

COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 update: Conduct of research

March 15, 2020

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Dear Colleagues,

Given the heightened risk of COVID-19 transmission, we feel that we must reduce laboratory research and other nonessential research activities as soon as possible, including graduate independent research and project-based research that require access to Cornell facilities.

We ask you to initiate plans to restrict research on campus to critical activities performed by a limited number of designated personnel. Research that is essential for the understanding and reduction of COVID-19 risk should continue. Beyond this, we ask that only those research activities that are absolutely necessary to retain critical research assets for long-term progress are conducted on campus. We ask that this reduction be implemented by the end of Wednesday, March 18.

Questions about specific research activities should be directed to the deans or associate deans, as appropriate. Faculty, staff, postdocs and graduate students are encouraged to work remotely if at all possible, and if present in laboratories they must abide by social distancing and personal protection protocols [listed here](#). We ask that in-person meetings be eliminated if at all possible and, if conducted, include a minimum number of people in appropriate spaces.

Critical activities are those necessary to maintain laboratory viability such as:

- Care for animals, plants and unique or expensive cell cultures or biological specimens,
- Preservation of unique reagents and other unique or expensive materials, and
- Maintaining equipment (e.g., liquid nitrogen and liquid helium systems, and shared computational clusters) that cannot be maintained remotely or

shut down without significant cost or consequences to the research effort.

Principal investigators, center directors and research support staff should immediately begin taking steps necessary to meet this deadline. Additionally, all visits to laboratories by outside scientists should be canceled for the foreseeable future, and in-person human subject research on campus should be eliminated.

We recognize the many difficulties and disruptions this restriction will impose, and we will work with you to ensure that you, your students and your research team are able to continue working productively from home or other remote locations. We encourage you to focus on research activities that can be completed remotely (e.g. writing papers and proposals, analyzing data, running computations and developing computational or analytic methods) after Wednesday, March 18.

The salaries and stipends of your staff, students and postdocs will continue on grants or other sources as usual. Guidance for researchers on federal grants charges and considerations for planning activity restrictions are collected on the Research Services website at: <https://researchservices.cornell.edu/news/coronavirus-research-continuity-guidance>. The document “Continuity Planning Guidance for Researchers” on this page provides many points to be considered as you plan your actions.

Among the tasks needed to meet the restriction deadline, the following are critical. Please review them carefully.

- If you have not done so already, provide a list of your essential personnel to the dean of your college. Include backup personnel so that essential activities can continue in the event an essential person becomes ill.
- If you have not already done so, collect and share within your group the contact information for you, your students, postdocs and staff.
- If you are performing animal research and have not shared your list of essential personnel or animal care plans with the Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE), do so now by email to care@cornell.edu.
- Plan essential activities to be staggered so that minimal laboratory personnel are present at any one time.

- Restrict all external personnel or visitors from your lab.
- In-person human subject research on campus should be eliminated.
- For other research involving human subjects with **limited or direct benefit to the participant** consider postponing or using remote interaction means such as Zoom meetings or videophone apps.

If you have any questions, please contact your dean or associate dean for research. Center directors within the research division should contact Mark Hurwitz.

We thank you in advance for your efforts to keep our community safe in this extraordinary situation. Please update your staff and your students about these changes and work with them on this important transition.

Sincerely,

Michael Kotlikoff
Provost

Emmanuel Giannelis
Vice Provost for Research and Vice President for
Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property and Research
Policy

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