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Research Contingency Group

Introduction

As outlined in [Research Activities Spring Term 2021 \(RCG\)](#) research activities at York have been operating at *de facto* Department for Education tier three since the Government publication of the [National lockdown: Stay at Home](#) guidance on 04 January 2021.

Following the Government announcement of a cautious easing of the national lockdown for England on 22 February 2021 and publication of the [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 \(paragraphs 89/90\)](#), Research Contingency Group considered options for continuation of research activities: a slow and steady, managed move to *de facto* DfE tier two by the start of summer term (19 April) is proposed.

Proposal for Research Activity from March 2021

From Monday 01 March 2021: Research activity in specialist facilities on campus (predominantly labs and research facilities) will continue but move back over that week to *de facto* DfE Department for Education tier two as in the [Tiered Research Activities Autumn Term 2020 \(RCG\)](#) paper previously agreed by RCG.

- *At tier two (fallback position) we propose that all lab and research activities continue as they were at the start of (Autumn) term: field work, face-to-face research, including performance-arts related research of a directly face-to-face nature, can continue.*

The on campus operational change is that building and lab occupancies can increase to those in place around September last year approximating to around 50% occupancy for larger labs and research facilities: this will be managed departmentally with faculty oversight. The status of PGT and final year students carrying out research projects built into the [Tiered Research Activities Autumn Term 2020 \(RCG\)](#) paper and the [Practical Teaching Activities Autumn Term 2020: Tier 3 \(ACG\)](#) paper, where they are treated as researchers, is consistent with [government guidance](#); access will be managed departmentally with faculty oversight.

It is important to note that the revised COVID-19 risk assessments that were put in place in January 2021 to account for the new more transmissible variant will remain in place and all practical spaces will operate on a two metre (shoulder-to shoulder) social distancing regime. There is also an expectation that all staff and students on campus will undergo LFD testing twice a week ([see table three page 49](#)).

From Monday 29 March 2021: Based on the Government plan to allow the *rule of six or two household mixing outdoors* being achieved ([step 1 phase 2: page 27](#)), Fieldwork can continue based on the revised departmental level overlay COVID-19 risk assessments above. This will be managed Departmentally through the [Offsite Work and Study COVID-19 Secure Check Sheet](#): fieldwork will no longer require DSG sign off.

From Monday 12 April 2021: Based on the Government plan to open *additional (indoor) premises that should be visited alone* ([step 2 paragraph 110 pages 33-34](#)) Face-to-face research activity can be resumed but must be conducted in line with the revised departmental level overlay COVID-19 risk assessments outlined above and signed off by the Head of Department or Directorate or nominated representative using the [Face to Face Research Activity COVID-19 Secure Check Sheet \(Final\)](#).

During this period (up to May 2021) there will be active review of on campus confirmed COVID-19 cases to ensure that each of these steps does not have a noticeable detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of staff and students.

Proposed Next Steps

We ask that RCG support this continuation of research activity as outlined above so it can be rapidly communicated to Departments to allow them to actively manage this transition.

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