Western Kentucky University

College of Education & Behavioral Sciences

Fall 2020 Research Restart Plan

This document describes requirements for the resumption of research in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS). This document was adapted from and in accordance with the [Big Red Restart Plan](#) update dated and [Resumption of Research Activities](#) documents dated June 18, 2020. Researchers must also adhere to CEBS-specific requirements outlined in the CEBS Restart Plan. Future policies and procedures should defer to future updates of the Big Red Restart Plan located at https://www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill/.

College of Education & Behavioral Sciences Research Restart Plan

Phase 1. Essential research. Consistent with the [Big Red Restart Plan Resumption of Research Activities guidelines](#), only essential activities necessary to maintain research equipment and protect data will take place within research spaces. All other research activities will take place remotely.

Phase 2. Lab personnel access to laboratory/research space. The Phase 2 protocol from the Big Red Restart Plan Resumption of Research Activities guidelines will be followed. For the remainder of this document, "lab" and "laboratory" refer to any space on the WKU campus where research is conducted. Research personnel may return to their research lab once a CEBS Plan for Resuming Research COVID-19 Protocol is approved for the lab by the department and college leadership. Research personnel must complete training on appropriate COVID-19 risk minimization procedures for lab operation. **Even if data collection with human participants is not resuming, researchers must submit a CEBS Plan for Resuming Research COVID-19 Protocol to their department heads (which must be approved by the department head and college leadership) prior to allowing student researchers or graduate assistants into research labs.**

Phase 3. Data collection with human participants. Researchers may resume data collection with human participants once they have a) a CEBS Plan for Resuming Research COVID-19 Protocol that has been approved by the department head, college leadership, and the Institutional Review Board (IRB-see below), b) a letter from the Dean or Department Head stating that they approve of the researcher resuming in-person data collection, which should be submitted with the IRB application/amendment, AND c) WKU buildings are open to the public. Amendments to the plan or challenges that arise should be reported to the appropriate department and college leadership.

PIs should consider converting in-person data collection procedures to virtual/electronic methods to minimize in-person and/or paper-pencil data collection:

1. Paper-pencil questionnaires/survey measures can be converted electronically for participants to complete at home or in the lab using a sanitized lab computer/iPad or the participant's own electronic device (laptop, phone, etc.).
2. Consent forms could be converted to electronic consent (IRB approval is required for this change).
3. Data collection done via an IRB approved, video-conferencing method. If health information will be collected, the video-conferencing method must be HIPAA-compliant.

Required approval prior to resuming in-person data collection with human participants:

No in-person data collection with human participants, whether at WKU or off-campus, may resume without an approved **CEBS Plan for Resuming Research-COVID-19 Protocol** to ensure compliance with WKU and Kentucky Healthy at Work guidelines. This includes all research studies with human participants, whether or not they have been previously approved by the IRB. In order to obtain approval for a research plan, researchers should submit the plan to their department head. Once the department head has approved the plan, it should be submitted to college leadership, with documentation of the department head's approval. Once college leadership has approved the plan, if the plan involves resuming in-person human participants research, the researcher should submit the plan and a letter from the Dean or Department Head stating that they approve of the researcher resuming in-person data collection to the IRB with their IRB application. After the IRB has approved the plan and any necessary modifications to the research protocol, data collection may resume. Faculty members are responsible for ensuring that all research for which they are the principal investigators of, as well as research conducted by students the faculty member supervises, adhere to WKU and Kentucky Healthy at Work guidelines. Protocols should clearly indicate mechanisms for screening those at an enhanced risk of contracting COVID-19 (see "COVID-19 Risk Factors" below).

PIs must provide research staff (i.e., anyone working in research spaces or with human participants, including student researchers) with the WKU guidelines, IRB addendum (at least sections specific to protocols for them to follow), and training about the guidelines mentioned above. PIs must document that this training has been provided using the **COVID-19 Procedures Training Acknowledgement form**.

Informational flyers pertaining to social distancing, symptoms, face masks, hand washing or sanitizing should be posted where appropriate in laboratory spaces. (University signage link: https://www.wku.edu/restart/printablesignage/index.php).

