Military Permissions Guidance
for Doctoral Learners Conducting Research with the DoD
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INTRODUCTIONS TO MILITARY RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

If a study involves recruiting through a branch of the military, collecting proprietary data, or using military records, permission from the appropriate branch of the military and potentially the Department of Defense (DoD) is required. These processes are complex, sometimes requiring multiple reviews.

It is highly encouraged that learners proposing a study involving military or VA personnel or records consult with the IRB Office as soon as possible to discuss the feasibility of the study.

Limitations of this Guidance Document

The various departments within the DoD consistently re-evaluate their processes and procedures as it research to research within the DoD. While every attempt is made to ensure Capella University doctoral learners have current information about these processes, processes may change without advance notice to the university by the DoD department.

This guide focuses on the military branches and provides information regarding the Veterans Administration (VA). If the department you are intending to conduct research with is not covered in this document, you will need to reach out to leadership in that department for information on their research approval process.

Note that due to study specifics of proposed research additional reviews within the department of the DoD where the research will be conducted may be required than what is listed in this document.

DoD Addendum

Capella University has a signed DoD-Navy FWA Addendum (DoD N-A3338) with an expiration date of May 22, 2018. The addendum is maintained by the Dissertation Support Center Supervisor. Questions regarding the addendum can be sent to irb@capella.edu.

The addendum covers the following DoD components:

- Department of the Army
- Department of the Navy
- Department of the Air Force
- Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness
- National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
- National Security Agency
- Defense Intelligence Agency
- Defense Threat Reduction Agency
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
- United States Joint Forces Command

When is DoD Approval Required?

The appropriate branch review is required when the researcher is using military resources (such as recruiting on bases, accessing emails, having other individual recruit on behalf of the researcher), is accessing existing DoD data, is accessing private DoD resources, or is conducting study actives with military or civilian personnel. Review and approval is required for the creation of a Professional Product within EdD Capstone.

DoD Permissions are not required in the following circumstances:
The researcher is posting flyers on the base (if this is the only recruitment method and note base command written permission is required)

The researcher is placing notices in newsletters (if this is the only recruitment method and note base command written permission is required)

The researcher is not recruiting using any DoD resources, study activities will not take place while personnel is at work or on active duty, and does not use any private DoD records/documents within the research. This applies even if the research focuses on the DoD

Agencies such as a local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or military support services (i.e. ROCKS) do not fall under DoD review because they are not funded or supported by a military branch. If researchers are unsure about whether the organization is funded or supported by a military branch, he/she should contact the appropriate official of the organization.

At any time, if the researcher has claimed that Human Subject Research Office (HRPO) and/or IRB review is not needed from the branch of the military, written correspondence from the branch/office/department noting such must be provided.

The above is provided as a general guidance. There may be specifics of the research that require DoD review and approval. This is based on current practice by the DoD and is subject to change at any time.
REVIEWs REQUIRED AND REVIEW PROCESS BY BRANCH

In this section, researchers will find information on what levels of review are required (such as Surveyor Review, IRB review, or Human Research Protections review) and the process for having those reviews conducted. In all instances, the formal research review (Surveyor review, IRB review, or Human Research Protections review) require that the researcher obtain Capella IRB review and conditional approval before submitting for the military review.

Before any HRPO/IRB review will be conducted by the military branch, the researcher must provide local command permissions. Researchers should be certain to review the information for the branches detailed below carefully in preparing to submit to Capella University’s IRB. Researchers should also note that conducting research with personnel from multiple military branches requires review and approval from all branches affected. Researchers intending to recruit across branches need to contact the IRB early on in the design process to discuss further.

US Air Force (USAF)

Resources:

- Website
- Air Force Organizational structure

The Air Force Human Research Protections Office (AF HRPO) requires an administrative review and approval of all research conducted with military/civilian personnel that uses military resources. In rare instances, the AF HRPO may require AF IRB review. Air Force Survey Office review is also required for all studies utilizing polls, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or any other means of collecting attitude, opinion, preference or intention data, and faculty research surveys. Currently, the Air Force Survey Office does not approve research that is being conducted solely for academia.

