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Research, Development and Acquisition

Institutional Research

MAOR

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Summary: This regulation specifies responsibilities and procedures for the conduct and coordination of *Institutional Research* at USMA.

Applicability: This regulation is applicable to all members of the Staff & Faculty, Cadets, and other organizations or individuals who conduct or participate in institutional research at USMA.

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Section I General

1-1. Purpose. To specify procedures for the conduct and coordination of *Institutional Research* at USMA.

1-2. References. See Appendix E.

1-3. Definitions. See Appendix A.

1-4. Mission. Institutional research at USMA is conducted in order to assess the status, efficiency, and effectiveness of policies, programs, procedures, and operations conducted in support of the Academy mission. The fundamental goal of institutional research is to assist the chain-of-command in the decision-making process and to inform internal or external oversight agencies in the discharge of their responsibilities. Institutional research:

- a. Includes evaluation of the quality of candidates, the performance and development of cadets, the contribution of graduates to the Army and the nation, and the cost-effectiveness of the Academy.
- b. Attempts to measure the attainment of institutional goals and the achievement of supporting objectives both for the Academy and the installation, as prescribed by the Superintendent.
- c. Provides recommendations, derived from the conclusions and findings of research intended to improve the quality of the West Point Experience for cadets, staff & faculty, and the community.

Section II Responsibilities

1-5. Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis (MAOR), will:

- a. Develop and staff annual institutional research plans for consideration by the Policy Board and approval by the Superintendent.
- b. Establish priorities and assign responsibility for the conduct of approved institutional research projects, based on guidance from the Superintendent. Provide the results of institutional research, for which the Office of Policy, Planning, & Analysis is the *proponent*, in a timely manner, in order to support the decision process.
- c. Staff and coordinate requests from internal or external individuals or agencies seeking to conduct institutional research at USMA. Conduct or support research and analysis as requested by a Major Activity Director when approved by the Superintendent. Review all protocols, questionnaires, surveys, tests, or procedures intended for use in the research project to ensure they are consistent with applicable Army Regulations and the ethical standards for scientific research and the institution.
- d. Monitor the execution of approved institutional research projects to ensure they are conducted according to proper protocol and LAW limitations on time and other resource constraints.
- e. Maintain files and records (including an automated "key-word" index) of completed institutional research projects along with summary results.
- f. Serve as the USMA POC to internal and external agencies or individuals requesting access to prior institutional research or any data or information pertaining to candidates, cadets, graduates, or the costs of operation of USMA or USMAPS.
- g. With the approval of the Superintendent, provide data or analysis pertaining to candidates, cadets, and graduates (including the costs per graduate both of USMAPS and USMA, as calculated by the Director of Resource Management). If the request for data or analysis originates from the public media, the Director will provide the information through the Public Affairs Officer. If the request is made under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, the information will be conveyed through the Director of Information Management.

Section III Procedures

1-6. Approval Process.

a. All requests to conduct or to commission institutional research projects will be initiated by the *Principal Investigator* through the Proponent. Proponents must endorse and provide justification for the project to the Director of Policy, Planning, & Analysis. The Director will staff and coordinate the request for approval by the Superintendent.

(1) When a request for the conduct of institutional research is initiated by a principal investigator who is not a member of the Command and who is not affiliated with a Command proponent, the Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis will consider and staff the request.

(2) If the research appears to have potential benefit for the Command, the Director may serve as the proponent or solicit an appropriate Command agency to sponsor the project through the approval process and during the execution phase.

b. Proposed projects involving the use of human subjects may require review by a board appointed by the Superintendent, under the authority of AR 40-38. In these cases, the Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis will ensure that this committee is included in the staffing process. Normally, human subjects may participate in institutional research only on a voluntary basis. They must give their "informed consent" (Appendix B) and must be advised that they need not respond to any question or engage in any activity or test they may find objectionable. They may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudicial consequences.

c. All proposed institutional research projects involving the use of Cadets must be coordinated with the Dean and the Commandant and approved by the Superintendent. Normally, Cadet participation in institutional research projects will be voluntary.

