

The below email was sent to all Ashford Faculty on March 18, 2020



Hello Ashford Faculty,

Due to the evolving situation with COVID-19 infections, the recent national restrictions placed on face-to-face meetings, and the Institutional Review Boards' role in human subject protection, we are temporarily banning all human-to-human data collection methods until all federal COVID-19 interaction restrictions have been lifted. This includes but is not limited to, in-person surveys, interviews, and group discussions. If you are assisting a student with their research project or are reviewing students' pending research projects, please keep these new restrictions in mind and guide them appropriately.

If you are planning to submit a research project to the IRB, please know that if face-to-face interactions are listed, your project will not be approved until the CDC lifts national interaction restrictions. When this occurs is unknown. If you wish to proceed with your research in the near term, you will need to utilize alternative methods for data collection (phone, video, internet-based surveys, etc.).

For those students and faculty currently engaged in research, your work is also impacted. While you do have IRB approval, the Department of Health and Human Services, which regulates Institutional Review Boards, is also the same organization that is working with the CDC to establish self-isolation protocols and restrictions on face-to-face interactions.

In your IRB Approval Letter, it states, "...Ashford University is committed to ensuring that all human participant research, regardless of funding source, follows the requirements set forth in Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations (<http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>)" and "...the IRB has the responsibility to protect the rights and safety of research participants in accordance with Federal Law and National Institutes of Health and Human Services."

Due to this, your data collection methods will also need to be altered or delayed. Should you choose to alter your data collection method so your research can continue, please submit a Report of Change form to the Ashford IRB address listed below.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, you can contact the Ashford Institutional Review Board at IRB@Ashford.edu

Sincerely,
Dr. Charles Holmes

**CHARLES P. HOLMES, PH.D., M.S.P.H. / CHAIR OF THE MPH PROGRAM;
CHAIR OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**
Ashford University / College of Arts and Science

