

St. Louis Community College

Guidelines for Types of Research Exempt from Review by the HSRB

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has set up guidelines for the types of research that may not require either a full or expedited review by the Human Subjects Review Board.

PLEASE NOTE: These guidelines are provided strictly as a service to principal investigators. The determination of exemption must be done by the Human Subjects Review Board, not by the principal investigator. **The principal investigator must still apply for exemption even if these criteria are met.**

Common Types of Research Exempt From Review

Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Public Welfare Part 46 - Protection of Human Subjects, Subpart A - Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects, [46.101\(b\)](#) sets forth all of the categories of exemption.

However, set forth below are some common types of research which are exempt from expedited or full review by the HSRB:

1. Surveys issued or completed by College personnel for the intent and purposes of improving services and programs of the College or for developing new services or programs for students, employees, or alumni. However, procedures must be in place to ensure that the confidentiality of individual responses is maintained, participants' privacy is protected, and survey participation is voluntary. This includes surveys conducted by professional societies or university consortia. (Note: If, at a future date, an opportunity arises to contribute previously collected survey data to a new project producing generalizable knowledge, application for HSRB review will be required before any identifiable data can be released to the new project).
2. Fact-collecting interviews of individuals where questions focus on things, products, or policies, rather than on people or their opinions. Example: canvassing librarians about inter-library loan policies or rising journal costs. (Note: Efforts leading to presentation outside of the classroom and/or publicizing the student-prepared documents in any manner are considered research. Instructors of research methods courses are encouraged to consult with HSPO staff listed at the end of this document).

3. Research involving a living individual, such as a biography, that is not generalizable beyond that individual.
4. Procedures carried out under independent contract for an external agency. Examples: personnel studies, cost-benefit analyses, customer satisfaction studies, biological sample processing.
5. Research involving deceased individuals.
6. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as research on education instructional strategies, or research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
7. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), if information taken from these sources is recorded in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified.
8. Research involving survey or interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, where all of the following conditions exist: responses are recorded in such a manner that the human subjects cannot be identified; the subject's responses, if they became known outside of the research, they pose no reasonable risk to the subject; participation is voluntary; and the research does not deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.
9. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, literature, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available and if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified.