

COVID 19 Human Subjects Research Restrictions at UTPB
Updated October 12, 2020

To keep faculty, staff, and students safe and help slow the spread of COVID 19, UT Permian Basin and IRB requests that researchers refrain from research activities involving face-to-face interaction. Exceptions include (a) studies where there is potential for direct benefit to the participant, and (b) instances where canceling or postponing research activities would increase the risk to the participant's safety or well-being. Direct benefits are immediate positive outcomes (e.g., relief of pain, increased mobility, decreased psychological or emotional distress, or direct payments).

For continuing research, previously approved by the IRB

- New enrollment of participants into existing human subject research with face-to-face interactions must stop immediately. If you would like to continue with face-to-face procedures, please follow the guidance for new IRB applications.
- Research activities that do not involve face-to-face interaction may continue. For those who would like to modify their procedures to limit contact (e.g., use MS Teams or phone calls in place of in-person interviews, use online surveys in place of paper surveys) please file an update form with the IRB chair. This can be found on our web page under “update an existing research project” (<https://www.utpb.edu/university-offices/research-and-grants/human-subjects-in-research-irb>).
- If your study must be paused, please notify sponsors and funding agencies based on guidance provided by your award notice. Contact Lisa Cline (cline_1@utpb.edu) in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs for help with this.

For new IRB applications

- New IRB applications for human subjects research will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Research that requires human interaction will be examined with regard to risk and advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Department of State Health Services. The following practices are considered to increase risk.
 - Interactions in which the researcher and participant must be less than 6 feet apart
 - Hands-on interventions
 - Interactions involving prolonged contact with a participant (more than 15 minutes)
 - Indoor compared to outdoor interaction
 - Interactions in which persons are unable to wear masks
- New studies involving face-to-face interaction are unlikely to be approved unless they provide direct benefit (immediate positive outcomes) to the participant, or unless the researcher has submitted a risk minimization plan. Face-to-facer studies will be reviewed by the full IRB Committee to allow for a risk-benefit assessment.

If you have questions please contact Dr. Jamie Hughes, IRB Chair and Professor of Psychology, via email at hughes_j@utpb.edu