



July 10, 2020

This weekly research re-engagement update is being sent to U-M faculty and staff with active sponsored research, including laboratory, studio, human and field research. Please share this information with your colleagues.

Dear faculty and research staff,

We are seven weeks into our strategic plan to safely re-engage research and scholarship across the University of Michigan, and I want to thank the research community for their participation and support throughout this process. We now have about 4,000 laboratory researchers entering more than 70 buildings daily across our campuses, dozens of field research teams resuming activity, and have reviewed more than 270 Tier 0 and Tier 1 human research activation protocols.

In regard to wet laboratory and studio research, it is a milestone worth recognizing to have opened research spaces and returned to research work after weeks of sheltering in place. We understand, however, that things do not yet feel back to normal. And with new requirements for density and social distancing, we are not able to return to full productivity in the generation of science and new knowledge.

This is indeed frustrating. Many researchers are asking how long they will need to work this way. The answer to this question will be dictated by the transmission of the virus. Next week, we will release a roadmap that outlines what research activities will look like if Michigan remains in Phase 4 of its [MI Safe Start Plan](#), advances to reduced rates of transmission in Phase 5 or regresses to Phase 3. We are working to adjust our public health requirements within state regulations to meet these changing levels of virus transmission, and we will share our plan to expand or compress our research activities as needed. We remain committed to ramping up research and scholarship in a safe and equitable manner.

Although we have prioritized on-campus research that cannot be done remotely, we recognize a substantial and essential portion of our research enterprise consists of dry laboratory, analysis, computational and policy-related work, most of which is office based. I want to thank these

individuals for their shared sacrifice of continuing to work remotely, which keeps building densities low and protects the health and safety of our community.

We recognize that office-based research teams also are grappling with how to maintain community and connection through prolonged periods of working remote. To further address this important issue, U-M organized a [Workplace Innovation and the Staff Experience \(WISE\) Committee](#) to develop recommendations that help guide the longer term management of remote and hybrid workspaces. Those recommendations will be released later this summer.

Training new graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in laboratory research is central to our mission. I am pleased to announce the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) is partnering with research and campus leadership to develop protocols and procedures for in-person research training that occurs in laboratories as they arrive at U-M. We expect to release this new guidance by mid-July.

As a community, we have worked diligently to re-engage research and scholarship, and our shared commitment to public health practices that we know minimize virus transmission and keep our research community safe and operational are critical. This includes wearing a face covering when traveling on board U-M buses and shuttles. It is important to note the [bus schedule changed on July 1](#) to provide extended hours and expanded service to coincide with parking enforcement.

I encourage you to review the information below, which focuses on in-person human research and public health metrics related to our re-engagement process. We continue to monitor a dashboard of these metrics daily.

Human Research

- OVPR recently refined and streamlined the [Human Research Activation Checklist](#). We appreciate your team's patience during this rapid implementation process. Principal investigators are no longer required to self-select which tier their project falls under. The Human Research Activation Committees will inform PIs which tier their project falls under as part of the submission review process.
- Only studies approved for activation under **Tier 0 and Tier 1** can resume in-person human research at this time. If Michigan remains in Phase 4 of its [MI Safe Start Plan](#) next week, we will activate **Tier 2** human research studies next week. If already approved, these **Tier 2** studies may not resume until OVPR announces the tier is activated.
- 400 human research activation protocols have been submitted.
- Thanks to the support and dedication of our Human Research Activation Committees, more than 272 protocols have been reviewed, 202 of which were approved for Tier 0 or Tier 1.
- Resources for human research activation:
 - [Human research activation plan](#)

- [Human research activation checklist](#) (Updated July 7)
- [Human research activation tier flowchart](#) (Updated July 10)
- [Human research activation tier framework](#) (Updated July 7)
- [Human research training module](#)
- [Research re-engagement webpage](#) (FAQs, guiding principles, activation procedures and committees, etc.)
- [Return-to-work training attestation for human research](#)

Animal Research

Site visitors from AAALAC International (AAALAC) will be on the Ann Arbor campus August 25-28 for a mandatory reaccreditation visit. We anticipate AAALAC representatives will visit all animal housing locations on campus, along with many laboratories.

AAALAC accreditation is critical to both the success of our Animal Care and Use Program and to the larger U-M research enterprise. Full AAALAC accreditation demonstrates to our peers, collaborators and funding agencies that U-M adheres to the highest national and professional standards of excellence in animal care and use. It also is necessary for ensuring that U-M faculty remain eligible for research funding from several external agencies.

Please visit the [AAALAC webpage on the ACU Program website](#) for more information about the upcoming site visit. A U-M username and password is required to access this webpage.

Public Health Metrics for Laboratory Research Re-engagement

- Research employees entering buildings (July 1-8): 4,136/weekday
- 74 total buildings ramped up for research and scholarship
- Environment, Health and Safety laboratory space visits (May 21-July 8): 9,098
- Supply of masks, sanitizer and disinfectant: Nonclinical PPE remains sufficient. Please refer to [Procurement Services' COVID-19 Supplies webpage](#) for more information.
- Researchers to date who displayed symptoms and tested **positive** for COVID-19: 0
- Researchers to date who displayed symptoms and tested **negative** for COVID-19: 3

Stay safe and healthy, and research onward.

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