Are you planning to conduct research abroad this summer?

When conducting research in foreign countries, investigators are expected to provide the same level of subject protections as they would when performing research at the University. Investigators should also comply with local laws and take into account the cultural context of the country in which the research is taking place. When designing protocols, investigators should consider the following questions:

- Is special permission needed to conduct research in the country?
- Is there a local ethics committee (EIC) review that is required?
- Are you familiar with the local culture, customs, and laws?
- Do you have a local collaborator who is familiar with the local culture and targeted subject population?
- What is the local culture or custom for obtaining consent?
- Are there privacy/confidentiality concerns unique to the country’s culture or customs?
- How will you communicate with the IRB?
- If you are a student, how will you communicate with your faculty sponsor?

Investigators must address these details in the submitted IRB proposal document. To better anticipate these considerations, it is recommended that investigators consult with an individual who understands the culture or area of the planned research setting. Be sure to talk to an individual who has experience with the groups you plan to study, if available.

For more information about International Research, visit: [https://research.utexas.edu/ors/human-subjects/special-topics/#international-research](https://research.utexas.edu/ors/human-subjects/special-topics/#international-research)

When is a Subject Signature Not Required?

The following are typical examples in which an Investigator may obtain informed consent from subject(s) without requiring a written signature:

- Research in contexts and cultures in which signing documents is considered inappropriate
- Research in populations with low literacy
- Research on sensitive topics or incriminating behavior
- Interviews that are not conducted face-to-face, e.g., Skype, email, etc.
- Anonymous surveys
- Surveys distributed online where obtaining a physical signature is impractical