

Ten Guiding Principles for Research Trainees in the Era of COVID-19 (in conjunction with institutional VPR offices and Schools of Graduate Studies)

- 1. Safety first: for trainees, staff and faculty** a. The research environment supports physical distancing for as long as recommended by regional, provincial or federal public health units. b. The research environment supports trainees who wish to stay home when sick, without repercussion. c. There is transparent and equitable consideration for accommodations for learners with specific medical conditions that may place them at risk in certain environments.
- 2. Integrity of the research/training experience is not compromised** a. The focus on completion of a body of knowledge that maintains excellence but is sufficient for the student to undertake thesis writing should be encouraged. Excellence should not be compromised with respect to data interpretation and overall thesis quality.
- 3. Commitment to Trainee Success** a. Trainees should expect continued mentorship and supervision in cases where a supervisor has frontline clinical responsibilities, a co-supervisor is recommended. b. Flexibility and accommodations will be needed as research activities and productivity will be significantly altered, and deadlines will be extended when and if necessary.
- 4. Continued Academic Learning** a. Trainees can expect creativity flexibility and regular communication to ensure academic goals are met. b. In the absence of “hands-on” research, trainees and their supervisors can develop remote learning opportunities that continue to achieve academic and research goals (reading the literature, reanalyzing data, experimental design, writing manuscripts/research proposals/thesis).
- 5. Financial support** a. Trainees can expect uninterrupted funding and scholarship payments and the financial impact of any decisions on the trainees will be considered. Any financial disadvantage to learners should be minimized.
- 6. Oral examinations and Assessments** will continue via remote videoconferencing.
- 7. Decisions that are made regarding academic progress** will not disadvantage any learner regardless of the types of research they are undertaking or their stage of training.
- 8. The Canadian medical research community** will work in collaboration with VPR offices and schools of graduate studies to be responsive to ongoing challenges and will continue to include relevant stakeholders in decision making.
- 9. The stress of uncertainty in the research and learning environments** is recognized and it is understood that there may be an impact on productivity. The wellness of our trainees is critical and actively supported through local, provincial and national means.
- 10. Focused transitioning back to research post COVID-19 is essential.** We need to be mindful on the expectation and challenges for both trainees and faculty.