

## A ZONE APPROACH TO RESTARTING IN-PERSON HUMAN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Research involving human participants was suspended December 20, 2020 in response to the provincial stay-at-home order, and this remains in effect. To prepare to restart research activities, this document outlines information for the research community on what in-person, human participant research can be authorized in each “zone”<sup>1</sup>, subject to the appropriate risk-mitigation strategies.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with the principles of “Ramping up Research,” it is expected that all research that can be conducted remotely will continue in this format. Irrespective of zones, research involving populations considered to be vulnerable (including older adults and Indigenous peoples) and/or research involving the collection of human samples (including tissue, breath, blood and/or other bodily fluids) is not permitted at this time.

### Researchers are advised:

- Campus Access approval does not constitute approval to proceed with in-person research, nor does a previous ethics approval. Additional institutional approval/permissions must also be obtained prior to the commencement of any research activity, and in particular those that are to be undertaken on campus. Please see the attached [“How to restart in person research”](#) for relevant procedures.
- Regardless of Zone, general health, and safety precautions around COVID-19, including but not limited to 2-metre physical distancing and mask or face coverings are required at all times indoors and outdoors, if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Please consult Better Together for the most up to date information.
- You are expected to create the conditions to reduce or cease activities on short notice, in case COVID-19 conditions worsen.
- Shifts between zones may require health and safety plans to be reevaluated and approved, prior to the commencement of any research activities.

	<b>GREY ZONE (Lockdown)</b>	<b>RED ZONE (Control)</b>	<b>ORANGE ZONE (Restrict)</b>	<b>YELLOW ZONE (Protect)</b>	<b>GREEN ZONE (Prevent)</b>
<b>General Description of Research That Can Be Authorized Subject to Risk</b>	No in-person human participant research.	Restricted in-person research.	Limited in-person Research	Some in-person research with approved Health and Safety Plans	Most in-person human research can be undertaken with approved Health and

<sup>1</sup> “Zone” refers to the Zones of Public Health Measures as defined/outlined in the Province of Ontario’s “COVID-19 Response Framework” at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-response-framework-keeping-ontario-safe-and-open>

<sup>2</sup> These guidelines are created with the safety of students, staff, faculty and other members of the community as the number one priority and are guided by Toronto Public Health and Ontario’s COVID 19 Response framework.

<p><b>Mitigation Strategies</b></p>	<p>All ongoing (previously approved) in-person research must pause/stop.</p> <p>Off-campus research requiring community participants must pause/stop.</p>	<p>No in person research permitted on campus or off-campus, except in extremely limited circumstances:</p> <p>If deemed to be essential<sup>3</sup></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>The research team can <b>always</b> maintain distancing and appropriate masking/PPE use, with adequate ventilation.**</p> <p>Priority will be given to student degree progression and/or COVID-19 related research.</p> <p>Requests for exemption from restrictions on no in-person research will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and research must be approved by both</p>	<p>In-person research only permitted if it is deemed essential* and where distance and appropriate masking/PPE is maintained <i>most</i> of the time.</p> <p>Requests for exemption from restrictions on limited in-person research will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by both VPRI and the relevant Dean.</p>	<p>(prioritizing student degree progression and COVID related research) and appropriate ethics clearance.</p>	<p>Safety plans and ethics clearance.</p>
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<sup>3</sup> Essential research examples include (but are not limited to)

- The completion of the studies is critical to the time to completion for their graduate students;
- If the graduate students remain well beyond the time to completion researchers will not be able to accept new graduate students
- The lack of productive research will impair the researchers ability to publish, apply for grants, to be promoted

		VPRI and the relevant Dean.			
<b>Safe Research Requirements</b>	Research activities limited to preparation and training will be restricted to members within the lab group only.	<p>Surgical Masks or N95 masks must be worn at all times by research personnel.</p> <p>Appropriate additional PPE<sup>4</sup> must be used as outlined in the health and safety plan/risk mitigation requirements.</p>	<p>Masks must always be worn by researchers and participants.</p> <p>Appropriate additional PPE must be used for researchers involving periods of brief contact (less than 15 minutes cumulative close contact, within 2 meters)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>No other increased risks (e.g. heavy breathing during exercise; gas inhalation.)</p> <p>Exemptions to requirements must be approved by both VPRI and the relevant Dean.</p>	<p>Surgical masks must always be worn by research personnel.</p> <p>Participants must wear (at a minimum) cloth masks that meet public health requirements</p> <p>If the participant arrives and does not meet this requirement, researchers to consider providing proper masks for participants to participate.</p> <p>Additional appropriate PPE required for ALL in-person human research, where distancing of &gt;2 metres not possible.</p>	<p>Surgical masks must always be worn by research personnel.</p> <p>Participants must wear, at a minimum, cloth masks that meet public health requirements.</p> <p>If the participant arrives and does not meet this requirement, researchers to consider providing proper masks for participant to participate.</p> <p>Additional appropriate PPE <i>may</i> be required for ALL in-person human research where distancing of &gt;2 metres is not possible.</p>

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<sup>4</sup> \*\*\* PPE: Will include, but is not limited to, medical grade masks (N95 respirators where appropriate): eye protection and/or face shield; gown, gloves as per approved Health and Safety Plan.

Participant Restrictions	No in-person research permitted on or off-campus	<p><b>If restricted research is permitted, participant pool limited to York community members only.</b></p> <p><b>This means that</b> participants are restricted to include only those who are already part of the on-campus community such as staff, students and faculty AND associated with the approved lab/research team.</p>	<p><b>Participant pool limited to York community members only. This means that</b></p> <p>Participants are restricted to include only those who are already part of the on-campus community, such as staff, students and faculty. Efforts will be made to recruit participants from the campus community, outside of the immediate study team, where at all possible. Expansion to other groups will not extend beyond those already on campus, unless with expressed College/Department approval.</p>	<p><b>Participant pool extended to York and non-York members</b></p> <p>While participant recruitment may involve members from the community at large, they are however restricted to zones in Ontario, equal to or below that of the City of Toronto.</p>	<p><b>Participant pool includes York and non-York members</b></p> <p>While participant recruitment may involve members from the community at large, they are however restricted to zones in Ontario, equal to or below that of the City of Toronto.</p>
<b>Human Research: Description of research activities</b>	<p>Research involving existing data sets that can be accessed off-campus. (e.g online or telephone data collection.)</p> <p>In-person research with human participants is suspended.</p>	<p>In-person research involving interaction, observation, or minimal intervention with human participants can be authorized, subject to appropriate risk mitigation strategies.</p> <p>Approval based on case-by-case basis;</p>	<p>In-person research involving interaction, observation, or moderate intervention with human participants can be authorized, subject to appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Some higher intervention activities may be possible</p>	<p>In-person research involving high intervention with human participants can be authorized, subject to appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Some higher intervention activities may be possible depending upon a broader</p>	<p>In-person research involving human participants, including studies where aerosol generation or contact with respiratory droplets is anticipated may be authorized, subject to appropriate risk mitigation strategies.</p>

		priority given to COVID related research and or student degree progression.	depending upon a broader assessment of other activities occurring at the same time.	assessment of other activities occurring at the same time.	
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### **Field Research**

Field research involving human participants may have additional restrictions, based on local/regional public health guidelines. Researchers who want to pursue field research will have their proposals reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, researchers must submit a health and safety plan for review and approval. Please contact the Office of Research Ethics for further assistance at: [ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca) or [acollins@yorku.ca](mailto:acollins@yorku.ca).

**NOTE: Graduate students conducting fieldwork involving in-person contact with human participants must first complete the Risk Assessment process and receive approval to proceed. Please contact [Graduate Studies](#) for information on the risk assessment process.**

**Principal Investigators should be aware that intra-provincial field research which requires movement between zones will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.**

<b>ZONE</b>	<b>Local/Regional Sites within Ontario</b>	<b>Other provinces</b>	<b>Global</b>
<b>GREY ZONE (Lockdown)</b>	Field research involving human participants in local sites is NOT permitted; on-going research is suspended.	As the zone approach is not applicable in other provinces, field research will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis; local site permissions, location-specific regulations, and public health guidance.	Field research in international sites shall be reviewed and approved subject to COVID-19 case statistics, site permissions, location-specific regulations, public health guidance, and Global Affairs travel advisories.
<b>RED ZONE (Control)</b>	Restricted field research in local sites is subject to site permissions, location-specific regulations, and public health guidance.		
<b>ORANGE ZONE (Restrict)</b>	Limited field research in local sites is subject to site permissions, location-specific regulations, and public health guidance.		

<b>YELLOW ZONE (Protect)</b>	Some field research in local sites is subject to site permissions, location-specific regulations, and public health guidance.		
<b>GREEN ZONE (Prevent)</b>	Most field research in local sites is subject to site permissions, location-specific regulations, and public health guidance.		

### **APPENDIX: HOW TO RESTART IN-PERSON RESEARCH**

Campus access approval does not constitute approval to proceed with in-person research nor does a previous ethics approval. The following additional institutional approval/permissions must also be obtained prior to the commencement of any in-person research activity:

#### **A. ON CAMPUS RESEARCH**

To restart in-person human research using campus resources (any on campus space such as a lab, classroom office etc.) the following is required:

1. [Access permit from applicable Associate Dean research](#)
2. Current applicable Ethics Certificate (HPRC/ACC), [Checklist](#)<sup>5</sup> and Health and Safety Plan: Confirmation from [ORE](#)
3. Current approved Biosafety Permit (If applicable): Confirmation from [ORE](#)
4. [Confirmation of Health and Safety Requirements](#)

#### **B. OFF CAMPUS RESEARCH**

To restart in-person human research conducted off campus, the following requirements must be met:

1. Current applicable Ethics Certificate (HPRC/ACC), [Checklist](#)<sup>6</sup> and Health and Safety Plan: Confirmation from [ORE](#)
2. Current approved Biosafety Permit (If applicable): Confirmation from [ORE](#)
3. Applicable site-specific approvals (where relevant)
4. [Confirmation of Health and Safety Requirements](#)

<sup>5</sup> Checklist – refers to the [ADDENDUM “Checklist: In-Person Research with Human Participants”](#)

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

## C. FIELD RESEARCH

To restart in-person human research that is conducted in the field, the following requirements must be met:

1. Current applicable Ethics Certificate/Permit [Checklist](#)<sup>7</sup> and Health and Safety Plan: Confirmation from [ORE](#)
2. Applicable site specific approvals (where relevant) – Specific to any geographic location requirements
3. [Confirmation of Health and Safety Requirements](#)

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid*