Although some of CCSU’s physical campus remains closed due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, the IRB remains fully available to field research-related inquiries and review research involving human participants. Exempt and expedited research will be reviewed as usual through our standard on-line review process. Research protocols that require full committee review will be reviewed according to our published meeting schedule. These meetings will be conducted virtually until further notice.

Please note that all in-person human subjects research interactions at CCSU should remain paused until at least January 2021.

Until the community risk of COVID-19 transmission is further reduced, the IRB strongly encourages all researchers to utilize research methods such as online surveys or secondary data analyses which do not involve face-to-face human contact. Research studies which include interventions that do not increase the risk of COVID-19 infection will continue to be reviewed and approved through our normal processes.

Recognizing that a pause to all in-person research may cause undue hardship to some researchers, the IRB will implement an application and review process by which researchers who cannot conduct their research remotely and/or may face a catastrophic loss of external funding or other hardship may apply for a waiver to the ongoing pause for in-person research. A COVID-19 Research Pause Waiver Application will need to be submitted to the IRB prior to restarting or beginning all in-person research interactions. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the IRB. Further guidance regarding risk levels, required risk mitigation strategies and other elements that will be necessary components of this waiver application process will be posted on the IRB website prior to the commencement of the upcoming fall semester.

For ongoing studies, investigators should revise their planned research procedures to eliminate personal contacts wherever possible, for example by eliminating the necessity of in-person visits and/or replacing in-person interviews with telephone or Internet contacts. Whether and when this may be practicable will vary depending on the protocol and the subjects with whom you are working. The IRB is available to assist researchers with the development of a research plan designed to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

All changes to ongoing studies must be submitted to the IRB via a Protocol Modification Submission Form. If a protocol modification cannot be submitted prior to any changes or within 5 business days of implementing emergency modifications “to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the human subjects” in accordance with the federal regulations outlined in 21 CFR 56.108(a)(4), please contact the IRB at irb@ccsu.edu to discuss your specific concerns.

As a reminder, the IRB does not need to be notified if research has been halted. Protocol modifications are only required for changes to ongoing research.

Please contact us at irb@ccsu.edu if you have any questions about this updated guidance.