Do I need INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) approval for my Honors thesis research?

1. **Complete CITI Training, including the Human Subjects Research module!**
2. **Discuss IRB approval with your thesis advisor**

- If you are planning to conduct research that involves human subjects, **you must seek IRB approval prior to data collection.**
  - Examples of research with human subjects:
    - Conducting interviews
    - Administering surveys
    - Analyzing identifiable, private information (e.g. medical records)
    - Observing behavior (e.g. of students, children, teachers)
- If you are not sure whether your research project requires IRB approval, contact [irb@usm.edu](mailto:irb@usm.edu) for clarification.

**How do I apply for IRB approval?**

- Go to [https://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board](https://www.usm.edu/research/institutional-review-board) for more information.
  - See “IRB Resources” for links to more detailed reports and policies, the forms you must submit to apply for IRB approval, useful tips and FAQs.
  - Email the completed, signed forms to your thesis adviser. Your advisor will review and sign your forms, which then must be reviewed and approved by the department chair/unit director, who will submit the application documents to [irb@usm.edu](mailto:irb@usm.edu).

**How long does it usually take the IRB to review and approve my application?**

- Usually, the IRB will need approximately a month to review your application once it has been submitted by the chair; if changes are needed and/or additional information is requested, the review process will take longer.
  - It is imperative that you initiate the application process as soon as you have developed your research protocol and have obtained approval from your advisor.
  - You should ensure that you provide the IRB with all requested information and address all concerns. It pays to prepare a thorough application!
  - Beginning to collect data BEFORE IRB approval has been granted is a violation of federal law and may prevent approval of your thesis.

**Useful links:**

- [http://www.irb.pitt.edu/student-research#irb5](http://www.irb.pitt.edu/student-research#irb5)
- [http://funding.yale.edu/applying/fellowships-institutional-review-board](http://funding.yale.edu/applying/fellowships-institutional-review-board)