

Research in the After Times: Some considerations

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Some issues to consider

- How can I adjust the research plan to answer the research questions?
- Can I wait till next summer to collect data? What can I do in the meantime to keep progressing/momentum?
- Consider disparities (i.e., health, economic, job loss, family care, internet access, rural/urban, etc.) in the community you are working in
 - Ask: Does participating in my research create an undue burden on this community?
 - Ask: Am I creating an undue risk for participants?
- Is it permissible to conduct the research?
 - Check UCD Office of Research ([link below](#))
 - Where your fieldsite is (i.e., national forest, state park, BLM, etc.)
- Can I and my team safely conduct the research?
 - Ask: Am I asking anyone on my team to take on more risk than is reasonable? than they are comfortable with?
 - Do any of my team members have underlying health conditions? Problems accessing technology? Do they have necessary social support?

Some suggestions (crowdsourced from UCD faculty)

- Get informed and stay informed
 - “Research Ramp-Up Ramp-Down” ([link](#)) (Office of Research’s plan for re-opening)
 - Please note, it is my understanding that graduate students are not necessarily getting the emails from the Office of Research on Research Updates; therefore, make sure to check this site to see what phase (currently in 1x) we are in and let that information dictate your planning
 - Grad Studies page on resources and guidelines ([link](#))
 - Coronavirus Campus Information ([link](#))
 - Institutional Review Board COVID-19 update ([link](#))
 - For Instructional Concerns see Keep Teaching ([link](#))
 - Note: [Center for Educational Effectiveness](#) is running training for graduate students to help prepare you for remote TA and instruction.
- Contingency planning with your mentors, major professors, labs, etc.
 - Grieve the loss of your plans

- Readjust expectations
- Balance strategically resource constraints with personal interests and professional development
- At what level will you be satisfied and get the degree you want?
- Stay in active communication with your research team to keep them aware of what is going on and where you are in planning stages
- Collect secondary data (i.e., Census, Policymap, CalEnviroscreen, etc.)
 - Can be a good opportunity to “hire” undergrads to be interns to help you collect and clean data
 - good experiences for them: skill-building, CV building
 - good experiences for you: managing, extend your reach, balance your responsibilities, further develop your quantitative skills (good for any job market)
- Online, synchronous video focus groups
 - Some issues:
 - participants talk more to facilitator than with each other
 - difficult to control group setting
 - miss facial expression cues, like enthusiasm or sadness
 - can’t collect field, participant observations
 - More issues:
 - Internet not great, suggest turning off video or calling in,
 - If have internet, then encouraging everyone to use their webcams (if they have one) helps with engagement in this virtual setting.
 - Be aware of broadband disparities, does your population of interest have reliable access to internet?
 - Consider polling potential participants in advance to see who might be able to connect in this way, be aware this may also introduce sampling bias depending on who you are trying to reach (i.e., those with internet and technology access living in rural areas, versus those without, may be very different groups).
 - Consider some other ways to enhance engagement, such as through Zoom breakout rooms or polling, etc.
- Consider can you hold outdoor focus groups with fewer than 10 people
- Put data collection on hold (i.e., postpone until the summer or indefinitely to see how virus progresses)
- Change data collection strategy, try to answer adjacent research questions

- Change research questions but not topic
- If you are funded, look into no cost extensions for funding, look at grad studies updated rules and guidelines (see below for helpful links); BE PROACTIVE
- Take care of yourself: Help and Support Resources for you ([link](#))
- **Definitely Check out: Lupton, D. (editor) (2020) Doing fieldwork in a pandemic (crowd-sourced document).** Available at:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfqribHmog9B6P0NvMgVuiHZCI8/edit?ts=5e88ae0a#>
 - Brief intro: “Isolation measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 means that social researchers who have for doing fieldwork in a pandemic - specifically, ideas for avoiding in-person interactions by using mediated forms that will achieve similar ends. Social research has been conducted online for many years, of course. There are many examples of using online survey tools or doing content analyses or ethnographies using existing online interactions as research materials. Interviews have been conducted by phone or Skype for a long time. This document was initially directed at ways for how to turn fieldwork that was initially planned as using face-to-face methods into a more ‘hands-off’ mode. However, people have added useful material about ‘born digital’ research (content already generated on the internet by online interactions), which provides an alternative source of social research materials if researchers decide to go down that path.”
 - Check out table of contents for easy navigation of relevant topics

Note: This guide was developed for students at UC Davis. For students and researchers at other institutions, consider looking to your own similar university structures for specific guidance and information for your own context.