

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) Working Remotely

Effective Wednesday, March 17, 2020, **the University campus closed until further notice. The University continues to operate remotely**, and staff from the ORSP will continue to be available via email during normal business hours (8:30am – 4:30pm). The IRB continues to carry out reviews of exempt and expedited research protocols, and to conduct virtually convened IRB meetings for protocols that require full board review. We are confident the processes we have put in place will limit any major interruptions to our normal day-to-day operations.

COVID-19 and Human Subject Research Studies

Beginning Wednesday, March 24, the University of Scranton's Institutional Review Board (IRB) requires the following:

All human subject research studies that involve direct participant contact (face to face) must be paused until further notice in recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic. This directive is being made to decrease exposure for our faculty, staff, and student researchers, as well as for research participants. All other aspects of the research that do not involve direct human subject contact may be continued.

It is anticipated that certain types of human subject research will be allowed to continue:

- Studies that include no physical or direct subject contact. These are studies done via mail, phone, online, etc. or could be those involving things like review of medical records/ archival data/ public data sets or studies that are in the status of data analysis.
- Studies currently involving in-person interactions with participants that are amended to include only interactions that take place remotely, either by phone or online, etc. If a research study cannot be carried out remotely, the study must be suspended until further notice.

Please note: It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator/Researcher to notify the IRB/DRB of any changes to currently active protocols, and to request approval of necessary revisions to meet the above conditions. All meetings taking place between members of the research team, particularly student researchers and research mentors, must take place remotely.

Advisors to students conducting honors and other scholarly/research projects are responsible for ensuring that students are following this policy in its entirety.

New protocols requiring IRB approval that include direct contact with human participants will continue to be reviewed virtually by the IRB/DRB, *but final approval of such protocols will be withheld until this new COVID-19 policy has been lifted.* The IRB will continue to monitor guidance from the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP)/Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and changes to University-wide operations.

We recognize that this request may impact your research on multiple levels. Changes to an IRB-approved protocol that are being proposed to address this new COVID-19 pandemic policy require submission via IRBnet for approval by the IRB. Questions regarding the amendment and subsequent review of open protocols should be directed to Dr. Tabbi Miller-Scandle, IRB Administrator, via email to tabbi.miller-scandle@scranton.edu. You may also leave a message at (570) 941-5824.