

September 3, 2021

Dear UT Tyler Faculty Colleagues,

I'm writing with a brief update for guidance on research activities at UT Tyler. Based on input received from legal counsel and occupational health, I am sharing the following guidance for beginning or resuming research activities involving person to person interactions.

1. Whether travel is segregated between vaccinated and unvaccinated persons is within management discretion.
2. Travel that includes vaccinated and unvaccinated persons in close quarters, such as travel by car, is permissible and is also within management discretion.
3. Masking cannot be required to participate in the activity.
4. Vaccination cannot be required to participate in the activity.
5. Waivers of liability are unnecessary as they present no practical advantage to the institution.
6. It is best if persons traveling are aware of the risks whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated so that each can make an informed decision to participate or not participate in the activity.
7. If a person decides not to participate in the activity because of perceived potential harm, that decision cannot be regarded or used negatively in student grading, employee evaluation, etc.
8. Research projects involving close team contact or face to face interactions with research subjects may begin or resume as previously approved by the IRB.
9. Individuals participating in these projects are encouraged to follow precautions dependent on their own vaccination status and assessment of their risk factors.
10. For research team members who choose not to participate, that decision again cannot be regarded or used negatively in grading or evaluation settings.
11. Changes to these guidelines may occur in future contingent on changes in pandemic conditions.
12. Contact [research@uttyler.edu](mailto:research@uttyler.edu) if you have questions.

Changes to these guidelines may occur in future contingent upon changes in pandemic conditions. We will keep monitoring advice and guidance from health authorities regarding progress on the virus and its spread, and we will adjust guidelines based on how conditions evolve. Your patience, cooperation, and understanding are appreciated.

We look forward to working with all of you as we continue pursuing outstanding scientific and creative achievements this year.

*Steven Idell*

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