

Community Engagement Studios Information and Policies

The Community Engagement Studio (CE Studio) is a one-time meeting for researchers interested in getting feedback and guidance about their research from patients, providers, or others in the community. Community stakeholders serve on expert panels to provide reactions to various aspects of a proposed or on-going research project, which may include the study design, intervention, communication materials, participant recruitment strategies, disseminating research results, and/or applying research findings to practice. CE Studios are facilitated by a neutral third party to balance power dynamics and create an environment where community experts feel empowered to share their opinions and ideas.

The Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research's Community Engaged Research Core developed the Community Engagement Studios (CE Studios) to help researchers work directly with patients and other community stakeholders in a way that is culturally sensitive and observes community priorities, values, and needs. The Vanderbilt team has trained community engagement navigators across the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) consortium to conduct CE Studios at their home institutions, including navigators at UC Irvine.

The CE Studio provides a framework for stakeholders (community experts) to give immediate feedback to researchers on specific areas of concern before a research project is implemented, or to assist a struggling project. In a CE Studio, members of the researcher's population of interest (i.e., patients, caregivers, providers, community organizations, etc.) serve in a consultative role, and thus are considered community experts. Community input can increase the quality and relevance of research, improve recruitment and retention for clinical trials, and inform community engagement sections for grant proposals, but enhancing public participation is one of the central challenges facing clinical research activities today.

The CE Studio can be a valuable experience for researchers at any stage in the research process. Faculty, post-docs, fellows, and graduate students who are interested in receiving feedback from their population of interest on the relevance and feasibility of their research ideas have reported positive impacts on their projects and proposals. The CE Studio provides a structured forum to gain valuable patient or community insight and has the potential to transform the way community and academic researchers work together.

We try to limit the amount of effort needed from the PI to have a studio. On average the PI's time commitment is ~5 hours/studio.

Process

1. Request CE Studio: <https://ci-redcap.hs.uci.edu/surveys/?s=PEH9XLL8F4>
2. ICTS staff will reach out to schedule a meeting with the PI and study team
3. PI to complete presentation PowerPoint following the provided template. This presentation will be reviewed by the ICTS staff to offer any suggestions for making it more understandable for a community audience, and often to suggest the addition of graphics and images in lieu of wordy explanations.
4. Study team works with ICTS staff to create a discussion guide, which the facilitator will use during the CE Studio discussion
5. ICTS staff works on setting up a location (if not virtual), identifying a facilitator, and recruiting experts to be part of the studio
6. After the completion of the studio, ICTS staff create a final report to be shared with the PI and study team (~2-3 weeks post studio) laying out key points that were discussed and providing takeaways from the studio.

Regulations for the CE Studios

1. We offer one CE Studio per project (possibility of two studios if an additional one is needed in another language).
2. Since CE Studios are not considered research (IRB exempt), the information collected during the studio is not to be used for research purposes, but rather to inform an existing or potential research project. If you would like to get IRB approval and use focus groups for your project, these meetings would not fit under the purview of the CE Studio model and would need to be organized and managed by your own team. The ICTS team can serve in a consultative role to help get the focus groups underway, but cannot organize and conduct these meetings.

3. The minimum turn-around time to schedule a CE Studio is three (3) weeks, with more time needed depending on the population of experts, location, or other variables.
4. Recruitment for each studio is done by ICTS staff, however the PI is welcome and encouraged to provide us with a list of names for us to contact.
5. A minimum of 8 experts are required to schedule a studio so that at least 5 participants are available for the discussion when that time arrives.
6. Please contact us to request a cost estimate specific to your project. On average the studios run ~\$5,000/studio, this includes payments for experts, facilitator, and hours spent by ICTS staff.