# UCL IOE Risk Assessment Form

Starting or Resuming Fieldwork in the contexts of COVID-19

This risk assessment form relates to the [IOE Starting or Resuming Face-to-Face Fieldwork -](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research/research-ethics/ethics-applications-ioe-staff-and-visitors/ioe-starting-or-resuming-face-face-fieldwork)

[Response to Research and changed contexts due to COVID-19](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research/research-ethics/ethics-applications-ioe-staff-and-visitors/ioe-starting-or-resuming-face-face-fieldwork). Before completing this form, please make sure you have read this guidance and are familiar with the process for approving projects that aim to start or resume fieldwork.

This form has been designed so that IOE researchers can:

* be made aware of the risks and hazards involved in starting or resuming to fieldwork and face-to-face data collection during the global COVID-19 pandemic, and what steps to take to mitigate them
* indicate the risks and hazards they may encounter in their fieldwork for their specific research project
* indicate what measures they plan to put in place to mitigate these risks and hazards

This form is also to be used by IOE reviewers to offer feedback on a project’s risks and Covid-19 safety.

We realise that country responses to Covid19 are varied, volatile and subject to change and that some government policies may not sufficiently offer an adequate standard of care for researchers and your intended participants.

The IOE Research Ethics Committee and Team will do our best to support researchers and their participants during this time. Please use this risk assessment form, even if your research is in a country context where regulations related to Covid19 have been reduced or removed. Please check carefully and include details: do not assume because a government lifts legal frameworks that the contexts of your research do not have guidance in place, or Covid19 risks that still need to be addressed within the conduct of your research. For example, in New Zealand, in early Autumn 2021 policies and practices are in place concerning transport and ‘sign in’ registers for some contexts: <https://www.education.govt.nz/covid-19/>

Advice: Please continue to use the areas we ask you to address to help the reviewers understand the context of your research and your careful response to safety and risk in relation to Covid19. Please contact your Department’s Research Ethics Coordinator (see IOE Research Ethics Committee Membership at  [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research/research-ethics/ethics-applications-ioe-students)](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research/research-ethics-ucl-institute-education)) or the IOE Research Ethics Office to help you think about how best to address these areas

Actions required – please:

1. **Read** the list of risks, hazards and control measures in the Appendix
2. **Complete** all sections of this form in full, providing as much detail as possible and referring to the guidance in the Appendix
3. **Email** this form to [ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk)

If you are reviewing this form, please answer all questions in the yellow highlighted ‘reviewer feedback’ sections, then email this form back to [ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk)

## Section 1: Project Details

1. Name(s) of researcher(s) submitting this risk assessment: Enter text
2. Name of supervisor (if applicable): Enter text
3. Research project title: Enter text
4. IOE department: Enter text
5. Is this project:

A resumption of a project that has already been granted full ethical approval by the IOE Research Ethics Committee:

* Project REC code:

A new project that has not yet received full ethical approval:

1. Brief description of project, including location(s) of fieldwork (maximum 300 words):

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 2: Project Participants

Please indicate below the categories of people potentially at risk from any activities within your research project and that will be covered by this risk assessment:

Researcher(s):

Members of the public:

Research participants:

Other:

More details:

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 3: Risk Assessment

1. Please read the **Appendix** on **COVID-19 risks and hazards** (pg. 3 onwards), and enter details of the potential risks arising from the work planned for this project below, **ensuring you are responding to risks highlighted in each of Hazards 1, 2, and 3**. Please make sure you provide links to national guidance relevant to COVID-19 and the context/country in relation to: (i) travel, (ii) the site or setting (iii) people who are at heightened risk, where relevant.

