



Class Projects

The College recognizes that some student projects conducted to fulfill course requirements involve activities that, in a different context, might be viewed as research. As a general rule, when those activities are conducted solely to fulfill a course requirement, an element of the definition of research (the intent to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge) is lacking. However, it is also the case that some classroom research assignments could place participants at risk. Therefore, recognizing its role in the protection of human participants, the IRB has determined that some classroom assignments may require review by the IRB.

CMC considers classroom assignments involving research activities to be educational in nature, and not subject to IRB review, when **ALL** of the following criteria are true:

1. The project is limited to surveys, questionnaires, interview procedures, observation of public behavior, minimal risk experimental studies, or standard educational exercises directly related to the topic(s) being studied in an official college course. In general, audio and video recordings made as part of the interview procedure for the sole purpose of accuracy are allowed.
2. Surveys/questionnaires/interviews, if used, contain no sensitive personal questions (e.g., no questions about alcohol/drug use, sexual behavior/attitudes, criminal activity, medical history, grades/test scores) or other personal information that could "label" or "stigmatize" an individual.
3. The participants are not from a special population that requires extra protections (e.g., pregnant women, people in the criminal justice system, and children under age 18, cognitively impaired individuals).
4. Either the information is recorded:
 - a) Without any direct or indirect (e.g., race, gender, code number) identifier linking the participant to his/her data; or
 - b) No direct identifiers are recorded and any indirect identifiers could not be combined to ascertain the identity of some or all the participants; or
 - c) If direct or indirect identifiers are retained in the dataset, then the other data contained in the dataset could not reasonably harm the participant's reputation, employability, financial standing, or place the participant at risk of criminal or civil liability.
5. The results of the classroom assignment, including audio and video recordings, either do not leave the classroom, or, if the project involves gathering data from or about a company, agency, or organization, the data/results are shared only with that company, agency, or organization, and the company will not share the data or results with anyone else.

If any one of the foregoing criteria is **NOT** true, then the project must be sent to IRB for review. It is the responsibility of faculty to determine whether an assigned project involving human participants can be classified as a course-related student project. Faculty should contact the IRB Office if assistance in making this determination is needed. It is also the responsibility of faculty to discuss general principles of research ethics with the class prior to the initiation of the project and ensure that those are followed.

The IRB is willing to review class research projects submitted by students individually or in groups, in order to support the educational process, but please recognize the traffic issues involved. The reviewers cannot always respond to applications from multiple classes during the two or three week window that may have been planned by the instructor for IRB review. Therefore, please do take into account the volume of applications that may be under review at a given time, particularly at certain points in the semester.