



## Critical Research Assessment Tool for Designation of Critical Research During the COVID-19 Closure

May 20, 2020

Designation of proposed research activities as “Critical Research” is required by the Faculty Dean before proposals are referred to the Research Safety Committee (RSC) for review of safety protocols. Following RSC endorsement, proposals are forwarded back to the Dean for any needed revision and then onto the Vice President of Innovation and Research (VPRI) for final approval. A designation of Critical Research is further tied to the current status of the institutional Phase within the COVID-19 shutdown defined by the University of Windsor Framework for Resumption of Research, a living document updated regularly as the COVID-19 situation changes. Activities permitted under COVID-19 closure follow a Phased process as dictated by Provincial restrictions and the current institutional status established by the Pandemic Planning Committee. Under stage 0, only essential activities and research occurring at home and/or using on-line internet resources are allowed to occur. Approved Critical Research projects are allowed to take place on campus and off-campus under Phases 1-3 with degree of restrictiveness of activities and total project numbers decreasing with increase in phase status. Any research involving human participants can only occur under Phase 4 designation. Phase 4 defines the removal of COVID-19 conditions regarding institutional operation allowing for resumption of normal institutional practices at the direction of the University President.

The criticality of research should account for several aspects of the proposed research activity being evaluated. This includes urgency and time sensitiveness of the research, impact of research on collaborators, funding agency timelines and deliverables, impact on physical and economic health of the community and contribution to student training. The above activity attributes should be balanced against additional risks related to implementing the proposed activities as it relates to the total number of personnel required to meet project needs, their ability to maintain physical distancing given resource constraints of laboratory space or field work activities (1 person/120 ft<sup>2</sup> or 1 person/11 m<sup>2</sup>), availability of requested space and resource use given on-going activities of approved research, need for essential services (e.g. CCC and other services) and external services (service technicians from companies etc.) required for delivery of consumables and supplies, maintenance and calibration of equipment, emergency response, access to public space for off campus field work and other concerns as assessed and identified by the Departmental Head/Director and Deans regarding the ability to perform the work under required restrictions related to COVID-19 closure.

The Phase designation of the institution further informs the degree to which on-campus facilities are available to support approved Essential and Critical Research. Under Phase 0, a maximum risk adverse model is applied to minimize as much as possible the total number of individuals accessing the campus or performing off-campus (non-home based) research while also minimizing the total number of buildings and rooms being accessed on the campus. As the Phase category progresses, as determined by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, larger numbers of personnel and building/room resources on campus may be accessed in support of approved essential and critical designated research.

The Department Head and Deans are asked to use the following questions and rubrics to help their assessment for designating a submitted proposal as Critical Research. Please consider all of the screening questions below in conjunction with the current COVID-19 Phase designation of the University of Windsor while making your decision.



# Critical Research Assessment Tool for Designation of Critical Research During the COVID-19 Closure

May 20, 2020

<b>Principal Investigator Information</b>	
Name:	
Department:	
Faculty:	
<b>Title of Project or Description of Research Activity:</b>	

1. Is the proposed research activity compatible with allowable activities outlined under the COVID-19 phase designation as articulated in the most current version of University of Windsor Framework for Resumption of Research and given the current COVID-19 Phase Status Identified by the Pandemic Committee?

Yes - Go to Question 2.

No - Is the proposed research activity compatible with allowable activities outlined in a different COVID-19 phase? If so, indicate which phase the proposed activities would be allowed under.

1      2      3      4

2. Does the proposed research require face to face contact with other individuals?

Yes - The proposed activity should not be allowed to take place until Phase 3.

No - Go to Question 3.

3. Does the proposed research involve work off campus?

No - Go to question 4.

Yes - Are proposed off-campus activities available under local and provincial COVID-19 restrictions?

No - Researcher needs to demonstrate local and/or provincial permission to access the area in question before activity can take place.

Yes - Go to Question 4.

4. Has the Department and Faculty completed a Flow and Zone Analysis of campus resources with estimates of how many personnel could be accommodated in the building(s) including entries and exits, washrooms, stairwells, elevators and common



## Critical Research Assessment Tool for Designation of Critical Research During the COVID-19 Closure

May 20, 2020

areas where the proposed research activity is to take place while maintaining physical distancing requirements?

Yes - Go to Question 5.

No - For Phase 1 activities it is generally assumed that the limited number of projects considered make this criteria less important. For Phase 2 and above a Faculty Flow and Zone Analysis of the building where proposed activity is to occur should be completed. Flow and Zone Analysis Plans should provide capacity limit recommendations tied to the Phase designation of the institution.

5. Can the requested number of personnel, access to specialized research space and other space needs be reasonably accommodated in the Faculty Flow and Zone Analysis Plan given existing approved activities occurring in the same building/areas under Essential and Critical Research?

Yes - Go to Question 6.

Maybe - Identify the concerns and possible accommodations that would enable the proposed research to take place while maintain safe working conditions. Consider the following options:

- Time Staggered Scheduling between groups and how this will be implemented
- Secure additional space or resources from other campus resources
- Other

No - After completion of the remainder of the survey, does the urgency and need of this research necessitate reevaluating an existing approved research activity to enable accommodation of the present application? If Yes then Decanal and consultation with the VPIR about the right process should be performed. If no the research activity should not be designated as Critical.

6. If the proposed activities are approved, approximately what proportion of campus resources within the Faculty Flow and Zone Analysis Plan will remain available for new proposals moving forward?

Plenty of Resources to Remain for New Proposals. Proceed to Question 7.

Resources are approaching capacity for approved activities but could be extended through additional scheduling solutions. Consider these implications in your assessment.

