**Guidelines for Letters of Permission**

A Letter of Permission from an authorized official must be obtained for research that involves the use of site resources (i.e. data source) or engagement in research procedures on site. Letters of Permission are most typically required for sites that would be considered “private” and not open for general public/commercial use. A Letter of Permission can be documented in a hard copy letter or by electronic mail (email).

**A Letter of Permission is typically required when conducting on-site research about a particular institution/office/company that does not have its own IRB. Examples include:**

* Schools
* Medical offices or clinics
* Private companies, or Non-Profits, Non-Government Organizations
* Religious institutions
* Federal, state or local governance institutions or offices

**Examples of sites and procedures for which a Letter of Permission is typically NOT required:**

* Public businesses/meeting centers (i.e. interviews conducted at Starbucks, local park)
* Recruitment procedures that involves posting research flyers in public/common places (e.g., Starbucks, public bulletin board on campus)

**The required elements for a letter of permission (see** [**template**](http://research.uci.edu/forms/docs/irb-appendices/letter-of-permission-template.docx)**)**

* Address to the Lead Researcher and Institution
* Title of research project
* Research procedures or resources that will facilitated by or occur at the site
* Sent from an authorized official (i.e. school principal, site manager, director, owner)
* Written on institutional/departmental letterhead or sent from the institutional email account.

**Additional Information, to be included as appropriate:**

* Other stipulations as required by the site, such as requiring documentation of IRB approval or requesting to review research findings
* Time allocations, if limited
* Any explicit restrictions to agreement/ permission

**It is the responsibility of the researcher to:**

1. Inform the site of the appropriate features of the study so that the site’s authorized official can make an informed decision regarding involvement
2. Inform the site of the need for a letter of permission
3. Obtain the letter of permission prior to beginning any research activities at the site
4. Maintain the permission letter with your study documentation.
5. The IRB reserves the right to require a copy of the letter before IRB approval; or may require a copy of the letter once available, at the time of continuing review, or as part of a routine quality improvement review.