March 16, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank our community of researchers, students and staff for their patience, diligence and flexibility.

York’s Research Continuity Group (RCG) is pleased to support the safe return to research activity. We are committed to ensuring that on-campus research and scholarship is undertaken as effectively and efficiently as possible while protecting the health and safety of our community, and in coordination with Public Health guidelines and recommendations.

Please review York University’s COVID-19 guidelines for the safe return to campus and note that York’s vaccination mandate policy will continue for the remainder of the Winter 2022 term. In addition, masks are mandatory, and the YU Screen must be filled out daily prior to attending campus. The YU Better Together website remains a centralized community resource and includes regular updates on COVID-19 measures, guidance, frequently asked questions, and related materials to help guide and support our community members. I strongly encourage you to visit the website for the latest information.

Please see below for important updates regarding research:

**On Campus Research**
As the University returns to normal operations, we have opened research spaces considerably. There are no current restrictions on pursuing on-campus research activities. Consistent with requirements in instructional spaces, physical distancing is encouraged across all research spaces, but no longer required, unless indicated by the area.

Research involving human participants can continue. *Face-to-face on-campus research with unvaccinated human participants is prohibited for the immediate future.*

**Face-to-Face (F2F) Research**
We are pleased to inform you that the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) launched a new streamlined F2F research procedure to facilitate a smoother review process for researchers and to ensure F2F research is undertaken as effectively and efficiently as possible in coordination with Public Health guidelines and recommendations.

Researchers conducting low-to-moderate risk research must:
- Complete the checklist to assess the level of risk for their F2F research.
- Fill out a Health and Safety Plan using the template provided. (*New: The Standardized Health and Safety Plan does not require additional review*).

Researchers conducting research that is *greater than low-to-moderate risk are still required to submit a Complete Health and Safety Plan* which will be
reviewed by a Health and Safety Advisor in addition to review and approval of the research ethics documentation (protocol or amendment application by the HPRC).

For guidance on how to assess your protocol’s COVID-19 risk level, and which documents to submit, visit the ORE website.

**Off-Campus Research**

For researchers who are conducting research off campus and/or in other countries, it is strongly advised that, where possible, researchers consider online research options. Where that is not possible, researchers must abide by their approved Health and Safety Plan and adhere to local health guidance, including potential cessation of face-to-face research activities if stipulated so by local public health authorities. Further, York is advising its community members to follow the [Government of Canada’s travel advisory](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/travel-advisory.html) for all international travel.

As many researchers resume their research activities, it should be noted that any [face-to-face human research activity](https://www.researchethics.ca/ethics-practice/en/ethics-considerations/human-research-activity-guidelines/) must include additional ethics compliance requirements. For further information consult Alison Collins-Mrakas, Director, 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](https://www.yorku.ca/division/) are available and remain committed to helping you navigate and assist with the continuation of your research activity.

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