Is your activity covered under the Human Research Protection Program?

It is often very difficult to determine if an activity requires review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) without significant discussions with someone who has extensive knowledge about the regulations and institutional policies. To help faculty, students and staff with this decision, a decision tree has been designed to identify whether or not activities and/or projects fall under the purview of the University of Missouri – Kansas City Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). If you have any questions or need clarification on an issue, please contact the Research Compliance Office.

Start Here

Will the activity involve collecting information about living individuals through intervention, interaction, or observation?
- Yes
- No

Will the activity involve collecting identifiable private information about individuals? ¹
- Yes
- No

Will you have access to the private information? ²
- Yes
- No

Will you be using data or other materials (including biological samples, cell lines, genetic material, etc.) that are linked to private information and were collected by another individual or organization?
- Yes
- No

Do you have a written agreement with the individual/organization collecting the private information stating that they will not provide private information to you and/or for the activity? ³
- Yes
- No

Is the collection of information systematic? (Does the activity involve an identifiable method?) ⁴
- Yes
- No

Is the activity intended to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge? (For instance, will the activity be used in a publication, presentation, or achievement of a degree?) ⁵
- Yes
- No

Please submit your activity for a determination of human subjects research.
- The activity is research with human participants. Please submit your research for review to the Research Compliance Office.

Don’t know or uncertain

Please contact the Research Compliance Office for assistance in determining what type of submission is necessary.
Identifiable private information is defined as:
- name
- address
- elements of dates related to an individual (e.g., birth date)
- email address
- numbers:
  - telephone
  - fax
  - social security
  - medical record
  - health beneficiary / health insurance
  - certificate or license numbers
  - vehicle
  - account numbers (e.g., credit card)
  - device identification numbers
  - serial numbers
  - any unique identifying numbers, characteristics, or codes (e.g., Global Positioning System (GPS) readings)
- Web URLs
- Internet Protocol (IP) addresses
- biometric identifiers (e.g., voice, fingerprints)
- full face photographs or comparable images

Will the data you are receiving be coded or de-identified? If coded, at a minimum you still have access to private information.

A sample agreement is available from ORIA, if you wish to use one for your activity.

Common research methods include interviews, surveys, questionnaires, observation, shadowing, case studies, etc. Some methods are clearly systematic, such as surveys and scripted interviews; others are less formally structured but may still qualify as systematic, such as emergent-design interviews and case studies. Additionally, some disciplines overlap in methodologies or “borrow” methods from other disciplines. For instance, researchers in linguistics or English studies may use ethnographic methods (such as case studies and emergent-design interviews) to examine people’s spoken or written communication practices. While the University encourages the interdisciplinary use of research methods, researchers must be aware that they are responsible for obtaining the necessary ethical review when using new or unfamiliar methods.

Another way of considering the question is to ask: Is there a written (or formulated or articulated) plan for the activity? Does that plan reflect the norms of an established discipline? If you are still unsure if your activity would be considered systematic, please contact the ORIA office for assistance.

The phrase generalizable knowledge also includes disseminating information through websites, newsletters, brochures, and other similar types of media. For instructors requiring human participant research exclusively as part of course activities, please submit a Research as Class Instruction form to ORIA.