

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

CLASS PROJECTS: WHEN TO SUBMIT TO THE IRB

The following questions are useful to instructors to help them know when a class project needs to be revised or submitted to the IRB for research review. Answer each question below:

1. Do the projects involve humans as participants?

- YES. PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.
 - Any class projects that collect information about living humans may be considered as “involving human participants.” This includes collecting archival data about *living* persons. Such projects may need IRB review depending on how the remaining questions below are answered.
 - If the project involves animals, a different ethics review board may be needed. Contact the Liberty University IACUC for more information, iacuc@liberty.edu.
- NO. If the project does not involve human subjects, IRB review is not needed.
 - Questions 2-3 must be answered “Yes” AND
 - Questions 4-10 must be answered “No” to indicate IRB review is not needed.

When in doubt, please contact the IRB at irb@liberty.edu. Projects requiring IRB review may take 1 month or longer for the complete review, depending on the characteristics of the class project.

2. Do the student projects involve only adults (18 years old or older) capable of giving informed consent to participate in the project?

- YES, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.
- NO, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION OR REVISE THE CLASS PROJECT TO ONLY INCLUDE ADULTS.
 - Children and adolescents are considered a special population; therefore, class projects involving children or adolescents will need IRB review. Submit the class project to the IRB for review or consider working with the student to revise the project.

3. Do the student class projects communicate appropriate elements of informed consent to participants (e.g., including information to participants on the institutional affiliation of the student, any risks in the study, potential benefits, voluntary participation, permission to withdraw at any time, safeguards for collected data, etc.)?

- YES, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.
- NO, REVISE STUDENT PROJECTS TO GIVE ADEQUATE INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION OR SUBMIT TO THE IRB.
 - The student must include appropriate informed consent information for participants even if the project does not require a signed informed consent (For example, such information can be provided in an anonymous survey’s instructions). This “consent principle” applies to both class projects and IRB applications. See the IRB website for sample informed consent material.
 - Questions 4-10 must be answered “No” to prevent the need for IRB review.

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4. Is this class project an honors project, master's thesis, or dissertation?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION.
 - Any honors project, master's thesis, or dissertation involving human subjects needs IRB review. Submit an IRB application regardless of any other questions on this form.
- NO, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

5. Is this class project intended to be presented at a peer-reviewed conference, be published, or produce generalizable knowledge?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION.
- NO, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.
 - Most class projects are intended to provide a learning experience for students rather than a contribution to the academic literature in a particular area. If the student intends to publish his or her project, present it at a peer-reviewed scholarly conference, or publish it on the Internet, or if the project appears to add meaningfully to generalizable knowledge, then the project must be submitted to the IRB.

6. Do the student class projects involve a special population?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION FOR THAT PARTICULAR PROJECT OR REVISE THE PROJECT.
 - Projects involving prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, economically or educationally-disadvantaged persons, individuals who are unable to give informed consent due to a physical or mental condition, or individuals whose circumstances may make them especially vulnerable to coercion (e.g., persons on probation) will need IRB review.
- NO, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

7. Do the student class projects ask questions related to illegal activities?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION FOR THAT PARTICULAR PROJECT.
 - If a student's class project asks these types of questions, the project will need IRB review.
- NO, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

8. Do the student class projects expose participants to potential criminal or civil liability if the data from the project ever became public?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION FOR THAT PARTICULAR PROJECT.
 - If accidental exposure of a class project's data could pose a criminal or civil risk to the participants, then the project needs IRB review.
- NO, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

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9. Do the class projects expose participants to potential financial damage, a reduction in employability, or potential damage to their reputation if the data from the project ever became public?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION FOR THAT PARTICULAR PROJECT.
 - Similar to the above, any project that exposes participants to such risks requires IRB review.
- NO, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

10. Do the class projects involve psychologically sensitive subject matter?

- YES, SUBMIT AN IRB APPLICATION FOR THE PARTICULAR PROJECTS INVOLVING SUCH THEMES.
 - If the class project involves topics that could lead to significant emotional distress in participants that is beyond the typical stress that would be experienced in daily life, then the project will need IRB review. Psychologically sensitive subject matter examples include activities such as interviews covering traumatic events, childhood sexual abuse, etc.
- NO, PROCEED TO SCORING.

1. IF QUESTION 1 WAS ANSWERED “NO” (DOES NOT INVOLVE HUMAN SUBJECTS), THEN NO IRB REVIEW IS NEEDED.

1. IF QUESTION 1 WAS ANSWERED “YES” (INVOLVES HUMAN SUBJECTS)

AND

2. QUESTIONS 2-3 WERE ANSWERED “YES”

AND

3. QUESTIONS 4-10 WERE ANSWERED “NO,” THEN THE CLASS PROJECT DOES NOT NEED IRB REVIEW.

When in doubt, please contact the IRB at irb@liberty.edu.