Social Distancing

1. The number of individuals in the laboratory will be limited to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed (6 feet separation).
2. Restrictions on the number of participants in a testing space will be based on the CDC, state, and university social distancing guidelines. Exceptions may be made for research involving families, couples, roommates, etc. living in the same household.
3. There should be ample time between participants to allow for proper sanitation (see below).
4. The number of research assistants in the laboratory during data collection should correspond to the minimum number needed to operate the equipment and also maintain safe social distancing between the research assistants and the research participants.
5. If research participation sessions are in progress, only research assistants directly involved in data collection should be in the laboratory. Additional research assistants may simultaneously engage in research activities (e.g., clerical, data management, etc.) in a closed adjoining lab space following appropriately social distancing guidelines in this space.
6. Research participants will be advised in scheduling that they must wear a mask to enter the building. Exceptions will only be made for those research participants who are not recommended to wear masks by the CDC, WHO, or Kentucky state guidelines. If research participants from the community do not have a mask, they will either be dismissed and their session rescheduled OR they will be provided with a disposable mask. Psychology Study Board (undergraduate) participants will be assigned an excused no-show in Study Board if they arrive at a research session without a mask and the researcher does not have one to provide to the participant.
7. Research participants from the community who are unfamiliar with the layout of Gary Ransdell Hall (GRH) by a research assistant (or the participant parking spots) and will be asked to sanitize their hands at the entrance of GRH. The research assistant will also ensure that the participant is wearing a mask prior to entering the building.
8. When escorting research participants to the laboratory, research assistants should ensure proper social distancing from the research participant (6 ft). If research participants are not able to use the stairs, the research assistant can show them to the elevator.
9. Research participants who do not require an escort to the lab space (e.g., Study Board participants) will be greeted upon arrival at the laboratory by a research assistant. The research assistant will ensure that the participant has sanitized their hands and is wearing a mask prior to entering the lab.
10. If working with vulnerable populations (e.g., older adults, children/infants, etc.), researchers should schedule laboratory sessions at a time when the hallways are not crowded (e.g., during class times, before/after the business day, Saturdays, etc.).
11. If a study includes interviewing a research participant, the research assistant/interviewer must be at least 6 feet away from the participant and wearing a

mask and/or face shield (plexiglass barrier optional). If the protocol for a study makes it difficult to maintain a 6 foot distance, then the research assistant should (a) wear both a mask and a face shield, or (b) wear a mask and be separated by a plexiglass barrier.

12. Research assistants who must physically interact with a participant (e.g., head-mounting displays for eye-tracking (HMD), placement of physiological and/or electrical probes/caps/sensors/etc. in psychophysiological/EEG studies) will wear disposable gloves in addition to a face mask and/or face shield. After each research participant, a thorough cleaning of wearable/reusable equipment (electrodes/probes/caps/glasses/HMD/etc.) with approved disinfectants/procedures.

Sanitation/Cleaning Procedures

1. All research personnel will adhere to the guidelines specified in the Big Red Restart Resumption of Research guidelines for handwashing, sanitizing workspaces, and logging lab attendance and exposure to other personnel.
2. Research personnel will be responsible for documenting the laboratory's supply of and need for soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, disposable masks, and cleaning wipes or other cleaning supplies. Laboratory directors (faculty) should establish a restocking routine with research personnel to ensure continuity of research.
3. Research participants a required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds at the beginning and at the end of each session. Handwashing and sanitizing during a session should occur if researchers or participants are handling objects that are frequently handled by others.

Screening for COVID-19 Symptoms
1. In addition to the requirements for screening research lab personnel (see Big Red Restart Resumption of Research guidelines), research staff will screen themselves and participants for any risk factors for COVID-19, illness symptoms, recent history of illness, and contact with a known or presumed COVID-19 individual(s).
    a. **Risk Factors for COVID-19**
        i. Before participation, potential research participants must be screened for COVID-19 risk factors outlined by the CDC (see COVID-19 Risk Factors below). If any risk factors are present, research participants should be made aware of these as risk factors before deciding to participate in the study.
        ii. Research staff should be made aware of these risk factors. Reasonable accommodations should be made for staff members who identify as having any risk factors and who are uncomfortable with testing research participants. These accommodations could include: remote assignments such as literature reviews, data analysis, participant recruitment, task programming, etc. Research staff should also follow appropriate social distancing both inside and outside of the workplace as mandated by the CDC, WKU, and Kentucky Healthy at

Work requirements.
   b. **Screening for Illness/Recent History of Illness/Contact with Known/Presumed COVID-19 Individual(s):** The Health Checklist (see below) can be sent to participants approximately 1 week ahead of time for them to self- screen ahead of participating. In addition, the researcher will ask the participant the checklist questions upon arrival to the parking lot, building, or laboratory.

