

# UNIVERSITY *of* GUELPH

## Research Continuity Framework

June 12, 2020

**Update: April 27, 2022**

### Revision Log

Date	Update
September 8, 2020	Reference to phasing in off-campus human participant research added
September 23, 2020	Self-assessment COVID screening changed to U of G screening tool
December 15, 2020	Travel information updated Travel guidelines updated
April 1, 2021	Human participant face-to-face guidelines added
June 16, 2021	Updated throughout with respect to face covering guidelines
July 29, 2021	Updated information with respect to research-related travel
August 11, 2021	Updated information with respect to density in non-office research spaces
September 27, 2021	Fall 2021 Guidelines for Human participant Face-to-Face Research supersedes older Guidelines that were previously available. Updated name and context of document from Phase-In-Framework to Continuity Framework, update with respect to density in non-office research spaces
January 5, 2022	Update with respect to increased density in non-office research spaces
February 11, 2022	Update with respect to increased density in non-office research spaces
February 22, 2022	Guidelines for Human participant Face-to-Face Research now referred to as current Guidelines for Human participant Face-to-Face Research
March 3, 2022	Updated information for student international travel
April 27, 2022	Pausing of Research Management Plan requirement, updates with respect to F2F and current guidelines



## Preface

This document is intended to provide a framework for the University of Guelph to support safe research activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document lays out a framework, including principles, responsibilities, and guidance that enable research to take place where a premium is placed on ensuring the collective health, safety and well-being of the members of the communities in which we live.

This document should be used by colleges, academic units, and researchers to guide safe research activities.

It should also be recognized that due to the changing state of affairs related to the pandemic, this framework may be modified, replaced, or superseded by other plans or directives as necessary. This might also entail curtailing research that has been initiated under this framework.

This said, as a research-intensive university, it is our hope that this framework allows us to continue as much of our research as is safe and practical to achieve.



## Principles guiding research continuity

- I. Our actions place at the fore our responsibility to ensure the collective health, safety, and well-being of members of the communities in which we work and live.
- II. Access to research facilities should be safe.
- III. Any research that is undertaken must be prepared to be contracted as quickly as is necessary to keep people safe if and when conditions change.
- IV. Research can only proceed provided it can be done safely and is properly resourced. This includes adequate staff training, availability of PPE, facility support services, and financial supports.
- V. All those on University of Guelph campuses must follow the requirements outlined on the University's COVID-19 website. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to continue to be mindful of actions that keep the community safe – vaccinations and booster doses, masking, physical distancing – even if public health and University requirements for those actions have been lifted or paused.
- VI. Researchers wanting to engage in in- person research activities involving human participants require Research Ethics Board approval and must conform with the principles described herein to ensure studies are conducted in a safe and effective manner, where any face-to-face interactions integrate current procedures and provisions from public health authorities to protect researchers and participants, alike.
- VII. Researchers engaging in research activities with live animals must adhere to approved animal utilisation protocols or submit amendments, if changes are necessary to conform to the principles described herein, for the normal process of Animal Care Committee review and approval. Research protocols using live animals must be conducted in a safe and effective manner and should integrate current procedures and provisions from public health authorities to protect researchers and animals, alike.
- VIII. Researchers retain responsibility for team members under the principle of duty of care. All PIs and personnel who pursue research have a duty of care for themselves and others to protect all from the transmission or exposure to the virus.



## Responsibilities related to research continuity

### *Office of Research*

- Establish framework for research continuity and modify as necessary.
- Monitor research continuity.
- Provide guidance related to research continuity.
- Coordinate with other university activities related to research continuity.

### *Environmental Health and Safety*

- Identify and facilitate best practices of COVID-19 safety.
- Conduct safety visits and audits in research spaces.
- Consultation as needed.

### *College Deans (or designates)*

- Provide college-level support for the research enterprise as informed by Academic Unit Chairs and Directors

### *Academic Unit Chairs and Directors (or designates)*

- Provide support as required for research groups.

### *Principal Investigators / Research Supervisors*

- Ensure all personnel in the research space are provided with appropriate communications, instructions, training, personal protective equipment (PPE), instructions and other resources.
- Protect physical and mental health and safety by addressing employee and student concerns.

### *Non-Office Research Space Users and Workers*

- Stay home if feeling unwell or [are experiencing symptoms](#).
- Report hazards and concerns to supervisor.
- All those on University of Guelph campuses, research stations and facilities are required to follow the requirements as outlined on the University's [COVID-19 Information page](#).



## Guidelines for research continuity

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

The University of Guelph recognizes that an inclusive campus and a culture of inclusion is an institutional and social imperative. Acknowledging the University's diverse population and ensuring that every member of an inclusive campus is a valued contributor is a foundational pillar of a successful post-secondary institution.

