

# COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN

## for on-campus human participant research

This plan is to be used by Principal Investigators (PIs) and Lab Directors/Managers to ensure protocols are in place to minimize the risk of COVID-19 while conducting research with human participants on-campus. This plan is to be used while conducting research in spaces managed/supervised by the PI.

Name of Principal Investigator (PI): \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

On-campus location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Research Ethics Application Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Roles and responsibilities

#### A. Supervisors/Principal Investigators

- Meet with research group members before allowing access to the study space.
  - Orientation must cover all items within this plan, including COVID-19 informed consent discussions, and the study procedures outlined in the research ethics application.
- Ensure research group members review the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#)
- Enforce all criteria within this plan, and the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#), as well as the research ethics application procedures including COVID-19 informed consent discussions.
- Establish a schedule for the study sessions to maintain physical distancing and shared use of space/rooms and equipment.
- Ensure sufficient supplies are available to maintain hand hygiene, PPE, and surface decontamination requirements.
- If working alone is permitted, ensure a [Working Alone Plan](#) has been developed and communicated to research group members.

#### B. Research team members

- Follow all guidance within this safety plan, including the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#), [Working Alone Plan](#), and the protocols in the research ethics application.
- Follow the University's [vaccination policy](#).

### Health Protocols

#### A. Self-assessment screening

- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and do not come to campus when ill.

- Ensure study participants conduct a self-assessment prior to arrival (day of study visit) using [Campus Check-In](#).
  - Provide an alternate process for individuals who may not be able to complete the Campus Check-In daily screening due to access or difficulties with the technology, a [paper copy of the campus check-in form](#) may be used.

#### B. [Illness and absence reporting](#)

- Do not allow a member of your team or a study participant to take part in research activities if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.
- Review and follow the [University's Health Protocols](#).

#### C. [Hand hygiene](#)

- Hand hygiene should be performed regularly throughout the day.
- Communicate these requirements to study participants.
- Be sure to follow the [Hand Hygiene guidelines](#).

#### D. [Working alone plan](#)

- If working alone is permitted, a working alone plan should be implemented

### **[Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)**

#### A. [Masking](#)

- Physical distancing is to be implemented whenever possible and everyone (researchers and participants) must wear an ASTM Level 2 medical mask.
- There should be limited situations when a study participant is [exempt from wearing a mask](#) or needs to remove their mask.
  - These may include:
    - people who are unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition or disability,
    - children under the age of 2,
    - when communicating with a person who is hearing impaired and the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication,
    - exercise studies to insert/remove a mouthpiece, or
    - facial recognition studies.
- Should a child not tolerate wearing a mask (fidgeting and constant touching), the researcher is to wear a N95 mask and protective eyewear when within 2 metres of the child.
  - Fit testing is required for anyone who will be wearing a N95 mask.
  - Contact the Safety Office for fit testing training/instructions.

## B. [Other protective equipment](#)

- Protective eyewear (in addition to a mask) is required when a person is not wearing a face covering and is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier
- In addition to masking requirements (as above), researchers are to wear face shields/eye protection, lab coat/scrubs or disposable gown, and gloves for studies that involve taking biological fluids (e.g., spit, blood, other bodily fluids) and the participants are to wear a ATSM Level 2 face mask.

## [Adjust the study space and activities](#)

- Ensure research team members are aware of arrangements for a:
  - building entrance that will be used by study participants, and
  - private space (e.g., reception area) to confirm the COVID-19 screening was completed and to carry out, if needed, the study pre-screening questionnaire at the building entrance.
- Study participants should wait in their car or outside the building entrance, weather permitting, until contacted.
- Bins holding personal items can be taken with the participant from the building entrance to the exit.

## A. [Physical distancing and occupancy](#)

- Maintain a 2-metre physical distancing, whenever possible.
- Occupancy is recommended to allow 2 metre distancing between persons within the space.
  - This can be controlled by:
    - Posting an occupancy limit based on 2 metre distancing.
    - Limit occupancy to only those involved in the study (researchers and study participants) and their guardian (if children) or support person, if needed.
    - Avoid having other individuals in the study space and on-campus (e.g., siblings or other family members that are not study participants).
- For activities in which 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained adhere to the [PPE requirements](#).

## B. Amend study activities

- Identify and discuss the study activities that will be amended and performed remotely (phone or virtually) as activities that can occur remotely should continue to be conducted remotely.

