

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT REVIEW—Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is a quality improvement project?** A quality improvement project is a systematic, data-driven activity designed to address a specific problem in a specific setting (usually a clinical or educational setting) using evidence based interventions. While clinical research projects are designed to discover new information and to create generalizable knowledge, the scope of a quality improvement project is more narrow; QI projects are designed to implement and measure improvement on a specific performance gap in a single setting, with a goal of providing an immediate benefit to the patients, students, or employees in that setting.
- 2. Why has TTUHSC implemented a QI Review process?** ? The need for QI review was first identified by a group of School of Nursing faculty conducting QI projects in TTUHSC and non-TTUHSC clinics. When trying to publish the results of these projects, the faculty were often asked for documentation of institutional approval. Though QI projects often use clinical research methodology, they are not considered “research” projects, so IRB review/approval is not appropriate. Until now, there has been no other institutional process in place to provide necessary review and approval. We learned that the issue exists beyond the School of Nursing—faculty in the SOP and SOM had experienced similar problems. The QI review process will assist many faculty in conducting and disseminating results of their quality improvement activities.
- 3. I do basic science research—how does this process affect me?** We do not expect that basic science research will be involved in this QI review process, but if you have a specific issue to discuss, please contact us.
- 4. Why don't the TTUHSC IRBs just review these projects?** The IRBs are charged with reviews of research projects. Quality improvement projects are not, by definition, research projects, as they are not “designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge.” When reviewing quality improvement projects, the IRBs are limited to stating that the project is not a research project, but can not provide any assessment of the project on its own terms. The new process will allow for a more knowledgeable review of quality improvement projects, while also permitting the IRBs to focus on reviews of research projects involving human subjects.
- 5. What is the QI Review Process?** A one-page QI Review request, found [here](#) should be submitted to the Director of Quality Improvement review (qirb@ttuhsc.edu). The Director may review and approve straightforward quality improvement projects, generally within 3 business days. More complex projects will be referred to a standing Quality Improvement Review Board (QIRB) made up of TTUHSC faculty and staff from all schools and campuses.
- 6. Everything I do at TTUHSC could be considered “quality improvement.” Where are you going to draw the line for what needs to be reviewed?** Quality Improvement projects requiring review are those that are specifically designed with data collection and analysis plans which, when implemented, will provide a direct benefit to the participant group being studied, and, for which there are plans to disseminate the project results beyond the operational unit.
- 7. Where can I get more information?** You can find the TTUHSC Operating Policy on Quality Improvement Project Review (TTUHSC OP 73.18) [here](#). You can contact Toni Denison, the Director of Quality Improvement Review at QIRB@ttuhsc.edu or reach her by phone at 806-743-4276.