# MSSE Student Records & IRB Protocol Decision Tool

1.  Are you accessing or using student records for your capstone project (e.g., grades, assignments, assessments)? Note: In most cases, this is a Yes.
    *   Yes – Go to Step 2
    *   No – Go to Step 5

2.  Do the student records include personally identifiable information (PII) such as names, student IDs, or other identifiers? Note: In most cases, this is a Yes.
    *   Yes – Go to Step 3
    *   No, records are de-identified – Go to Step 4

3.  Do you have written consent from the students (or guardians, if minors) to use their identifiable records in your capstone project? Note: In most cases, this is a Yes.
    *   Yes – Go to Step 4
    *   No – You cannot access identifiable records without consent. Obtain consent or use de-identified data. You cannot de-identify the data yourself. Note: In most cases, you will need consent.

4.  Are you using these student records for research purposes, such as publishing or presenting your capstone findings beyond the MSSE Program? Note: This includes archival in the MSU Library.
    *   Yes – You need to submit an IRB protocol for review.
    *   No, I am only using the records to improve my own classroom instruction or for my capstone project – IRB review is not needed. However, you must follow FERPA guidelines when handling student records. Note: This is considered educational scholarship, and your paper can still be archived in the MSU Library.

5.  Are you interacting directly with students for your capstone project (e.g., conducting surveys, interviews, focus groups)?
    *   Yes – Go to Step 7
    *   No – IRB review likely not needed if you are not using student records or interacting with students. Skip to Step 8. Note: In most cases, this is a Yes.

6.  Are these interactions (e.g., surveys, interviews) part of your regular classroom instruction with minimal risk to students?
    *   Yes – Go to Step 7
    *   No – You need to submit an IRB protocol for review. Note: In most cases this is a Yes.

7.  Will you be collecting sensitive or personal information from students (e.g., health data, behavioral data) for your capstone project?
    *   Yes – You need to submit an IRB protocol for Review
    *   No – Go to Step 8. Note: In most cases, this is a No.

8.  Do you plan to publish or present any of the information collected from students outside of the classroom or MSSE program (e.g., in journals, conferences)?
    *   Yes – You need to submit an IRB protocol for review.
    *   No – IRB review is likely not needed but ensure voluntary participation and adhere to FERPA guidelines. Note: This would include presentation to school administrators, staff, students, conference presentations, poster sessions, etc.

# Key Considerations for MSSE Students

- FERPA Compliance: Even if an IRB protocol is not required, MSSE Students must always follow the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) when accessing or using student records, especially those with personally identifiable information.

- Capstone Projects: If your capstone involves research or data collection from students and you intend to present or publish beyond the MSSE program, you will need to submit an IRB protocol for review.

- Consent: If you are using identifiable student records or conducting surveys/interviews for research purposes, be sure to obtain informed consent from participants.

- Educational Improvement vs. Research: If you're using data strictly for improving your classroom instruction as part of your capstone (without publication or external presentation), IRB review is not required, but following ethical guidelines is still important.