





iii. *What if I'm unclear as to whether my intended information collection is Research or Institutional?*

Sometimes, the primary intent of a planned project is not clear. University affiliated project leads should consult their REB to help determine the project's primary intent, and to obtain a letter exempting them from the research ethics review requirement as appropriate. The REBs provide a guidance table that summarizes key distinctions between QA/QI and research ([CHREB FAQs](#); [CFREB FAQs](#)).

Within project descriptions, language that references a specific University program or learner population and conveys an evaluative intent to improve practice could be perceived as an activity undertaken, at least in part, by the Institution and therefore be considered subject to FOIP. If the intent of the project is truly for research, and not for an institutional operational policy or purpose, the use of general language when phrasing research questions helps to minimize ambiguity.

Examples:

- What is the experience of university students...? (generic language)
- What is the experience of students in the University of Calgary's MDSC course 123...? (institution-specific language, implied intent to improve a specific University course or program)

If you are unsure whether



improvement and do not need to obtain approval of the University's Information Steward. Any proposed use and disclosure beyond the individual instructor requires consultation with the FOIP Office and should follow the [Disclosing Personal Information of Students Guideline](#).