

Does My Project Require an IRB Application?

You are required to submit a formal application if your proposed study meets both of these conditions: It constitutes research and is conducted on human subjects. The quiz below is designed to determine if your study meets both criteria. If it does, a formal application is required before research begins. The IRB cannot approve research after it has been done.

Part A: Does my study constitute research?

According to the Code of Federal Regulations, research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge [45 CFR 46.102(d)].

Answer **yes** or **no** to the following questions:

- Do you expect or intend to **publish** the results of your study?
- Do you expect or intend to **present** the results of your study at a conference?
- Are you doing this project as part of your **Senior Research Project**?

If your answer was **no** to all questions, your study is not considered research. A formal application is waived and you are free to begin your study. If your answer was **yes** for any of the questions, your study is considered research. Continue to Part B.

Part B: Is my study considered research on human subjects?

Answer **yes** or **no** to the following questions:

- Will people themselves be the **subjects** of study?*
- Will the study involve interacting with **living people**?
- Will you gather information that would ordinarily be **private** (e.g. personal beliefs)?
- Will you observe **behavior** in a context where the subjects would reasonably expect privacy (e.g. their homes)?

**Interviewing your physics professor to learn about black holes does not count, since then the subject of your research is black holes; interviewing the same professor to learn about his/her values, experiences or behavior, however, IS research on human subjects.*

If your answer was **no** to all questions, your study is not considered to be on human subjects. Formal application is waived and you are free to begin your study. If your answer was **yes** for question 1 **and** one or more of the questions 2, 3 or 4, your study is considered to be on human subjects.

If your study is indeed research on human subjects, you must submit a formal application. Proceed to our application process.

If you are still not sure whether or not your study is considered research on human subjects, visit the [Office for Human Research Protections \(OHRP\)](#) within the [Department of Health & Human Services \(DHHS\)](#) to see detailed explanations of what does and what doesn't constitute research on human subjects under the federal regulations.