



July 24, 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 nine weeks into our strategic process of safely re-engaging research and scholarship across the three University of Michigan campuses, and our shared commitment remains the same: to protect the health and safety of our research community. The process for ramping up has indeed been gradual, but we must continue to operate in this manner and practice important public health measures given the ongoing spike in COVID-19 cases nationwide.

Many units this week began operating at 45 percent density on any given shift — an increase from 30 percent in laboratories that are able to accommodate this activity while maintaining 144 square feet and social distancing protocols. This density level of 45 percent is consistent with our benchmarking across peer institutions, including the Big Ten, Ivy League and private universities across the United States. To increase productivity this week, we have encouraged laboratories to allow flexibility across shifts to accommodate individual teams' needs.

We also developed a [Research Activation Map](#) that aligns with the [MI Safe Start Plan](#) and guides university research operations based on virus transmission.

I appreciate your continuous support and expertise during these challenging times, and I also encourage you to review the items below for more information as it relates to our research re-engagement efforts.

#### **Process for exception to distancing requirements for essential laboratory training**

- Learners are an essential and valued component of the U-M research enterprise, and so their health and safety (and that of the entire research community) is our No. 1 priority. One of the most effective ways to reduce COVID-19 transmission is to minimize contact within six feet of one another, but that is not always a viable option when introducing a learner to new laboratory techniques or performing complex procedures. Therefore, we

developed a process for exception to distancing requirements for essential laboratory training that units can soon implement. Refer to the following PDF only as an example, and if you seek an exception, please work directly with your research associate dean to issue a formal request through Qualtrics. Note this procedure does not change the overall density requirement for laboratories.

- [Research training exception guidance](#)

### **Re-engaging undergraduate researchers**

- Undergraduate students are allowed to safely resume in-person laboratory research, according to the governor's executive order. Units can refer to the guidance below for how to safely re-engage undergraduate researchers in stages, and we will revisit this criteria once the fall academic semester begins.
  - Re-engagement of undergraduates at this point is limited to:
    - Senior students (individuals entering their senior year of coursework) who already have research experience in the same laboratory, and reside in the local (Ann Arbor, Dearborn or Flint) area.
  - Please remember that undergraduate students:
    - Are subject to the same building capacity limits as other researchers.
    - Must participate in the same symptom monitoring and building intake processes as other researchers.
    - Must complete the EHS return-to-research training module.
    - May not be left alone in research spaces.
    - May not be compelled by principal investigators to resume research and scholarship.

### **Human research updates**

- Studies approved for activation under **Tier 0, Tier 1 and Tier 2** can safely resume in-person human research at this time. We will continue to monitor virus transmission rates, and how those rates impact our status under the [MI Safe Start Plan](#), to determine when studies approved for activation under **Tier 3** can safely resume. If the state reverts back to Phase 3, U-M will only allow Tier 0 and 1 studies to continue.
- The human research FAQs featured on the [research re-engagement webpage](#) have expanded and are now separated into 13 categories so that teams can quickly find answers to important questions.
- 1,899 individuals have completed the human research training module via My LINC.
- 672 human research activation protocols have already been approved. 225 protocols are in the review process, and PIs should soon receive updates regarding their submissions.
- Resources for human research activation:
  - [Human research activation plan](#)
  - [Human research activation checklist](#)
  - [Human research activation tier flowchart](#)
  - [Human research activation tier framework](#)
  - [Human research training module](#)

- [Research re-engagement webpage](#) (FAQs, guiding principles, activation procedures and committees, etc.)
- [Return-to-work training attestation for human research](#)

### **Public health metrics for research re-engagement**

- Research employees entering buildings (July 16-22): 4,327/weekday
- 74 total buildings ramped up for research and scholarship
- Environment, Health and Safety laboratory space visits (May 21-July 22): 12,265
- 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: 4
  - Please refer to the [U-M Workplace Contact Tracing Protocol](#) for further guidance on how to respond in the workplace when an employee is awaiting test results or tests positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Stay safe and healthy, and research onward.

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