The following principles drive the University's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI):

- All campus community members must anticipate and encourage diverse perspectives and leverage them to drive creativity and innovation.
- A culture of inclusion begins by acknowledging the diversity among us and recognizing that some members of our community experience barriers to education, employment, and full participation due to systemic factors.
- A culture of inclusion is possible only if the institution continually designs, reviews, and rebuilds structures – including policies, programs, and practices – that are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all.
- A culture of inclusion necessitates the involvement of the community of diverse stakeholders – faculty, staff, and students – to drive a strategic and system-wide approach to EDI.

The institution is committed to identifying barriers to full participation that exist for equity-seeking groups and ensure, upon identifying and striving to eliminate those barriers, that equity-seeking groups experience a sincere and genuine sense of belonging in the campus community. Particularly at this time, where there are multiple demands on one's time between caregiving and employment responsibilities, we all bear responsibility to do our utmost to reduce barriers.

- Share the handbook, "[An Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Handbook for Individuals and Organizations During COVID-19](#)", which was developed by the Office of Diversity and Human Rights.
- Provide confidential and/or alternative venues for faculty members to provide feedback on research continuity.

### General guidelines

Protective measures remain essential. Please refer to the University's COVID-19 related guidelines available on the [EHS website](#). Protective measures include:

- All those on University of Guelph campuses must follow the requirements outlined on the University's COVID-19 website. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to continue to be mindful of actions that keep our community safe – vaccinations and booster doses, masking, physical distancing – even if public health and University requirements for those actions have been lifted or paused.



## Travel

Any individuals who travel must adhere to all relevant [travel advisories](#) and comply with public health, including vaccination, and self-isolation requirements both at destinations outside of the province and here in Ontario. Any required self-isolation / quarantine timeframes must be factored into travel plans and work schedule commitments.

### Domestic travel

#### Faculty, Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Staff and Students

Local Public Health measures must be followed.

### International travel

#### Students

Students travelling internationally for approved research must follow all Government of Canada travel regulations and have [GuardMe travel health insurance](#) coverage. Additionally, students travelling on a University-related activity (including research, training, conferences and/or study) need to contact the [Centre for International Programs](#) for [mandatory pre-departure preparation](#), support with logistics, insurance and general travel questions and emergency response services.

#### Faculty, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Research Staff

Those travelling internationally for approved research must follow all Government of Canada travel regulations.

#### Important note regarding international research-related travel

Any research-related international travel approval is contingent on standing enrolment in the University's Extended Health benefits plan with valid emergency out-of-country coverage. Note that emergency out-of-country insurance coverage is available through the University's Extended Health benefits as long as Canadian provincial health insurance coverage remains valid.

If you are unsure whether or not you are enrolled in the University's Extended Health benefits plan with valid emergency out-of-country coverage, please contact your supervisor.

### Human participant research

While the requirement for Research Management Plans has been paused, as always, certification from the Human Research Ethics Board for all research involving human participants must be in place before proceeding with any human subject research.

Human participant face-to-face research should conform to University of Guelph policy broadly with respect to any public health measures due to COVID-19. As is common practice, researchers who feel their research puts participants at a higher risk for COVID-19 should flag this at the REB application stage.

Researchers who have **ongoing projects** with human participants should continue with precautions outlined in the informed consent (with COVID appendix) unless revised with a formal REB amendment.



**For new studies**, the COVID consent appendix is no longer required, however researchers are asked to add the following statement to the Risks section of consent forms: "The research team is committed to providing a safe environment for the community and will follow all COVID-19 safety guidelines outlined by the University of Guelph and public health."

## Research involving animals

Use of animal care facilities should follow the following guidance to ensure health and safety of all staff and users in those facilities:

- All researchers working with animals must have met mandatory training requirements and have the practical skills necessary to competently perform animal-based tasks while adhering to public health directives.
- Research plans using live animals should include plans for contraction of activities on short notice.
- All those on University of Guelph campuses, research stations and facilities must follow the requirements outlined on the University's COVID-19 website. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to continue to be mindful of actions that keep our community safe – vaccinations, including booster doses; masking; physical distancing – even if public health and University requirements for those actions have been lifted or paused.
- Significantly increase the frequency of hand sanitation.
- Send your team with appropriate cleaning/sanitizing supplies so that they can do their part in the continuous cleaning of their own equipment, common equipment and high traffic areas in the field research station. If needed, appropriate concentrated disinfectant solution will be available at each station, from which you can prepare disinfectant solution to be used for cleaning. It must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Bring spray bottles, paper towels and disposable gloves (if required by the product) for use.

## Graduate students

Graduate students working in university research facilities should feel comfortable that their personal health and safety are assured. Graduate students should communicate any concerns they might have with the Lab Manager and/or research advisor, who is expected to address those concerns either by clarifying misperceptions or more fully implementing safety measures.

