OISE RESEARCH RESTART UPDATE

MARCH 31, 2021

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN, RESEARCH, INTERNATIONAL & INNOVATION
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH REVIEW PROCESSES
‘VIRTUAL’ RESEARCH CONTINUES!

• Despite the challenges of conducting research during a global pandemic, OISE faculty and student researchers have been largely able to continue, adapt, and/or pivot so that they can continue their research.

• Research that can be conducted virtually has continued as usual
  o Virtual research not involving human participants does not require REB review
  o Human participant research with virtual methods is reviewed by REB on ongoing basis

• Given the uncertainties associated with the pandemic, we encourage students and faculty members to consider research methods that do not involve working face-to-face with human participants wherever possible. This may include gathering data
  o From participants virtually via zoom interviews or online questionnaires
  o From existing data sources, including publicly available documents and websites, existing datasets, and existing literature (e.g., systematized literature reviews)
TIMING OF REVIEW OF FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH

For Research Ethics Board (REB) review of face-to-face human participant research to be conducted in Toronto and Peel:

• Protocol submissions will be accepted in a stepwise progression based on COVID-19 research risk, beginning with Level 1 (low-risk) research and following prioritization criteria within each level as determined by the UofT Research Restart Steering Committee.
  o Information regarding which types of research are currently accepted into the process can be found on the F2F Human Research Review Status page.

For face-to-face human participant research to be conducted in other regions or countries where public health directives may allow for face-to-face research:

• Researchers may submit their REB protocols for review at any time.
## RESEARCH: TIMING OF REVIEWS BY LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVID-19 RESEARCH RISK</th>
<th>RESEARCH METHOD</th>
<th>DIRECT/CLOSE CONTACT?</th>
<th>CONDUCTED IN AN EHS-APPROVED COVID-19 SAFE RESEARCH SPACE?</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE START (PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Interaction/observation</td>
<td>None or minimal contact, physical distancing can be easily achieved (e.g., interview, non-invasive methods)</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2a</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Some physical contact (e.g., biospecimen collection, body measurements), physical distancing challenging to maintain</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2b</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Some physical contact (e.g., biospecimen collection, body measurements), physical distancing challenging to maintain</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3a</td>
<td>Physical treatment/ manipulation</td>
<td>Sustained physical contact, participant breathing heavily, physical distancing not possible</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3b</td>
<td>Physical treatment/ manipulation</td>
<td>Sustained physical contact, participant breathing heavily, physical distancing not possible</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Normal activities</td>
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- Submissions will be accepted in advance of when the work is anticipated to be permitted
  - e.g. F2F studies that could be conducted in Orange will be accepted for review when the Framework is in Red
WHEN FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH CAN RESUME

- UofT’s COVID research risk levels, which order the risk associated with face-to-face research according to the degree of direct/close contact with participants, can be found on the [Review of Face-To-Face and Off-Campus Research page](#).

- **Low-risk research** involves no or minimal contact. Physical distancing is easily achieved. (e.g. interviews, computer-based studies, non-invasive methods)

- This research can take place in locations that correspond approximately to being in a “Red Zone” in Ontario’s provincial COVID framework

- Note that research protocols are assessed on an individual basis, so there is no hard and fast relationship between the Province’s framework and whether research will be approved
STUDENT RESEARCH INVOLVING FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

• Ethics protocols are submitted for REB review by faculty supervisors for their students
  o Faculty member may designate a student as a ‘Student PI’, in the My Research Human Protocols (MRHP) system
  o Student PI can create and work on a REB protocol
  o Student PI sends the protocol to the supervisor for review and ‘approval’
  o When a faculty supervisor ‘approves’ a student’s protocol, it proceeds to the faculty member’s Chair for review (and, ultimately, submission to the REB)

• See UofT’s Ethics in Human Research website for information on research ethics review
REVIEWS PROCESS FOR FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH

- In the OISE context, proposals involving face-to-face human participant research are reviewed by three committees:
  - OISE Research Recovery Committee (aka the Deans and Chairs leadership team)
  - UofT Face-to-Face COVID-19 Review Committee; F2FCRC (for on-campus research) or Occupational Health and Safety; OHS (for off-campus research) assesses the COVID-19 health and safety risks of the proposed research
  - UofT Research Ethics Board (REB) does the usual ethics review

- Final approval by OISE Research Recovery Committee is required before face-to-face human participant research can begin
HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH – OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

Virtual?

