

Dear UCR research community,

I would like to follow up on the Chancellor's message yesterday about academic continuity and campus operations. As mentioned in the message, we are **NOT** suspending research activities at this time but want to share several actions and recommendations.

Despite many uncertainties about how the COVID-19 epidemic will affect the research enterprise in the intermediate and longer term, now it is time to start planning for potential serious disruptions. We are not alone in facing these uncertainties and have been in communication with other universities about their plans of action. I am thankful to the dynamic collaboration among research leaders and administrators in the academic community who are sharing best practices about how to confront this unprecedented situation. In particular, I want to acknowledge our colleagues at Yale University and the University of California, Berkeley for their research community communications from which we have borrowed and adapted to our campus in the guidelines below.

We would like to remind you that per UC policies, in no event should researchers take materials other than secure laptops, data storage devices, and other similar devices offsite (e.g., to their homes) to maintain research continuity during a curtailment. All essential research must continue within the confines of appropriate laboratory space. Please exercise extreme care when transporting data storage devices or accessing data remotely and contact [Information Technology Solutions](#) if you need assistance. If in doubt about these restrictions, please contact the relevant RED office for further assistance.

RED has arranged for all essential functions, such as vivarium care, to continue as usual (similar to the holiday breaks). All other functions will also continue as usual except that most meetings of compliance committees will take place via Zoom or by phone. We anticipate minimal impact to our services.

Each individual researcher, lab, and/or research facility is best positioned to create a continuity plan to meet their unique needs, but we strongly encourage you to consider the following guidelines.

Immediate Measures

To reduce the potential transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus (or other colds and flu) in the coming weeks, I ask that all campus labs and research facilities put in place the following measures:

- Require that all personnel who are feeling unwell stay home until they no longer have symptoms. Further guidance on personnel policies will be distributed to campus later today
- Remind all personnel to practice sanitary measures such [as washing hands with soap and water frequently](#) and for at least 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer if handwashing sinks are

not available, avoiding touching their face, and covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow

- Explore and implement measures to reduce density and allow “social distancing” of lab/research personnel. For example, when possible increase spacing between researchers or have personnel come to the lab in shifts
- Review opportunities for lab personnel and support staff to work remotely, even consider modifying and conducting research activities fully remotely in the short term
- Increase proactive cleaning and disinfecting of laboratory and communal spaces, including lab benches and chairs, equipment, common spaces, etc.
- Many scientific conferences and other research community meetings are being cancelled or are permitting remote participation. Limit your research group travel according to the UCR guidelines for travel (https://ehs.ucr.edu/coronavirus#information_for_travelers)
- Consider cancelling or postponing field research trips, as they present unique risks because of shared housing, eating meals together, and challenges of “sending someone home” should they become ill during an extended trip

Longer Term Planning for Research Continuity

Principal Investigators and Research Managers should begin scenario planning now for the potential continuation of research and campus operations with reduced or remote staffing if significant numbers of research or research support personnel become ill or large-scale self-isolation is required.

PIs should plan for the following possibilities:

- Be prepared for some of your laboratory workforce to fall ill or be required to self-isolate
- Be prepared to decontaminate the workspace of an ill researcher in your laboratory. If assistance is needed please contact [Facility Services](#) (FS), which has implemented new cleaning protocols. While FS can take care of common areas and areas outside the lab, decontamination of the actual research surfaces will need coordination with the lab personnel to make sure no experiments are affected and lab chemicals are not accidentally mixed with cleaning products
- Be prepared for core facilities and other fee-for-service resources to become unavailable
- Be prepared for critical supply orders, including controlled substances, to be delayed. PIs should work with their building manager to coordinate essential deliveries.
- Be prepared for building or laboratory access to be curtailed. The campus will notify the affected communities as soon as possible. Assume that essential access for equipment maintenance and critical laboratory experiments will continue.
- Be prepared that repairs performed by Facilities Services and other campus and non-campus service providers may be delayed

