Columbia University COVID-19 Guidelines for Field or Community Research

Updated: March 9, 20221; effective March 14, 2022

These Guidelines are regularly updated in response to changing COVID-19 circumstances.

Current Guidelines:

1. Research plans for field/community research must comply, to the extent possible, with the same University COVID-19 requirements as apply to on-campus research activity, including researcher/staff vaccination policy and other requirements as noted on the Columbia COVID-19 website for on-site research at Columbia. Exceptions may apply if a particular research facility implements risk reduction guidelines that are functionally equivalent to those guiding research on Columbia’s campuses. As always, field/community research must comply with the University’s local and international travel policies.

2. For research outside of New York City, such plans must also comply with any local requirements, e.g., vaccination, testing, isolation and quarantine requirements for travelers from New York.

3. Plans for field/community research should outline the types of activities, the risks involved, the risk mitigation strategy, and plans for response in the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case among researchers/staff or enrolled or potential research participants. Fieldwork plans must address the following COVID-19 concerns, as applicable: travel risk, including both travel to the research site and travel while at the field site; food and lodging risk; and research activity risk.

4. Field/community research plans must also consider the risk to the community, as well as to the researcher and to the campus upon the researcher’s return.

5. Field/community research requiring in-person interactions, including human subjects research, will require a plan to be reviewed by the applicable department, school, center or institute in accordance with University and school procedures. Such research must be conducted in accordance with the COVID-19 Guidelines for Human Subject Research, which currently include a two-way face covering requirement, i.e., both members of the research team and research participants or potential participants must wear a non-cloth mask, with limited exceptions. If the individual does not have such a mask, the research team should provide one.