

Which review applies to my study?

I. Exempt Review

Exempt research is research with human subjects that generally involves no more than minimal risk. However, it is "exempt" from the provisions stated in 45 CFR 46, Subpart A (Common Rule). An exempt research study does not require ongoing review by the IRB, unless the project is amended in such a way that it no longer meets the exemption criteria.

The IRB is required to determine if a research project falls under of the following six exempt categories listed in the federal regulations (45 CFR 46.10(b)):

1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as
 - a. Research on regular and special education instructional strategies
 - b. Research on the effectiveness or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods
2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures (of adults), interview procedures (of adults) or observation of public behavior, *unless*:
 - a. Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, AND
 - b. And disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation
3. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (2) if:
 - a. The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office
 - b. Or the research is conducted for the Department of Justice under Federal statute 42 U.S.C. 3789 g, or for the National Center for Education Statistics under Federal statute 20 U.S.C. 12213-1, which provide certain legal protections and requirements for confidentiality
4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects
5. Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:
 - a. Public benefit or service programs
 - b. Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs
 - c. Possible changes in or alternative to those programs or procedures, OR
 - d. Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs
6. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, if
 - a. Wholesome foods without additives are consumed or
 - b. A good is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA or approved by the U.S. EPA or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

II. Expedited Review

If the research presents no more than minimal risk, the IRB may determine it qualifies for an expedited review. The expedited review covers the same elements as the full/convened committee review but can be conducted by the IRB chair or a designated experienced reviewer rather than the whole convened committee.

There are 9 expedited categories in the federal regulations (45 CFR 46.110):

1. Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices only when condition (a) or (b) is met.
 - a. Research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.)
 - b. Research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.
2. Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows:
 - a. From healthy, nonpregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds. For these subjects, the amounts drawn may not exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week; or
 - b. From other adults and children², considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects, the collection procedure, the amount of blood to be collected, and the frequency with which it will be collected. For these subjects, the amount drawn may not exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8 week period and collection may not occur more frequently than 2 times per week.
3. Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means.

Examples: (a) hair and nail clippings in a nondisfiguring manner; (b) deciduous teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (c) permanent teeth if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction; (d) excreta and external secretions (including sweat); (e) uncannulated saliva collected either in an unstimulated fashion or stimulated by chewing gumbase or wax or by applying a dilute citric solution to the tongue; (f) placenta removed at delivery; (g) amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor; (h) supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques; (i) mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings; (j) sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.

4. Collection of data through noninvasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves. Where medical devices are employed, they must be cleared/approved for marketing. (Studies intended to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the medical device are not generally eligible for expedited review, including studies of cleared medical devices for new indications.)

Examples: (a) physical sensors that are applied either to the surface of the body or at a distance and do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy; (b) weighing or testing sensory acuity; (c) magnetic resonance imaging; (d) electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography; (e) moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.

5. Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis). (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)
6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

8. Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened IRB as follows:
 - a. Where
 1. the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects;
 2. all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and
 3. the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or
 - b. Where no subjects have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified; or
 - c. Where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.

9. Continuing review of research, not conducted under an investigational new drug application or investigational device exemption where categories two (2) through eight (8) do not apply but the IRB has determined and documented at a convened meeting that the research involves no greater than minimal risk and no additional risks have been identified.

III. Full Board (Convened) Review

Studies that involve more than minimal risk require full board review at a convened meeting at which a quorum of IRB members is present. For the research to be approved, it must receive the approval of a majority of those members present.

1. Studies using vulnerable populations
2. Studies taking place internationally (particularly those with little or no provisions for protection of human subjects)
3. Studies where information may be disclosed that could require mandatory legal reporting (e.g., child/ elder abuse, drugs, etc.)
4. Studies involving deception which raises the risk level of the subjects
5. Studies that fall under the jurisdiction of the FDA