Does it fall under the category of human subjects?

- are you collecting data by interacting with living individuals (surveys, interviews, observations, etc.)?
- are you analyzing data that others have collected from living individuals (data sets)?
- are you collecting or analyzing personally-identifiable information about living individuals?

√ if yes to any of the above, you are working with human subjects.

When does my project need IRB approval?
When the answer to both of these questions is yes.

Is it systematic observation and/or data collection which

- is intended for release to the scientific community as a contribution to knowledge?
- is portrayed (explicitly or implicitly) by students, faculty or staff as “research” or “experimental” investigation?
- is intended to fulfill requirements for a thesis, dissertation, or other research requirements at UT?

√ if yes to any of the above, you are engaged in research activity.

Advice for students from the UT Knoxville Institutional Review Board (IRB)

(865) 974-7697
contact us with any questions!
irb.utk.edu
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The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Office of Research and Engagement
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Sample Course Project from Architecture & Design

Interaction with living individuals with the purpose of designing an object, environment or human experience.

- intent = design an object, (e.g., a chair)
- final product = object
- audience = instructor, client, constituent

Does not require IRB approval

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a
- dissertation?
- master’s thesis?
- undergraduate honors thesis?
- other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?
- presented at a research conference/colloquium?
- published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...
- elements of a structured research study are to be added
- intent = contribute to knowledge
- final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

If the purpose is sharing the design and/or the learning process, IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course, client and constituent.

Permission is needed from the client (who owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.
Sample Course Project from Business

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a
• dissertation?
• master’s thesis?
• undergraduate honors thesis?
• other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Collection and/or analysis of data from a firm, for the purpose of evaluating practice and/or making recommendations for improvement

• intent = improved practice
• final product = internal report
• audience = instructor, firm

Does not require IRB approval

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?

• presented at a research conference/colloquium?
• published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...

• elements of a structured research study are to be added
• intent = contribute to knowledge
• final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

If the purpose is sharing the recommendations and/or the learning process,

IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course and the firm.

Permission is needed from the firm (which owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.
Sample Course Project from Landscape Architecture

Interaction with living individuals with the purpose of designing a landscape
- intent = design a landscape
- final product = landscape
- audience = instructor, client

Does not require IRB approval

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a
- dissertation?
- master’s thesis?
- undergraduate honors thesis?
- other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?
- presented at a research conference/colloquium?
- published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...
- elements of a structured research study are to be added
- intent = contribute to knowledge
- final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

If the purpose is sharing the design and/or the learning process,

IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course and client.

Permission is needed from the client (who owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.
Sample Course Project from Political Science

Collection and/or analysis of data from an organization, for the purpose of evaluating practice and/or making recommendations for improvement

- intent = improved practice
- final product = internal report
- audience = instructor, organization

Does not require IRB approval

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a

- dissertation?
- master’s thesis?
- undergraduate honors thesis?
- other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?

- presented at a research conference/colloquium?
- published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...

- elements of a structured research study are to be added
- intent = contribute to knowledge
- final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

If the purpose is sharing the recommendations and/or the learning process,

IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course and the organization.

Permission is needed from the organization (which owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.
Sample Course Project from Program Evaluation

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a dissertation? master’s thesis? undergraduate honors thesis? other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Collection and/or analysis of data from an agency, for the purpose of evaluating practice and/or making recommendations for improvement

- intent = improved practice
- final product = internal report
- audience = instructor, agency

Does not require IRB approval

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?

- presented at a research conference/colloquium?
- published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...

- elements of a structured research study are to be added
- intent = contribute to knowledge
- final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

If the purpose is sharing the recommendations and/or the learning process,

IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course and the agency.

Permission is needed from the agency (which owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.
Sample Course Project from Public Health

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?
- presented at a research conference/colloquium?
- published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...
- elements of a structured research study are to be added
- intent = contribute to knowledge
- final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a
- dissertation?
- master’s thesis?
- undergraduate honors thesis?
- other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Collection and/or analysis of data from an agency, for the purpose of assessing community health and/or making recommendations for improvement
- intent = improved practice
- final product = community health assessment
- audience = instructor, agency

Does not require IRB approval

If the purpose is sharing the assessment and/or the learning process,
IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course and the agency.

Permission is needed from the agency (which owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.
Sample Course Project from Social Work

Sharing with audiences beyond the course: Is the project being described as research?
- presented at a research conference/colloquium?
- published in a research journal?

If it is to be enhanced...
- elements of a structured research study are to be added
- intent = contribute to knowledge
- final product = research report

...IRB approval is needed to turn the information collected from individuals into research data

When does my project need IRB approval?

Is it also serving as a
- dissertation?
- master’s thesis?
- undergraduate honors thesis?
- other structured research product?

IRB approval is required prior to engaging in research activity.

Collection and/or analysis of data from an agency, for the purpose of evaluating practice and/or making recommendations for improvement
- intent = improved practice
- final product = internal report
- audience = instructor, agency

Does not require IRB approval

If the purpose is sharing the recommendations and/or the learning process,

IRB approval is not required even when shared beyond the course and the agency.

Permission is needed from the agency (which owns the data) for sharing beyond the course.