UVic Human Research Ethics COVID-19 Bulletin #6
Guidance for In-person Research with Human Participants
Under BC Restart Plan Steps 3 & 4

Date: July 21, 2021
To: Faculty and Student Researchers
From: Sandra Gibbons, Chair, Human Research Ethics Board
      Matt Murphy, Vice-chair, Human Research Ethics Board

The requirements and guidance in this Bulletin supersede those included in previous UVic Bulletins and guidelines.

**November 15, 2021 update:** Students are no longer required to seek a Special Authorization for International Travel from UVic Office of Global Engagement before submitting their research ethics application or in conjunction with the research ethics process for in-person research. The University does continue to advise students, their supervisors, faculty and staff to check the Global Engagement website for international travel updates during the pandemic.

On May 25, 2021, BC’s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, announced the four-step BC Restart Plan to facilitate the safe return to regular daily activities as the province emerges from the restrictions of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

As of July 1 BC has entered Step 3 of the Restart Plan. University of Victoria has entered Step 3 of the Restart Plan and Step 4 is anticipated September 1, 2021.

The University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) coordinates their guidance with UVic’s Restart Plan and with direction from:

- **UVic Occupational Health, Safety and Environment** (OHSE)
- **Associate Vice-President Research Operations**
- **UVic Global Engagement Office** (international travel safety) for student researchers

While public health restrictions are easing in BC - and in transition globally - researchers should continue to consider ways to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission within research teams, with participants and in communities.

Researchers’ intended start date/re-start for in-person research and the geographical location(s) of the study are of prime importance in their research ethics applications.
This guidance is subject to change if conditions warrant, such as updated orders from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and direction from the above UVic offices.

** Researchers who propose to use in-person activities during the pandemic must be prepared for a sudden shut down in the event of new health directives and advisories from the BC government, WorkSafe BC, public health entities, Indigenous nations as well as other regional, national or international directives or outbreaks that impact a specific study.

**In-person Research Involving Human Participants**

This Bulletin applies to:

- UVic campus facilities, classrooms and spaces *(on-campus)*
- Community *(off-campus)* locales - locally, nationally, and internationally

**UVic Occupational Health, Safety and Environment (OHSE) and in-person research**

*Effective July 15, 2021* UVic Safe Work Plans (SWP) have been replaced by the Communicable Disease *(CD)* Plan. One overarching UVic CD Plan covers research, teaching, and services.

1. Units/researchers are no longer required to create or customize their own safety plans. The CD Plan covers university activities\(^1\). See OHSE guidance on switch from SWP to CD Plan at end of this document. *Human research ethics will NOT ask you to provide a CD plan.*

2. During Restart, researchers will confirm in their ethics application or amendment that they have read and will adopt the UVic CD Plan as a minimum safety standard set out in this Bulletin.

3. Researchers proposing to conduct *off campus community research* in a location where it is difficult to summon help, and separated by significant time or distance from emergency or medical assistance are advised to contact OHSE about a *Field Safety Plan* (See OHSE details at end of this document.)

*Human research ethics will NOT ask you to provide the Field Safety Plan.*

What the Restart Steps 3 and 4 changes mean for approved studies and new studies:

Changes apply to studies in the paper-based system, in UVic-RAIS, and in the Provincial Research Ethics Platform (PREP).

- A research ethics amendment is required to resume all previously approved in-person research that has been on hold (or granted “Deferred Approval”) during the pandemic or to convert virtual studies to in-person research. Please follow human ethics instructions in this Bulletin.

- **Going virtual:** An amendment is required to switch an approved in-person study or course-based approval to a fully virtual study or approval.

- A research ethics amendment is required when proposing to reduce your COVID-19 health and safety procedures **below** the UVic CD Plan level for in-person activities in approved ethics applications. *Human ethics does not anticipate that researchers will propose to reduce their procedures below the CD Plan level unless there are special circumstances.* Please contact ethics@uvic.ca

If your study has been approved for in-person activities during COVID-19 and is ongoing with NO reductions to COVID-19 health and safety levels/practices, human ethics assumes you are adopting the UVic CD Plan. Barring no other modifications, you are NOT required to submit an amendment to human research ethics.