For example, ‘*members of research team will have to use public transport to travel to the school where fieldwork will take place’*

Please note: if your research is being conducted in a country context where regulations related to Covid19 have been reduced or removed, please supply links to confirm this. Examples:

1. **Travel** https://www.transport.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/
2. **Site or setting** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/>
3. **People who are at heightened risk** https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 3a - Reviewer feedback:

Has the P.I. identified all the risks related to the face-to-face fieldwork elements of their research? If no, please elaborate below, indicating any actions needed

☐ - Yes ☐ - No ☐ - Partially

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Please confirm the steps you will take to mitigate the above COVID-19 related hazards and risks. See the Appendix for some examples of control measures. Please reference specific control measures or sections of the Appendix, where possible.

For example, (in reference to the above) *‘members of research team will be asked to plan their journeys ahead to avoid busy times. They will be asked to wear a face covering while travelling, as well as trying to socially distance as much as possible. They will be encouraged to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser once their journey is complete’*

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 3b - Reviewer feedback:

Has the P.I. provided adequate control measures for the risks described above? If ‘no’ or ‘partially’, please elaborate below, indicating any actions needed

☐ - Yes ☐ - No ☐ - Partially

Click or tap here to enter text.

Has the P.I. provided links to national guidance or documentation regarding COVID-19, relevant to their research and/or fieldwork site? If ‘no’ or ‘partially’, please elaborate below, indicating any actions needed

☐ - Yes ☐ - No ☐ - Partially ☐ - N/A

Click or tap here to enter text.

Any other comments or actions:

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Section 4: Declaration

Researcher’s signature/name: Enter text

Date: Enter text

# Appendix: COVID-19 risks and hazards

**Safety Information on hazards, risks and control measures which may apply:**

*(Source: UCL RiskNET)*

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. The virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets fall on people in the vicinity and can be directly inhaled or picked up on the hands and transferred when someone touches their face.

# Starting or resuming fieldwork risks

Research staff who travel to fieldwork or other outdoor working (UK only) at this time must follow the risk control measures as outlined below. There are 5 priority controls stated by UCL for all to follow:

1. If you or a member of your team are classed as vulnerable or extremely vulnerable (at increased risk of severe illness) in relation to COVID-19 – please follow UCL guidance about travel in this context and discuss with your **line manager**.
2. Keep in mind the symptoms of COVID-19 and adhere to government guidelines on self-isolation as appropriate. Do not attend work or undertake research if you think you may be unwell or if someone in your household is unwell. Symptoms include a new, continuous cough, high temperature and/or loss of taste or smell.
3. Strictly follow government guidelines on social distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene.
4. Reduce the number of people carrying out fieldwork and face to face data collection.
5. Researchers must keep in contact with their teams or supervisor, if relevant, and constantly review any work being conducted. Task specific protocols and risk assessments must be kept up to date, in response to new hazards or changes in risk level. Please email [ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ioe.researchethics@ucl.ac.uk) if you need to update us, or would like to discuss anything.

## Hazard 1: Infection transmission travelling to & from fieldwork

*Risk: Participants or researchers may contract COVID-19 as a result of contact with infected individuals or contaminated surfaces*

Control measures:

### Primary controls

* Stay at home – continuation of remote working is encouraged, where possible
* Quarantine – those with symptoms must not travel to, or attend, the workplace. Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 must be sent home and stay at home for at least 7 days from the onset of symptoms. You can stop self-isolating after 7 days if your symptoms have gone, or if you just have a cough or changes to your sense of smell or taste - these symptoms can last for weeks after the infection has gone. Keep self-isolating if your COVID-19 symptoms persist after 7 days. If someone lives in a household where someone else is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, then they must also stay at home in line with the NHS guidance.
* Researchers are encouraged to walk, cycle or use cars/taxis to travel to and from fieldworks. Avoid using public transport wherever possible.
* Researchers are encouraged to avoid overnight stays and complete all fieldwork in one day trip where possible.
* Where overnight stay is required such arrangements must meet social distancing guidelines.
* If researchers need to use public transport, consideration must be given to avoidance of peak times and known busy periods wherever possible. An individual researcher may still chose a busier period because of individual circumstances, but the impact of this should be discussed.

