



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTIONS PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

Oral History/Journalism Projects

The UCSD Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) has determined that many projects involving oral history or journalism methods are not likely to meet the definition of "research" stated in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects at [45 CFR Part 46, Subpart A](#), and would, therefore, be excluded from IRB review with no submission to the IRB necessary.

These regulations define "research" as "a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge."

The UCSD HRPP Standard Operating Policies and Procedures define generalizable knowledge as "Activities designed (with intent) to collect information about some individuals to draw general conclusions about other individuals that are predictive of future events and that can be widely applied as expressed in theories, principles, and statements and that enhance scientific or academic understanding."

Historians and journalists typically use collected information to explain past or current events but not to create theories, principles, or statements of relationships that are predictive of future events or that can be widely applied. Such activities would not be considered "generalizable knowledge."

Where, however, projects at UCSD are, in fact, designed to develop or contribute to "generalizable knowledge," such projects must be submitted to the HRPP. Upon submission, such projects may be granted exemption from IRB review, handled through the expedited review process, or reviewed by the full IRB, as appropriate.

Oral history projects conducted by, or under the supervision of, UCSD faculty, staff or students should be conducted in accordance with the guidelines established by the [Oral History Association for the ethical and professional practice of oral history](#).

For questions as to whether a project meets the criteria for exclusion from IRB review, please contact the Director of the Human Research Protections Program at 858-657-5100.