NEW COVID-19 INSTRUCTIONS

1. Purpose

All researchers with human subjects protocols that require in-person recruitment and/or testing at Caltech will abide by the updated Cal/OSHA and Caltech institutional regulations pertaining to minimizing the risk of COVID-19. This guidance will remain in place until further notice in light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

2. General Information

As of June 21st, the Caltech IRB is following Cal/OSHA and Caltech institutional regulations pertaining to minimizing the risk of COVID-19. Per President Rosenbaum’s email of June 17, 2021, the IRB is no longer requiring vaccinated researchers to wear masks, to socially distance, to undergo COVID testing, or to report campus activity.

3. Guidelines

Vaccinated Researchers
The Caltech IRB no longer requires researchers to wear face coverings indoors (unless posted signage or rules for accessing a particular space state otherwise), maintain six feet of physical distance, undergo COVID testing, or complete the health attestation form or record the building locations visited each day.

Unvaccinated Researchers
If a researcher does not have a valid Caltech QR code from their CDC COVID vaccination, they are considered unvaccinated, and must comply with the following requirements:

1. Wear a face covering in all indoor environments and at all times when working with human subjects.
2. Participate in Caltech’s surveillance testing program when reporting to campus. This requirement extends to all employees, students, and campus affiliates who have not submitted proof of vaccinated status and who access campus, even on an occasional or one-day-a-week basis. Information regarding the surveillance testing program can be found here: https://together.caltech.edu/updates/fps/06202021

Research Participants
The IRB continues to require all research participants to be fully vaccinated. All participants must show a valid CDC record or California QR code, demonstrating that they are fully vaccinated. The IRB is not requiring research participants to wear face coverings, maintain six feet of physical distance, or undergo COVID testing, though researchers may still require it in their protocols.

4. Informed Consent (ICF) Language

Investigators must include in their protocols a revised informed consent that, in addition to the study’s standard informed consent, contains the following appendix. Investigators should submit an amendment to active protocols, and have it approved with this modified informed consent, prior to resuming research.

“You are participating in on-campus research during a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is still active, and when new mutations of the virus that causes COVID are appearing. Participating in this research may
expose you to those viruses and therefore presents some risk of contracting COVID-19. To minimize this risk, it is required that you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. To participate you must show your valid CDC vaccination card (or California QR code) when you arrive on campus.

You are not required to wear a mask, but if you would like to wear a mask, please bring your own or ask one of the researchers to provide you with a mask. Please do not participate in this study if you feel ill, or if you have been close to somebody known to have COVID-19. Please practice good hygiene and wash your hands before and after you do the study session. If you test positive for COVID-19 after participating in this research, please contact the researcher immediately. If you have any questions about the risks of contracting COVID-19 during this study, please ask the researcher before you participate.”