### When travelling (walking/cycling/public transport):

* Only use public transport if you have to. If you must use public transport, take the following additional precautions:
* Check with your provider for the latest travel advice before you leave.
* Plan ahead and use a direct route.
* Travel at 'off peak' times, which means avoid travel between 05:45 to 08:15 and 16:00 to 17:30, Monday to Friday.
* Take hand sanitiser and a face covering. Wearing of face covering is mandatory on public transport.
* Wash or sanitise your hands before beginning your journey - and when you arrive.
* Try to maintain social distancing, for example when approaching or passing other people, waiting on platforms or at stops.
* If you can't stay away from people (e.g. when boarding or alighting, on busier services, at busier times of day) try to face away from other people, and keep the time you spend near others as short as possible.
* Use a face covering when you will be close to others.
* Be aware of the surfaces you touch. Be careful not to touch your face.
* Use contactless payment where possible, to avoid topping up Oyster cards.
* Always follow instructions from TfL or other transport staff.

### If using taxis or private hire vehicles, take the following steps:

* Book a trip in advance where possible, to avoid using taxi ranks.
* At taxi ranks, keep 2 metre distance from people outside your household.
* Follow the advice of your driver as they may have put in place additional precautions, such as which seat to use.
* Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch and wash or sanitise your hands before and after a journey.
* Wear a face covering (fabric covering your nose and mouth) inside the car.

### If using private vehicles to travel, take the following steps:

* If you normally share a vehicle with people from other households, you should find a different way to travel if possible.
* Plan your route, including any breaks, before setting out. Routes may be different as local areas make changes to enable social distancing on pavements and cycle routes. This particularly applies to central London.
* If you have to travel with people outside your household, try to share the transport with the same people each time and keep to small groups of people at any one time. Consider seating arrangements to optimise distance between people in the vehicle.
* Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch and wash or sanitise your hands before and after a journey.
* If sharing the journey, wear a face covering (fabric covering your nose and mouth) inside the car.

## Hazard 2: Fieldwork sites and shared areas

Staff / students (PhD and Postgraduate researchers) who travel to fieldwork or other outdoor working (UK only) at this time must follow the risk control measures as outlined in this assessment.

### General

* Each fieldwork site will generate its own risk profile and should be considered as an individual case; risk assessments should not be copied across instances. Thorough preparation ahead is required.
* In all cases, wherever possible, maintain a 2 metre (6'6") distance between people. If it is impossible to remain 2 metres apart in circulation spaces, face away from other people whilst passing them.
* The current Government (national and local) and Regulatory bodies’ guidance/ recommendations for working must be followed. This is rapidly evolving and is found in different places.
* If your research takes place in a setting or settings (such as a school) then you should also follow guidance/recommendations that have been implemented in that setting
* Consideration needs to be given on how equipment and PPE will be cleaned or disposed of safely
* Increase ventilation by opening windows where possible
* If relevant, the control measures and new ways of working must be communicated to all project staff before fieldwork or data collection begins.

### PPE & Hygiene

* Researchers and participants should be using appropriate PPE for the setting, including hand sanitisers and gloves (and possibly face coverings/masks) as indicated by government guidance. PPE must not be shared.
* Having strong measures in place to promote good hygiene is paramount. It is widely accepted that all researchers should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more and more frequently than normal. As many public toilets may be closed, consideration needs to be given to this aspect. Hand sanitiser should be used where hand washing is not convenient.
* Allow frequent breaks to attend to hygiene requirements.
* Areas or process steps where people directly pass items to each other must be identified and risks of transmission mitigated. Prevent direct contact between people, using a 'put-down-pick-up' process for example.
* Wash your hands before and after using shared tools, objects, materials, equipment and other items. If a hand wash sink is not available, use hand sanitiser.

