



“Psychology Works” Fact Sheet: Guidance for Psychology Faculty and Researchers as Relates to COVID-19

COVID-19 is not only impacting everyday life; it is also impacting faculty and research teams in many ways, from how to transition to online classes, how to work and best support students remotely, how to adapt current research projects while ensuring the welfare and safety of research subjects, and how to pay salaries/stipends and other costs that may be modifying or halting research.

With the transition to virtual education, researchers and faculty are working diligently to protect their research participants and animal subjects, their students, their scholarship, and in some cases, their careers. In the interim, below is some information that may provide helpful guidance in navigating these difficult times.

More detailed information specific to Canada’s research funding support and information from the funders can be found in the CPA’s Fact Sheet on Research Funding Information as Relates to COVID-19 (<https://cpa.ca/corona-virus/cpa-covid-19-resources/>).

Working Remotely

Since mid-late March, most people have been working remotely. This has required faculty, staff and researchers to ensure they had all mission critical information with them; they were using university-approved security protocols to analyze and store data off-site; and they had a laptop, charger, webcam, contact information for team members and access to any electronic materials that would have been needed. Knowledge of Skype, Zoom, Hangouts/Google-Meet and other video-conference software has become a must to stay connected virtually.

Maintaining Research

Given COVID-19, research that brings people physically close together or in large gatherings has been most impacted. Policies regarding how to conduct research during emergencies are university specific, and you should follow your institution’s emergency or disaster-preparedness policies for guidance to deal with COVID-19’s impact on your research and career/degree-completion impacts.

Information from Canada’s Tri-Funding Agencies

Canada’s tri-funding agencies (Canadian Institutes for Health Research – CIHR; Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada – SSHRC; Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada - NSERC) are closely monitoring the evolution and impact of COVID-19 and are taking necessary actions to support its grant, scholarship, fellowship, and awards recipients; support its applicants and peer reviewers; protect their staff; and modify their operations.

Each agency is also regularly updating their websites with messages from the presidents and updated information for the research community.





- **CIHR:** <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51917.html>
- **SSHRC:** https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/news_room-salle_de_presse/covid-19-eng.aspx
- **NSERC:** https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/NewsRelease-CommuniqueDePresse_eng.asp?ID=1139

Check in with your program officer

While Canada’s funding agencies have extended deadlines, it is nonetheless important to think creatively about how to sustain your research over at least the next three to six months. Stay in regular touch with your university’s program officer and share how the crisis is affecting your work and how you plan to keep making progress.

Maintain communication with your research team

Frequent communication is important to sustaining research projects, assessing how your team members are coping, and maintaining social connectedness. Consider daily or weekly video-meetings to set goals and/or action items. Reassure your staff that it is okay to not be as productive during these challenging times. To the extent possible, cross-train staff, deploy them to work on other tasks, and if not already done, have calls forwarded to a project staff person’s cellphone.

Modify your research and analysis

With the stoppage of face-to-face human research or temporary closure of research labs, researchers who rely on face-to-face interaction or in-lab work to collect data have had to either pause their research or transition their research to online. If you are shifting to remote data collection and storage, keep in mind that changing methodologies may require that you notify your institution’s review or ethics board and potentially, updating consents to participate. Modifications to methodologies in the midst of a study will have to be accounted for in future analyses.

Supporting Students and Trainees

Students and trainees are most vulnerable right now due to stressors arising from financial uncertainty; pressure to graduate within a given time frame and before funding runs out; managing research and teaching responsibilities; disruption in academic work and transition to remote learning; cancelled or altered co-op placements, internships, and residencies; and lost conference presentation/attendance opportunities. If you are able, help them progress toward their goals and be flexible about deadlines.

Encourage students to visit the Government of Canada’s website for information on its emergency support for students and recent graduate impacted by COVID: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/04/support-for-students-and-recent-graduates-impacted-by-covid-19.html>.

Encourage them to visit the tri-agency’s websites for information on extensions for training award recipients and competition deadline information pertaining to the Canada Graduate Scholarships, Vanier





Canada Graduate Scholarships, Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships, and NSERC’s Undergraduate Student Research Award – to name just a few.

If students have been awarded funding from sources other than the tri-agencies, direct them to contact the funding provider to obtain information on impacts to deadlines.

Stay in touch with your students and have conversations with them about how they plan to carry on their work during this new reality, while reminding them that it is okay to feel that they do not have the mental or emotional capacity to produce knowledge or continue their research during these challenging times.

