



Guidelines for University of Guelph Human Participant Face-to-Face Research

February 19, 2021

Updated March 24, 2021

Introduction

Human participant face-to-face research has been on pause since December 23, 2021-- first to accommodate the University holiday closure and then because of the provincial shutdown, in effect from December 26, 2020 – February 15, 2021.

The University recognizes that face-to-face human participant research is a vital part of our research enterprise. As we come out of the provincial lockdown and move back to being led by Ontario's [COVID-19 response framework](#), we have created guidelines for human participant face-to-face research that provide equitable access and opportunity for faculty to do research and graduate students to make progress toward degree completion. These guidelines are created with the safety of students, staff, faculty and other members of the community as the number one priority.

The following guidelines address on and off campus and out of province research. They are to be used with the University of Guelph's Frameworks for Phasing-In Human Participant Face-to-Face Research at University of Guelph ([On Campus](#), [Off Campus](#)) and approved pre-existing Research Management Plans (RMPs).

These guidelines also align with existing University policies for on-campus access, which in turn follow provincial public health risk ratings. As outlined in the University of Guelph's framework for Face-to-Face research, all 'on campus' human participant research that can be done remotely, will continue to be done remotely. An approved RMP is also required for remote, off-campus face-to-face human participant research and should also follow the [Framework for Phasing-In Human Participant Face-to-Face Research at University of Guelph \(Off Campus\)](#).

For the purposes of this document, *Researchers* refers to Principal Investigators and collaborating faculty, graduate students, technicians and support staff within a lab.

Research involving populations at higher risk of negative outcomes (described as 'vulnerable populations' by the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)) is only being considered for human face-to-face research activities when there is a compelling evidence to do so.

Consideration of exceptional cases to work with higher risk populations can be requested within RMP, provided there are effective protection measures to reduce risk to these individuals (e.g., fully COVID-19 vaccinated).

Guidelines

University of Guelph Human Participant Face-to-Face Research in Ontario based on Province of Ontario Criteria

Green (Prevent):

- All Human Participant Face-to-Face Research can proceed under the University of Guelph frameworks for human participant face-to-face research ([On Campus](#), [Off Campus](#)). This includes strict adherence to approved RMPs, and appropriate PPE and mitigation procedures.
- Participant recruitment for on campus activities can include people from the community at large but is restricted to zones in Ontario at a level of restriction equal to, or below, that of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.
- The restriction of movement between zones does not include essential travel by research personnel. These individuals are to follow institutional directives on regional travel and should follow the guidelines as they apply to the region in which the research is being conducted.
- Adherence to minimum numbers of people in an indoor space as recommended by Public Health will be maintained.
- Research with vulnerable populations remains restricted at this time.

Yellow (Protect):

- Includes all the components of Green with increased restriction on the number of people permitted in an indoor or outdoor space, as dictated by Public Health.

Orange (Restrict):

- Includes all the components of Yellow with increased restriction on the number of people permitted in an indoor or outdoor space as dictated by Public Health.

Red (Control):

- Human Face-to-Face Research data collection can proceed under the guidelines approved in individual RMPs. This includes strict adherence to approved RMPs, and appropriate PPE and mitigation procedures, including enhanced protections for protocols involving exercise.
- Participation in a lab activity should include the minimum number of people to perform data collection, following University of Guelph guidelines for capacity, up to a maximum as per Public Health guidelines for indoors spaces.
- On-campus research is restricted to include only those participants 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.
- Off campus research requiring community participants may proceed with RMP approval by College/Department.

- As with high-risk RMP applications, the second-tier review committee is available for consultation on exception requests.

Grey (lockdown):

- Human Face-to-Face Research is restricted.
- Researchers are permitted to continue to perform activities in the lab that enable research preparation to move forward. This includes the skillful practice of techniques, equipment preparation and testing of protocols. This does not include data collection.
- Access to labs is restricted to immediate lab members, with adherence to precautions as outlined in the RMP, and limiting time in close proximity.
- The number of individuals in the lab at one time will be maintained at an absolute minimum for the training or activity that is in progress. As per the University's Frameworks ([On Campus](#), [Off Campus](#)), people who are within 2m of each other for prolonged duration (> 15 minutes) requires the wearing of full PPE (surgical mask, face shield/eye protection, lab coat).
- Activities of preparation and training will be restricted to members within the lab group only.
- Off campus research requiring community participants may not proceed.

State of Emergency:

- Under extreme circumstances, and with careful consideration the University may decide to shut down research activities.
- In these extreme circumstances human research restrictions will follow those imposed on other animal/wet lab facilities with respect to lab access.
- Human Face-to-Face activities will follow the Grey/lockdown guidelines if laboratory access is permitted on campus.
- Communication regarding phase in of research will be provided in a timely fashion to enable research to continue.

Human Participant Face-to-Face Research outside of Ontario

- Human participant face-to-face research being conducted outside of Ontario must have an approved RMP, including clear adherence to relevant public health rules in the jurisdiction of research, REB approval, and be consistent with other existing UofG policies, e.g. regarding travel.
- Please refer to the [Framework for Phasing-In Human Participant Face-to-Face Research at University of Guelph \(Off Campus\)](#)