Does Your Project Require an Application to the WCU IRB office?
IRB Decision Tree #1

Will a member of your research team observe, interact with, or intervene with individuals to gather information that will be used for research? Examples:
- Surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews
- Games, experiments in physical or in electronic environments
- Physical or biomedical procedures – imaging, scanning, or blood collection
- Diet, nutrition studies, taste test
- Studies examining effectiveness of educational tools or curricula
- Use of instruments or devices, including phones, to collect data or monitor behavior
- Passive observation of public behavior (in physical or online environments)
- Studies examining individuals’ responses to manipulation of their physical or online environment
- Another activity that involves observation of, or interaction with, individuals to gather information for research

- NO  Research will only use existing data

Refer to IRB Decision Tree #2 on Secondary Data

Is the information being collected about individuals?

- NO  The focus is only on products, processes, policies, organizations e.g. interviewing transportation officials about parking policies

Not human subjects research. No IRB review is required.

Is the sole intent of this project to meet course requirements with no intention to use or share the results beyond the classroom?

- NO  Project is research with human subjects. An application to the IRB and written notice of approval are required before the study can begin.

Questions? Contact irb@wcu.edu
Does Your Research Involving Existing Data, Documents, or Biological Specimens Require Review by the WCU IRB Office?

**Decision Tree #2**

1. Are the data/specimens about or from individual who are or may be still living?
   - **NO**
     - **Not human subjects research. No IRB review is required.**
   - **YES**
     - Materials are from cadavers or data is about deceased individuals.
       - **YES**
         - Is all the information about specimens/data available in the public domain or are the specimens obtained from a supplier of public use data?
           - **NO**
             - **Project is research with human subjects. An application to the IRB and written notice of approval are required before the study can begin. Questions? Contact irb@wcu.edu**
           - **YES**
             - Were the specimens/data collected specifically for the research through an interaction or intervention with living individuals?
               - **NO**
                 - Is the provider a collaborator in the recipient’s research?
                   - **NO**
                     - **Can the provider link the specimens/data, directly or indirectly, to identifiable living individuals?**
                       - **YES**
                         - **Can the recipient link the specimens/data to identifiable living individuals either directly or through a code?**
                           - **NO**
                             - **Project is research with human subjects. An application to the IRB and written notice of approval are required before the study can begin. Questions? Contact irb@wcu.edu**
                           - **YES**
                             - **YES**

This tool has been adapted with permission from Cornell University.

**Reference:**