

The Research Journey: Introduction to Inquiry

Research is a process of systematic inquiry that entails collection of data; documentation of critical information; and analysis and interpretation of that data/information, in accordance with suitable methodologies set by specific professional fields and academic disciplines.

Research is conducted to...

Evaluate the validity of a hypothesis or an interpretive framework.

To assemble a body of substantive knowledge and findings for sharing them in appropriate manners.

To help generate questions for further inquiries.

If you would like further examples of specific ways different schools at Hampshire think about research, see:

School Definitions of Research [Â»](#)

What is "research" that needs to be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Hampshire before proceeding?

Research should be reviewed by the IRB only when human subjects are involved, and the term research should be considered under a more narrow definition. Specifically, when the researcher is conducting research as outlined above AND has direct interaction with participants or data linked to personal identifiers, it should always fall under the purview of the IRB. Even if you have not directly collected the data yourself, as the researcher, your research may fall under the purview of the IRB.

In reviewing such research, the IRB is concerned with the methodology of data collection in the "field" (e.g. collection, experimentation, interview, participant observation, etc.) and the use of the data. The broader validity of the hypotheses or research questions, and the quality of inferences that may result (unless, of course, the research methodologies severely compromise the data collection and data usage directly), is not something they will be evaluating.

What if I am using information that is already available?

If you are doing research that is limited to secondary analysis of data, records, or specimens that are either publicly available, de-identified, or otherwise impossible to be linked to personal identities, you may still need IRB approval to do your project. Sometimes a data use agreement between the researcher and the data custodian may still be required to verify that the researcher will not have access to identifying codes. This "de-linking" of data from personal identifiers allows the IRB to make this determination. Regardless, you should submit an IRB proposal so the IRB can determine whether your project needs IRB review, and if so, the type of review required.

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For specifics of what research should be reviewed by the IRB and the category of review required, see the flow chart and examples provided.

Reference

[Mixed Methods in Health Sciences Research: A Practical Primer \(Mixed Methods Research Series\)](#)

[Collaborative Qualitative Research](#)