

April 6,2020

In current of evolving environment, SBS IRB assures the social and behavioral sciences research community that our primary concern is the safety of our research participants and our primary goal is to support the continued safety and research productivity for our researchers.

SBS IRB has taken the following decisions when reviewing the research proposals:

1. Initial studies:

- IRB will communicate with researchers to modify their recruitment, consenting and data collection strategies to minimize in-person interactions. All investigators will be assisted to obtain approval to conduct research remotely (e.g., by phone, Zoom, Webex, Skype, limesurvey or others that are IRB approved). Remote interactions with participants are required for all studies, irrespective if they are conducted in Lebanon or other countries.
- The IRB will temporarily halt processing studies if the research cannot be performed remotely and is not immediately necessary for participants' health, safety, or welfare.

2. Ongoing studies will be renewed on a case by case basis:

- If research procedures can be modified to minimize in person interactions, an amendment is required. No changes can be made to research procedures until approved by the IRB.
- Principal investigators must put all studies that do not involve an immediate health benefit to the participants on voluntary administrative hold until the IRB informs them otherwise. (Renewal letters will be released but research cannot resume after COVID 19 crisis).

Students' projects

Our student project/research facilitator, Ms. Bekhaazi has been contacting students via WebEx requesting modifications to enable them to collect data virtually when feasible. If a study cannot be conducted remotely, students are required to coordinate with their thesis/project advisors who should contact the IRB for a final decision whether their students' research can continue. Please submit all correspondence about student projects to le08@aub.edu.lb and nb85@aub.edu.lb

Until further notice, faculty advisors are encouraged to deter their students from conducting studies that cannot be completed online.