

SLC-REB

Screening Tool for Researchers: A Brief Survey to Help You Understand Whether Your Proposed Research Project Requires REB Review

Is your project a Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) study and does it require REB Review?

The following questions will help you determine whether your project can be considered either QA/QI that is exempt from REB review or whether REB review is required. All research projects conducted under the auspices of SLC that involve human participants require REB review. If answering these questions you find that you are still uncertain as to whether your project ought to have SLC-REB review, please contact the [Research Services Office](#) or call 613-544-5400 ext. 1621.

Is your project QA/QI?

<p>1. Is your project intended to develop a better practice within your organization or setting?</p> <p>This question clarifies if the main goal of your project is to produce findings that can be used to improve practice, program or service delivery within your organization or setting. In other words, the most important reason you are doing this study is to contribute in a timely manner to improving how some aspect of care or service is delivered in a particular location.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
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<p>2. Is the current project part of a continuous process of gathering or monitoring data within an organization?</p> <p>This question helps to assess the fit of your project with the primary focus of quality improvement. The focus of QI is on time-limited projects that target service, program, or process improvements. QI projects are often initiated in response to issues and trends identified through ongoing quality assurance monitoring of care and service provision.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>3. Would this project still be done at your site even if the results might not be applicable anywhere else?</p> <p>This question helps assess if your project fits with the usual focus of quality improvement and evaluation on site-specific programs, services or processes. By contrast, in research the specific site does not matter except in more general terms such as urban or rural.</p> <p>Please note, in the due course of time you may choose to share (through presentation at conferences or publication in an Evaluation or QI journal) the process and results of your project with others for adaptation to new contexts. However, sharing project results for potential benefit elsewhere is not the main reason you are doing the project.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>4. Does the language used in the project description refer specifically to features of a particular program, organization, or locale, rather than using more general terminology such as rural vs. urban populations?</p> <p>The language used in your project can help determine if it is quality improvement/ evaluation or research. Quality improvement and</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>

<p>evaluation projects use terminology that specifically name a particular program or process, or a particular organization, setting, or service. By contrast, research projects often describe location by more general characteristics such as rural versus urban, which reflects their intent to be "generalizable" across settings.</p>	
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If you answered “yes” to the above questions, then there is good reason to believe that your project falls under the category of QA/QI projects and does not require REB review. However, to be certain that your project doesn’t require REB review, please answer the following questions.

Does your project require SLC-REB Review?

<p>5. Is the project primarily designed to test a specific hypothesis or answer a specific quantitative or qualitative question?</p> <p>This question helps assess whether your project fits in one of the two broad research approaches: quantitative and qualitative. A key component in this item is assessing whether or not there is a clearly stated research question.</p> <p>Qualitative research projects are guided by specifically formulated research questions. These types of research projects apply explicit qualitative theory which underlie and direct the methodology used in the design of the specific study, including the analysis plan.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
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<p>Quantitative research projects are directed by specific hypotheses or research questions that guide the selection of the scientific design of the specific study, including the analysis methods. In general, qualitative research develops theory through rigor in interpretation of observations.</p> <p>In general, quantitative research tests theory through the measurement of key variables.</p>	
<p>6. Is the project designed to support generalizations that go beyond the particular population the sample is being drawn from?</p> <p>This question assesses whether the design of your project fits with research that is specifically designed to produce results that can be assumed to be true (generalized) beyond the individual participants in the specific study.</p> <p>In other words, with the clear intent of following internationally accepted scientific standards for "generalizability", your project design includes precise sample size calculations and other techniques related to how it is going to be conducted. Research designed for "generalizability" implies some future application of findings to the population of focus, although sometimes subjects do directly benefit from participation in a research project.</p> <p>Note: Producing and sharing learnings from a project for potential adaptation to other contexts is not the same thing as producing results that are considered scientifically generalizable because of specific features included in the design of the study such as precise power calculations.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>

