**Research and Research-related activities:**

**Researcher COVID-19 Short Checklist (From 30 April 2022)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Study title:** |  |
| **Researcher:** |  |
| **Location of research:** |  |

As we transition to a new phase of living with COVID, the University continues to be guided by the Scottish Government’s Strategic [Framework](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-scotlands-strategic-framework-update-february-2022/), and sector-specific [guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-universities-colleges-and-community-learning-and-development-providers/pages/overview/). Procedures for undertaking research and knowledge exchange fieldwork and/or with human participants will continue to reflect the University’s [guidance](https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/hss/SitePages/Latest-Covid-guidance-1-April.aspx). There are increased opportunities for undertaking in-person research activities, but there remains a need to risk assess the circumstances, and prioritise the implementation of routine mitigation measures.

In time, the implementation of these routine measures will be integrated into standard health and safety, travel, ethics and other approval procedures. During that transition, this checklist has been designed to support researchers to engage in best practice and identify, document and mitigate COVID-specific risks to the safety of participants (where applicable), and researchers.

This checklist does **not replace** other approval processes (including [travel](https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/business-travel/travel-safety/risk-assessments-travel-plan) and [fieldwork](https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/AcademicYearPlanning/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FAcademicYearPlanning%2FShared%20Documents%2FField%20Trips%20and%20Placements%2FUoE%5FField%5Ftrips%5Fand%5Fplacements%5Fguidance%5FApr22%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FAcademicYearPlanning%2FShared%20Documents%2FField%20Trips%20and%20Placements) risk assessments) that must be processed through the usual channels.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assessing risk and implementing routine measures (see** [**link**](https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/covid-19/hygiene-and-health)**)** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Provide brief detail** |
| The COVID related safety risks inherent in undertaking the activity do not **substantially exceed** the background risk level to which a researcher is likely to be exposed to were they to remain in their study or work base. |  |  |  |  |
| Researchers have been strongly encouraged to be vaccinated, where available (please follow [link](https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/covid-19/staff/pay-employment-policies/vaccination) to further guidance) |  |  |  |  |
| If feeling unwell with COVID related symptoms, researchers will stay at home and postpone the research activity until they feel better. |  |  |  |  |
| Research participants (or a representative) will be advised via the Participant Information Sheet that if they feel unwell with COVID related symptoms, then they should stay at home and postpone the research activity until they feel better. |  |  |  |  |
| Researchers will engage in appropriate hand and respiratory hygiene activities, and ensure the facilities are available for participants to do so too. |  |  |  |  |
| Researchers will make every effort to ensure that there is appropriate ventilation at the research site. |  |  |  |  |
| Although there is no longer a legal requirement for face coverings, as a default and as a courtesy to the participants, researchers are encouraged to continue to wear face coverings in indoor or communal spaces, unless it is likely to meaningfully impact on the research activity (please explain). |  |  |  |  |
| Will this research specifically aim to recruit participants in a group deemed at higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19 (see [link](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice))? If “Yes”, please detail why this research is required, and any additional ethical and safety safeguards that will be in place to provide enhanced protection for these participants (e.g., COVID testing). |  |  |  |  |
| The researcher will monitor the local COVID-19 related guidance, and adjust or suspend the research in line with these requirements. If the guidance is unclear, then researchers should discuss the changing guidance with colleagues (including, if appropriate, Health and Safety) and document the decision making. This may require further adjustments to risk assessments and insurance approvals, and updating the School given the fluidity of the situation. |  |  |  |  |
| Have updates been made to the study protocol/other study documents (including Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms) to incorporate additional risk and safety measures required? (see Appendix 1 below for suggested text) |  |  |  |  |

CI/PI Signature (*delete as appropriate)*: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1: Additional standardised text to be added to PIS and Consent Forms for COVID-19 ethical amendment/ new ethics application for research projects involving interaction with human participants**

N.B. this is suggested text, and language may be modified to suit the participant population. This information should be read in conjunction with theResearcher COVID-19 Short Checklist.

**Participant Information Sheet**

***Risks of participation (COVID-19) (insert after other section on risks of participation)***

We have taken specific steps to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 during the study by adhering to the most up to date Scottish Government [guidance](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/). These routine measures include making every effort to ensure i) good ventilation; ii) by default, continued use of face coverings; iii) good hand and respiratory hygiene; and iv) suspension of research if the researcher(s) or participant(s) have COVID symptoms. Further, university facilities used for research are subject to an enhanced cleaning regime.

{If you are a participant who is deemed at higher risk, but exceptionally the research is justified as there is either a clinical need or the benefits outweigh the risks, then researchers will have taken additional steps (TBC)}

However, even with these control measures, there remains some risk of exposure from participating in this study.

***What if I am unwell prior to the research interaction?***

If you feel unwell, experience COVID-19 related symptoms, then please contact the researcher (Name and telephone), and we will postpone or cancel the research interaction.

**Consent Form**

**Consent statement (COVID-19) – *additional***

I am aware that participating in this study at the current time may carry risks in relation to potential exposure to COVID-19, and I understand the steps that have been taken in relation to minimising the risks of exposure and transmission.