

University of Scranton Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Guidelines for Studies Involving Human Research Participants
(Revised 10/01/21)

We understand that with the re-opening of the University campus, faculty and staff researchers are looking to commence or resume studies involving human subject participants. Any faculty, staff, or student researcher with an IRB-approved protocol can conduct studies that require direct contact with research participants, *in accordance with the Royals Back Together Plan*.

Researchers who are awaiting approval of pending IRB protocols that require inviting participants to campus and/or require student researchers to be in close proximity to participants can expect approval of those protocols.

Current and Pending IRB Protocols

- Faculty, staff, and student researchers may engage in IRB approved research on campus. All COVID-19 related guidelines released by the University must be followed in accordance with protocols published by University Health and Safety. (see <https://www.scranton.edu/royals-safe-together/safe-healthy-campus.shtml>). Currently, all participants must be masked at all times while in any University building.
- IRB Protocols must include all precautions that will be taken to ensure the safety of participants and researchers. These precautions must meet or exceed University guidelines. *Researchers must include specific details of the plan for COVID-19 precautions that address the unique circumstances of the study, including disinfection of surfaces, physical distancing, and masking.*
- Principal Investigators (PIs) must include all COVID-19 related information detailed in the protocol must be included on consent forms provided to research participants.
- Participants may be invited to campus, in accordance with the [Royals Back Together Plan: Public Access](#). When possible, researchers should plan to meet during evening and weekend hours when the chance of interaction with others outside of the study is significantly reduced.
- PIs may meet with participants at off-campus locations, following all CDC, state, local, and site-specific COVID-19 policies.
- If the study will take place in another county/state, the regulations of the site will determine start date and any necessary precautions specific to the site.

Student Researchers and Research Subjects

- Student researchers may conduct research studies that require them to interact with University faculty, staff and/or students, as well as off-campus participants. Once again, all individuals involved in the study must be masked and a physical distance of 3 feet should be maintained at all times, with the exception below.
- Student researchers can only perform studies including measurements, vitals, sampling, etc. that require physical contact if the participants show proof of vaccination. Vaccination records of participants should not be recorded, but the PI must maintain a checklist showing that each participant has provided proof of his/her vaccination status.
- Students may be utilized as research participants, but **may not** be required to visit any laboratory or undergo other off-campus testing.

Questions related to this new policy or to a specific IRB protocol may be directed to Dr. Tabbi Miller-Scandle, IRB Administrator, at tabbi.miller-scandle@scranton.edu, or to the IRB Chair, Dr. Bryan Burnham, at bryan.burnham@scranton.edu.