


Boston University Office of Research

TO: Boston University Faculty, Staff, Graduate Students, and Postdocs

FROM: Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research 

DATE: March 21, 2020

SUBJECT: Essential On-Campus Research and Preparation for Potential Cessation of In-Person On-Campus Research

We have previously asked researchers on both the [Charles River](#) and [Medical](#) Campuses to **minimize laboratory activity to the greatest extent possible**, and to develop a plan should we be required to shut down operations further. The purpose of this memo is 1.) to ask PIs to provide an inventory of work that is continuing on campus, and 2.) to provide information about what activities would be critical to maintaining the capabilities of the lab if it is necessary to cease in-person-in-the-laboratory work.

Inventory of Ongoing Work: We are asking all PIs to use this [form](#) to let their department chairs know by Wednesday, March 25, what activity is still occurring on campus and which personnel are considered essential to the ongoing work. As outlined in our earlier communications, the following principles underlie the designation of activities currently considered essential:

- long-term experiments and activities that would generate significant data and financial loss if not completed
- human subjects research that holds the potential for direct benefit to the subject (e.g., investigational drug, devices, or surgical procedures) and the interaction is required to deliver that potential direct benefit
- work to maintain critical samples and animal populations
- activity that if discontinued would pose a safety hazard
- activity to maintain critical equipment in facilities and labs
- COVID-19 related activity that has a timeline for deployment that could address the current crisis

Invalid justifications of essential activities include:

- It will take time to get the lab up and running again
- Experimental results are needed for a paper submission or another deadline

PIs should be prepared for these criteria to become more restrictive, depending upon developments.

Preparation for cessation of in-person-in-the-laboratory work. We are now asking PIs to indicate on the form what activities they believe are critical to maintaining the capabilities of their lab if in-person-in-the-laboratory work is required to cease. In that case, access to

labs would only be available for essential personnel who perform critical procedures, processes or equipment management that require regular personnel attention to maintain laboratory viability (e.g. liquid nitrogen tank filling, animal support, maintaining shared computational equipment). Many, if not most, on the lists of essential personnel are expected to be staff in facilities and researchers maintaining equipment and systems that require attention. In any case where the activity goes beyond simple equipment or sample maintenance, the request should include a justification of the essential activity, a social distancing plan, and a contingency plan. The information you provide will be used to notify your departmental administrator about who these individuals are.

Personnel: Unless their presence is required for an essential role, trainees (including PhD students and post-doctoral researchers) should work remotely. We expect PIs will not make any immediate changes to the support of their staff, students, and postdocs. Please continue charging personnel salaries to grants as normal. Our research administration staff are monitoring awarding agency guidance, are prepared for fully remote support, and will be contacting departments where after-the-fact changes may be necessary. We have also been working with research sponsors to ensure that we continue to operate in a compliant and appropriate manner.

Process: Each school will develop a process for review and approval of the list of critical activities. A first-level review will be performed by department chairs. In the event of an order to cease in-person-in-the-laboratory work, final approval of activities beyond those approved by the chair must be obtained from an associate dean or dean.

Staff in Environmental Health & Safety and the Animal Science Center, who are defined as essential personnel, have robust continuity programs to support the campus during this time. Additionally, the units of the Office of Research, including the Institutional Review Board and Research Compliance, are fully functional using remote protocols. Departments, schools, the Office of Research, and Environmental Health & Safety will work together to determine how best to continue the indicated critical activities.

One consequence of the scaled back in-person-in-the-laboratory research and remote work is that the campus will have far fewer people and we will need to make sure that spaces and valuables are secured. BU Public Safety is mindful of this concern and will be taking appropriate measures.

Cc: Academic Deans
Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Robert A. Brown, University President



Boston University Office of Research
1 Silber Way, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02215
617-353-2595 / bu.edu/researchsupport