Process for obtaining AF HRPO Approval

Learner obtains written permissions, on letterhead, from base command granting permission to conduct the research.

The researcher submits to CU’s IRB (researchers may submit without command approval but IRB approval will not be granted until command approvals are submitted) and receives approval.

Capella University’s IRB will submit the IRB application and all supporting documents to the AF HRPO for their review.

AF HRPO reviews and determines if additional permissions are necessary or if changes are necessary to the proposed study.

- Researcher will make required changes and resubmit to CU’s IRB. CU’s IRB will review and then forward to the AF HRPO for their review.

If the AF HRPO approves the study, Capella University’s IRB grants full approval (for the IRB milestone) and researcher moves forward in the milestone process.

Studies that require approval from the Air Force Survey Office

The Air Force requires approval from the Air Force Survey Office (and the issuance of a Survey Control Number) in addition to AF HRPO approval for any study involving the following:

- Polls
- Questionnaires
• Interviews
• Focus groups
• Or any other means of collecting attitude, opinion, preference or intention data, and faculty research surveys

Researchers are responsible for submitting their study to the Survey Program Office for review and providing that approval to CU’s IRB before the IRB submits to the AF HRPO for review. Currently, the Survey Program Office does not approve research that is being conducted solely for academia. Therefore, learners intending to survey Air Force Personnel need to contact the Survey Program Office to determine feasibility for their study. If a SCN cannot be obtained (or a determination a SCN is not needed for the study), researchers will have to redesign their study as HRPO approval cannot be granted without one.

US Army

Resources:
• U.S. Army Human Research Protections Office
• U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences
• Additional Submission Instructions/Requirements for ARI
• USAMRMC Institutional Review Board (HQ USAMRMC IRB)
• US Army Organizational Structure

Approvals Required:
• Research that is conducted on Army base(s) requires Human Research Protections review.
• If the learner is not affiliated with the military, US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) approval in addition to HRPO review is required for all studies.
• All surveys and interviews that have sample of 10 or more persons as individuals or representatives of agencies that ask about attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and related demographic information and is conducted in two or major commands (consult the US Army organization structure for further information) must be approved by ARI. Examples include: surveys on Army families, Army leadership, alumni, human relations, and G.I. incentives.
• Surveys and interviews that have a small size do not require ARI approval if the researcher is affiliated with the military.
• Surveys and interviews conducted within a single command (ACOM, division, brigade, battalion, and company/detachment) must be approved by the unit commander.
• Examples include: Survey on 173rd Stryker Brigade Team, Clinical Investigations, Single command Climate Surveys, and customer satisfaction surveys.
• Surveys and interviews of military members conducted in two or more DoD Components (services) must be approved by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) (i.e. surveys of DoD Personnel).

Process for obtaining US Army HRPO Approval
• The researcher obtains the appropriate command approvals and submits to Capella University’s IRB
- Upon approval from CU’s IRB, the researcher must submit the CU IRB application and all supporting documents to the Army HRPO (AHRPO) for review. The researcher must include the CU IRB approval letter.

- If ARI review and approval is required, the researcher must submit to ARI or DMDC for review and approval concurrently. Note that the AHRPO will not approve without ARI/DMDC approval.

- Researchers submit all of these materials via email to: usarmy.ncr.hqda-otsg.mbx.otsg-ahrpo@mail.mil

- Researchers do not need to complete Army applications unless directly by the AHRPO.

- Once researcher has obtained AHRPO approval, the researcher attaches the AHRPO approval letter to the IRB Application and resubmits.

- CU’s IRB processes the full approval that allows the learner to obtain IRB milestone completion.

**US Navy/Marines**

Resources

- Website
- Human Research Protections Information
- US Navy Organizational Structure

Research with Navy personnel generally requires an administrative review and approval from the Navy HRPO. In some circumstances, the Navy will require Navy IRB review. Researchers will be notified by the Navy’s HRPO if Navy IRB review is required.

