

Determining if a project requires IRB review depends on whether it constitutes **research** involving **human subjects**. The table below is intended to help determine if a project meets the definition of research requiring submission to the IRB. If the project involves some characteristics of a research project, submission to the IRB for review is expected. Contact the UWG IRB if you have questions.

	Human Subjects Research	Quality Improvement	Program Evaluation	Student Project
Purpose/Intent	Intent of project is to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge (e.g. testing a hypothesis)	Intent of project is to improve a practice or process within a particular institution or ensure it confirms with expected norms	Intent of project is to improve a specific program	Intent of project is to provide an educational experience about the research process or methods
Motivation for Project	Project occurs in large part as a result of individual professional goals and requirements (e.g. seeking tenure, obtaining grants, dissertation, etc.)	Project occurs regardless of whether individual(s) conducting it may benefit professionally from conducting the project	Project not initiated by the evaluator and occurs regardless of whether individual(s) conducting it may benefit professionally from it	Project occurs as part of assigned course work or a requirement of an educational program to learn a new technique or pass a course/fulfill an assignment
Intent/who Benefits	Designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge and may not directly benefit subjects	Designed to promptly benefit a process, program, or system and may or may not benefit subjects	No benefit to participants expected; evaluation concentrates on program improvements or whether the program should continue	Participants may or may not benefit directly; benefit is primarily for the investigator conducting project for his/her own knowledge or fulfillment of educational requirements
Risks/Burdens	May place subjects at risk and stated as such	By design, does not increase participant risk, with exception of possible privacy/confidentiality concerns	Concentrates on program improvements, does not increase participant risk	Should not increase participant risk, but depending on topic may place subjects at risk and stated as such
Population	Usually involves a subset of individuals – universal participation of an entire program, department, clinic is not expected; generally statistical justification for sample size used to ensure endpoints can be met	Information on all or most receiving a particular treatment or undergoing a particular practice or process expected to be included: exclusion of information from some individuals significantly affects conclusions	Information on all or most participants within or affected by receiving a particular treatment or undergoing a particular practice or process expected to be used: exclusion of information from some individuals significantly affects conclusions	Can either include all, most, or a subset of individuals; statistical justification may be used in the context to understand the process of subject selection; however recruitment often utilizes convenience sampling
Data collection	Systematic data collection	Systematic data collection	Systematic data collection	Not designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge
Testing/Analysis	Complex with inferential statistics to promote generalizability of results	Descriptive statistics or statistical process control charts for trended data	Descriptive statistics or statistical process control charts for trended data	Design is often an example or template provided by a professor or course book
Extraneous variables	Controlled and/or measured, tight protocol control	Acknowledged but not measured	Acknowledged but not measured	May or may not be acknowledged
End Point	Answer a research question	Promptly improve a program/process/system	Concentrates on program improvements or whether the program should continue	Assigned coursework completed, new skills learned and modeled in exercise.
Dissemination of results	Intent to publish or present generally presumed at the outset as part of professional expectations, obligations/ dissemination of information usually occurs in research/scientific publications or other research/scientific for a; results expected to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge by filling a gap in scientific knowledge or supporting, refining, or refuting results from other research studies	Intent to publish or present generally not presumed at the outset; dissemination of information often does not occur beyond the institution evaluated; dissemination of information may occur in quality improvement publications; when published or presented to a wider audience, the intent is to suggest potentially effective models, strategies, assessment tools or provide benchmarks or base rates rather than to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge	Intent to publish or present generally presumed at the outset of the project; dissemination of information to program stakeholders and participants; may be publically posted (e.g., website) to ensure transparency of results; when published or presented to a wider audience, the intent is to suggest potentially effective models, strategies, assessment tools or provide benchmarks or base rates rather than to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge	Any presentations, posters, or publishing is simply to document the educational experience or completion of programmatic requirements.  Text for publications/presentations: This project was undertaken as a Teaching-Learning project and was not formally reviewed by the University of West Georgia's Institutional Review Board.