

# Phased Reopening of Research/Scholarly/Creative Activities draft 6/1/20

## I. Introduction

The guidelines in this document are contingent on external factors, primarily Governor Whitmer's orders, public health orders from the Washtenaw County Health Department, and the changing rate of COVID-19 infections in Southeast Michigan. Faculty, staff, and students must be flexible with the timing of activities described in this document. Faculty, staff, and students also must be ready to quickly ramp down their research activities in response to any spikes in COVID-19 infections. No dates are provided because the university must retain flexibility in both the timing and duration of each phase in order to protect the safety of the EMU community.

This document refers to research, scholarship, and creative activity that is conducted on campus. **The term *research* as used in this document equally pertains to research, scholarly, and creative activities and should be interpreted as such.** These activities include any physical presence in campus spaces, including academic buildings and the library, research that requires in person contact with individuals (e.g., human subjects), campus research labs, offices, performance spaces, studios, field research, and research in the community.

## II. Procedures

There are four phases, described in Section III, of restricted research activities, based on the severity of the COVID-19 restrictions and on the need for maintaining certain research activities.

**Step 1:** The Provost's Office communicates which phase campus is in and the starting date.

The Provost will articulate additional conditions, factors, or environmental standards that restrict the use of facilities to certain employee and student classes. These decisions and the special conditions are based on external requirements and recommendations (federal, state, county) and on internal guidance (e.g., Dean of Students, Public Safety, Environmental Health & Safety, Physical Plant).

**Step 2:** During any phase, Faculty may request access to research facilities through their Department Head/School Director (DH/SD) using a form provided by the Dean's Office. The DH/SD will forward the requests they endorse to their Dean's Office. When required, Deans will forward the requests they endorse to the Provost's Office.

**Step 3:** In making their decisions, the DH/SD and the Dean will consider *Factors to Evaluate Prior to Granting Administrative Approval* in Appendix A.

**Step 4:** The Dean's Office notifies all faculty, students, and staff who are given access, sending copies to the DH/SD. Deans will log the fully approved requests, the dates of each approval, the spaces approved, the number of people approved to work in each space for each hour and day approved, and the number of people approved to work in each building for each hour and day approved.

### **III. Phases of Reintegration of Research/Scholarly/Creative Activities**

#### **a. Phase 0: Shelter in Place: (Standby Laboratory Processes)**

Shelter in place is a full ramp-down of research activity. Only essential personnel (those deemed by the University as critical for sustaining and protecting facilities and/or life) may access campus, and only Standby Laboratory Processes can be performed. Essential personnel must request access through the Provost's office. They must access the laboratory building via swipe card, contact DPS on each occasion, and abide by CDC hygiene protocols, including wipe down of surfaces. They should be prepared to certify on each visit that they have measured a normal body temperature that day and have no virus symptoms.

*Standby Laboratory Processes* include tasks that are essential for maintaining long-term research activities, such as topping off liquid nitrogen coolant, switching compressed gas cylinders, equipment maintenance, caring for laboratory animals, and cell culture maintenance. Due to shipping and receiving restrictions, there should be no ordering of reagents, gases, or supplies during this interruption.

All other research facilities must be locked down and left in a safe and stable condition.

#### **b. Phase 1: Time-Sensitive Research**

During Phase 1, access to campus will be heavily restricted and limited to only high priority activities. Faculty must request permission to access laboratories through the DH/SD and Dean. Faculty must also request access for their research students and professional staff. Once permitted to access a research laboratory or studio, faculty will notify James McEvers, Laboratory Compliance Manager, EHS, so that he knows when laboratory/studio spaces will be back in service.

Faculty will access the laboratory building via swipe card, abide by CDC hygiene protocols (including wipe down of surfaces, lab occupancy, and social distancing). Students are not permitted to work in a building alone and must arrange to be in the building at a time when another person will also be in the laboratory space or on the same floor (e.g., another student in the lab, a faculty supervisor, another staff member).

Please be aware that researchers may not be able to quickly procure new laboratory supplies. Instructions for purchasing and receiving will be issued based on each specific situation. Purchases must be delivered through Central Receiving. One may not have items shipped to one's home or to the building loading dock.

All research that can be conducted remotely must continue to be conducted remotely. Meetings and other activities that can be conducted remotely must be conducted remotely.

### **1. Phase 1a: externally sponsored, time-sensitive research**

Time-sensitive research includes externally sponsored research in which a tight timetable has been established or approved by the sponsor through a grant or binding contract. ORDA can verify those projects that are externally sponsored.

### **2. Phase 1b: other time-sensitive research**

Time-sensitive may also include research, scholarly, and creative activity that directly contributes to a dissertation or thesis; research that is necessary for imminent tenure or promotion; some animal research; some plant research; research in which previously collected data or other samples will be rendered unusable (e.g., some longitudinal research or studies employing research samples with limited shelf-life); seasonal data collection (field research or educational research *that does not involve in person interaction with human subjects* that must be conducted at a specific time); and research conducted in direct response to reviewer comments in a manuscript or grant application.

### **c. Phase 2: Limited Access with Expanded Safety Requirements**

Most research activities can be conducted on campus during Phase 2, but room and/or building occupancy is reduced by state and county COVID-19-related health regulations.

During Phase 2, research activities will be scheduled through the appropriate administrative office (typically the Dean) in order to remain within space occupancy limits. Once permitted to access a research laboratory or studio, faculty will notify James McEvers, Laboratory Compliance Manager, EHS, so that he knows when laboratory/studio spaces will be back in service.

Researchers must abide by CDC hygiene protocols (including wipe down of surfaces), and operate within the guidelines of the State of Michigan and Washtenaw County.

### **d. Phase 3: Full Access with Expanded Safety Requirements**

All remaining research can be conducted on campus during Phase 3. Access to buildings will not be restricted. However, researchers must still abide by CDC hygiene protocols (including wipe down of surfaces), and also operate within the guidelines of the State of Michigan and Washtenaw County. Such guidelines may effectively limit the occupancy of certain very small laboratories.

## **IV. Requirements**

**If any of the following cannot be maintained (e.g., PPE is not available), then activities may not resume/must be halted.**

*a. Who may return to work?*

**During Phases 0-1, only individuals with a need for access to campus locations in order to perform their research will be permitted on campus, and the time spent on campus must be minimized.** Faculty and staff who are in good health may return to their research as specified in each phase. Students may not be compelled to work in on-campus facilities. During Phases 1 and 2, if students wish to work on their own project (e.g., thesis or dissertation), they may submit, in writing, a request to their faculty adviser, who forwards it to the DH/SD and Dean. It is at the discretion of the DH/SD and Dean to determine if the student's work on the project is appropriate based on the current phase of the reopening process. Faculty and staff who may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 (link to CDC guidance) or who live with an individual who is vulnerable to COVID-19 are not required to return to their on-campus research or may request special accommodations to minimize their risk.

Students who are working on research during any period of restricted access must inform their faculty supervisor or department head/school director when they will be in the building working. Students are not permitted to work in a building alone and must arrange to be in the building at a time when another person will also be in the laboratory space or on the same floor (e.g., another student in the lab, a faculty supervisor, another staff member).

Any individual who feels unwell, has a fever, headache, chills, nausea, shortness of breath, muscle aches, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, difficulty breathing, a cough, or any other symptoms of COVID-19 may not be on campus. If a student or employee experiences any of these symptoms *and has been on campus*, they should email the Dean of Students at [EMU\\_DeanofStudents@emich.edu](mailto:EMU_DeanofStudents@emich.edu). The Dean of Students will contact and provide clear directions to all who need to know.

*b. Access to on campus spaces*

During Phases 0-2, access to campus will only be permitted after submitting a request form. Faculty must attest: they will abide by CDC hygiene protocols; there will be no visitors in the lab; only people approved by the Dean's Office will be working in a lab space at one time; individuals will remain at least 6 feet apart at all times; no students will be compelled to come to campus or work in the lab; that lab surfaces, handles, and keyboards will be cleaned and disinfected before beginning use and before leaving; and appropriate PPE will be worn at all times.

*c. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required at all times*

All individuals on campus must wear a cloth face covering at all times. In research labs, appropriate PPE (gloves, goggles, lab coats) is required as usual. If required PPE is not available, research must stop until proper PPE has been obtained. COVID-19 PPE will be provided by the University.

*d. Social distancing must be maintained*

All individuals must maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other people, unless further distance is recommended. Work spaces and schedules must be sufficiently flexible to maintain safe distancing among all people. Staggered shifts or days might need to be implemented for personal safety. Individuals will not be permitted to work if proper distances cannot be maintained. People should not congregate in shared or public areas.

Social distancing particularly affects supervision and human subject research.

i. Supervision

If students are conducting research on campus and require training or direct supervision, that training or supervision must be done remotely **if possible**. If training or supervision must be in person, then appropriate PPE and social distancing is required.

ii. Human Subject Research

Whenever possible, interactions with human subjects should be virtual or remote. Please note that you may need to request a modification of your IRB-approved protocol. In person, one-on-one interaction with human subjects should only occur on an as-needed basis, and proper PPE (e.g., masks), social distancing, and cleaning/disinfecting of spaces must be maintained as appropriate.

In-person focus groups and other research in which the investigator interacts with multiple people at a given time are prohibited until Phase 2.

*e. Cleaning/Disinfecting*

All shared spaces/frequently touched items and equipment (e.g., door and drawer handles, faucet handles, lab benches, etc.) should be cleaned and disinfected prior to starting laboratory work and prior to leaving at the end of work. Equipment shared by multiple users during laboratory work should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently. Only disinfectants approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should be used, see EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-COV-2. Custodial Services will provide the disinfectants and paper towels.

Laboratory personnel should frequently be washing their hands and especially after removal of gloves, prior to working in desk space areas and before leaving the laboratory.

*f. Health checks*

Faculty, staff, and students may be required to have their temperature taken upon entry to a building or lab and/or to answer questions about COVID-19 symptoms.

*g. Notification*

For safety purposes, faculty and staff must notify someone (e.g., Public Safety, Department Head/School Director, faculty/staff colleague) if they are in a building alone. Notification must be provided when an individual enters a building and leaves campus. Students are not permitted to be in buildings alone.

## **Appendix A: Factors to Evaluate Prior to Granting Administrative Approval**

- a. What are the external [CDC, State, County] and internal special conditions, factors, or environmental standards that restrict who, how, or when facilities can be utilized? (These shall be articulated by the Provost.)
- b. Where is the work to be performed?
  - 1. Building and room numbers.
  - 2. Is the laboratory facility essential? Can the same work be done from a remote location?
  - 3. Does the research involve off-campus field work? When field work is involved, will someone need to access equipment and supplies from a campus laboratory or storage room?
  - 4. Does the research involve a specialized computing facility?
  - 5. Number of discreet laboratory rooms that will need to be entered.
  - 6. Number of floors in the building where these laboratories are located.
- c. Is the project funded by an external sponsor? What are the project deadlines?
- d. People (Researchers)
  - 1. Who? [Faculty, non-tenured Faculty, Graduate Student working on dissertation/thesis, paid Students, other Graduate Students, Undergraduate Students, Staff]
  - 2. How many people will simultaneously be in the laboratory from this research group?
  - 3. Do other research groups share the lab and want to also be present?
  - 4. Can researchers maintain 6 feet distancing in passing? 36 square feet of workspace per person?
  - 5. Number of people simultaneously in the building (or the vehicle when performing field work)?
  - 6. Are custodians available to refill soap dispensers and paper towels, and to perform general cleaning activities?
  - 7. Will emergency personnel have limited access to the laboratory facility?
  - 8. If the work is to be performed in the field, how big is the research team? How will the team be transported?

- 9. Will researchers be required to be scheduled in shifts?
- e. Research Materials and Research Subjects
  - 1. Are all required research materials procured and available?
  - 2. Is required Personal Protective Equipment available?
  - 3. Are cleaning/disinfecting materials available?
  - 4. Can hazardous materials be properly stored and/or removed?
  - 5. Does the research involve plants and/or animals? Is an updated protocol in place?
  - 6. Does the research involve human subjects? Is an updated protocol in place?
  - 7. Does the research involve a secure data set?
- f. Is the planned research ongoing? If not, how much time will it take to complete these research activities?