

Subject: Research restart

From: "Appling, Dean" <dappling@austin.utexas.edu>

Date: 5/21/20, 2:07 PM

CC: "Appling, Dean" <dappling@austin.utexas.edu>, "Goldbart, Paul" <paul.goldbart@austin.utexas.edu>, "Matouschek, Andreas T" <matouschek@austin.utexas.edu>

This email has been sent on May 21 to all CNS faculty.

Dear Colleagues:

You will have received the memo from Ali Preston (interim VPR) earlier today outlining the process by which UT will increase research activity on campus. As the memo indicates, for now each research project on campus will need to be approved individually. The approval process will run through the colleges. PIs who wish to perform research on campus in this next phase will need to request approval through the Assoc. Dean of Research. Requests will be evaluated in consultation with the CNS department chairs.

You will see that each Research Phase in the restart plan specifies a target Workforce Number, which refers to the maximum allowable percentage of researchers on-site. Research has been operating currently according to the plan's Research Phase 4. We are now transitioning to Research Phase 3. Research Phase 3 caps the Workforce Number at 30%-40% of the total research workforce. Please do not plan to resume projects that cannot be stopped again on short notice. We should anticipate the possibility of returning to more restricted research phases, should COVID-19 infections rise again.

As outlined by the VPR memo, this phase 3 is designed to include time-sensitive research, including:

- Seasonal data collection such as field research or experiments close to completion
- Access for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows close to completing their degree/term of appointment, including visiting graduate students/postdoctoral scholars with formal visiting agreements on file
- Sponsored projects with grant end dates within 3 months, for which the funding agency has not granted leniency

The College of Natural Sciences **Research Restart** site is located [here](#). This site contains the UT guidelines and criteria that will be used to evaluate each request.

Below are the steps you will need to take to request approval to restart your research operations at the workforce levels defined by this phase. Please read through all the steps before proceeding. *Note: even if you have a current research exemption, you still need to request approval for this new phase of campus research activity.*

1. Develop a **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** document describing how your laboratory will conduct research safely - this document must be uploaded as part of the approval process. Think about how your lab's workflow will have to be adjusted to achieve appropriate social distancing. Think about the instruments, equipment, gas lines, specific experiments, etc. in your lab that will need special attention as you ramp research back up. Develop procedures for cleaning and disinfecting your space. The university has produced a **PI Research Restart Toolkit** that contains UT policies and best

practices for resuming research activities in your group or laboratory (link on the [CNS Research Restart](#) site).

2. Gather and prepare all applicable information and documents required for submitting your request, including but not limited to, research personnel contact information and EIDs, Biosafety protocol numbers and similar, core facility requirements, operating procedures, etc. Review the CNS Research Restart Request Guide (link on the [CNS Research Restart](#) site). This guide details the information that will be required for your submission.

3. Complete the CNS Research Restart Request Form. CNS will review your request, contact you if additional information is needed, and notify you of approval.

We look forward to working with all of you to resume research activities as soon as possible.

thanks,

dean

Dean R. Appling, Ph.D. | Assoc. Dean for Research and Facilities |
The University of Texas at Austin | College of Natural Sciences | 512-471-4796

Begin forwarded message:

From: Office of the VP for Research <vp-research-sr@austin.utexas.edu>
Subject: [assoc-deans-research] Research Restart
Date: May 21, 2020 at 1:10:17 PM CDT
To: "assoc-deans-research@utlists.utexas.edu" <assoc-deans-research@utlists.utexas.edu>
Reply-To: assoc-deans-research@utlists.utexas.edu



TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin

Office of the Vice President for Research

Dear PI Colleagues,

After several weeks of careful planning with your associate deans for research (ADRs), and with critical insight from UT health experts and the [university-wide COVID-19 Recovery Executive Committee](#), I am pleased to announce a multi-phase plan to resume research operations. The [full plan and research phases](#) are described on our [Research Restart website](#), and I encourage you to read the plan and our [accompanying FAQs](#) carefully.

The plan outlines a phased system – ranging from 0 to 5 – that will restore our full research enterprise over time while aiming to minimize the risk of coronavirus transmission on campus. This phased strategy establishes new policies regarding face coverings, social distancing, screening, and other workplace practices to balance the need to resume research activities with the need to keep faculty, staff, and graduate students healthy and safe.

Research has been operating according to the plan's **Research Phase 4** guidelines, during which most campus research has been paused, and only essential personnel and research teams with approved exemptions have been permitted on site. As we begin transitioning to **Research Phase 3**, these parameters are expanding to include some forms of research activity that are time sensitive.

Beginning today, **Thursday, May 21, 2020**, PIs who wish to restart their time-sensitive research on campus may request approval through their colleges, schools, or units. Approvals to restart research operations at a substantially reduced workforce capacity, adhering to strict social distancing, face covering, and personal hygiene policies, will be managed by your ADR. Your dean or ADR will send more specific guidance about the research restart process for your college, and links to each college or school's research restart request form are included on [our website](#).

The target date for beginning **Research Phase 3** operation levels is **Monday, June**

1, 2020. Once PIs have obtained formal approval, authorized personnel may enter laboratories to perform preparatory activities prior to June 1, such as lab cleaning, instrument activation/calibration, and supply ordering, while following the safety and social distancing policies outlined in the plan. No new research activities should be initiated before June 1, 2020.

Only those PIs who wish to resume research activity on-site on June 1 need to take action. If you do not need or want your researchers to return to campus yet, you do not need to submit a research restart request at this time. Also, any research that can be done remotely (such as data analysis or manuscript preparation) still should be, and no formal approval is required for remote research activities.

My office has created a [PI Research Restart Toolkit](#) to assist you in your own planning process. The toolkit outlines UT policies and best practices for resuming research operations in your group or laboratory. Additional questions regarding the research restart plan or approval process may be [directed to your ADR](#).

Your safety and health are paramount. Together with the university executive leadership and your deans, I will continually reassess conditions on campus and communicate any changes to you as soon as possible. Our team will also regularly update the toolkit and our website to reflect the most current information available.

The research we do here at UT is extremely important. The core purpose of the university is to transform lives for the benefit of society. Every day, you achieve this purpose by providing training to the next generation of researchers and making critical discoveries that create new economic opportunities and possibilities for a better life. I look forward to supporting you and your research teams as you begin returning to campus to continue your important research mission.

Sincerely,



Alison R. Preston

Interim Vice President for Research
