# Does My Study Require Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review?

[Diagram Version of IRB Review Flow Chart (PDF)](https://umaine.edu/research-compliance/resource/does-my-study-require-irb-review-flowchart/)

## Does the activity involve the collection of information, data, biospecimens ***or*** existing data/biospecimens from/about **living** individuals?

### If *yes* to Question 1: Proceed to [Question 2](#_Is_the_activity).

### If *no* to Question 1: IRB Review is ***not*** required.

## Is the activity a “systematic investigation,” such that it involves a prospective plan incorporating data collection, either qualitative or quantitative, and data analysis to answer a question?

### If *yes* to Question 2: Proceed to [Question 3](#_Is_the_activity_1).

### If *no* to Question 2: IRB Review is ***not*** required.

## Is the activity designed to contribute to or develop *generalizable knowledge*, such that the activities intend to draw general conclusions, inform policy, or generalize findings beyond a single individual/group or internal program?

### If *yes* to Question 3: Proceed to [Question 4](#_Does_the_project).

### If *no* to Question 3: IRB Review is ***not*** required.

## Does the project involve ***only*** existing data sets or existing biospecimens given, or otherwise accessible, to the researcher?

### If *yes* to Question 4: Proceed to [Question 5](#_Are_the_investigator(s)).

### If *no* to Question 4: Skip ahead to [Question 6](#_Is_the_project).

## Are the investigator(s) able to identify the subjects via the data or biospecimens, either directly or through a linked code?

### If *yes* to Question 5: **IRB Review is required.**

### If *no* to Question 5: IRB Review is ***not*** required.

## Is the project solely for a class assignment in which:

## data will not be used outside of the classroom;

## data is not being used for a capstone project, honors thesis, master’s thesis, or doctoral dissertation; ***and***

## the data are destroyed at the end of project with no further use? **(See note[[1]](#footnote-1))**

### If *yes* to Question 6: Proceed to [Question 7](#_Does_the_project_1).

### If *no* to Question 6: Skip ahead to [Question 8](#_Is_the_activity_2).

## Does the project involve protected populations or collection of sensitive information? **(See note[[2]](#footnote-2))**

### If *yes* to Question 7: **IRB Review is required.**

### If *no* to Question 7: IRB Review is ***not*** required.

## Is the activity a program evaluation/quality assurance/organizational study?

### If *yes* to Question 8: [Proceed to Question 9](#_Is_the_data).

### If *no* to Question 8: **IRB Review *is* required.**

## Is the data intended to be generalized to other programs, services, organizations?

### If *yes* to Question 9: **IRB Review *is* required.**

### If *no* to Question 9: IRB Review is ***not*** required.

# Please contact the UMaine IRB at umric@maine.edu with any questions about your planned study!

1. Any student conducting research solely to satisfy a course requirement or degree requirement who intends to present their study findings at the **UMaine Student Symposium *must*** obtain IRB approval before any recruitment or data collection begins.  
    [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Protected populations** include minors, prisoners, pregnant women, fetuses and products of labor/delivery, and individuals with diminished capacity to consent or physical disabilities. **Sensitive information** includes any information that could be damaging to an individual (civilly, criminally, or in reputation/employability/financial standing, etc.) if released. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)