More detailed information specific to COVID and psychology students can be found in the following CPA Fact Sheets: *Guidance for Psychology Students as Relates to COVID-19* and *Student Wellness during COVID-19* (<https://cpa.ca/corona-virus/cpa-covid-19-resources/>).

Supporting Junior Colleagues

Junior colleagues are also particularly vulnerable right now. If possible, senior faculty may be able to offer data sets they can work with or provide opportunities to collaborate on existing research projects.

If you are an early career researcher yourself, document how the crisis is affecting your research and talk to your chair about potential impacts on your tenure path. With the cancellation of most in-person conferences, seek opportunities to network virtually, participate in the work of your national or provincial psychological association, or participate in other scholarship activities (e.g., online continuing education, serving as a peer reviewer).

Self-care

While this is a very challenging time for everyone, it is important to remember that all of your department colleagues and research peers are in the same position. Eventually, research activities will resume, as will in-person classes. In the interim, it is important for faculty and researchers to take care of themselves.

During this time, some psychology faculty may have increased demands to provide mental health services and supports to their students in ways that might otherwise not have been expected to before COVID-19. Check in with your department and your university’s counselling services for information on available resources for students, while ensuring you have the necessary supports for yourself.

Be cognizant of the impacts of too many virtual meetings and too many emails. With the transition to working remotely, there has been a vast increase in the number of virtual meetings; while virtual meetings are effective at maintaining connectedness and communication, many are feeling overly fatigued by the number of video-conference meetings that now are required to deal with issues that once would have been addressed via an in-person meeting or by walking to someone’s office. The same can be said of email.





In addition to supporting students, research staff and transitioning to remote learning, many faculty and researchers are also juggling the responsibilities – and fatigue – of being educators to their children who may also be at home.

Conferences and COVID-19

Given the state of the pandemic globally, in-person knowledge mobilization and sharing events such as conferences are being cancelled or postponed; in some cases, in-person conferences are being transitioned to virtual events to enable both the delivery and sharing of research findings and continuing education activities. This is the case for the CPA’s 2020 Annual National Convention which was scheduled for May 2020 in Montréal, QC, but will be delivered as a virtual event over the summer of 2020.

A poster or presentation that was peer reviewed and accepted to a conference can still be included in your CV, even if the conference was cancelled. The CPA has a recommended format for citing cancelled presentations; this information was sent to all individuals that had a presentation accepted for inclusion in the CPA’s national conference (see below).

For individuals OPTING TO participate in the CPA’s virtual event, the format is as follows:

Surname, Initial. & Surname, Initial. (2020, insert dates of virtual event). Title of accepted submission. [specify type of presentation – poster, Gimme-5, 12-minute talk, etc.]. 81st Canadian Psychological Association Annual National Convention, Montréal, Quebec, Canada. [insert link to virtual event when available]

For individuals OPTING NOT TO participate in the CPA’s virtual event, the format is as follows:

Surname, Initial. & Surname, Initial. (2020, May 27-30). Title of accepted submission. [specify type of presentation – poster, Gimme-5, 12-minute talk, etc.]. 81st Canadian Psychological Association Annual National Convention, Montréal, Quebec, Canada. [insert link to Abstract Book PDF when available] (Conference cancelled due to COVID-19)

If the conference at which you were scheduled to present is not being transitioned to a virtual event or you are unable to participate in the virtual event, you can consider sharing your poster and/or presentation through the Open Science Framework (OSF). For more information, see [OSF meetings](#).

Making the Transition: Moving your Course to a Virtual Environment

The need for a rapid transition from in-person instruction to online platforms has necessitated a steep learning curve for many faculty. It is important to remember that although effective, there are significant differences between in-person and online delivery of education:

- Most adult education research shows that the maximum length of an online session should be less than two hours: attention spans begin to wane after as little as 15 minutes and engagement is challenging through a computer screen. Longer lectures should be broken up into more digestible portions.





- There are some techniques that can help keep learners engaged; for example, some webinar or e-learning platforms provide the ability to create polls that will encourage participants to pay attention and answer topical questions in real time.
- In creating lesson plans, keep in mind that topics and learning objectives should be kept focused and self-contained in order to maintain clarity and continuity. Schedule time for a brief recap at the start of each session but keep the path well-defined and easy to follow.
- Consider adding more self-directed elements if possible; short projects, additional readings, and putting students into small groups to discuss material virtually can add value between sessions and contribute to the overall goals of the course while placing the onus on students to engage with the material.
- Most importantly, stay connected to your students. If this is the first time you are delivering material online, take this opportunity to learn from your students regarding what does – and does not – work. Maintain your goals, clarify your benchmarks, and be open to learn and experiment.

The following is a list of some valuable resources to assist you in your transition.

