**[Re]starting Face-to-Face Research – Risk Assessment**

Following the government announcement to lift the remaining COVID-19 restrictions with effect from 19th July 2021, it is important to ensure any research activity paused due to COVID, or new research activities, (re)commence safely and ethically. DMU will continue to closely monitor applications for face-to-face research as the COVID landscape is still very changeable.

The following is intended to guide researchers through some key questions relevant to research in the current COVID climate. This is not an exhaustive list and will vary depending upon the nature of your research. Any research requiring face-to-face interaction must adhere to Faculty and University-wide announcements/guidelines, and current government guidelines, here in the UK or abroad.

Please note that the status with the pandemic is ever-changing – new restrictions may come in place quite suddenly, or there may be further local lockdowns**. Please do consider how you are going to mitigate risks to your research if face-to-face research had to come to a halt again.**

**UG/PGT Research Projects:** Please check with the relevant Module Leader on face-to-face research activity for UG/PGT projects. These can only start when permission has been granted, both in terms of ethics review and the relevant risk assessments.

**FORM 1** – Study Restart – for studies with active ethics approval wishing to resume face-to-face research, or to amend the protocol to allow face-to-face research.

**FORM 2** – New Study – for new applications.

**KEY CONTACTS:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Faculty** | **Ethics Email** | **Web Link** |
| Arts, Design and Humanities (ADH) | ADHEthics@dmu.ac.uk  | <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/faculty-specific-procedures/art-design-and-humanities-ethics-procedures.aspx>  |
| Business and Law (BAL) | balresearchethics@dmu.ac.uk | <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/faculty-specific-procedures/bal.aspx> |
| Computing, Engineering and Media (CEM) | ethics.CEM@dmu.ac.uk |  |
| Health and Life Sciences (HLS) | hlsfro@dmu.ac.uk | <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/pg-and-research/human-research-ethics/health-and-life-sciences-ethics-procedures.aspx> |

**FORM 1 – For those researchers wishing to restart face-to-face research**

**Please complete the following assessment. Please justify your responses in the additional comments section, including any measures taken to mitigate risks. Please return the form to your Faculty Research and Innovation Office using the relevant email address.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Researcher Name:** | **P Number:** |
| **Project Title:** |
| **Date of ethics approval:** | **Reference number:** |
| **Date:**  |
| **Area** | **Question:** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Additional Comments** |
| **Is the study viable?** | * Are any localised restrictions still in place that would affect access to the target population (children at school, for example)
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Are support resources (research assistants etc) still available?
 |  |  |  |
| * If the study is funded, is funding still available?
 |  |  |  |
| * Do you have access to the required facilities (laboratories, workshops, research sites)?
 |  |  |  |
| * Will anxiety relating to Covid transmission amongst participants affect recruitment?
 |  |  |  |
| * Has existing ethical approval expired and if yes, does it need extending?
 |  |  |  |
| **Area** | **Question:** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Additional Comments** |
| **Is the study safe?** | * Is there documented justification for face-to-face research?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there a documented health and safety risk assessment for the study that considers COVID risks to participants and researchers (including PPE, social distancing, minimal contact, alternative ‘online’ research methods)?
 |  |  |  |
| * Will participants be put at greater risk than would be expected in their current daily activities?
 |  |  |  |
| * Can the study be paused, or amended, should restrictions be re-introduced?
 |  |  |  |
| * Are collaborative partners able to meet safety requirements?
 |  |  |  |
| * Has consideration been given to international partners and restrictions in place in that country?
 |  |  |  |
| * Has consideration been given to the impact on vulnerable participants including those that may be isolating/shielding or have concerns about the research interaction
 |  |  |  |
| * Are any change to ethics approval required to reflect alterations to study protocol?
 |  |  |  |
| * Has consideration been given to current travel restrictions internationally? All travel must follow DMU guidelines.
 |  |  |  |
| * For researchers already overseas, for example residing in another country and wishing to complete research in that country, a robust plan should be developed to show how the relevant government guidelines will be followed.
 |  |  |  |
| **Human tissue risks to consider:** |
| * Does the study use stored (frozen etc.,) human tissue/biological samples that may be infected with COVID?
 |  |  |  |
| * Is it safe to collect biological samples? (Consider social distancing, PPE.)
 |  |  |  |
| **Area** | **Question:** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Additional Comments** |
| **Is there capacity for the study?** | * Have you contacted other collaborative partners to see if they have capacity for the study to start/restart?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a phased-start or restart possible to lessen the impact?
 |  |  |  |
| * Does the study refer participants to counselling or other similar services where capacity may be affected by an increase in demand or limited service availability?
 |  |  |  |
| * Where relevant, have you contacted NHS partners to see if they have capacity for the study to start/restart? For studies sponsored by DMU, confirmation must be forwarded to HLSFRO@dmu.ac.uk.
 |  |  |  |

**FORM 2 – New research ethics applications requiring face-to-face research.**

**Please complete the following assessment. Please justify your responses in the additional comments section, including any measures taken to mitigate risks. Please upload a copy of this form, and supporting documentation, with your WorkTribe application.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Researcher Name:** | **P Number:** |
| **Project Title:** |
| **Date:** |
| **Area** | **Question:** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Additional Comments** |
| **Is the study viable?** | * Are localised restrictions still in place that would affect access to the target population (children at school, for example)?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Are all support resources (research assistants etc) available?
 |  |  |  |
| * Do you have access to the required facilities (laboratories, workshops, research sites)?
 |  |  |  |
| * Will anxiety relating to Covid transmission amongst participants affect recruitment?
 |  |  |  |
| **Area** | **Question:** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Additional Comments** |
| **Is the study safe?** | * Is there documented justification for face-to-face research?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there a documented health and safety risk assessment for the study that considers COVID risks to participants and researchers (including PPE, social distancing, minimal contact, alternative ‘online’ research methods)?
 |  |  |  |
| * Will participants be put at greater risk than would be expected in their current daily activities?
 |  |  |  |
| * Can the study be paused, or amended, should restrictions be re-introduced?
 |  |  |  |
| * Are collaborative partners able to meet safety requirements?
 |  |  |  |
| * Has consideration been given to international partners and restrictions in place in that country?
 |  |  |  |
| * Has consideration been given to the impact on vulnerable participants including those that may be isolating/shielding or have concerns about the research interaction.
 |  |  |  |
| * Has consideration been given to current travel restrictions internationally?
 |  |  |  |
| * For researchers already overseas, for example residing in another country and wishing to complete research in that country, a robust plan should be developed to show how the relevant government guidelines will be followed and submitted to the Chair of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.
 |  |  |  |
| **Human tissue risks to consider:** |
| * Does the study use stored (frozen etc.) human tissue/biological samples that may be infected with COVID?
 |  |  |  |
| * Is it safe to collect biological samples (consider social distancing, PPE)?
 |  |  |  |
| **Area** | **Question:** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Additional Comments** |
| **Is there capacity for the study?** | * Have you contacted collaborative partners to see if they have capacity for the study to start/restart?
 |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a phased-start possible to lessen the impact?
 |  |  |  |
| * Does the study refer participants to counselling or other similar services where capacity may be affected by an increase in demand or limited service availability?
 |  |  |  |