- Bulletin 6 instructions apply to new applications for initiating research with in-person activities (via a new Standard Application Form or Course-based Application Form).

*A Study Specific Assessment (Word document) for in-person activities is no longer required for new human research ethics applications or amendments under Restart Steps 3 and 4.*

**COVID-19 Studies:**
We will no longer be prioritizing COVID-19 studies for ethical review unless there are special circumstances. Please contact ethics@uvic.ca

**Student Research Involving International Travel:**
**November 15, 2021 update:** Students are no longer required to seek a Special Authorization for International Travel from UVic Office of Global Engagement before submitting their research ethics application or in conjunction with the research ethics process for in-person research. **The University does continue to advise students, their supervisors, faculty and staff to check the Global Engagement website for international travel updates during the pandemic.**

**Section I: On-Campus Research**
On-campus research activities include but are not limited to:
• Inviting participants to a campus space - indoor (e.g., classroom, office, lab, library, CARSA) or outdoor (e.g., venues, green spaces) to be screened for study eligibility, data collection activities etc.
• Recruiting individuals in a face-to-face manner on campus and/or to collect data from them during the interaction (e.g., hallways, green spaces)
• In-person research undertaken as part of coursework in in-person courses or course-based research (See Annotated Guidance)
• Non-UVic researcher conducting research in a campus facility or space (indoor or outdoor)

A Study Specific Assessment (Word document) is no longer required for Human Research Ethics Restart Steps 3 and 4.

Please provide the following directly in the research ethics application form specified sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Form &amp; Section</th>
<th>On-Campus: What’s needed &amp; details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section G.1 - Researchers’ Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>In G.1 confirm that you have read and will adopt the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan) for in-person research activities proposed the ethics application or amendment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments</td>
<td>If your in-person study involves both campus and off-campus (community) components please follow instructions in “Section II Off-campus in-person community research”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1.3B</td>
<td>Course-based Application: In C.1 add that you will mention the UVic CD Plan and this Bulletin to students in reference to their assignment(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section K - Recruitment</strong></td>
<td>In K.2.b:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Platform (Harmonized ethics) New studies &amp; amendments</td>
<td>• If using a hybrid of in-person and virtual recruitment activities specify which of the activities will be conducted in-person and virtually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5.4.A</td>
<td>• If applicable, include relevant and special health safety procedures above and beyond the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan) to reflect your study’s participant inclusion criteria, participants’ health vulnerability etc. (e.g., masking, hand sanitizing, physical distancing) when recruiting participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course-based Application: In C.3.a &amp; b, add that students will adhere to the CD Plan if using in-person recruitment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section L - Data Collection</strong></td>
<td>In Section L.1.B:</td>
</tr>
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<td>If applicable, include relevant and special health safety procedures above and beyond the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan). These procedures are specific to the geographical location of the in-</td>
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</table>
### Section 5.6

Person research, nature of the data collection activities, uses and types of equipment, duration of in-person interactions etc.

**Course-based Application:** In C.3.a. & b. *(if applicable)* please address relevant and special safety procedures above and beyond the CD Plan *(as described above).*

### Section M - Risks

**Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments Section 6.3**

1. In M.5a: Identify that health risks are associated with possible exposure to COVID-19 as relevant for this research.
2. In M.5b reference UVic Communicable Diseases (CD plan).
3. In M.5b if applicable, include any additional relevant and special health risks **above and beyond** the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan).
4. In M.6 include your response plan should harm occur (associated with COVID-19) --- e.g., contact tracing.

**Course-based Application:** In C.3.a. & b, add that students will adhere to the CD Plan if using in-person recruitment. Advise students to include a COVID-19 statement of risk and description of CD information in the consent form.

### Section S: Appendices

**Consent Form(s)**

**Provincial Platform (Harmonized ethics) New studies & amendments Section Page 9**

Add contact tracing statement to consent forms for Standard Application and **Course-based Application:**

Participants will be advised if they have or may have come into contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Contact information for participants will be stored in a separate file from research data in the event that follow up is needed.

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**Section II: Community (Off-campus) Research**

Community (off-campus) in-person research applies to research involving human participants conducted in locations, sites, or spaces other than, or in addition to, the UVic campus.

