

Guidance for Research Involving Human Participants During COVID-19 Pandemic

Purpose

Ensure health and safety of the campus community by minimizing the spread of the virus when involving human participants in research.

Location

Research labs and other campus spaces utilized for the purposes of conducting research.

Description of Task

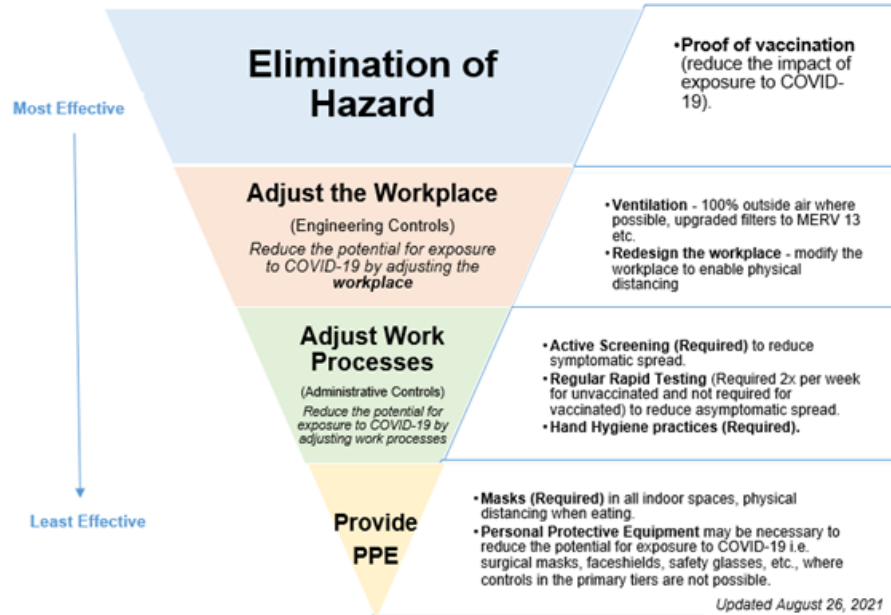
The majority of individuals will continue working remotely. Researchers may be required to access campus for the purposes of conducting research involving human participants.

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	1
Location.....	1
Description of Task.....	1
Hierarchy of Hazard Control	2
Continue Working Remotely	2
Adjust the Workplace (Engineering Controls)	2
Adjust Work Processes (Administrative Controls).....	2
Personal Protective Equipment	3
Procedural Guidelines	3
Resources	4

Hierarchy of Hazard Control

Hazard mitigation should always focus on implementing control measures to eliminate or reduce risk. The hierarchy can be applied to any hazard in the workplace including COVID-19.



Continue Working Remotely

Individuals should continue to work remotely if appropriate tools and resources are available to complete their work tasks. Utilize technology where possible to conduct research involving human participants (i.e., virtual interviews or virtual observation).

Adjust the Workplace (Engineering Controls)

Physical distancing (always keep a minimum distance of 6 feet(2m) from others) should be maintained as much as possible when conducting research involving human participants.

Adjust Work Processes (Administrative Controls)

Prior to scheduling research, researchers and participants should be required to self-screen and stay home if sick (complete the [Ontario COVID-19 screening tool](#) to help determine how to seek further care).

Scheduling of research involving human participants should be implemented in such a way as to limit the number of individuals on campus, as with all other on campus activities.

Hygiene Practices: to prevent exposure, researchers and participants should avoid touching face, eyes and mouth as well as conduct appropriate hand hygiene. Researchers and participants should be aware of location of closest sink with soap and water or hand sanitizing station for hand hygiene.

Personal Protective Equipment

Face coverings and or surgical masks should be worn as per the Guidelines for [Face Coverings and Masks During COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Personal protective equipment is required where physical distancing cannot be achieved during research involving human participants.

Procedural Guidelines

- 1) Researchers must confirm that all individuals have completed the [Ontario COVID-19 screening tool](#) no more than 1 hour before coming to the University and have been advised of their result (whether they are clear to attend campus or have been advised to get tested for COVID-19 or to isolate). A copy of the result must be retained by the researcher for a period of 14 days.
- 2) Barriers are only to be considered for workstations that cannot be appropriately spaced such as client/student facing areas. Barriers do not replace the need for face coverings. If after other considerations (spacing workstations, rotational schedules, etc.) barriers are necessary, submit a work order with Facility Services (or location-specific building services) for materials and installation.
- 3) Maintain physical distancing during the participant welcoming process as much as possible. Consider the use of floor markings or barriers.
- 4) Researchers will be responsible for communicating to participants the COVID-19 protocols established for the research encounter.
- 5) Implement wayfinding signage that is clearly visible to maintain physical distancing within the research area.
- 6) Avoid the use of waiting areas and schedule participants to be met at the entryway.

- 7) Where possible, reorganize the research space to maintain physical distancing between the researchers and the participants. Consider the use of floor markings to direct participants where to sit or stand. If not possible, physical separation with barriers such as Plexiglas or other partitions should be considered.
- 8) If research involves physical contact with participants, PPE is required by both the researchers and the participants (surgical mask and goggles or face shield).
- 9) Gloves should be worn if the research requires contact with mucous membranes. If gloves are required, hands must be washed immediately before donning and immediately after removal and safe disposal.
- 10) Consider the installation of barriers at research stations where participants are likely to respire heavily.
- 11) Ensure all high touch surfaces (i.e., door handles) are frequently disinfected and that hand washing, or hand sanitization stations are available.
- 12) Disinfect all objects that are touched or manipulated by participants between each use (i.e., chairs, tables, pens, pencils, microphones, etc.).
- 13) Research devices used to collect participant data (i.e., blood pressure and oxygen content) should be manipulated by the participant as much as possible with verbal instruction from the researcher.

Resources

- [Guidelines for Research Labs During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Donning](#) and [Doffing](#) Disposable **Masks** (videos)
- [Donning](#) and [Doffing](#) Disposable **Gloves** (videos)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Government of Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)