

Colleagues,

The health, safety and well being of our campus and community is a priority, and this includes faculty, staff and students engaged in research, as well as research subjects. Effective March 17, 2020, in an effort to keep our researchers and human participants safe from exposures to COVID-19, we are requiring a temporary hiatus in face-to-face (i.e. in-person) human subjects research interactions. Human subjects research conducted online or using other remote data collection methodologies (email, mail, phone, Zoom, etc.) may continue. Please note that once a human research study has received IRB approval, any subsequent changes to the study must be reviewed and approved by the IRB (through IRBNet.org) prior to implementation.

We encourage all principal investigators to develop individual contingency plans for research operations that are consistent with WKU's plan of action (see <https://www.wku.edu/covid19/>). Below we provide a list of suggestions to consider as they relate to operations of your research program as the situation evolves.

- Develop an effective communication plan to assure that you and your laboratory members are in communication over research operations.
- Identify essential research operations (e.g., special care for animals, cell culture maintenance or on-going experiments), and identify who will be responsible for performing those essential activities (individuals identified with back-up plans).
- Delineate research outcomes that can be performed remotely, and what resources are needed to do so.
- Consider which supplies/reagents will be needed for continued experimentation and whether orders and/or needs should be adjusted, if possible, to ensure on-going operations.
- If you have regulatory approvals that will be expiring soon, contact the Office of Research Integrity (<https://www.wku.edu/compliance/>) to request extensions.
- Consider shutting down non-essential equipment that will not be damaged by shutdown, or that requires reagents (e.g., liquid nitrogen or gases) where supplies may not be readily available.
- Create plans for equipment maintenance by designated individuals.

We are continuing to monitor and evaluate the evolving situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, and we will provide regular updates on campus policies related to research activities.

Thank you,
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