

University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research during COVID-19 Outbreak

In light of the COVID 19 outbreak, research and recruitment involving in-person contact with participants must be suspended, delayed or modified to minimize or eliminate risks to participants and the public. Due to the current, and quickly evolving, COVID-19 situation, all human participants researchers should have **stopped any in-person interactions with participants** unless doing so presents more danger to the participant than continuing the research. If you are in this unlikely situation please let the Human Participant Research Committee (HPRC) know immediately.

Research limited to online or web-based interaction with human participants is still permitted. In some research settings, investigators can consider if in-person participant interaction could be replaced with telephone or online communication. Considerations for the modification include the nature of the protocol, the type of participants engaged in the research, and any additional risk that may arise by switching from in-person to virtual communication. Revised participant consents or consent addenda may be required (e.g., to update privacy considerations with use of different communication channels). While TCPS 2 typically requires review and approval of modifications prior to implementation, an exception can be made where the change is necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participant(s) (Article 6.15). Such changes may be implemented but must be reported to the HPRC at the earliest opportunity (within 5 business days as a guide).

Where researchers are feeling unwell, efforts must be made to avoid or minimize in-person contact with others and to stay home to prevent transmission of any illness. If COVID-19 is known or suspected, Public Health Alberta protocols should be followed (<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>).

For further information on the University of Lethbridge Situation go to www.uleth.ca and click the link at the top of the homepage.

For further information on COVID-19, please see Health Canada's website for up-to-date information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>.

Guidance is subject to change as the situation evolves and we will advise on any changes on a regular basis. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Susan Entz at susan.entz@uleth.ca.

Take care of yourselves. Take care of each other.

Scott Allen, Chair, Human Participant Research Committee
Susan Entz, Research Ethics Officer