Community (off-campus) research includes but is not limited to research conducted in the following settings and locations with research participants:

- One or more geographical locations in a city, region or country
- Public outdoor spaces (parks, streets, town squares)
- Private indoor and outdoor settings (homes, properties, offices, businesses)
- Facilities or spaces under the jurisdiction or authority of an organization or entity (e.g., schools, community centers, non-governmental organizations, other post-secondary institutions, government offices, ocean vessels, etc.)
- Health facilities and clinics under the authority of a health authority, hospital, health region, private practitioner/clinician
• Lands and facilities under the authority of an Indigenous nation(s) or community

The HREB will not approve activities that do not adhere to the minimum standards imposed by the public health order for the locales (regions, countries) and organizations where research is taking place.

*A Study Specific Assessment (Word document) is no longer required for Human Research Ethics Restart Steps 3 and 4.*

**Updates on other UVic research processes for community in-person research (See the end of this document):**

- Guidance from Occupational Health, Safety and Environment (OHSE): pivoting from SWP’s to CD Plans and when a Field Safety Plan is needed.

- **November 15, 2021 update:** Students are no longer required to seek a Special Authorization for *International Travel* from UVic Office of Global Engagement before submitting their research ethics application or in conjunction with the research ethics process for in-person research. The University does continue to advise students, their supervisors, faculty and staff to check the [Global Engagement website](#) for international travel updates during the pandemic.

Please provide the following directly in the research ethics application form specified sections:

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. In G. 1 confirm that you have read and will adopt the UVic <a href="#">Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan)</a> for in-person research activities proposed in the ethics application or amendment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | 2. Studies outside of BC and Canada:  
| | In G.1 confirm that you have reviewed at least one of the following health websites relevant to the research location(s):  
| | • [Public Health Agency of Canada (Prevention and Risks)](#)  
| | • [World Health Organization (Situation dash board for countries)](#)  
| | **Course-based Application:** In C.1 add that you will mention the UVic CD Plan and this Bulletin to students in reference to their assignment(s) and if applicable, relevant public health websites for student assignments outside BC and Canada |
| **Section G.1 - Researchers’ Qualifications** | In G.1 research involving regional, national or international travel:  
| Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments | 1. If member(s) of the research team will travel (regionally, nationally or internationally) identify who will travel, and where they will travel to and from. |
| Section 4.2.C | 2. International research: If the researcher or members of the team are currently located in the country/countries where the study will be conducted, please include this information as well.  
3. If international travel applies, please include the above also in Section I.1. (UVic RAIS form)  
**Course-based Application:** Add the above information to section C.7. |
|---|---|
| **Section J - Research Description** | **Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments**  
**Section:** 5.1.B  
In J.1.c enter the month and year you intend to begin or re-start the in-person research activities.  
_in-person research activities usually include activities such as recruitment of participants, data collection and consent, meeting with Indigenous communities/nations, etc._  
**Course-based Application:** In C.1 enter anticipated start or re-start of students’ in-person assignments. |
| **Section K - Recruitment** | **Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments**  
**Section:** 5.4.A  
In K.2.b:  
1. If using a hybrid of virtual and in-person recruitment activities, specify which activities will be conducted virtually and in-person.  
2. If applicable, include relevant and special health safety procedures above and beyond the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan) to reflect participant inclusion criteria, vulnerability etc. (e.g., masking, hand sanitizing, physical distancing) when recruiting participants.  
**Course-based Application:** Please address the above in C.4. Please add that students will adhere to the CD Plan if using in-person recruitment if applicable. |
| **Section L - Data Collection** | **Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments**  
**Section:** 5.6  
In Section L.1b:  
1. If any in-person data collection occurs outside of BC, please include a link to the relevant health and safety website with the most recent health snapshot for the geographical region or country where in-person research will occur (e.g., infection rates/cases, hospitalizations, vaccination).  
2. If applicable, include relevant and special health safety procedures which are above and beyond the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan). These procedures are specific to the nature of the data collection activities, uses and types of equipment, duration of in-person interactions etc. |
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| Course-based Application: If the above are applicable, please address in C.5.  
1. In M.5a: Identify that health risks are associated with possible exposure to COVID-19 as relevant for this research.  
2. In M.5b reference UVic Communicable Diseases (CD plan).  
3. In M.5b if applicable, include any additional relevant and special health risks above and beyond the UVic Communicable Disease Plan (CD plan).  
4. In M.6 include your response plan should harm occur (associated with COVID-19) ---e.g., contact tracing.  
Course-based Application: In C.3.a & b, add that students will adhere to the CD Plan if using in-person recruitment. Advise students to include a COVID-19 statement of risk and description of CD information in the consent form.  
Section O- Free and Informed Consent |  
| Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments: Section 6.6 | Include the information you will provide in the consent materials as to risks associated with COVID-19 due to participation in the research project in Section O.3.  
Appendices | Off-campus & Community: What’s Needed  
Section S: Consent Form(s) | Include information from Sections L (Data Collection); M (Risks); and O. (Free and Informed Consent) in consent forms).  
Add contact tracing statement to consent forms for Standard Application and Course-based Application:  
Participants will be advised if they have or may have come into contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. Contact information for participants will be stored in a separate file from research data in the event that follow up is needed.  
Section S: Email or letter from host or partner organization | If in-person research activities (recruitment, data collection) will occur on the premises of a host/partner organization (e.g., school district, non-governmental organization, private company etc.)  
1. Upload email/letter from the organization agreeing to the above.  
2. Attach the organization’s safety document, communicable disease plan or equivalent.  
Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments Section Page 9  
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Section S: Email or letter from Indigenous nation/community Provincial Platform (Harmonized) New studies and amendments Section Page 9

