

**UTHealth School of Nursing
Center for Nursing Research
Guidelines for Teleform Services**

The Center for Nursing Research (CNR) offers a service whereby researchers can have their data collection forms converted to Teleform. This software enables the researcher to collect data on paper forms that can be scanned electronically into databases (such as SPSS) for management and statistical analysis. Scanning of the completed forms can also be provided by CNR staff. A fee is charged by the CNR for all Teleform services.

To ensure there is adequate time to complete the creation of Teleforms for a study, the researcher should contact the CNR well in advance of the start of data collection. Initial contact should be made with the Administrative Director of the CNR to ensure that financial arrangements are made. The researcher should then meet with the appropriate CNR staff, including research assistants and statisticians, to ensure that the content of the forms is known to those that will be working with the study data. Below is the initial information that is requested from researchers when they are seeking Teleform services:

- 1) Data collection forms in Word or pdf format
- 2) Numeric codes for categorical items (such as gender or race)
- 3) Response scoring for items that are measured on an ordinal scale (instrument items)
- 4) Format for numeric items such as age or weight (number of places after the decimal, etc.)

The process for converting a data collection form to Teleform is basically the same for all projects. After the CNR staff have met with the researcher, an electronic draft of the form is created in Teleform. This draft is sent to the researcher as a pdf file for review and approval. After final approval from the researcher, the form is activated in Teleform and can be used for data collection. Single page forms can be printed from pdf files using any printer, but multi-page forms will need to be printed from the Teleform computer in the CNR.

There are numerous issues that can arise when working with Teleform, so it is important that the researcher and the CNR staff communicate frequently during development, data collection, and scanning of the forms. Below are some of the main issues to be aware of:

- 1.) Changes to a Teleform that include moving response fields will require reactivation, or a new form to be created. Data should only be collected on copies of the latest version of a form.
- 2.) Data collection should only be made on Teleforms that have been printed, as photocopies of Teleforms do not scan reliably.
- 3.) Researchers should inform their respondents of the proper procedure for completing the forms, including where and how to mark response items. It is best if the data collector review the completed forms with the respondent to make sure all questions have been answered and that all responses are legible.