

**SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY**  
**Office of Grants, Research and Sponsored Programs**

**Procedure/Standards**  
**PAYMENT TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

I. **Purpose**

The purpose is to establish consistent procedures for paying research participants at Slippery Rock University.

II. **Definitions**

- A. **Research Participant** – individuals participating in Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved research projects, surveys and/or studies.
- B. **Nonresident Alien** – an individual who does not pass the green card test or the substantial presence test.
- C. **Research Participant Payments** – compensation made by Slippery Rock University to individuals for participation in IRB approved research projects, surveys and/or studies.
- D. **Confidential Participant** – Research Participants classified by the IRB as being confidential. Paper documentation containing the participant’s identifying information, such as a Payment Request Form or Informed Consent, would be considered a breach of the participant’s confidentiality.
- E. **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** – the oversight body responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of individuals participating in research. An IRB approves, monitors and reviews research involving human subjects, per 45 CFR 46.

III. **Procedure/Standards**

In general, research participant payments are allowable. For externally and internally funded studies, research participant payments should be included in the budget at the time of submission and approved by the funding source. Study participants cannot receive incentives valued at more than \$600 in any calendar year.

All research projects that involve human subjects must be reviewed by the IRB before initiating the work of the study’s protocol. The IRB can either give the protocol a full review, an expedited review (i.e., reviewed by one or more IRB members), or consider the project exempt from further review. In some cases, research is conducted where the privacy of the participant needs to be protected. In cases such as this, back-up from the approved IRB submission must be provided to Accounting Services prior to subjects being compensated.

#### IV. Methods for Payment

- A. Check Requests – checks can be sent directly to the participant using the Payment Request Form. Account number 625400 should be noted on the Payment Request Form, along with the funding cost center number. The approver for that cost center number will also need to sign the form prior to Accounts Payable processing the request.
- B. Gift Cards and Gift Certificates – gift cards/certificates may be purchased for study participants anticipated to receive less than \$600 in a calendar year. The PI may purchase the gift cards/certificates and be reimbursed or purchase them directly with a purchasing card (P-Card).

**Internal grants:** gift cards/certificates can be purchased with nominal value (not to exceed \$25.00) for research participants. (please refer to the Expenditures of Public Funds Policy)

The PI must safeguard gift cards/certificates in a secure area. Gift cards/gift certificates exceeding \$100 cannot be distributed to SRU employee research participants.

- C. Small Incentives– small incentives, such as pens, t-shirts, wristbands, etc., with a value under \$25 may be purchased for study participants. The PI may purchase the incentives and be reimbursed or purchase them directly with a purchasing card (P-Card). The PI must safeguard the small incentives in a secure area.
- D. Moderate incentives –moderate incentives (value over \$25 but not exceeding \$100) may be purchased for study participants. The PI may purchase the moderate incentives and be reimbursed or purchase them directly with a purchasing card (P-Card). The PI must safeguard the moderate incentives in a secure area.
- E. Large Incentives – large incentives (value of over \$100) to participate in a research project may be given as long as the estimated value of the prize does not exceed \$600. Large incentives must be awarded as a result of a random drawing of all participants; awardees cannot be selected without a random drawing. Large incentives cannot be distributed to SRU employee research participants.
- F. Cash – cash cannot be used to pay research participants.

#### V. Responsibilities

- A. Principal Investigator – the PI is responsible for :
  - Submitting human research protocols to the IRB for approval;
  - Requesting the IRB determine the participants remain confidential and

attaching the IRB determination to every payment document submitted for payment;

- Keep a log of research participants, including dates of visits and dollar amounts given, regardless of confidentiality. If participants are confidential, a number may be assigned to each subject for tracking purposes.
- Determine if the participants will receive \$600 or more in a calendar year during the course of the study;
- Determine if their study participant is involved in other studies that will result in the participant receiving more than \$600 in compensation; and,
- Safeguard gift cards, gift certificates or other incentives prior to distribution to study participants.

B. Accounting Services Staff – is responsible for:

- Processing and maintaining financial records for payment request and P-Card purchases.

VI. **Links for Additional Information**

- IRS Resident and NonResident Alien Tests: <http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc851.htm>
- SRU IRB: <http://www.sru.edu/offices/institutional-review-board>