YES

Regular REB process; apply anytime

NO

3 Committee Review:
OISE Research Recovery, UofT F2FCRC, REB

In OISE buildings:
Apply according to UofT Research Risk Level; Approval assessed on OISE restart principles and GAT

Off-campus:
In Toronto/Peel - Apply according to UofT Research Risk Level
Outside Toronto/Peel – Apply anytime local conditions permit
### OVERVIEW OF ROLES FOR FACE-TO-FACE RESEARCH REQUESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>OISE RRC</th>
<th>F2FCRC</th>
<th>REB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consults with Business Officer and others in dept/unit – for research in OISE buildings</td>
<td>Consults with unit staff – for research in OISE building</td>
<td>Reviews the F2FOC form, connects with the PI as needed, and assesses the plan wrt health &amp; safety</td>
<td>Once the OISE Research Recovery Committee approves the proposal to go forward, Chair ‘approves’ the REB protocol, which sends it to the UofT REB for ethics review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completes REB protocol and F2FOC Review form; submits REB protocol, which goes to Chair for review</td>
<td>Considers research (via F2FOC form) according to the OISE Divisional Plan for Research Recovery and Adaptation, attending to building capacity, prioritization principles, F2FCRC feedback, etc. and decides whether to approve</td>
<td>Provides feedback to the PI and OISE Research Recovery Committee</td>
<td>REB conducts ethics review and approves or sends back to PI for additional information/change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for student research requests – works w student on REB protocol, completes F2FOC form</td>
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**Notes:**

- OISE Divisional Plan for Research Recovery and Adaptation
- F2FOC Review form

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**WITH OISE I CAN**
FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH APPLICATION AND REVIEW – PROCESS AND STEPS
FACULTY MEMBER REQUEST FOR FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH

1. For research to take place in an OISE building, faculty member consults with Department Business Officer (and Department manager, where applicable) re: feasibility/General Assessment Tool (GAT) review

2. Faculty member completes the Face-to-Face and Off-Campus COVID-19 (F2FOC) Review form
   - This online REDCap survey form asks for extensive and detailed information on the who, how, where, and when of the research, with a focus on participant and researcher safety
   - The F2FOC form is saved as a PDF once it is completed
   - For student research:
     - The faculty supervisor and student should work together to plan the research protocol
     - Because the faculty member cannot change a MRHP protocol sent by their student, the faculty member should send the PDF of the completed F2FOC form to the student PI, who will attach it in the Document Summary (Section 13) of the MRHP protocol prior to sending the protocol back to the faculty supervisor, who reviews and approves the protocol
FACULTY MEMBER REQUEST FOR FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH

3. Faculty member completes the REB protocol through My Research Human Protocols (MRHP)
   - For new research, this is a new protocol submission
   - For research previously approved by the REB, this is a protocol amendment
   - For faculty supervisor’s Student PI protocol, faculty supervisor reviews and ‘approves’ protocol

4. Faculty member uploads the completed F2FOC Review form (PDF) to the Documents Summary (Section #13) of the MRHP submission or amendment

5. Faculty member submits the MRHP REB protocol, which goes to their Chair for review
• Chair reviews REB protocol received from faculty member:
  o Chair checks the ‘Notes and Document Summary’ section of the protocol to check/confirm whether the research involves face-to-face human participation and, if so, whether the faculty member has completed the F2FOC Review Form

• If yes, Chair emails a copy of the F2FOC Review form to the OISE Research Recovery Committee care of oise.research@utoronto.ca
REVIEWING PROPOSALS TO CONDUCT FACE-TO-FACE RESEARCH: OISE RESEARCH RECOVERY COMMITTEE

OISE Research Recovery Committee reviews the F2FOC form:

