Does your project require review by the Cal Poly Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

Start Here

Are you conducting the activity as a function of your employment or education at Cal Poly?

NO → **Does your activity collect data from Cal Poly employees or students as subjects?**

NO → Activity does not require review by Cal Poly IRB.

BUT

YES

YES

Is the activity a systematic investigation?
Does it attempt to answer research questions (hypothesis/es)?
Is it methodical? Does it collect data in an organized way?
Will the data be analyzed and conclusions drawn?

NO → Activity is not research and IRB review is not needed.

BUT

YES

NO

Is the investigation designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge?

Design refers to the purpose of the investigation. If the purpose is to archive results for further research, compare results to other assessments, or draw conclusions to generalizable knowledge, the use of exploratory or qualitative data collection will be considered research according to the Federal definition. Some investigations are intended to train students (classroom projects) or not designed to produce generalizable knowledge and are not considered research. At Cal Poly, master's theses and senior projects are considered research and should be reviewed; however, there are some exceptions.

Generalizable knowledge means conclusions, facts, or principles derived from particulars (individual subjects, medical records, etc.) that are applicable to or affect a whole category (members of a class, kind, or group, a field of knowledge, etc.) and enhance scientific or academic understanding.

Is the primary goal of the activity to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge? Is a major goal of the activity to learn something to benefit people other than the research subjects? Is the goal of the activity to do more than improve the performance of an institutional practice in relationship to an established standard?

YES

Activity is research.

Does it involve obtaining information from or about living human subjects or human materials?

NO → Activity is not research involving human subjects and IRB review is not needed.

BUT

YES

NO

Does the research involve interaction or intervention with the human subjects?

NO → **Is the information individually identifiable?**
Is the identity of the subject known, or may be ascertained, by the investigator or associated with the information?

YES

NO

YES

Is the information private?
Private means in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public.

YES

Activity is research involving human subjects.
Please submit the project to the Cal Poly IRB for review.

Other Federal, State, local laws and/or regulations may apply.

Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo, March 2017