

UW-Green Bay Institutional Review Board

Institutional Research During the COVID-19 Crisis

The IRB of UW-Green Bay dedicates itself to facilitating faculty, staff and student research within the safe parameters established by the COVID-19 shelter-in-place statewide policies. The following guidelines provide information about how campus researchers may continue their research programs.

1. Research procedures that do not involve any direct, in-person contact with participants or co-researchers may continue. This includes data analysis, online surveys, telephone interviews.
2. Collaborative research involving an external institution may continue, as long as the researchers and participants adhere to the exclusion of direct, in-person contact with anyone involved in the study.
3. The Institutional Review Board will continue to perform reviews.
4. Changes to protocols because of the at-home requirements may be submitted via the Protocol Modification form. Indicate that the change is related to COVID-19. Modifications of protocols that do not compromise the safety of participants or researchers will be approved.
5. In proposing changes, researchers must consider whether or not they present any new risk to participants, such as compromising anonymity, or requesting that something be done that places participants in situations that increases exposure to COVID-19.
6. Changes require a revised informed consent that may be electronically signed by the research participants. A request for "waiver of consent" may be made to the IRB. See the website for further information.
7. Researchers need to consider how research location (and any restrictions on the sites) may be impacted by COVID-19.
8. New studies are still being reviewed. Studies that involve in-person contact will either need to be conducted remotely or postponed until the COVID-19 restrictions at UW-Green Bay are lifted.*
* As restrictions are relaxed it is the expectation that the researcher must clearly address in their protocol current best practices as advised by the CDC and the university being taken to protect researchers and participants. These measures must be noted in the protocol and the informed consent for participants to sign.
9. The IRB will continue to accept and review Modifications and Extension requests. Research that is postponed due to COVID-19 will still have to file an extension request prior to the protocol expiration date.
10. IRB meetings and reviews are proceeding as scheduled.
11. The following changes do not need to be reported to the IRB. Researchers should document their changes for their research records.

- a. Pausing recruitment or testing.
 - b. Adding links to reputable websites for information about COVID-19.
 - c. Postponing or cancelling in-person visits.
 - d. Communications to participants in changes in research procedures due to the COVID-19 crisis.
 - e. Messages to participants do not require IRB approval. In addition, messages about changes to study visits, like administering questionnaires over the phone or video conferencing, do not require IRB approval. Make a note to your study files to document these communications.
12. Research funded by federal agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF) must also adhere to their policies regarding conducting research during the COVID-19 crisis. Please consult the Office of Grants and Research for further guidance.

The above guidelines will remain in place until resumption of fully functioning university activities as dictated by University policy. The IRB will continue to monitor research impacted by COVID-19 and will work with constituents to ensure that research is not negatively impacted.