- **Colleges & Institutes Canada:** Free resources to help faculty affected by COVID-19
<https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/free-resources-to-help-faculty-affected-by-covid-19/>
- **Working and learning online during a pandemic:** Resources for Higher Education Faculty by Pearson
<https://www.pearson.com/news-and-research/working-learning-online-during-pandemic.html>
- **Course for Online Faculty Members:** Lethbridge College https://lethbridgecollege.ca/news/news-release/lethbridge-college-offers-course-online-faculty-members?utm_source=Academica+Top+Ten&utm_campaign=94faed1d45-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_17_07_21&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b4928536cf-94faed1d45-52001729
- **Transition to Online Teaching:** Concordia University <https://www.concordia.ca/offices/ctl/moving-courses-online/transition.html>
- **A Digital Survival Kit for Transitioning Courses Online:** University Affairs
<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/career-advice-article/a-digital-survival-kit-for-transitioning-your-course-online/>
- **Online Learning and Distance Education Resources:** Tony Bates, Research Associate, Contact North
<https://www.tonybates.ca/>
- **Course Design for Rapidly Moving Your Course Online: Spring/Summer 2020:** Western University
<https://teaching.uwo.ca/elearning/index.html>
- **Transitioning to online teaching: Proven methods and helpful tips:** Royal Roads University Webinar
<https://www.royalroads.ca/info-sessions/webinar-transitioning-online-teaching-proven-methods-and-helpful-tips-qa>





- **Guide to online teaching and learning:** Sheridan College
<https://sheridancollege.libguides.com/c.php?g=715931&p=5105237>

Resources Provided by the APA

- **Moving Online Now: How to Keep Teaching During Coronavirus** (PDF, 3.5MB):
https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/CoronaVirus_ArticlesCollection.pdf
The Chronicle of Higher Education has assembled a collection of articles to help faculty and staff members make the adjustment to online teaching.
- **OnlineAskPsychSessions:** <http://bit.ly/PsychSessions>
APA Div. 2 (Society for Teaching of Psychology) and PsychSessions have jointly created a free mini-series of brief podcasts, called OnlineAskPsychSessions, to help instructors transition their courses online.
- **Accessible Teaching in the Time Of COVID-19:** <https://www.mapping-access.com/blog-1/2020/3/10/accessible-teaching-in-the-time-of-covid-19>
Many of the suggestions in this article come from the disability community, who has been using online spaces to teach, organize, and disseminate knowledge since the internet was created.
- **How to Quickly (and Safely) Move a Lab Course Online:** <https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Quickly-and-Safely/248261?cid=cp275>
By modifying learning objectives and finding the right resources, many lab courses can be taught online.
- **APA Online Psychology Laboratory:** <https://opl.apa.org/>
Provides interactive resources for the teaching of psychological science and helps students understand the science of psychology.
- **Open Stats Lab:** <https://sites.trinity.edu/osl>
Provides free student access to several statistics labs. Each lab consists of a published article, a data set, and an activity they can follow. Students can also download free introductory statistics books online (<https://openstax.org/details/books/introductory-statistics>).

Staying Professionally Active

Recognizing the emotional and mental toll that the pandemic may be taking on some individuals, others may want or need to stay professionally active during this time. Below are some ways in which individuals can stay professionally involved.

- Take a Continuing Professional Development course from the CPA's online offerings, from a provincial/territorial association, or from other relevant professional associations.
- Create and/or review your individual professional learning plan.
- Expand your learning of research methods – quantitative and/or qualitative – or statistical applications, particularly those offering downloadable software at no cost.





- Take the opportunity to read new journal articles; the CPA’s three journals (Canadian Psychology, Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology) are available to all CPA members via the CPA’s members only portal.
- Subscribe to the APA’s PsychNetGold database through the CPA (<https://cpa.ca/publications-resources/psycnet-gold/>) and have access to the following: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycEXTRA, and PsycCRITIQUES.
- Submit articles for publication consideration.
- Volunteer to serve as a reviewer for one of Canada’s funding agencies.
- Start working on grant applications.
- Attend virtual conferences.

Where do I go for more information?

To obtain important and up to date information about COVID-19, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Provincial, territorial, and some municipal associations of psychology often maintain referral services. For the names and coordinates of provincial and territorial associations of psychology, please visit: <https://cpa.ca/public/whatisapsychologist/PTassociations>

This fact sheet has been prepared for the Canadian Psychological Association by Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Psychological Association.

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Your opinion matters! Please contact us with any questions or comments about any of the *Psychology Works* Fact Sheets: factsheets@cpa.ca

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