### UCL Insurance

* UCL has a Business Travel Insurance policy that will insure UCL employees, students, and persons assisting UCL with its business who are normally resident in the UK. When travelling on UCL business you'll need to register your trip. Please refer to Travel on UCL Business webpage for further information: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/expenses-insurance/travel-ucl-business
* UCL personnel are covered, subject to financial limits, for Personal Accident, Medical Expenses (this includes COVID), Personal property, Money, Kidnap and Ransom, Personal Liability/Legal Expenses”
* UCL costs of travel aren’t. Any booked flights and hotels that need to be cancelled while the FCO guidance remains “against all but essential travel”, are not covered under the insurance policy. Do assess whether the travel could be delayed until the FCO guidance is relaxed.
* UCL insurer will require assurance that all government advice and guidelines are being followed, hence it is vital to complete specific risk assessments, and both the FCO’s guidance and the national or regional guidance must be followed. This should include considering the availability and standard of medical assistance available to travels in the destination country, and the ability to repatriate travels.
* If an individual is resident in an overseas country, they may not be covered by UCL travel insurance. This should be checked on a case by case basis with the UCL insurance team. For staff resident in, or on long term secondment, current overseas policy is:
* All UCL staff and students are covered under UCL’s Personal Injury insurance when working on UCL business.
* This policy applies to staff and students' resident overseas, or seconded (defined as staff who are contracted to work overseas for a period over 12 months).
* Where overseas resident and seconded individual are required to travel as part of their role (either in-country of internationally), additional travel insurance should be requested here https://www.ucl.ac.uk/staff/task/arrange-travel-insurance, this also allows the secondee to have a health insurance policy in place for GP and pre-existing medical treatment.
* UCL insurer will require assurance that all government advice and guidelines are being followed, hence it is vital to complete specific risk assessments, and both the FCO’s guidance and the national or regional guidance must be followed.
* Where staff are resident in the country, and are not a secondee, then they are responsible for their own medical and insurance cover when not on UCL business.

Note - UCL does not have any cover in force for Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Venezuela or Yemen. This should be flagged to RSA via the UCL insurance team.

## Hazard 3: Heightened risk for vulnerable groups

There may be heightened risks faced by individuals from exposure to COVID-19 in community settings or the workplace. This includes people more at risk due to their ethnicity, age, disability or status as new or expectant mothers.

* Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and may be clinically vulnerable. Concerning evidence suggests that the impact may also be higher among men and those in the higher age groups.
* There is evidence that COVID-19 has a greater impact in older age groups, particularly those over 50. Therefore, older staff and participants may be more at risk and they are also more likely to have long-term health conditions.
* People with disabilities may face additional challenges returning to fieldwork.
* Pregnant individuals, at whatever stage of pregnancy, are classed as at higher risk from COVID-19. Those returning from maternity leave must also be considered.
* If researchers wish to seek advice, or a research staff member wishes to discuss a health issue in confidence, then they can make a referral to [Workplace Health](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/workplace-health).

### Control measures:

* Stay at home; researchers are encouraged to work from home wherever possible to do so. This is particularly applicable to those who may be at higher risk.
* UCL is taking a risk-based approach to UCL researchers who may be asked to star or return to working in fieldwork or other outdoor working (UK only). Anyone returning to fieldwork is asked to follow [UCL Coronavirus guidance](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/coronavirus/) and refer to either Workplace Health via [ohw-wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ohw-wellbeing@ucl.ac.uk) (staff) or [Student Support and Wellbeing](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-support-and-wellbeing) to help ensure you are protected. However, individuals should not feel they must disclose underlying health conditions to their line manager if they do not wish to do so.
* Line managers/Principal Investigators/supervisors must have sensitive and comprehensive conversations with individuals who may be at heightened risk. They must listen carefully to concerns, provide support and consider adjustments. Adjustments may include undertaking lower-risk tasks, limiting exposure (for example through reducing working times) and working from home
* All members of the UCL community can access support through [Care First.](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/evening-and-weekend-support)
* All research participants need to be made aware of the hazards and risks arising from their participation that may be relevant in the context of the project and consider how these will be mitigated prior to agreeing to participation.