

**Tarrant County College District
Institutional Review Board
Frequently Asked Questions**

Researcher Classifications:

Do routine classroom projects require IRB approval?

Some instructional activities may have the characteristics of research, but do not require IRB review. These activities include: (a) data collected at the department level, such as teaching or course evaluations, (b) a class project or paper that does not involve human participants or (c) reviews of existing literature that isn't readily generalizable, i.e., biographies. If the data will not go beyond the classroom setting, it is likely that the project does not need IRB approval.

Use to following guidelines to determine if your activities in the classroom are subject to IRB review. IRB review is NOT required if *all* of the following are true:

- a. The project is limited to surveys/questionnaires/interviews/observations of public behavior directly related to the course topic.
- b. The data collection activity contains no sensitive personal questions (i.e., no questions about drug use, grades, medical history) or other personally identifiable information.
- c. No identifying information is recorded to link a person with the collected data.
- d. The participants in the project are not from a vulnerable or special population (i.e., minors, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally impaired individuals).
- e. The collected data does not leave the classroom setting, or if the project involves collecting data on an outside organization, the data are only shared only with that organization.
- f. No one receives compensation for collecting, organizing, analyzing or reporting the data.

Do District pilot projects require IRB review?

Because most pilot projects are a test run to determine whether or not scaling the project up would be beneficial and the information collected is not generalizable, IRB approval is not typically required with the following exceptions, the pilot project involves: (a) vulnerable populations, (b) methods with more than minimal risk, (c) the collection of sensitive data or (d) the possibility that the data collected may be presented or published sometime in the future.

Do Internet projects require IRB review?

If the information collected online involves human participants or is intended for future presentation or publication, IRB approval is needed. Informed consent addressing the confidentiality of human participants and the data collected on them is required.

Does qualitative research, such as interviews or focus groups, require IRB approval?

This type of research will need to be submitted to the IRB if it involves *a systematic investigation ...designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge*. An IRB review is necessary to ensure that the human subjects are not harmed.

I am just doing a survey. Do I need IRB approval for surveys?

If the research project involves data collection of human subjects, you need IRB approval prior to starting your research. Written IRB approval is **required** before any interaction with human subjects can begin.

Does research on existing data require IRB approval?

Existing data involves using data that has already been collected to answer new questions. IRB review and approval is not needed if the source of the data is public (libraries, newspapers, publications) and analysis of the data will not make the data individually identifiable. If the individually identifiable data comes from TCCD's student information system, Ellucian Colleague, the research will require IRB review.