2. To facilitate contact tracing in the event of exposure to or contracting of COVID-19, research personnel will be required to personally log their whereabouts in a private journal. This log should include the dates and times of their travels, and should include the names of those known individuals with whom they were in contact in an enclosed space for longer than 30 minutes. This information is strictly for the use of the individual logging their activities, but will serve as a means to offer a transparent accounting of one's location to others (e.g., Principal Investigator (PI)/lab director, WKU, local health department) should it become necessary to communicate to other research personnel, students, or other members of the community participating in WKU research.
   a. If the employee/student has had contact in an enclosed space for longer than 30 minutes with research participants, PIs should provide guidance on what should be included in the private log to ensure participant confidentiality.

Data Collection "In the Field" (off-campus)
1. The above-mentioned guidelines also apply to research "in the field," but close communication with site contacts may be required to ensure coordination between the PI and the facility. There may be additional facility requirements beyond these guidelines. In such cases, a research lab's plan for resuming research activities may need to be amended to include additional requirements.
2. PIs should obtain a letter of support from research site locations stating that 1) they are approved to conduct data collection at their facilities and 2) the facility is adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. This letter of support should be included in the IRB modification or otherwise submitted to the IRB when appropriate.
3. PIs are responsible for determining the source of personal protective equipment and sanitizing supplies prior to travel to field locations. PIs are also responsible for clearly communicating to research personnel how these materials will be transferred, used, and inventoried if supplied by the PI or WKU.

The following pages contain excerpts from the Big Red Restart Plan on university-wide requirements for the resumption of research.

Requirements from the Big Red Restart Plan:

In accordance with the Big Red Restart Plan dated June 18, 2020, the resumption of research activities on campus will occur in stages, based on the continued assessment of the COVID-19 status in the city of Bowling Green and in Warren County, the lifting of local stay at home restrictions, and on our ability to successfully social distance in our laboratories, offices, and shared spaces that support research. Our plans will also align with guidelines from the Governor's office (see Kentucky Healthy at Work Requirements in Appendix A) and the University's "Big Red Restart" planning process, both of which specify which employees and students may return to work and under what conditions they may return. Strict requirements will remain in place to maintain the safety of the workplace and of the members of the community involved in WKU-related research activities. Movement between stages will happen cautiously and gradually. Please be aware that we will continue to monitor public health metrics closely. The need may arise to swiftly reduce research activity should negative indicators develop.

All on-campus research activities, including any previously approved essential research activities, must meet all requirements as detailed below.

Phase 1
On-campus essential research activities since March 2020 have been restricted to:
- *Activity that if discontinued would pose a safety hazard;*
- *Activity that maintains critical equipment;*
- *Activity that maintains critical samples, reagents, and materials, including laboratory animal populations as well as critically needed plant populations, tissue cultures, or other living organisms which cannot be cryopreserved;*

Phase 2
Beginning June 18, 2020, and in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements, specific, limited, on-campus research operations will resume. Gradually increasing levels of on- campus activity will enable us to develop and practice rigorous safety protocols in an orderly manner. All resumption of research activity requires that a lab re-start plan be submitted to and approved by one's home department and the college dean's office in consultation with the WKU Office or Research and Creative Activities (ORCA). When appropriate, modifications to protocols involving human research subjects will be submitted to the WKU Institutional Review Board (IRB) to accommodate safety protocols for lab personnel and human participants.
Modifications to protocols for the care of animals given enhanced safety procedures will also be submitted when appropriate. The department chair and college dean or their representative must approve the plan for continuation of essential research activities and any resumption of research activity.

Please note that researchers requesting permission to resume in-person human subjects research during this stage must include in their plan a detailed description of the measures

that will be implemented to ensure the safety of researchers and participants as well as strict adherence to COVID-19-specific university, state, and federal requirements. Plan submissions should describe the personal protective equipment and sanitization supplies available to the research personnel in the physical research space and how these materials will be used to ensure that the research lab/office will meet existing safety guidelines.

During this stage, up to 50% maximum occupancy for on-campus research spaces will be allowed. This transition may require a reconfiguration of spaces to enable appropriate
distancing, as well as the implementation of scheduling protocols, such as working in shifts. Re- start plans submitted by a researcher should address the impact of this maximum occupancy restriction on the resumption of research activities. When human subjects research is involved, be sure to specify the lab personnel to participant ratio.