d. In addition, questionnaires, surveys, psychological tests, inventories or other data gathering mechanisms (including "Focus Group" questions or structured queries for individual interviews), must be submitted for review by the Director prior to their use in the project.

e. Occasionally, institutional research projects proposed by a proponent or by a principal investigator (e.g., a cadet project or faculty study) may be of such limited scope that a full staffing with Superintendent approval is inefficient or unwarranted. In these cases, the proponent will provide the Director of Policy Planning and Analysis with a written description of the project in sufficient detail to include its purpose, scope, resource requirements, and duration. When these parameters suggest that the project should be conducted, the Director will confer with affected MADs, and with their support, the Director may grant approval.

f. All surveys of Army personnel, requested by private sponsors outside the Federal Government agencies, other than DA, will be forwarded to HQDA (DAPC-MSF-S) for approval. OPA will review the survey in accordance with AR 600-46, paragraph 1.15, and forward the survey with the proposed Memorandum of Agreement to HQDA.

1-7. Conduct of Institutional Research.

a. Approved projects will be conducted IAW their written protocols and within the resource constraints and time-schedule as specified during the staffing process.

b. Where more than one activity is involved in the project, the Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis will effect or ensure appropriate coordination and integration of effort, plan for administrative and logistic support at the installation level, and resolve scheduling issues.

c. Major Activity Directors and Heads of Departments of Instruction may collect data or opinions for the purpose of internal assessment, supporting Cadet learning objectives, providing administrative or logistic support to the command, or forwarding required routine reports to other agencies. Such actions will be governed by internal organizational directives and do not require prior institutional approval. Findings and conclusions may be released only through the chain-of-command.

1-8. Reporting the Results of Institutional Research.

a. The proponent is responsible for the accuracy of reported findings and conclusions that are based on their projects.

b. When the project reflects on candidates, cadets, and graduates of the Academy, its findings will be released to external audiences, with the approval of the Superintendent, through the Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis.

c. When the principal investigator is from an external agency (whether government or civilian) the USMA proponent for the project will construct a *Memorandum of Understanding* between the Academy and the investigator(s). It will be reviewed by the Staff Judge Advocate for legal sufficiency; and it will stipulate ownership of the data, authority for release of data or findings, mechanisms for prior review of any formal presentation of results or findings (whether written or verbal), and the level of support to be provided to the investigator(s) by the proponent and the Academy (Appendix C).

d. Data or results at the individual level of detail will normally not be reported in order to protect the privacy and the anonymity of the respondent. Individual responses to specific questions may be forwarded when the individuals consent or when their identity cannot be inferred. Normally survey data, focus group findings, and clinical results will be aggregated and only group level statistics will be reported. When a respondent's data or test results warrant medical or command attention, the Principal Investigator is responsible for taking appropriate action to protect the safety of the individual and the integrity of the command.

APPENDIX A DEFINITIONS & GLOSSARY

Conclusions: Logical consequences based on the findings of institutional research projects.

Data: Numerical or demographic results obtained during the conduct of institutional research.

Data Analysis: A mathematical procedure applied to basic data in order to gain insights supporting the purpose of an institutional research project.

Findings: The results produced by data analysis or other scientific procedures applied in the conduct of institutional research.

Focus Group: A collection of individuals who meet with principal investigators to discuss matters within the scope of the approved institutional research project.

Institutional Research: The study of policies, programs, procedures, quality indicators, attainment of goals and supporting objectives, costs, efficiency, effectiveness, status of projects, projections, or estimates and forecasts pertaining to the United States Military Academy or West Point. The principal goal of Institutional Research is to support decision-making by the chain-of-command. Institutional research transcends the West Point Experience from candidates through graduates, staff and faculty, command climate, morale and welfare, and cost-effectiveness of USMA as a source of commissioned officers. It also includes the impact of external decisions, regulations, instructions, or legislation upon the institution.

Principal Investigator: The individual(s) or agency(ies) that conduct approved institutional research projects.

Proponent: The agency that sponsors or supports the conduct of specific institutional research projects.

