

HAC Policies and Procedures

Certificate of Confidentiality

Who Issues Certificates of Confidentiality?

Certificates of Confidentiality are issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to protect identifiable research information from forced disclosure.

What Can a Certificate of Confidentiality Do?

They allow the investigator and others who have access to research records to refuse to disclose identifying information on research participants in any civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceeding, whether at the federal, state, or local level. Certificates of Confidentiality may be granted for studies collecting information that, if disclosed, could have adverse consequences for subjects or damage their financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation. By protecting researchers and institutions from being compelled to disclose information that would identify research subjects, Certificates of Confidentiality help achieve the research objectives and promote participation in studies by assuring confidentiality and privacy to participants. For additional guidance review the NIH web page at <http://grants2.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/>

Does Every Study Need a Certificate of Confidentiality?

No. Most studies do not need a certificate of confidentiality. However, if the study involves highly sensitive information, the investigator should contact the HAC Chairperson to obtain further guidance.

How Do We Inform The HAC That We Have Received A Certificate Of Confidentiality?

Please indicate in the DRP that a Certificate of Confidentiality has been requested and include the name of the potential granting agency. If a protocol meets the requirements, then the PI must provide a copy of the Certificate to the HAC Administrative Office. A copy of the certificate **must** be submitted to the HAC upon receipt from NIH.