

**Cancer Comprehensive Center UPR  
Human Research Participant Protection Program**

**Policy 2: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTS FOR EXEMPTION  
FROM IRB REVIEW**

**1. Subject**

Some types of research activities meet CCC-UPR's definition of human participant research but do not require review and oversight by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). These types of research projects are known as "exempt" because they are exempt from the requirements of IRB review and approval. This policy describes the criteria under which an exemption may be granted and the procedures for applying for an exemption.

**2. Policy statements**

- A PI **may not** self-determine that his or her research protocol qualifies for exemption from IRB review.
- A PI requesting an exemption must submit a Request for Exemption from IRB Review. The IRB staff will determine if the research project meets the eligibility requirements for exemption from IRB review.
- If the research activities are not eligible for an exemption, the research project must receive either expedited or full committee review by the IRB.
- Research activities may not commence until the PI receives a written notice of exemption from IRB.
- Changes to any of the research activities or materials must be reviewed by the IRB staff to verify that the project continues to be eligible for exemption from IRB review.
- Researchers are responsible for ensuring full and continuing compliance with all CCC-UPR and IRB policies in the conduct of their research.

**3. Procedures**

- 3.1. After determining that his/her research constitutes research with human participants (*see* Policy 1: Determining Whether a Research Activity Needs IRB Review and Approval), a PI should submit a Request for Exemption letter to the IRB office (e-mail to [irb@cccupr.org](mailto:irb@cccupr.org)), along with copies of study related materials (e.g., recruitment materials, consent forms, surveys, questionnaires, interview scripts/outlines, etc.). Instructions on how to complete and submit the form and additional guidance are available on the IRB website at <http://www.irb@cccupr.org>.
- 3.2. Upon review of the application materials, if the IRB staff determines that the research project qualifies for an exemption (see criteria in Section 4 of this document), they will issue a formal written notice to the PI via email and letter.  
The review process for Requests for Exemption takes typically 5-10 business days.
- 3.3. IRB will archive a copy of the exemption notice and all submission documents until five years after the termination of the research activity. The PI should maintain these documents for five years after the research activity has concluded and all publications and/or reports have been accepted.
- 3.4. Protocols that are recognized as exempt from IRB review do not require continuing review (i.e., annual renewal of exemption is not necessary). However, for each change that is proposed or may need to be

made while conducting the research, the PI should submit an amendment request so IRB staff can evaluate whether the change affects the research project's eligibility for exemption from IRB review. The PI must receive a written notice confirming that the project remains exempt before implementing the change in the research activities.

#### 4. Criteria for granting exemption from IRB review

##### 4.1. Research Activities that cannot be granted exemption from IRB review (other exclusions are specified in the criteria 1-8 below)

- Research involving prisoners.
- Research involving the active collection of biological specimens or conducting biomedical/psychophysiological procedures.

##### 4.2. Research Activities that may be granted Exemption from IRB review: If the proposed research activities are such that the **ONLY** involvement of human participants will be in one or more of the following categories, they may qualify for an exemption:

#### **EXEMPT REVIEW CATEGORIES:**

*Research that includes audio, video, digital, and image recordings of subjects does not qualify for any of the exempt review categories.*

##### **Criteria #1: Education .104(d)(1)**

Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

- a) In educational settings with normal educational practices?
- b) Research on Regular/Special educational instructional strategies?

##### **Criteria #2: Tests, Surveys, Interviews, Observation .104(d)(2)**

Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

- (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;
- (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or
- (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §\_\_.111(a)(7).

Involves educational tests(s), surveys, interviews or observation of public behavior?

Data recorded to prevent identification of subjects?

Prevention for risk of disclosure of subjects' responses outside the research (placing subjects at risk of criminal, civil liability, or damage financial standing, employability, or reputation)?

**NO EXEMPTION AVAILABLE IF:** children are involved in survey or interview procedures; children are involved in observation of public behavior and the observers participate in the activities observed.

