



Facilitation Support: Adapting Research Plans to COVID-19

Purpose

- This document is intended to provide support for adapting research plans given the new reality as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
- The goal is to generate:
 - discussion among researchers on adapting research, and
 - additional ideas or approaches for adapting research to the new reality
- Ultimately, success will be measured by the extent to which this initiative assists researchers in adapting to pandemic restrictions, students remain engaged and employed – all while preserving the health and safety of researchers and students

Scope

- In scope
 - facilitation of adapting research plans to COVID-19 particularly where students are involved
 - support available for adaptive approaches
- Out of scope (these will be addressed elsewhere)
 - Grant / contract extensions or deferrals
 - PDF package
 - Financial support to replace undergrad / grad student employment compensation
 - Tuition relief

Adapting research plans: illustrative examples

- If the researcher feels strongly that her/his/their research program (field, lab or both) must continue in whole or in part, they are invited to complete and submit a [risk assessment form](#)
 - The tolerance for health risk (exposure to COVID-19) is extremely low
 - The perception of over-reacting is preferred to potential consequences of under-reacting
- Adapt experiment-based research to include only acceptably low-risk activities
 - E.g. Mark Brigham – along with colleagues across Canada, proposing to sample bat activity remotely in inner city, suburban and rural habitats in close proximity



where it is clearly articulated that this work can be done safely with zero chance of violating physical distancing rules

- Re-deploy grad students to value-added activities that can be done from home working remotely
 - Data analysis
 - Modeling
 - Writing
- Even if you don't have a backlog of data, there is an opportunity for grad student or Post-Docs to participate in an international match-making exercise like this one:
<https://otlet.io/coivd19-resources>
 - Grad students in need of research projects are matched with researchers who have available datasets/ideas
 - Opportunity is available for masters, PhD students, Post-Docs and researchers who are currently affected by COVID-19 restrictions
 - Opportunity is open to all disciplines

Support available for adaptive approaches involving working from home

- Software
 - An option to access software on campus for faculty and staff is to use RDP to connect to their work machine where the software is already installed
 - Some software like SPSS has been made available for a free trial until June 15th (see <https://staging.uregina.ca/remote-learning/>). Staff can also request that SPSS be installed on their home machine through IT Support although IBM doesn't formally support at home use when access to the license server is through a VPN server.
 - Some specialized software available through appsanywhere (see <https://www.uregina.ca/is/common/ur/software/appsanywhere.html> and the link to the list of available software) but it is only licensed for public lab machines. To help researchers through work from home we can license it for a single Windows device for \$25/year/device +tax but this would be limited to one year of use due to the high management overhead of administering/auditing the per device licensing model.
 - In some instances, software is open source and free of cost (e.g. R statistical analysis software) and can be installed on any reasonable computer such as student laptops
 - Limited funding from VPR will be made available for software licensing (e.g. statistical or bioinformatics software licenses) required for data analysis or modeling activities



- Assistance for students to install software required to conduct analyses from home (Gavin Simpson)
- Hardware
 - Access to more powerful computing resources on IECs computers that can be accessed remotely, especially for using/running R, if students needed access to hardware that they don't have at home (Gavin Simpson)
- Training and support for quantitative data analysis using R or similar software (Gavin Simpson)
 - Zoom workshops – topics including:
 - Introduction to R
 - Data science and data visualization in R
 - Applied statistics
 - Version control for code/analysis with git/GitHub
 - Reproducible research
 - Writing papers and theses using reproducible research tools (rmarkdown, Pandoc)
 - Virtual office hours to do more focused work with students where there are specific questions about specific data or research questions
- Training and support for qualitative data analysis (see Library resources section below)
 - Using NVivo or other software such as Dedoose or Atlas.ti
 - In addition to the NVivo workshop Cara Bradley is planning, are there other faculty who could volunteer time and expertise for workshops on qualitative data analysis approaches like narrative inquiry, discourse analysis (i.e. not just software)
- Library resources
 - Online books and journals, digitization services, <https://uregina.libguides.com/covid-19/>
 - All information on this web page is subject to change at short notice. Please check this page regularly.
 - Zoom workshops with graduate students as the primary audience are being scheduled on topics including (Cara Bradley)
 - Using the library from off-campus
 - NVivo for qualitative data analysis
 - Qualtrics for online survey research
 - Conducting a literature review