

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCH PROGRAMS AT HSC IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (UPDATED MARCH 24, 2020)

This guidance is for non-human subjects research. Guidance on human subjects research can be found at: <https://compliance.ouhsc.edu/HRPP/COVID-19-Information>.

As described in the March 18 [GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCH PROGRAMS AT HSC IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19](#), on-site research is ongoing at this time; however, all research laboratories and facilities should be limiting their activities to essential research activities.

The following guidance is to assist researchers in carrying out their essential research activities.

Principal Investigators should be working with the individuals in their laboratory to continue non-human subjects essential research operations while at the same time providing a safe work environment to mitigate the risk of spread of COVID-19.

- 1) All research activities should be carefully evaluated for the following:
 - a. Do these activities pose an increased risk to research staff, such as being unable to implement social distancing or good hygiene practices in order to carry out the research activity?
 - b. Can this research be put off to a later date without a significant impact to the ongoing experiments or activities?
 - c. The HSC plans to continue supporting research activities as long as a safe work environment can be maintained that mitigates the risk of spread of COVID-19; however, if this were to change and the University needed to limit research to mission-critical research only or a shelter-in-place directive was given by a governmental entity, how would ongoing research be managed?
- 2) Telecommuting should be encouraged as much as possible, based on research protocols and requirements. Examples of work that could be done by telecommuting would include data analysis, literature review, protocol development, and manuscript preparation. Central IT has provided information about remote working resources here: <http://ou.edu/ouit/workanywhere>.
- 3) While telecommuting can be encouraged as much as possible, there are a number of research activities that must be done in a laboratory environment. In these situations, principal investigators should:
 - establish flexible or rotating work schedules for essential personnel where possible, to reduce the number of people working near one another on a given day
 - implement social distancing practices meant to reduce close contact in the workplace (e.g., maintain an approximate distance of 6 feet from others) and practice the [CDC-recommended good hygiene practices](#)
 - transition all meetings to phone or virtual formats (<https://itscnorman.ou.edu/askit/zoom-for-staff/>)
- 4) Guidance on graduate student activities can be found [here](#). A list of possible telecommuting activities for graduate students can be found [here](#).
- 5) Guidance for employees on Responsibilities for Workplace Wellness can be found [here](#).
- 6) Each laboratory should have its Research Disaster Plan prepared in case the University needs to limit research to mission-critical research only or a shelter-in-place directive is given by a governmental entity. For information on developing a Research Disaster Plan see <https://research.ouhsc.edu/Resources/COVID-Research-Updates>.

NOTE: Due to the rapidly changing nature of COVID-19, this guidance is subject to change with little or no notice.