<p>7. Does the project impose any additional burdens on participants beyond what would be normally expected or normally experienced during the course of care, program participation or role expectations?</p> <p>This question helps determine your project's fit with research in that participation is voluntary and that those participating will be involved in activities which are in addition to routine care, program provision, or other routine actions or duties on the part of the participant.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>8. Is the primary purpose of the project to produce the kind of results that could be published in a research journal?</p> <p>This question clarifies whether the main goal of your project is to obtain results that CAN be published in a research type of journal. In other words, the most important reason you are doing this study is to contribute to the general body of knowledge on the topic through achieving scientific publication.</p> <p>By contrast, the main goal in quality improvement and evaluation is to provide information for decisions about a specific program or aspect of service delivery.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>9. Is there a likelihood that a breach of confidentiality could place participants at risk of legal liability, denial of insurance or other damage to financial standing, employability, or reputation?</p> <p>There is widespread agreement about the rights of individuals to privacy and the corresponding duty of investigators to treat private information in a respectful and confidential manner. This item assesses whether the current project is higher risk in terms of the</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>

<p>probability that serious consequences could occur should there be any breach of confidentiality of the private information being collected. Informed consent ought to be sought from all participants if this risk applies.</p> <p>The best protection of the confidentiality of personal information and records is through anonymity. When that is not possible project leaders should indicate the extent of the confidentiality that can be promised to participants. Strategies or countermeasures to mitigate (ease the response should it occur) this risk should be clearly described in the plan and to the participants. There should also be a plan to limit access to and provide secure storage of the private information for a specified period of time and with a specific plan for its destruction at the end of that timeframe. These should be clearly outlined on the consent form and during the consent process.</p>	
<p>10. Is there a power relationship between the investigator and participants (e.g., manager/employee, therapist/client, service provider/recipient, teacher/student)?</p> <p>If undue influence is present in the context in which the project will be carried out by virtue of the trust and dependency that exists in a power relationship, participants may feel restricted in how free they are to choose to participate in or withdraw from the project. Relationships such as manager/ employee, health provider/patient, service provider/ recipient and teacher/student are particularly fraught with power imbalances. The potential for any exertion of undue influence by an existing power relationship has to be carefully considered in the design of the project. Consideration should be given to any potential perceptions of the participants that may affect</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>

<p>their responses. The design ought to include ways to reduce any form of coercion over participants.</p> <p>Informed consent should be considered for all participants if this risk applies.</p> <p>Include measures in the project plan to protect private information to ensure participants are shielded from potential retribution and feel free to share their ideas or information. Suggestions in the case of the manager/employee situation: Have someone else as project lead and data collector. Anonymize all data to the respective manager of the employees. Clearly outline in the informed consent process all risks and the plan to counter them.</p>	
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<p>11. Are personally identifiable data, documents, records or specimens originally collected solely for purposes not related to the current study?</p> <p>Personally identifiable information that was originally collected for the purpose of providing care or service is now proposed to be used for another purpose (i.e., a secondary use). In other words, the information was originally collected for person-centric purposes (i.e., just for the care or service of one person) and now the proposal is to use it for a purpose other than care or service of that specific person.</p> <p>Projects that propose to use data originally collected for other purposes (e.g. chart reviews, academic transcripts) need to include safeguards to protect against any breach of the privacy and confidentiality of these individuals. As well, there may be consent issues with respect to the individuals from whom the data was</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
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originally collected and to be respectful, informed consent ought to be part of the project plan.	
<p>12. Are the risks or burdens for participants beyond what would be experienced in routine care or beyond what a reasonable person might expect in day-to-day interactions?</p> <p>Examples of potential risks for participants include physical, psychological, spiritual, economic, and social harm or distress as a result of an element of a QI or evaluation project. Examples of burdens over and above routine care or expectations in day to day interactions may include feelings of intrusiveness, discomfort, or embarrassment arising from an element of a QI or evaluation project.</p>	Yes/No

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions from 5-12, then your project requires SLC-REB review. If you have any doubt about whether your project is QA/QI or “research” requiring SLC-REB review, then it is prudent to contact the [Research Services Office](#). If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We are here to help you.

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources usable by all people, whatever their abilities or disabilities. This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.

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