International Research

While we cannot impose our regulations on other cultures, we should not relax our standards for the ethical conduct of human research including a meaningful informed consent process.

All international research studies must adhere to recognized Ethics Codes such as U.S. Regulation Title 45 CFR 46, the Declaration of Helsinki, the Nuremberg Code, or the Belmont Report. Consent and recruitment must be in the language that is understandable to the subjects. Special attention should be given to local law, customs and to cultural and religious norms when proposing international research and in crafting an appropriate informed consent process.

In some instances, it may be appropriate for the IRB to waive some or all requirements for written consent.

Research protocols for which this may be reasonable should include explanations of the local cultural norms or conditions requiring such a waiver e.g., societies where no written language is used, societies where signatures represent the surrender of spirit or soul to the researcher, etc.

Research protocols should include documentation of the approval by a local equivalent of an IRB or Research Ethics Board of the research project before they are submitted to the NYU IRB.

In circumstances where investigators find there is no equivalent board or group, investigators should seek guidance and approval from local experts (either residing in the host country or abroad or from experts having research experience in the host country). For student research, this may be the faculty sponsor. For faculty research, the researcher him or herself, may have the appropriate experience. Community leaders from groups such as local NGOs, Universities, or other non-partisan groups, etc., may also be appropriate. The IRB requires documentation of this "local approval" before it can grant full project approval.

Please complete and attach Appendix B to all IRB applications for International Research Projects.

For internet surveys or interviews via Skype where Subjects reside in a foreign country, and the investigator remains in the U.S., Appendix B is not required. However, privacy and confidentiality issues must be addressed in the protocol application.