- Where possible, conduct the following study procedures ahead of the participant’s arrival on-campus (phone or virtually):
  - review of the University’s vaccination policy,
  - review of the COVID-19 information consent letter for on-campus studies,
  - review of the study information consent letter, and
  - pre-screening questionnaires to determine eligibility in the study.
- Activities that require a member of the research team to be in close proximity with the participant should be limited, whenever possible.
  - Ways to reduce close proximity may include:
    - demonstrating how to place the heart rate monitor on oneself while the participant remains at a 2-metre distance,
    - using videos or posters with instructions to walk the participant through how to place the sensors on their own body, or
    - use of plexiglass, breath shields, or similar barriers.
- Contact may be needed for certain limited close proximity activities.
  - This may include:
    - adjusting a heart rate monitor to ensure accuracy of the measurements,
    - helping a participant adjust a VR headset for comfort, or
    - spotting to ensure participant safety during exercise tasks.
- Studies with significant exertion, heavy breathing, or mask removal should be minimized, whenever possible.

### C. Other considerations

- Ensure study participants are provided a secure and safe storage location of personal items, such as jackets, purses, wallets, or knapsacks through the provision of lockers, storage racks, or other designated storage spaces.
  - If needed, provide Rubber Maid bins in designated locations with disinfection before/after use.

### Surface and equipment decontamination

- Follow the surface decontamination guidance under Cleaning Protocols in the [Health and Safety Guide](#).
- [More information](#) on the disinfection of surfaces.

## Safety plan acknowledgement

**PI acknowledgement:** *(be sure to check the boxes)*

- I will not allow for the scheduling of study participants to be on campus until I have reviewed the procedures in this safety plan AND the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#) with all research team members.
- I am responsible for the implementation of all procedures outlined in this safety plan AND the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#) to reduce the infection risk.
- I will post this plan in the study space/rooms.
- I acknowledge that I have reviewed the following documentation provided on the research ethics website:
  - o [FAQ](#) for resuming face-to-face/in-person research
  - o [Vaccination confirmation guidance](#) and participant [recruitment flowchart](#)
  - o Ethics [application steps and instructions](#) (new applications and amendments)
  - o Research team [instructions for conducting in-person research](#)
- I acknowledge study team members found not following these directives may be subject to corrective action up to and including disciplinary measures and suspension of research ethics clearance for all studies.

PI/Supervisor Name	Signature	Date

*Electronic acknowledgement is acceptable.*

**Research team member acknowledgement:**

By printing and signing your name in the table below, you acknowledge you have:

- been oriented and/or trained on the procedures outlined in this safety plan,
- read the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#), and
- been consulted and have no reservations with the safety precautions and processes that have been put in place to conduct research on campus.

Name	Signature	Date

*Add additional lines for signatures as needed. Electronic acknowledgement is acceptable.*

By printing and signing your name below, you acknowledge you:

- have read the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Guide](#),
- will put a monitoring program in place to check in with PIs/Supervisors regularly to ensure the safety protocols in this plan are being followed, and
- acknowledge PIs/Supervisors and research team members found not following these directives may be subject to corrective action up to and including disciplinary measures and suspension of research ethics clearance for all studies.

Department Head Name	Signature	Date

*Electronic acknowledgement is acceptable.*

## Safety plan checklist

- The following actions are to be completed as prior to bringing study participants on-campus:
  - ✓ Post room occupancy limits.
  - ✓ Remove extraneous seating and designate workstations/areas.
  - ✓ Post hand hygiene procedures.
  - ✓ Communicate study changes due to COVID-19 to all research team members including study participants (in the participant COVID-19 consent letter).
  - ✓ Arrange for secure lockers, bins, or office space for personal or street items.
  - ✓ Prepare for a safe shutdown of workspaces should another extended shutdown of campus be required.
  - ✓ Complete a [Working Alone assessment](#) and implement this plan, if required.
- The following actions are to be conducted for study participants as part of this safety plan:
  - ✓ Ensure one-time use water bottles or water coolers with disposable paper cups are available for study participants, as needed.
  - ✓ Provide study participants with an ASTM Level 2 mask to wear.
  - ✓ Arrange for secure storage of participant information for contact tracing and use this information only for this purpose.
  - ✓ Ensure a space is available to conduct the COVID-19 screening, if needed, or study pre-screening at the building entrance in a manner that is as private as possible.