

Date: March 19, 2020
To: All Campus Researchers
From: Sarah M. Nusser Vice President for Research
Cc: Provost, Deans, Associate Deans for Research
Re: **New Guidelines for Research and COVID-19**

The rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic and recent guidance from President Wintersteen to encourage telework has significantly changed the landscape for research operations at Iowa State. To further promote the safety of Iowa State faculty, staff and students, the Office of the Vice President for Research has worked with the colleges to update many of the [COVID-19 and Research FAQs](#) on the VPR website and to develop the following guidance for researchers.

Please review and implement the following guidance in planning and conducting your research activities:

- 1. Iowa State University research is continuing, but research and creative activities should be being conducted differently to maximize social distancing.**
 - Research activities that can be performed remotely (e.g., writing, analyses, computation) must be conducted off-campus, with approval from your supervisor – this applies to all faculty, staff, post-docs, graduate students, and undergraduate researchers.
 - Activities that require access to campus facilities (as deemed by a supervisor) should adjust operations by creating rotation and shift schedules with a small number of people (with at least two for safety considerations) to ensure the CDC-outlined distance of six feet between people is maintained while ensuring safety.
 - In some cases, research should be paused, as is the case for in-person human subject studies, to reduce the risk of exposure to both participants and researchers. Check out the *Human Subjects* section of the [COVID-19 and Research](#) website.
 - ISU research administration services that support researchers remain available through phone, email and video methods.

2. **Please practice social distancing to the degree possible.**
 - Guidance is posted on the [COVID-19 and Research](#) webpage in the *Social Distancing and Mitigating the Risk of Transmission While Conducting Your Research* section.
3. **All researchers should immediately begin developing contingency plans** to prepare for curtailing all but the most essential on-campus research and creative activities.
 - While Iowa State is not at this point, contingency plans are critical to minimizing the impact of a disruption and to ease the process of restarting research.
 - The *Research Contingency Planning* section of the [COVID-19 and Research](#) webpage offers guidance to help you with this planning, including guidance on [what to consider in a contingency plan](#).
4. **Researchers should work with their department chairs, research center directors, and associate deans for research** to make appropriate decisions on whether their research activities should:
 - Continue through telework arrangements;
 - Be modified to conduct minimal on-campus or field/farm-based research while maximizing social distancing and reducing the environmental, health, and safety risks; or
 - Be suspended.

Please be sensitive to the needs and concerns of graduate students when making decisions and plans.
5. **Researchers should pay extra attention to safety considerations** given the reduced environmental, health, and safety personnel on campus, and minimize time on campus and within the community.
6. **Please use the resources that are available to you** – including the [COVID-19 and Research web page](#) and the [ISU Safety page](#) – to make the best and most informed decisions you can make.

There's no doubt we are in uncharted territory, but we're doing so together. We ask that you continue sharing your questions, suggestions and ideas with us at vpr@iastate.edu to help all of us chart a new path forward for Iowa State research.

My best regards, and please be well.

Sarah Nusser
Vice President for Research
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