Undergraduate students will only be permitted to participate in on-campus research activities during this stage with approval by Department and College Leadership. Supervision of undergraduate research students should be specifically addressed in the research plan.

Until employees return to campus for the resumption of regular work duties, no lab personnel (including graduate students and post-docs) will be required to work within the research lab or office space. Employment duties will be determined as is usual by one's manager, and, to the extent possible, will continue through remote means.

Research personnel returning to the lab will be required to:
- *Complete training on appropriate COVID-19 risk minimization procedures for lab operation*
- *Document temperature in a private journal in the laboratory or office upon arrival each day*
- *To facilitate contact tracing, maintain a personal log of one's temperature and day-to-day travel destinations. This should include the names of individuals that you have been in contact with (for greater than 30 minutes) since last being in the lab.*
- *At the end of the day, log in a private journal the names of those other researchers whom the employee/student has been in contact with (for greater than 30 minutes) since they have reported to the lab.*
- *Stay at home when sick or otherwise exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19*
- *Wash hands or use hand sanitizer for 20 seconds upon arrival to the research space and throughout the day when exposed to shared surfaces and lab equipment*
- *Maintain a distance of 6 feet from other lab personnel and wear a face covering when accompanied by others in the work space*
- *When you begin your work in your lab area and when you leave any room in which you have been working and at the end of your day at work, you must swab down all work areas with 70% ethanol or an equivalent disinfectant solution. This includes any shared-space location (e.g. microscopy room, tissue culture room, etc.).*

- *At the end of the day a log in a private journal will be maintained of everyone that the employee/student has been in contact with (for greater than 30 minutes) since they have reported to the lab.*
- *Refrain from bringing visitors, visiting trainees, guests, or pets to the research space*

Phase 3

Beginning August 1, 2020, general access to buildings housing research space is scheduled to resume. All requirements described in Phase 2 will continue. Appropriate signage will be mounted to advise non-research personnel to avoid entering research space without first receiving approval of appropriate personnel (e.g., lab director or project lead researcher).

University signage: https://www.wku.edu/restart/printablesignage/index.php

Kentucky Healthy at Work Requirements

1. *Continue telework where possible. Entities should operate via phone or Internet to the greatest extent practicable. Employees who are able to perform their job duties via telework (phone or Internet) must continue to telework.*
2. *Phased return to work. Entities are encouraged to implement a phased return to work, including generous telework, sick leave, and family leave policies for those employees who are not able to come into work due to illness, taking care of a family member(s), or lack of childcare options.*
3. *Enforce social distancing. Entities must ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that employees who are not able to telework and must be physically present at the office remain a minimum of six (6) feet away from all other employees and customers unless closer interaction is absolutely required to perform their job duties (e.g., healthcare examinations).*
4. *Limit face-to-face interaction. Entities must ensure that employees minimize face-to-face contact with one another and with customers to the greatest extent practicable. Meetings should be conducted via telephone or Internet if possible.*
5. *Universal masks and any other necessary PPE.*
   a. *Universal Employee Masks: Businesses, organizations, and entities must ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that their employees, volunteers, and contractors wear a cloth mask (a surgical or N95 mask is not required). A business, organization, or entity need not require an employee/volunteer/contract or to wear a mask when masking would create a serious health or safety hazard to the employee/volunteer/contractor, when the employee/volunteer/contractor is working alone in an enclosed space, or when the employee/volunteer/contractor is working alone in an area with more than six (6) feet of social distancing. Businesses and organizations shall provide PPE at no cost to employees and should offer instruction on proper use of masks and PPE.*

b. *CDC guidelines on proper use of PPE can be found at:* https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face- covering-instructions.pdf.

c. *Encourage Customers to Mask: Entities should encourage customers to wear masks, which the entities may provide. Entities may refuse to serve any customer who is not wearing a mask.*

d. *Access to Gloves: Entities must ensure that employees whose job duties include touching items often touched by others (e.g., credit cards/cash, paper, computers) wear gloves that are regularly replaced. Entities should also follow the applicable CDC, OSHA, or other federal guidelines relating to gloves.*

6. *Adequate Hand Sanitizer and Encouraging Hand Washing. Entities must supply adequate hand sanitizer (60% alcohol content or higher) for both employees and customers and ensure that it is made available near high-traffic and high-touch areas (e.g., doors or door handles). Entities must also encourage routine and consistent hand washing for employees and customers.*

