

Resumption of Research Activities

The resumption of research activities on campus will occur in stages, based on the continued assessment of the COVID-19 status in our area, the lifting of local stay at home restrictions, and on our ability to successfully social distance in our laboratories, offices, and in shared spaces that support research. Our plans will also align with guidelines from the Governor's office, and the University's "Big Red Restart" planning process. This approach will guide 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 movement between stages will happen cautiously and gradually. Please be aware that we will continue to monitor public health metrics closely and, we the need may arise to reduce research activity should negative indicators develop.

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;
- Activity that maintains laboratory animal populations;
- Activity that maintains critically needed plant populations, tissue cultures, or other living organisms which cannot be cryopreserved;

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

June 18, 2020 – Until return of normal activities

Changes in local, state, or federal requirements could result in changes to these requirements.

Resumption of specific, limited, on-campus research operations and activities will begin on June 18, 2020 if an approved plan is in place. Gradually increasing levels of on-campus activity will enable us to develop and practice rigorous safety protocols in an orderly manner.

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.

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.

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.

No person (including graduate students and post-docs) will be forced to work during this stage.

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.

In addition to the KY Healthy at Work Requirements (given below), WKU will implement the following requirements to mitigate risks of COVID-19 transmission:

- Faculty must submit a written plan and have approval from department and college leadership to continue/resume research activities
- Implement training and protocols described in approved plan.
- If you have come in contact with or otherwise believe that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, we are requesting that you self-report this information so that we are able to actively monitor our campus setting. This is also important for WKU's coordination with applicable health officials and any required reporting. Stay away from people and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention protective actions found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf>. Notify WKU Emergency Management at (270) 745-2019 or via email at wkuemgm@wku.edu to initiate the reporting process.
- Do not come to work if you are sick.
- Temperatures of all personnel shall be documented in a private journal in the laboratory upon arrival each day.
- Wash hands frequently for 20 seconds.
- Face covering must be worn at all times in WKU public facilities, including leased buildings, until further notice. This includes: when entering the WKU campus; while at work; and when leaving campus.
- 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.).
- Upon arrival a log (in a private journal) of everyone that the employee/student has been in contact with (for greater than 30 minutes) since they were last in the lab will be maintained.
- 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.
- You may not bring visitors, visiting trainees, guests, or pets to work.
- No more than one person may enter an elevator at a time. Please use the stairs whenever possible and do not congregate in those areas.
- If you're working at a typical lab bench, no other person may also be working in the same bay (i.e., laterally).
- Bathrooms may represent a high-risk area. As with other highly frequented areas, one person should use a bathroom at a time if possible, and hand washing is especially important.
- Practice social distancing – reduce meetings, use videoconferencing, work in shifts, keep 6 ft distances between personnel, work remotely when possible.
- Enhance cleaning of shared instruments and surfaces (shared phones, shared lab equipment, shared benches, doorknobs). Use a disinfectant that is safe and appropriate for the item.
- Ensure remote access to files and data.

Appendix A

KY 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/contractor 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 is designated as its Healthy at Work Officer. This individual will be responsible for the entity’s 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.