03/13/2020

ELON UNIVERSITY IRB
Guidelines for Minimizing the Risk of Transmission of Infectious Disease during COVID-19 Pandemic

Valuing Safety in the Human Subjects Research Environment

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for creating the safest research environment possible for researchers and participants. While research activities may continue as long as the campus is open, investigators are encouraged to review procedures and processes they are using and take any action necessary to minimize the possibility of transmission of infectious diseases. When preparing the research team for interaction with human subjects,

PIs should remind the team that their safety and the safety of participants is valued above all other outcomes, including research progress.

PIs who mentor students should communicate to students that disruptions in data collection or data processing that are caused by actions taken in response to COVID-19 or any other infectious disease will not negatively affect the student's grade or status as a research student.

PI's should already be employing techniques and procedures that minimize risks for participants and researchers. The following additional strategies **should be considered** at this time to help ensure participant and researcher safety:

1. When possible, researchers should move from in-person data collection processes to online or other procedures that do not require face-to-face interaction. Any such protocol changes should be documented by submitting an amendment via IRB mentor.
2. When non-face-to-face procedures are not feasible, researchers should contact participants by phone and screen them for symptoms associated with COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html) and other infectious diseases before they arrive at the research area.
3. Protocols enrolling populations that are elevated risk for COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html) should delay in-person data collection and any other procedures that may place participants at heightened risk of COVID-19 exposure for the time being.
4. Acquire and learn how to utilize resources that can assist in screening people for active infection including a forehead thermometer and public health resources that describe symptoms of infectious diseases like COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html).
5. Screen all members of the research team, including faculty and students, for symptoms of COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html) and other infectious disease before interaction with research participants or other researchers.
6. Excuse any participant if they present with symptoms of COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html) or other infectious diseases
7. Prior to, and after interacting with, a research participant, the research environment should be cleaned according to the procedures described by the CDC (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html). Researchers should also apply the CDC's recommendations for hand washing and avoiding close contact when possible.

Elon students who have medical questions or concerns should consult Student Health Services at 336-278-7230. For questions about the university response to COVID-19, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 336-278-7200.

Elon employees who have medical questions or concerns should consult Faculty Staff Wellness Clinic at 336-278-5569 on Monday-Friday between 7:30 am-4:00 pm. Outside of these hours, employees should contact their community's emergency medical clinic or contact the NC COVID-19 call center at 866-462-3821.

Community members with medical concerns should consult their community's medical clinical or contact the NC COVID-19 call center at 866-462-3821.