

## COMMON FEASIBILITY CONCERNS IN DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Capella University is committed to ensuring that researchers undertake research that is not only scientifically sound but is also feasible to undertake. Sometimes, even a well designed study that has the potential to add beneficial information to the literature can present challenges in execution. These challenges can add a significant amount of time to a researcher's degree completion or result in studies that cannot be completed. These types of challenges not only lengthen a researcher's time in the program but can also be costly for the researcher. Therefore, Capella University and the IRB are committed to identifying potential challenges and working with researchers to plan for these challenges or modify study designs to ensure feasibility.

The purpose of this document is to illustrate common feasibility challenges experienced by researchers. While some do present significant ethical concerns to potential participants, others present logistical challenges. This document is not exhaustive and cannot cover every possible research challenge, but highlights those challenges common within Capella research studies. Any dissertation or doctoral capstone learner whose project may involve these potential barriers should consult with the IRB early in the design and planning process.

Information on scheduling IRB consultations

- Learners may schedule time to consult with the IRB using the [Consult Calendar](#). Researchers who schedule an appointment should also email a copy of their current Research Plan or a summary of their proposed dissertation research or capstone project to the [IRB Office](#)
- A summary of the discussion will be provided via email following the consultation.
- Learners who participate in a face-to-face residency may also have an opportunity to consult onsite if referred to the IRB by their faculty.

The following are common issues relating to feasibility:

**Complex Research Site Permission:** It may be complicated to obtain site permission when research requires multiple research sites or involves multiple IRBs. This is common when research is conducted with federal agencies, hospitals, and schools and universities. In such cases, researchers may experience difficulties or delays in obtaining research site permission(s). Additionally, researchers intending to recruit from and/or collect data from large corporations, particularly Fortune 500 companies, often have problems obtaining permission. Contact the IRB Office ([irb@capella.edu](mailto:irb@capella.edu)) if you are concerned that it may be difficult to obtain site permission.

**Vulnerable Populations and sensitive topics:** Research involving a highly vulnerable population on a sensitive topic may pose [greater than minimal risk](#) to participants and should be assessed by the IRB as soon as possible. For more information see the IRB's resources on [sensitive topics](#) and/or [vulnerable populations](#). Research involving highly vulnerable populations may not be appropriate for a dissertation or capstone project due to the researcher's lack of previous experience and limited expertise.

**Military or VA Research:** Research that involves military or VA personnel or records must be assessed as soon as possible. Each branch of the military has a distinct permission process and often multiple layers of permission are required. In some cases requests are denied.

**Prisoner, Parolee, Probationer Research:** Research that involves prisoner, parolee, or probationers and/or their records should be assessed as soon as possible. Many prison facilities and department of corrections have complex research review processes and requirements.

**Data Usage Agreements and Contracts:** Research that requires a data usage agreement or contract between the learner/institution and the research site must be assessed as soon as possible. There are rare instances in which Capella University and the site cannot agree on terms to the agreement. Documents requiring a signature from a mentor or a Capella University official must be reviewed by Capella University's legal team and the IRB prior to signing. This can be a time-consuming process, so it is important to initiate the process early. Send a copy of the agreement to the [IRB Office](#) for IRB review. The IRB will co-ordinate the legal review of the document.

Important information about restricted datasets: Some datasets cannot be approved due to stringent data security requirements such as the ICSPR and Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) restricted data. Additional information is available on [iGuide](#).

**Capella University as a research site:** Studies involving Capella records/data and/or include learners, faculty, or staff in their research must be reviewed by the Doctoral Success Center (DSC) and receive institutional approval before moving forward. Depending on the nature of the study activities these are approved in limited circumstances. See [the site permission guidance on iGuide](#) for further information. Researchers must submit the research plan to the [DSC](#) for preliminary review. The DSC will co-ordinate the necessary internal university review