

# SoTL and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Like any other research project, SoTL involves ethical decisions. The CFE has offered this graphic to help guide you in thinking through the IRB process.

Can I serve as a **Principal Investigator** on a SoTL Project?

- It is important for you to be aware of the university's policy on who can serve as a Principal Investigator and who cannot. You must be an [EHRA](#) employee or permanent faculty member to serve as the Principal Investigator. Contact the IRB office [irb\\_questions@unc.edu](mailto:irb_questions@unc.edu) if you have further questions.

What if I am asking students in my course to **do something beyond normal educational practices**?

- Activities that are a part of "normal educational practices" are considered part of the teaching and learning process.
- Activities that require students to do something *beyond* "normal educational practices" such as complete a questionnaire, focus group, or survey that seek to broaden your knowledge of teaching and learning and **contribute to a broader body of knowledge about teaching and learning** should lead to an [IRB](#) submission.

What if I want to **share the information** gathered from my course at a conference, in a presentation, or publication?

- Sharing information on what you did in your course such as developing an online platform and its process **may not** need IRB approval. An NHSR (non-Human Subjects Research) determination may be submitted to the OHRE (Office of Human Research Ethics).
- Sharing information on the **effects** of what you did in your course on student outcomes, learning, and behavior or sharing information that is intended to contribute to generalizable knowledge **will need** IRB.

*There are some things to consider **BEFORE** you think about data collection and **AFTER** you have data.*

Before

After

- Did you do something exciting in your course and have student data? Unfortunately, you were not sure and did not complete an IRB application. You must still complete an IRB application if you plan to share data at a conference, in a presentation, or publication. *It is possible your study will be exempt or require an expedited review.* Contact the IRB office [irb\\_questions@unc.edu](mailto:irb_questions@unc.edu).

You must complete [Human Research Ethics Training](#) prior to submitting an IRB application.

[Research](#) on teaching and learning involves a systematic approach to create a generalizable body of knowledge. Students are considered [human subjects](#) and their participation must be voluntary. You cannot make their participation in a project or study a condition of completing a course. Learn more [here!](#)

**GET READY TO [SUBMIT THE IRB APPLICATION](#)**

If you have any specific questions about the IRB process at UNC-Chapel Hill, please contact an IRB Analysts through the IRB Office of Human Research Ethics at 919-966-3113 or send direct questions to [irb\\_questions@unc.edu](mailto:irb_questions@unc.edu).

If you need assistance or would like a consultation in completing the IRB application, contact Darin Knapp Henderson at [darin\\_knapp@med.unc.edu](mailto:darin_knapp@med.unc.edu).