Patient-oriented research is conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as tissues, specimens and cognitive phenomena) for which an investigator (or colleague) directly interacts with human subjects. Excluded from this definition are in vitro studies that utilize human tissues that cannot be linked to a living individual, tissue banking, and studies that do not require patient consent (e.g., retrospective chart reviews). Patient-oriented research includes studies of mechanisms of human disease, studies of therapies or interventions for disease clinical trials, and studies to develop new technology related to disease.

Nonpatient-oriented research will usually receive PRC exemption after review by the PRC Chair or Vice Chair.