



March 18, 2020 U-M ramps down noncritical laboratory research activities

This message is being sent to the U-M research community (faculty and administrative personnel). Please share this information with your colleagues.

Dear Faculty and Research Staff,

In an effort to protect the health and safety of the University of Michigan community amid the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation, researchers across all three campuses should ramp down all noncritical laboratory research activities by **5 p.m. on Friday, March 20**. We will continue to assess the situation at regular intervals.

Faculty, staff and students must ramp down all noncritical laboratory research activities, with the exception of research related to COVID-19. The university will maintain minimal access to laboratories so that critical activities, including the maintenance of animals, unique reagents, and essential equipment and materials, along with research related to COVID-19, can continue. Research and scholarship (e.g., analyzing data, writing and reviewing manuscripts, preparing presentations, developing new grant proposals, convening online discussions with students and lab staff, etc.) that can occur remotely should continue.

We remind you that, on March 14, the university began [restricting human subjects research](#) in order to minimize the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, and to preserve personal protective equipment for clinical care. These restrictions are effective through May 1 and may be extended depending upon circumstances.

We understand the difficulty of this situation, and its potential impact on the research enterprise and to your individual work and scientific inquiry, but the health and safety of our university community and the broader public is our top priority. Our research mission is important, however the health of our researchers and local community is more important. Please note that we are working closely with leadership across the schools and colleges to minimize the impact this poses to your professional advancement, the advancement of your colleagues, and to your ability to return to fully functional labs.

Please review the important details below:

- Beginning at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 20, only essential personnel who perform critical procedures, processes, or equipment management that requires regular attention will be able to access labs. This includes, for example, liquid nitrogen tank filling; maintenance of other equipment that requires gas or cryogen monitoring/service, including deep-storage freezers, electron microscopes, mass spectrometers and incubators; animal care; activities which ensure the continued viability of critical samples; and maintenance of shared computational equipment. Refer to the [COVID-19 Research Operations at U-M webpage](#) for information and examples.
- Remote activities such as data analysis, writing grants and manuscripts, and planning of future experiments may and should continue. Please refer to the U-M Remote Work Resource Guide at its.umich.edu/remote-resource-guide.
- Ensure essential personnel who will support critical functions have appropriate access.
- Essential maintenance should be staggered so that laboratory personnel who are present to maintain essential research functions minimize interactions. Lab personnel should follow social distancing guidelines.
- Please continue to charge grants and internal sources of research funding as normal. There is additional guidance related to proposal submission and award management at research.umich.edu/covid-19.
- The Unit for Laboratory Animal Medicine (ULAM) will maintain mechanisms for providing continued daily care to all animals housed on campus. Please refer to the FAQs featured in the link above.
- Undergraduates or external visitors are not allowed in labs.
- Ensure you have access to contact information for your lab team, including students, postdocs and staff, and review the Continuity of Operations Plan and emergency procedures within your group.
- Faculty who have undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students in the lab working for academic credit – including independent study and dissertation credit – must work with each of their students to develop a plan for continued research progress appropriate to the degree or credit pursued. For more information visit: <https://rackham.umich.edu/covid-19/>
- Some school/college/unit leadership have requested continuity plans or critical information/resources be shared with them, so please follow their guidance regarding that process.
- Materials including chemical, biological and radioactive materials are not allowed to be removed from campus
- Laboratory work that is specific to COVID-19 is encouraged and should continue.

It is important to note that all UMOR research support units are now remote, but remain operational, including Research and Sponsored Projects, Technology Transfer, Institutional Review Boards, and the IACUC.

If you have any questions regarding the ramp down of all noncritical research activities, please refer to our [COVID-19: Research Operations webpage](#). We anticipate

exceptions to this ramp down to be exceedingly rare and require approval from school/college/unit research leadership in consultation with OVPR.

The university also continues to take critical steps to diminish the risk of transmission of COVID-19, so please continue to monitor coronavirus.umich.edu for important updates.

If anyone performing critical research activities demonstrates any symptoms of illness, including but not limited to cough or fever, that individual must stay home. If someone has doubt about whether they could be ill, they should not come to work. This includes essential personnel, which is why redundancy in lab planning and communication is vitally important. Please refer to coronavirus.umich.edu if you have any further questions regarding how to address potential illness within your research laboratory.

Please establish a system by which lab members can and will check the status of each other. We must look after not only our physical health, but also consider mental health and the impact that current events can have on the members of our research community. While this process may be disheartening, please know that the steps you take now will support the long-term success of our labs and research groups.

Finally, if you and your colleagues have any extra personal protective equipment and/or unopened medical supplies that could be used by Michigan Medicine, please encourage them to send it to:

Michigan Medicine
1500 East Medical Center Drive, Dock 5
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109
Attn: UMH Dock Receiving Team

Sincerely,

Rebecca Cunningham, M.D.
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