

What types of research studies may be considered normal educational practice?

- Test development. Development and pilot testing of new educational assessment tools.
- Experimentation with instructional methods.
- Collecting affective data, specifically attitudes toward learning.
- Assessments related to educational activities. The time commitment required to complete assessments should be described and should not exceed reasonable limits.
- Research with instructional methods or classroom / school activities which may include pre- and post-testing, surveys, interviews, and / or observations. For example, if you are studying a new writing technique and you want to ask the students what they think about the writing technique, this could qualify for exemption.
- Collecting data specific to teacher and / or student current knowledge, beliefs, or attitudes towards learning, or data about how these change over time. These studies may be descriptive in nature and may even be longitudinal. Interviews, observations, and surveys must include questions and subject matter that fall within the scope of the educational activity being studied.
- Obtaining samples of student work or scores may be eligible if FERPA regulations are also met.

What types of research studies may NOT be considered normal educational practice?

There are studies that may take place in an educational setting that the IRB would not consider exemptible because they do not involve *normal educational practice*. The Board can still approve these studies, but they would require applicants go through the traditional expedited or full board review process. Examples of such studies include:

- Interviews, observations, and surveys where the questions and subject matter go beyond the scope of the educational activity being studied.
- Collecting privileged information such as socio-economic status, physical abuse, etc.
- Educational activities involving procedures that are rarely used and are not considered “best practice” in the field.
- Studies that may involve normal educational practice, but pose greater than minimal risk to the students. Such decisions are made by the IRB based on possible risks to the participants in the research. The Board may also determine that a study cannot be classified as normal educational practice based on the proposed methodology for the study.

For additional guidance on whether your research proposal qualifies as “normal educational practice,” please visit [HERE](#) or email the IRB Coordinator, [Matt Ferrari](#).