### **Criteria #3: Benign Behavioral Interventions –New**

3. (i) Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met:

A. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

B. Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or

C. The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by .111(a)(7).

3(ii) For the purpose of this provision, benign behavioral interventions are brief in duration, harmless, painless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on the subjects, and the investigator has no reason to think the subjects will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing. Provided all such criteria are met, examples of such benign behavioral interventions would include having the subjects play an online game, having them solve puzzles under various noise conditions, or having them decide how to allocate a nominal amount of received cash between themselves and someone else.

3(iii) If the research involves deceiving the subjects regarding the nature or purposes of the research, this exemption is not applicable unless the subject authorizes the deception through a prospective agreement to participate in research in circumstances in which the subject is informed that he or she will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research.

### **Criteria #4: Secondary research .104(d)(4)**

Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available;

(ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;

(iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164....

[HIPAA]

(iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for non-research activities, if the research generates identifiable private information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with [various federal privacy laws.]

Important note here: The information or biospecimens don't have to be existing at the time of the exemption determination, they can be collected into the future. The data can be collected prospectively and still be used for exempt research under Category 4 in the Final Rule.

Involves collection/study of existing archival data, specimens, or diagnostic specimens (publicly available or recorded to protect identity of subjects).

<p><b>Criteria #5: Federal Research and Demonstration Project.104(d)(5)</b></p> <p>Research and demonstration projects that are conducted or supported by a Federal department or agency, and that are designed to study, evaluate, improve, or otherwise examine public benefit or service programs.</p> <p>New requirement: Each agency must maintain a public list of these projects, to be published prior to conducting the research. Research and/or demonstration project, subject to approval of department/agency head, designed to study, evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public benefit or service programs</li> <li>procedures to obtain benefits/services</li> <li>changes/alternatives to programs/procedures</li> <li>changes in methods/levels of payment for benefits/services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criteria #6: Unchanged Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies. .104(d)(6)</b></p> <p>Involves taste and food quality evaluation; consumer acceptance studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) wholesome foods without additives are consumed</li> <li>b) food consumed is at or below safe level; agricultural chemical, environmental contaminant at or below safe levels (established by FDA, EPA or USDA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criteria #7 New: Storage and maintenance for secondary research .104(d)(7)</b></p> <p>Storage or maintenance for secondary research for which broad consent is required: Storage or maintenance of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for potential secondary research use if an IRB conducts a limited IRB review and makes the determinations required by § 46.111(a)(8). This category is for the storage of identifiable biospecimens and identifiable private information, prior to secondary analysis.</p> <p>Note: The storage and maintenance may be exempt if the IRB conducts a limited IRB review to determine that there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and maintain the confidentiality of data, and if broad consent is obtained.</p>
<p><b>Criteria #8 New: Use of information or biospecimens in secondary research .104(d)(8)</b></p> <p>Secondary research for which broad consent is required: Research involving the use of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for secondary research use, if the following criteria are met: – Broad consent was obtained, – Consent documented or has waiver of documentation, – IRB conducts a limited review under 46.111(a)(7), and – The investigator does not include returning individual research results to subjects as part of the study plan.</p>

#### Comments:

1. Final Rule allows research with children to be exempt for categories 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.
2. For exempt categories 7 & 8, **limited IRB review** is always required.
3. It's also important to remember that exempt categories 7 & 8 are only available for use when **broad consent** will be (or has been) obtained.

## 5. Regulations and Guidance Applicable to Exemption from IRB Review for Research with Human Participants

### 5.1. Federal Regulations

CCC-UPR has filed a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services guaranteeing its

application of the federal policy for the protection of human participants in 45 CFR 46 when engaging in human participant research funded by the Public Health Service (PHS). According to institutional policy, the same standards apply to all human participant research, regardless of funding support.

- Eligibility of certain research protocols to be exempt from IRB review: 45 CFR 46.101(b) <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/45-cfr-46/index.html>
- OHRP has developed Decision Charts for guidance on eligibility for exemption from regulatory requirements for IRB review: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/decision-charts/index.html#c2>