Considerations When Carrying Out Remote Research

When carrying out remote research, all the [usual ethical considerations](#) still apply. Some ethical and best practice issues may be intensified and challenged by remote engagement.

General advice:
- Speak to, and keep in touch with, your academic adviser before and during your project—seek feedback early and often.
- Where possible, be proactive in making contacts and establishing trusting relationships in the area where research is conducted and participants are enrolled.
- Before you begin your research, take time to ensure that all parties involved understand each other's goals and expectations.
- Engage with the IRB process and complete all necessary IRB applications but know that IRB approval is only part of the journey – you are ultimately responsible for the ethical conduct of research.
- Anticipate obstacles and ethical dilemmas you might face (see IRB Q&A, for example)
- Reflect on how the process of your research meets the four ethical principles of: humility, introspection, solidarity, and social justice (Pinto et al. – reference below).
- Use the questions here to guide your thinking as you plan your research.

Consider:
- How has the pandemic impacted the people and structures involved with the research/project I intend to carry out?
- How can I accommodate and responsibly address particular challenges to my research/project tasks?

Focus on myself:

- Do I have the resources I need to carry out my research? If not, what might I need to meet the requirements of the position?
- Do I have a support group of people I can turn to for advice about a range of issues I may encounter?
- What might the cultural considerations be for carrying out research with these participants? How might any cultural differences or language barriers be heightened by the online environment? Do I know of any resources to address this?
- Do I have an understanding of the political, historical and social context of my research without having been to that location? Who could I talk to about this or what resources could I access?
- Do I have a strong relationship with local partners and reliable communication channels?
- Are there any factors in my personal situation or circumstances which may impact my ability to carry out this research?
- What is the time difference between where I am and where I will be carrying out my remote research? Is this workable and sustainable for the entire duration?

Focus on the local researchers:

- Have the research priorities of the researchers I intend to work with shifted?
- Are some elements restricted due to funding cuts/health and safety measures/travel restrictions?
- Is the research team facing communication difficulties due to the inability to work in person?
- What other obstacles might the researchers be facing currently?
- Have I discussed these concerns with the researchers I intend to work with and discussed reasonable workarounds or responses for my specific research tasks?

Focus on the study participants:

- What difficulties might people in the study participant pool be facing at the moment?
    - Illness among family members?
    - Loss of income?
    - Increased stress and uncertainty?
    - Limited access to phone/internet connections?
    - Limited access to local resources (medical personnel. Equipment etc.)?
- Have I discussed with my research team, mentors, and other contacts how to accommodate or appropriately respond to certain stressors participants may face?

Collaborate and discuss with your faculty adviser:

- How can you structure your research to be sensitive to the issues the study participant pool may be facing?

Talk with your faculty adviser and host country preceptor (if the study is done in an international setting) about:

- The longer-term goals for your research right now – which parts could be postponed, which parts could be adapted, and which parts could be carried out remotely now?
- How could you recruit participants?
- What would informed consent look like?
- Will you be incentivizing participation in your research?
- How will you stay in touch throughout your research to check in and hold yourself accountable to the ethical standards you have laid out for your project?
- What are some of the ethical issues that may arise during, or as a result of, your research project and how might you approach them?
- What are the resources you could use to inform your approach?
- Is there a pre-departure workshop that you could participate in?

CIPE Resources
- https://funding.yale.edu/applying/planning-research-projects
- https://funding.yale.edu/applying/planning-public-service-projects

Further Resources
Click the links below to access via Articles+ from Yale Library. Accessing the full-text may require entering your Net ID and password when prompted. For more information on off-campus access, visit: https://guides.library.yale.edu/OffCampusAccess.

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