7. *Restrict Common Areas. Entities must, to the greatest extent practicable, restrict common areas such as lobbies, waiting rooms, break rooms, smoking areas, lunchrooms, and concession areas to maximize social distancing and reduce congregating.*

8. *Proper sanitation. Entities must sanitize frequently touched surfaces and areas (e.g., doorknobs, credit card machines, shared computers) in accordance with CDC guidelines. When they have identified an employee, who has COVID-19 or the associated symptoms, entities must further ensure that they immediately restrict access to contaminated areas and post signage and adequately clean impacted areas. Any contaminated area should be off-limits to all but essential personnel for a minimum of 24 hours if practicable.*

9. *Conduct daily temperature/health checks. Entities must require employees to undergo daily temperature and health checks; these checks may be either self-administered or administered by the entities prior to workplace entry. Self- administered temperature and health checks may be performed at home. Employees who have a fever and/or any symptoms of COVID-19 should be directed to their health care provider to be tested and then instructed to quarantine at home as soon as any illness is detected. This includes employees that passed a temperature and health check prior to reporting to work but became ill during the course of the day. Guidance on COVID-19 symptoms and how to conduct temperature and health checks can be found in the Health Requirements and Temperature Checks section below.*

10. *Create a testing plan. Entities must ensure that any employee with COVID-19 symptoms is tested by a health care provider for COVID-19 within 36 hours. Entities must ensure that employees are trained on how to isolate individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and how to report possible cases. If an employee tests*

positive, the entities must immediately notify the local public health department.

11. *Make special accommodations. Entities must, to the greatest extent practicable, make special accommodations for employees and customers at higher risk for severe illness. Individuals in these high-risk categories have been identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention –further information is available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Higher-Risk.*

12. *Designate a "Healthy at Work" Officer. Entities must ensure that an employee isdesignatedasitsHealthyatWorkOfficer.Thisindividualwillberesponsible for the entity' compliance with this guidance and any other guidance provided. Entities should allow for employees to identify and communicate potential improvements and/or concerns to the Healthy at Work designated Officer or management.*

13. *Educate and Train Employees. Entities must educate and train all individuals, including employees, temporary employees, contractors, vendors, customers, etc., regarding the Healthy at Work protocols. This training must be offered during scheduled work times at no cost to the employee.*

14. *Contact Notification Responsibilities. Entities opened must be prepared to assist public health officials if an employee test positive or becomes exposed to COVID-19. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, providing the employee's work schedule, workstation, hours or shifts worked, when the employee was potentially exposed, and the names and contact information of any other employee or other party exposed to the virus. Additional information about Contact Notification Responsibilities can be found in the Contact Notification Responsibilities Section Below.*

COVID-19 Risk Factors (subject to change)

Below are risk factors for COVID-19. Please take these into consideration before participating in our study.

1. Age > 65 years of age
2. Body Mass Index (BMI) > 30
3. Uncontrolled hypertension (SBP > 150)
4. Diabetes (even if controlled)
5. Pregnant or nursing
6. Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
7. Immunocompromised
8. Chronic kidney disease
9. Chronic liver disease

If you have any questions, please contact <insert PI/lab contact information>.

Additional Resources
Populations to consider: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html
Underlying Medical Conditions: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra- precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

Health Checklist

In the last 14 days, have you had any of the following symptoms (circle)?

1. Fever > 100.0^{0}F	YES	NO
2. Cough	YES	NO
3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	YES	NO
4. Chills	YES	NO
5. Muscle aches	YES	NO
6. Sore throat	YES	NO
7. Congestion or runny nose	YES	NO
8. Loss of taste or smell	YES	NO
9. Nausea or vomiting	YES	NO
10. Diarrhea	YES	NO
11. Traveled by plane inside/outside the country?	YES	NO

Have you had contact with a known/presumed COVID-19 patient in the last 14 days (<6 ft., > 30 minutes)?   YES   NO

If any of the above questions are YES, do NOT proceed with the study.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

References and Additional Resources

Recommendations in the CEBS Research Restart Plan were modified from WKU Department of Psychological Sciences Restart Plan and Department of Psychology VU Ramp UP of Human Behavioral Research: Issues & Protocols (5/6/20) Plan.

CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

KY: https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19

WHO: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

WKU: https://www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill/