

April 23, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

**OFFICE OF THE
VICE-PRESIDENT
RESEARCH &
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It has been over a year since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. I thank you all for your dedication, flexibility and hard work during these uncertain times. In anticipation of the start of the new Fall 2021 term, we are currently planning for the safe return of more on-campus learning, other co-curricular opportunities as well as returning more researchers to campus. With the continuing roll-out of the vaccine, we remain hopeful of increasing on-campus research and scholarly activities in Fall. Our commitment remains to ramp up on-campus research and scholarship as effectively and efficiently as possible while protecting the health and safety of our community.

York University has established the [YU Better Together](#) website as a centralized community resource. This site includes regular updates on current COVID-19 measures, guidance, frequently asked questions and related materials to help guide and support our community members as we continue towards returning to life on our campuses. I would encourage you to visit the website for the latest information.

Our Research Continuity Group (RCG) continues to work diligently on your behalf with our colleagues and Associate Deans Research from York Faculties, Council of Research Directors of the Organized Research Units, and our York COVID Planning and Recovery team. We continue to coordinate our university planning and operations groups to ensure that we are integrating our ramping up research and scholarship plans as seamlessly as possible and meeting the needs of all York researchers, both those on campus and those continuing their research remotely.

In accordance with the Province's January 2021 State of Emergency directive all research that can be conducted remotely should do so. Therefore, all research activity that can be feasibly and safely conducted off campus without significantly compromising the integrity of the work remains off campus. Further, York is advising all of its community members to follow the Government of Canada's travel advisory to avoid all non-essential international travel. As international travel advisories begin to lift, this guidance will be re-assessed, and additional information will be provided. At this time the [international travel document](#) provides further information and guidance on international travel.

In response to the current Provincial Grey-Zone restrictions, human participant in-person research remains suspended. However, as we move out of the Provincial lockdown zone and continue across the zones of recovery, York has developed



guidelines on the safe restart of in-person research, guided by the Toronto Public Health and Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework. The [Zone-approach to restart of in-person human research](#) (hyperlink pending) identifies the research activities that can be authorized in each zone, subject to appropriate risk-mitigation strategies. As many researchers are considering a return to research for the Fall 2021 term, it should be noted that campus access approval must include additional ethics approvals prior to any research activity. For further information consult Alison Collins-Mrakas, Senior Manager & Policy Advisor, Office of Research Ethics at acollins@yorku.ca.

The dynamic nature of the pandemic means that we must continue to remain flexible, and we are doing all that we can to provide quality support and resources to help achieve academic success, whether remotely or on campus. Our [Division staff](#) are available and remain committed to helping you navigate and assist with the continuation of your research activity. In the coming days, further research communications will be sent out to you from the Office of the Associate Dean Research in your Faculty and/or my office to gather information required to support return to campus planning for the upcoming Fall 2021 term.

Despite our best efforts — and here I want to appreciate and thank the extraordinary contributions of so many of our faculty and staff members — our students and researchers have borne the worst of the pandemic. A vast majority of them have been deprived of the on-campus experience and have limited or no access to their research facilities, labs, offices, and libraries. I hope that we can continue extending our full support to our students and researchers, and be as accommodating to them as possible.

Once again, I encourage you to visit the [YU Better Together](#) website to review all the related resources, as well as continuing to monitor the website periodically to ensure that you are aware of any changes to public health directives.

I thank you all for your continued contributions, dedication to research and flexibility in adapting to and navigating the new circumstances of research and scholarship in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Amir Asif
Vice-President Research & Innovation