- Be prepared that processing of visas by the federal government may be delayed, resulting in delayed appointments

Steps you can take now to ensure continuity of critical functions in case of a severe outbreak:

- Identify procedures and processes that require regular personnel attention (e.g., cell culture maintenance, animal studies, etc.).
- Assess and prioritize critical laboratory activities. Create an inventory of laboratory chemicals and sensitive laboratory instrumentation and equipment, and share this information with your building manager and EH&S. You can update your chemical inventory by accessing UC Chemicals (<https://ehs.ucr.edu/laboratory/chemical/chemical-inventory>)
- Identify any research experiments that can be ramped down, curtailed, or delayed
- Identify key personnel able to safely perform essential activities to insure the continuity of your laboratory's research capability
- Ensure that you have access to up-to-date email and telephone contact information (including cell phones) for your critical staff
- Cross-train research staff to substitute for others who may be out sick or unable to come to work
 - Ensure that staff have the appropriate, up-to-date training
 - Document critical step-by-step instructions for laboratory procedures
 - Encourage all researchers to be familiar with each other's work if an absence would threaten the loss of experiments (such as which cells need transferring to new media, etc.)
- Coordinate with colleagues who have similar research activities to identify ways to ensure mutual support and coverage of critical activities
- Review contingency plans and emergency procedures with researchers and staff
- Maintain a sufficient inventory of critical supplies that may be affected by global shipping delays. Inform your building manager if your lab relies on regularly scheduled supplies such as liquid nitrogen, dry ice, or compressed gasses.
- Contact your departmental leadership, building manager, and [Office of Emergency Management](#) staff if you need assistance in reviewing your business continuity plans

Other safety considerations:

- Ensure that individuals performing critical tasks have been adequately trained and understand whom to contact with technical or safety questions. If you need assistance in developing Standard Operating Procedures for research processes, contact EH&S for guidance (www.ehs.ucr.edu), ehs@ucr.edu or by phone (951) 827-5528.
- Avoid performing high-risk procedures alone. When working alone is necessary, exercise extreme caution.

- Ensure that research team members notify colleagues of their schedule when working alone for an extended period of time
- Ensure that hazardous materials (e.g., radioactive, biohazards, chemicals) are properly secured

Contract- and Grant-related questions:

- Sponsored Programs Administration (SPA) is reviewing questions relating to the allowability of costs associated with any disruptions to sponsored projects stemming from COVID-19
- Send questions to your departmental business offices about who should coordinate with SPA
- For a cost to be allowable, it will require consistent treatment across all funding sources
- The federal funding agencies are working on a unified message in this regard, and once published, SPA will share it with the UCR community

Coronavirus research on campus:

- Note that all PIs must have all the necessary compliance approvals prior to performing any coronavirus-related research or work on campus (including helping state and federal agencies screen patient samples). This includes requesting or accepting COVID-19 samples (patient or otherwise).

Finally, I would like to echo the Chancellor's message that it is imperative that all members of UCR's community uphold and respect campus culture and our [Principles of Community](#). Employees are reminded not to stigmatize anyone based on national origin. Students who experience any mistreatment or witness inappropriate behavior can make a report to deanofstudents@ucr.edu. Employees should consult with their direct supervisor if they witness or experience inappropriate behavior.

Please forward this message to anyone may need to know.

Sincerely,

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Important Links:

Campus Coronavirus page for up-to-date information: <https://ehs.ucr.edu/coronavirus>

Environmental Health and Safety: <https://ehs.ucr.edu/>

RED: <https://research.ucr.edu/> Contacts: <https://research.ucr.edu/about/staff.aspx?d=1>

- General UC Website on [How UC is responding to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [UC Health letter](#)
- [UC Berkeley Research Continuity & Planning for COVID-19](#)
- [UCSF Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources](#). Includes information such as:
 - Interim Policy on events and large gatherings
 - Travel guidelines and Visitor policy