

University of Virginia
Guidelines for Return to Social and Behavioral Sciences Research
With Human Participants
July 31, 2020

Overarching Goal:

- Research with human participants, both on and off grounds can proceed only to the extent that it can be performed safely.
- UVA faculty, research team members and staff must continue to comply with executive orders and health authority guidance from national, state, local, and University authorities to protect the safety of research participants, staff, visitors, students and faculty.
- Consistent with the [Governor's Phase 1 Reopening Plan](#) and the [Phase 2](#) guidelines, the approach outlined in these guidelines is based on established physical distancing requirements for our various research spaces, requiring the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) which remains a limited resource, and sound hygienic practices, such as recommended hand washing/use of hand gel, and routine sanitizing of work areas.
- **Under no circumstances should safety be sacrificed due to the lack of adequate supplies, such as the type and quantity of PPE.** Plan in advance for PPE supply chain issues when reopening research.
- **Required personnel and core services (if required) must be available.**
- **Failure to follow these guidelines will result in revocation of research approval.**

Timeline for re-opening non-clinical research:

Phase 1: Research off-grounds with human subjects which was not previously paused, may continue provided that face-to-face contact is not required.

Phase 2: July 1, 2020 Off-grounds research with human subjects requiring face-to-face contact.

Phase 3: *Target date – September 15, 2020* Research with human subjects requiring face-to-face contact on grounds or under lease by UVA in support of UVA faculty and staff activities.

The Phase 3 target date will be highly dependent on ongoing updates to federal, state, local, and institutional policies related to physical distancing and allowed activities and based on continuous monitoring of the guidelines. All safety measures (e.g., social distancing, wearing masks) are required in Phase 2 and 3 and will continue until further notice.

If there are special circumstances (e.g., the need for certain procedures in restricted periods in a longitudinal study) you may write to request an earlier restart. Please provide background information and justification to DHudson@virginia.edu.

Additionally, researchers must maintain plans and be prepared to halt all activities on short notice should this becomes necessary.

In order for researcher/staff to initiate or resume off-grounds research which does require face-to-face contact in **Phase 2**, the University will require: 1) approval under the [research ramp-up guidance procedures](#) for Field-Based Research; 2) approval for the required travel to the off-grounds location, including adequate personnel procedures and PPE; and 3) project specific approval that may be required at the research site.

If a project requires international travel, this will require approval from the **International Studies Office**. Domestic travel must also adhere to relevant guidelines. Also see [UVA travel restrictions](#) If traveling out of state, written permission must be obtained from the Department Chair/Center Director and the Associate Dean for Research. In either case, domestic or international travel, care must be taken to protect the human subjects in keeping with local requirements as well as observation of any and all cultural restrictions.

Phase 3, research with human subjects requiring face-to-face contact on grounds or under lease by UVA in support of UVA faculty and staff activities. This research which must be done on-grounds and which requires face to face contact on grounds is likely to be complex and might require multiple visits or specific instrumentation or interactions. In some cases there may be multiple participants and/or children escorted by parents. This will require special attention to guidelines for social distancing and density of personnel. Though this work may not resemble the work in a laboratory, the same issues hold for density, spacing and flow patterns. Shorter duration encounters may not require more than 6' distances, however longer interactions will require greater spacing.

In order for researcher/staff to initiate or resume on-grounds research in **Phase 3**, the University will require approval under the [research ramp-up guidance procedures](#) for Field-Based Research.

Particular attention must be given to the following:

- All research personnel must wear masks while working on-site, including when in contact with research participants and/or staff. [See UVA Policy on Face Coverings](#).
- Research personnel must follow the recommendations on physical distancing and hygiene practices for staff and study participants as required for the specific locations being used.
- When moving around a minimum distance of 6 feet is recommended for social distancing.
- For prolonged work with others (e.g., in shared office or research space) the space between people should be at least 9 feet and a density of not more than one person per ~250 square feet.
- Supervisors must, to the extent practicable, make special accommodations for employees at higher risk for severe illness. Individuals in these high-risk categories have been identified by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Such accommodations shall be coordinated through the Human Resources employee relations team.
- Research personnel should contact participants within 24 hours prior to the visit. Research personnel should verbally confirm and document that the participant is well, and explain the procedures on site for screening. The participant should be informed to wear a mask to the visit and that they will be required to wear a mask throughout the visit.

- Upon arrival, research participants must have their temperature taken and will be asked about symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (up-to-date symptom description from the CDC can be found [here](#)). If research is being conducted in UVA Health facilities where this screening is conducted for everyone who enters the building, research personnel do not need to repeat the screening. If the visit is taking place in an academic space (CRU, Memorial Gymnasium, etc.), the study team must document and log the screening results (<https://redcapsurvey.healthsystem.virginia.edu/surveys/?s=H9AEYA3DCC>)
- Research participants should not bring guests to the visit. Children and adults who require assistance may have one caregiver (unless the research protocol requires the presence of both parents). If a caregiver is present, the caregiver must also be screened prior to the visit as outlined above.
- Throughout the study visit, including during the screening process, research personnel should follow physical distancing guidelines (i.e., 6 feet of physical distancing), except as necessary to complete required procedures.
- Research related activities should be conducted by a minimum number of necessary people, with time limitations and minimal personnel density.
- All research sites must eliminate traditional waiting and common seating areas and utilize non-traditional alternatives (e.g., call ahead registration, waiting in car until called, take participant directly to the research room, etc.).
- Research participants and caregivers must wear either a surgical/procedural mask or a cloth mask/face covering throughout the visit, except when removal of the mask/covering is necessary (e.g., when required by the research procedure),

NOTE: If the facility in which this research occurs has stricter restrictions than outlined above, the facility guidance must be followed. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in revocation of onsite privileges.