



# Human Research Ethics Training Tips

## Revised Common Rule Definitions

### §11.102 Definitions for purposes of this policy.

**(a) Certification** means the official notification by the institution to the supporting Federal department or agency component, in accordance with the requirements of this policy, that a research project or activity involving human subjects has been reviewed and approved by an IRB in accordance with an approved assurance.

**(b) Clinical trial** means a research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (which may include placebo or other control) to evaluate the effects of the interventions on biomedical or behavioral health related outcomes.

**(c) Department or agency head** means the head of any Federal department or agency, for example, the Secretary of HHS, and any other officer or employee of any Federal department or agency to whom the authority provided by these regulations to the department or agency head has been delegated.

**(d) Federal department or agency**

refers to a federal department or agency (the department or agency itself rather than its bureaus, offices or divisions) that takes appropriate administrative action to make this policy applicable to the research involving human subjects it conducts, supports, or otherwise regulates (*e.g.*, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the Central Intelligence Agency).

**(e)**

**(1) Human subject** means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research:

*(i) Obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or*

*(ii) Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens.*

**(2) Intervention** includes both physical procedures by which information or biospecimens are gathered (*e.g.*, venipuncture) and manipulations of the subject or the subject's environment that are performed for research purposes.

**(3) Interaction** includes communication or interpersonal contact between investigator and subject.

**(4) Private information** includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information that has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and that the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (*e.g.*, a medical record).

**(5) Identifiable private information** is private information for which the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information.

**(6) An identifiable biospecimen** is a biospecimen for which the identity of the subject is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the biospecimen.

**(7) Federal departments or agencies implementing this policy shall:**

(i) Upon consultation with appropriate experts (including experts in data matching and re-identification), reexamine the meaning of “identifiable private information,” as defined in paragraph (e) (5) of this section, and “identifiable biospecimen,” as defined in paragraph (e) (6) of this section. This reexamination shall take place within 1 year and regularly thereafter (at least every 4 years). This process will be conducted by collaboration among the Federal departments and agencies implementing this policy. If appropriate and permitted by law, such Federal departments and agencies may alter the interpretation of these terms, including through the use of guidance.

(ii) Upon consultation with appropriate experts, assess whether there are analytic technologies or techniques that should be considered by investigators to generate “identifiable private information,” as defined in paragraph (e) (5) of this section, or an “identifiable biospecimen,” as defined in paragraph (e) (6) of this section. This assessment shall take place within 1 year and regularly thereafter (at least every 4 years). This process will be conducted by collaboration among the Federal departments and agencies implementing this policy. Any such technologies or techniques will be included on a list of technologies or techniques that produce identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens. This list will be published in the **Federal Register** after notice and an opportunity for public comment. The Secretary, HHS, shall maintain the list on a publicly accessible Web site.

**(f) Institution** means any public or private entity, or department or agency (including federal, state, and other agencies).

**(g) IRB** means an institutional review board established in accord with and for the purposes expressed in this policy.

**(h) IRB approval** means the determination of the IRB that the research has been reviewed and may be conducted at an institution within the constraints set forth by the IRB and by other institutional and federal requirements.

**(i) Legally authorized representative** means an individual or judicial or other body authorized under applicable law to consent on behalf of a prospective subject to the subject’s participation in the procedure(s) involved in the research. If there is no applicable law addressing this.

**(j) Minimal risk** means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

**(k) Public health authority** means an agency or authority of the United States, a state, a territory, a political subdivision of a state or territory, an Indian tribe, or a foreign government, or a person or entity acting under a grant agency, including the employees or agents of such public agency or its contractors or persons or entities to whom it has granted authority, that is responsible for public health matters as part of its official mandate.

*(l) Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities that meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program that is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities. For purposes of this part, the following activities are deemed not to be research:*

- (1) Scholarly and journalistic activities (e.g., oral history, journalism, biography, literary criticism, legal research, and historical scholarship), including the collection and use of information, that focus directly on the specific individuals about whom the information is collected.
- (2) Public health surveillance activities, including the collection and testing of information or biospecimens, conducted, supported, requested, ordered, required, or authorized by a public health authority. Such activities are limited to those necessary to allow a public health authority to identify, monitor, assess, or investigate potential public health signals, onsets of disease outbreaks, or conditions of public health importance (including trends, signals, risk factors, patterns in diseases, or increases in injuries from using consumer products). Such activities include those associated with providing timely situational awareness and priority setting during the course of an event or crisis that threatens public health (including natural or man-made disasters).
- (3) Collection and analysis of information, biospecimens, or records by or for a criminal justice agency for activities authorized by law or court order solely for criminal justice or criminal investigative purposes.
- (4) Authorized operational activities (as determined by each agency) in support of intelligence, homeland security, defense, or other national security missions.
- (m) *Written, or in writing*, for purposes of this part, refers to writing on a tangible medium (e.g., paper) or in an electronic format.