Course-based Application: If the above are applicable, upload in appendix

If research consultation, recruitment or data collection will occur in an Indigenous nation/community or organization:

1. Upload an email/letter from the nation/community or organization agreeing to the in-person research activities.
2. Attach the nation/community’s safety document, communicable disease plan or equivalent.

Course-based Application: If the above are applicable, upload in appendix

Resource: The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in partnership with Research Ethics BC (REBC), part of the BC Academic Health Science Network, have created a Culturally Safe and Trauma-Informed Practices document for researchers to read and use as a resource when working with First Nations. Please read this document prior to engagement with communities.

Section III: Other UVic Research Processes for Community in-person Research

1. November 15, 2021 update: Students are no longer required to seek a Special Authorization for International Travel from UVic Office of Global Engagement before submitting their research ethics application or in conjunction with the research ethics process for in-person research. The University does continue to advise students, their supervisors, faculty and staff to check the Global Engagement website for international travel updates during the pandemic.

2. Update from Occupational Health, Safety and Environment (OHSE) Community (off campus) In-person Research – Field Safety Plan

Fieldwork / Community In-Person Research

- In general, all field activities, including community in-person research will follow the Communicable Disease (CD) Plan with no requirement for a Safe Work Plan (SWP) going forward.

- If someone is already out in the field/community (locally, regionally, internationally) with an approved SWP the recommendation is that they adopt the CD Plan and follow measures in the CD Plan (no requirement to contact OHSE to pivot to CD Plan). Continue to also follow the CP Plan and other safety protocols already established with OHSE (so long as doing so does not
pose an impediment to the research) for the duration of their project or trip.\textsuperscript{2} Please contact ohs@uvic.ca if you have questions.

**Field Safety Plans are required for:**

- Research fieldwork or field schools/trips, carried out by faculty, staff or students in the natural environment or community, away from the normal support networks of the university.

- Remote off-campus activities carried out in a location where it is difficult to summon help, and is separated by significant time or distance from emergency or medical assistance. Examples include: working more than 10km from a facility with telephone or radio communications; emergency or medical assistance is more than 1 hour away; or areas with limited traffic, open waters, dense vegetation, and/or other topographic features, which makes it difficult to obtain assistance.

Note: there may be circumstances where a field safety plan is not required if the nature of the trip, its activities or the travel does not introduce elevated risks. Please contact OHSE or Risk Management for guidance.

\textsuperscript{2} Human ethics does not expect researchers will reduce their health and safety procedures below the CD Plan level unless there are special circumstances. Please contact ethics@uvic.ca