• For research proposed to take place in an OISE building: consults with relevant people in departments/units where research is proposed to take place

• Considers proposed research according to the OISE Divisional Plan for Research Recovery and Adaptation, including
  o Building capacity and related considerations for research in OISE buildings
    • coordination with other activities (e.g., teaching); occupancy max in building, within floors/units, and shared spaces (washrooms, elevators etc.); building maintenance; availability of PPE)
  o Prioritization of research
    • Student needs (program completion), sponsor requirements, faculty career milestones

• If a feasible plan is established, the OISE Research Recovery Committee emails the UofT Face-to-face COVID review committee (F2FCRC) at f2f.research@utoronto.ca to let them know the Chair/Recovery Committee has received a F2FOC Review form
REVIEWING PROPOSALS TO CONDUCT FACE-TO-FACE RESEARCH:
UOFT FACE-TO FACE COVID REVIEW COMMITTEE (F2FCRC)

• F2FCRC reviews the submitted F2FOC form:
  o The F2FCRC will connect with the PI as needed to gather additional information, discuss
    issues, and suggest protocol changes to address issues; this may be a back-and-forth
    process

• The F2FCRC emails the OISE Research Recovery Committee and the faculty member to
  provide recommendations to on the project’s risks and health and safety requirements
  regarding the appropriateness of the research request with respect to COVID-19 risks to
  researchers and participants, and whether and what modifications could be made to
  reduce these risks to an institutionally-acceptable level
REVIEWING PROPOSALS TO CONDUCT FACE-TO-FACE RESEARCH

• Incorporating information from OISE departments/units (as applicable) and the UofT F2FCRC, the OISE Research Recovery Committee decides whether to approve the research plan

• If YES, the Committee emails:
  o The F2FCRC (to inform them of the decision)
  o The Chair, who then ‘approves’ the MRHP protocol, which sends it for REB review

• If NO, the Committee emails the faculty member and Chair with explanatory information
  o The Chair sends the REB protocol back to the faculty member, including the explanatory information in the Notes section of the protocol
  o The faculty member may make changes and resubmit the protocol, which will be reviewed again
**REVIEWING PROPOSALS TO CONDUCT FACE-TO-FACE RESEARCH**

- Once the REB protocol is approved, the faculty member receives notification through MRHP.

- When the F2FOC plan and the REB protocol have been approved, the F2FCRC issues an approval letter to the faculty member.

- For research taking place in an OISE building, this letter is **necessary but not sufficient to start the research**.
  - The faculty member should reconnect with the OISE Research Recovery Committee, who will connect with department/unit staff to confirm when/how the research can be safely conducted in the building.
OFF-CAMPUS RESEARCH NOT INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
REQUESTING OFF-CAMPUS RESEARCH NOT INVOLVING FACE-TO-FACE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

• Examples include in-person archival data gathering at off-campus locations

• Faculty members who wish to conduct off-campus research should complete the F2FOC Review Form (provided as a PDF when the form is submitted) and email the form to ehs.office@utoronto.ca for review
  o The F2FOC form is used for both F2F and off-campus research; it contains branching logic so that only questions relevant to off-campus research are asked

• Faculty members will be contacted by UofT Occupational Health and Safety once the review of the F2FOC Review Form been conducted

• Questions in advance of submitting the form can be directed to OHS at ehs.office@utoronto.ca
INFORMATION SOURCES
MONITOR FOR CHANGES IN PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS IMPACTING FACE-TO-FACE AND OFF-CAMPUS RESEARCH

• Student COVID-19-related information is available on the OISE website

• Information regarding research recovery and adaptation is available for OISE faculty members on OISE Research’s Resources for Faculty SharePoint site

• General information regarding research and COVID-19 is available from the UofT Vice President Research and Innovation (VPRI) COVID-19 Research and Innovation Updates

• Researchers should monitor the VPRI Face to Face Human Research Review Status page periodically to keep up to date on public health directives and suspend activities as conditions require.

• Researchers conducting research outside the Toronto and Peel regions should also monitor local conditions to determine if research activities should be modified or suspended.