

HSC Guidance for Non-Clinical Research Planning and Continuity

Integrated with the Vice President for Research Office. April 3, 2020

These directions are for all non-clinical research at the University of Utah HSC (Colleges of Health, Nursing, and Pharmacy, and Schools of Dentistry and Medicine). These directions are additional to any other requirements from the VPR (<https://research.utah.edu/coronavirus/essential-research-activities-during-the-COVID-19-outbreak.php>). They must be followed at all locations, including sites auxiliary to the HSC campus.

For clinical research see: <https://research.utah.edu/coronavirus/guidance-for-research-planning-and-continuity.php#Human%20Subjects%20Research-Related%20Visits>.

All groups should have dramatically reduced the number of times that research personnel visit the University and the amount of time that each person spends at the University. Lab work should now be limited to just the most essential procedures, such as animal maintenance and studies that cannot be deferred, cell lines that cannot be frozen, equipment maintenance that cannot be deferred, and covid-related research. All other exceptions must be approved at the level of a department chair, division chief, or program director. Please also observe the following additional guidelines:

Personnel Guidelines:

- Category I personnel (Mandatory Required on Campus or at Health Care Facilities) are expected to perform their essential duties and support essential research, as defined by the VPR. However, personnel (<https://www.hr.utah.edu/coronavirus/>) who are uncomfortable working on site should not be unreasonably pressured to do so.
- Graduate students and post-doctoral researchers should not be classified as mandatory unless their work is critical to essential research. See the [Graduate School guidance](#) for further details.
- PIs and mentors should be extremely judicious in classifying research personnel as mandatory, and keep the health and safety of our research community and the public as their foremost consideration.
- Lab heads should organize regular check-in to ensure that all lab members are adequately supported.
- Division chiefs, program directors, and department chairs should organize regular check-in to ensure that all faculty are adequately supported.

Physical Distancing and Hygiene:

- Everyone must follow the hygiene and physical distancing recommendations on <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/#protect-yourself>. This includes washing or sanitizing their hands when arriving or leaving a lab or office.
- Anyone with a fever or signs of respiratory infection (fever > 38.0 or new cough or shortness of breath) should not come to the University for two weeks from the onset of symptoms.
- Anyone who can work remotely should do so.
- All meetings should be held electronically.
- Small rooms (e.g., office or procedure room) should have no more than one occupant.
- Always maintain at least 6-feet of separation. For example, only one person per bay or one person per half bay, depending of lab configuration.
- To avoid physical overlap, time at the lab should be scheduled, such as through calendaring.
- Each lab should post a check list of surfaces to wipe down with alcohol/detergent/bleach at the start and end of each shift, including shared equipment and fridge doors/handles, etc.
- Because there is a severe shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for medical care, people should be mindful of using disposable PPE that is not required or necessary for the essential procedures they are conducting. Note that required PPE must still be worn to minimize exposures that could put additional burden on the healthcare system if an incident occurs. All other PPE should be offered as a donation to the clinical effort (<https://research.utah.edu/coronavirus/COVID-19-research.php>).

Other safety concerns: During this period of reduced lab density, special attention should be paid to the safe performance of hazardous procedures. Such procedures should be minimized and only performed with permission of the PI and when other lab personnel are available nearby to assist in case of an accident.