Resources are approaching capacity for approved activities but some approved critical research will be ending and will free up resources for future research activity proposals.

After approving this project, physical resources will be fully occupied as defined by the Faculty Flow/Space Plan.



**Critical Research Assessment Tool for Designation of Critical Research During the COVID-19 Closure**

May 20, 2020

7. Fill out the table answering each question as it pertains to the Urgency and Need of the proposed activity. High scores imply high Need/Urgency. Suggested score minimums tied to the institutional phase designation are proved at the bottom of the Table.

Category	Urgency/Impact Score: Low (1), Med (2), High (3)
<p><b>Urgency and Time Sensitiveness</b> Points to Consider for this ranking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrequency or cyclic nature of observation that requires samples be taken during a specific window of time not likely to be repeated in the next 3 months</li> <li>• Ability to take advantage of rare or unusual opportunity for research that otherwise could not take place outside of the time window of proposed activities</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Impact on Collaborators</b> Points to Consider for this ranking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will partners associated with funded research be compromised by further delay in research activities over the next 3 months? Compromise can consider impacts to organizational competitiveness and/or economic viability if research is delayed beyond deliverable milestones agreed to in research agreement.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Funding Agencies Timelines and Deliverables</b> Points to Consider for this ranking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the PI contacted the funder to determine if extensions to funded research are possible or not? Consider whether funding itself will be extended or if timelines will be extended. No possible extension should be given a score of 3, extension of timeline without funding 2, extension of funding and timeline a value of 1.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Impact on Physical and Economic Health of Community</b> Points to Consider for this ranking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the research directly related to the COVID-19 Pandemic? (Score 3)</li> <li>• Would delay in research activities impact ability of the community/partners to deliver health services? (Score 2-3 dependent on urgency)</li> <li>• Would delay in research activities result in direct economic losses to the community? (Score 2-3 dependent on economic impact)</li> <li>• Would delay in research activities compromise planned restoration activities e.g. habitat restoration or economic development? (Score 2-3 dependent on likelihood actual threat of deal)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Number of Personnel and Contribution to Student Training</b> Points to Consider for this ranking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for research activities to <i>complete</i> graduate thesis-research requirements. Faculty should justify that student thesis research</li> </ul>	



**Critical Research Assessment Tool for Designation of Critical Research During the COVID-19 Closure**

May 20, 2020

<p>completed to date cannot be used to complete a thesis under accommodations as recommended by Graduate Studies and advised by the student advisory committee. Consideration on scoring should be made based on what fraction of thesis work is completed and how much additional activity will be needed to achieve the minimum requirements to defend a thesis. A score of 3 is given for low amounts of activity required towards completion of thesis requirements; 2 for moderate activity and 1 for projects at the beginning of data collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects with minimum # personnel that include only faculty or one staff, PDF or RA should be given a score of 3. Reduced scores for larger number of personnel participating in research. Score of 1 for groups of 3 or more.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Total Score:</b></p>

**Suggested Key:**

**Phase 1 Minimum Score: 9**

**Phase 2 Minimum Score: 7**

**Phase 3: Below 7**

8. Does the proposed research activity involve Undergraduate student participation?

Yes - Are undergraduates allowed to perform research under COVID-19 restriction bases on the rules outlined within the Faculty? If "No", then the project should not move forward or the researcher should be requested to remove unsuitable personnel from their proposal.

No - Go to Question 9.

9. Does the proposed research activity require additional needs for services and support at the University of Windsor?

Yes                      No

Please Consider the following:

- Additional staffing and resources from CCC, Facility Services, Delivery Services, Border Brokerage Requests related to supply of consumables and materials?
- Additional staffing and resource needs relate to Emergency Services including external agencies (i.e. coast guard/search rescue services for field work), CCC staff needed for Spills Response related to use of dangerous chemicals, radioactive materials, biosafety or lasers?
- Additional staffing and resource needs in support of animal studies in animal care facilities or in the husbandry and care of non-vertebrate living specimens.
- Additional staffing resources from Leddy Library or other central services on campus
- Other:



## Critical Research Assessment Tool for Designation of Critical Research During the COVID-19 Closure

May 20, 2020

10. Does the proposed research activity require individuals from different organizations to come onto campus?

No - Go to Question 11.

Yes - Please Consider the following elements in your assessment of risks related to the project:

- If face-to-face meetings are required, this will require Phase 4 designation.
- Will technicians from companies need to come to campus to install, maintain, certify or repair infrastructure? How will they be given access while maintaining physical distancing? Are they appropriately insured for this work? (Please consult with VPRI's office on insurance requirements for companies performing work on campus during COVID-19 restrictions). How long and what areas will they be given access to? How will the scheduling of the work be completed?

11. Do you have any additional concerns regarding recommending this research activities designation that may be brought to the Dean and/or VPRI's attention?

Please specify below or in an attached letter with this survey.



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May 20, 2020

Based on your answers to Questions 1-11 do you recommend the proposed research activity be designated as Critical? (Yes/No):

Yes                  No

If Yes - What COVID-19 Phase most appropriately reflects the stated activities? (0-3)

1                  2                  3                  4

(Note, that the COVID-19 Phase Rating will be attached to each "Request for Resumption of Research" proposal in case of reversion of the active COVID-19 Status as Assessed by the Pandemic Planning Group)

If No - Projects denied Critical Status can be re-assessed after a change in the COVID-19 Phase as Assessed by the Executive Pandemic Committee. Please re-evaluate questions 4-6 in light of the re-submission of a proposed project.

<i>Approvals</i>	
<b>Department Head or Associate Dean</b>	
Signature	Date
<b>Dean</b>	
Signature	Date