Reports and Presentations: Formal written or verbal expression concerning the nature of, findings or conclusions of institutional research projects.

Statistic: A numerical indicator derived from data analysis.

Surveys or Questionnaires: Written or verbal interrogatories addressed to institutional research project participants and designed to gather data or opinions relevant to the purpose of the study.

Test: An instrument or procedure intended to measure level of achievement, degree of accuracy, or likelihood of a finding.

**APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT**

When people are asked to contribute or participate as subjects in the conduct of institutional research, they are entitled to sufficient information concerning the project that they may make an informed decision concerning their participation. They must understand the purpose of the project or study, its demands on their time, the full nature of their contribution, any risks attendant to their participation, and whether their contribution is anonymous or with attribution. They must know that their privacy will be protected, that they may refuse to reply to any question or perform any task they find objectionable, and that they may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudicial consequences. An example of typical statements relating to privacy and informed consent follow. These formats may be used as guides in preparing statements that are applicable to institutional research projects at West Point.

**APPENDIX C
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

When approved institutional research projects are conducted by a principal investigator who is not assigned or detailed to West Point, an MOU will be used to describe the relationship and the responsibilities between the Command and the researcher. The Staff Judge Advocate will review the MOU before it is signed in order to verify that its construction is legally sufficient to support the intent. As a minimum the MOU must address:

- Ownership of the data collected;
- Authority for USMA (OPA and PAO) to review any representation of findings prior to their release;
- The extent of institutional support (logistic, administrative, analytic, etc.) to be provided to the researcher;
- Opportunity for the Command or the researcher to terminate the project prior to its completion should either party find it in their best interests to do so.

While each MOU must be tailored to meet the specific conditions of the institutional research project, the example below may serve as useful guide in preparing an MOU for review by the SJA:

APPENDIX D

**SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES, INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS
IN SUPPORT OF APPROVED
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS**

Frequently, the protocol or study plan for an approved institutional research project will include a survey, questionnaire, subject interviews, or meetings with focus groups. In such cases, the Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis will review the content of these interrogatories to ensure they do not include matter that may inappropriately invade a respondent's privacy, ask for incriminating information, or address matters that are morally or ethically objectionable.

Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and focus group sessions not related to institutional research are not within the purview of this regulation. Their use is governed by other applicable instructions and Army Regulations. Examples include: manpower surveys, facility utilization and customer satisfaction surveys, Command Climate surveys, and Quality of Life questionnaires.

All surveys and similar interrogatories addressed to participants in institutional research projects are voluntary and participants may refuse to answer any question that they find objectionable. Generally, respondent's contributions will be anonymous, that is individual replies will not be reported and the identity of the respondent will be protected by the researcher. In those cases where the research protocol denies anonymity, the respondent will be fully informed and must consent to the release of any information provided.

Examples of recurring surveys conducted by the Director of Policy, Planning, and Analysis are:

- New Cadet Testing, Annually, R-Week
- Fourth Class Survey, Annually, March
- First Class Survey, Annually, April
- Corps Honor Survey, Biannually, January
- Cadet Time Study, 5 year Intervals, January
- Survey of Graduates, As Required, Throughout the Year

Other Surveys or interrogatories may be requested, by proponents, as elements of institutional research projects. All such activity must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Policy, Planning & Analysis prior to execution.

Appendix E
REFERENCES

- a. USMA Regulation 10-1, ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS, Organization and Functions Manual, 6 February 1981.
- b. AR 25-55, OFFICE MANAGEMENT, Release of Information and Records from Army Files.
- c. AR 360-5, ARMY INFORMATION, Public Information Policies.
- d. AR 600-46, PERSONNEL-GENERAL, Attitude and Opinion Survey Program, 1 November 1978.
- e. AR 70-25, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, Use of Volunteers as Subjects for Research.
- f. HSC Regulation 40-23, MEDICAL SERVICES, Management of Clinical Investigation Protocols and Reports.
- g. AR 5-5, MANAGEMENT, Army Studies and Analyses, 15 October 1981.