**Process for obtaining Navy HRPO Approval**

Researcher must obtain approval letter from whatever command[s]/unit[s] from which they intend to recruit subjects, use facilities, etc. Note: the commander has the choice to allow or not allow this access – however, the research project cannot be considered by us unless you have it; nor can the research take place. Explanation of this requirement can be found in DoDI 3216.02, Enc. 3, 7e(1).

- The researcher submits to CU’s IRB (researchers may submit without command approval but IRB approval will not be granted until command approvals are submitted) and receives approval

- Capella University’s IRB will submit the IRB application and all supporting documents to the Navy HRPO for their review.

- Navy HRPO reviews and determines if additional permissions are necessary or if changes are necessary to the proposed study.

- Researcher will make required changes and resubmit to CU’s IRB. CU’s IRB will review and then forward to the Navy HRPO for their review.

- If the Navy HRPO approves the study, Capella University’s IRB grants full approval (for the IRB milestone) and researcher moves forward in the milestone process.

**Research with the Marines**

The process for obtaining approval for research with the marines follows the same process as for the Navy (detailed above) but requires additional reviews in some instances, such as research with the SEALs. Research with the SEALS falls under SOCOM and therefore
requires SOCOM review. SOCOM review is lengthy, requires multiple permissions, and isn’t easily obtained. Capella University’s IRB will co-ordinate with the researcher, the Navy HRPO, and SOCOM on these reviews. Note that other departments that fall under SOCOM (beyond the SEALs) also require SOCOM review.

**Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)**

The DoDEA conducts research for the system, analyzes, and reports on student performance on tests such as the TerraNova and Advanced Placement (AP) as related to academic performance, demographics, and participation in selected school classes and programs. The Branch is also responsible for developing and administering internal and external surveys of employees, parents, and students. Research that falls under DoDEA activities requires approval from the DoDEA (includes but not limited to capstone projects and doctoral research that utilizes DoDEA resources or personnel in the research). Researchers are required to contact the DoDEA for information regarding their review process and must initiate that review process with them. Once the researcher has DoDEA approval, they submit the approval to CU’s IRB for review and approval. Researchers may submit to CU’s IRB without DoDEA approval, but cannot obtain CU IRB approval until it is obtained.

**US National Guard – Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness)**

National Guard permissions vary by branch. Depending on the branch involved in the research, obtaining these permissions can be extremely difficult. Some branches require administrative HRPO review in addition to command permission.

Resources

- [National Guard Organizational Structure](#)

**All National Guard Branches**

- Researchers involving National Guard members from a specific state should get endorsement from that particular state’s National Guard command’s adjutant general. It’s important to note that commands are based on groupings (i.e. Minnesota has several commands such as the ’Red Bulls’).

- Researchers utilizing a region (more than one state) will require multiple endorsements from the specific adjutant generals.

**Army National Guard**

- First endorsement from the adjutant general must be obtained from the targeted state(s).

- The application must then be sent to the Chief Surgeon.

- After the Chief Surgeon review, it will be sent on to the Army National Guard’s HRPO for review. The IRB will provide further instructions on this process once CU’s IRB has approved the study.

**Air National Guard**

- First endorsement from the adjutant general must be obtained from the targeted state(s).

- Remaining requirements have yet to be determined. This document will be updated when these requirements are given to CU’s IRB. Researchers in the meantime need to discuss the requirements with the Air National Guard command.
US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)

Resources:
- VA Organizational Structure
- Website

Research involving a VA facility (veterans, staff, and/or records) will require VA IRB approval from that facility.

Some VA facilities have appointed the VA Central IRB to conduct IRB reviews on their behalf. Researchers must contact the VA facility to determine the permission requirements and approval process for that VA facility. Some VA facilities require a signed contract (these contracts must be submitted to the IRB for the university to sign). Once approval is obtained from the VA, the researcher must submit the approval to CU’s IRB.