



Q&A Research Operations at KSU During COVID-19 Mitigation

1. What is the Status of KSU research laboratories and facilities?

Due to the USG guidance of April 2, 2020, all routine research not conducted remotely from KSU campuses should wind down and come to a stop by 5:00 pm on Friday, April 3, 2020.

Only critical activities should continue beyond the deadline. Faculty should **first contact their Associate (Assistant) Dean for Research with questions about their research activities**, after which they may contact the Office of Research if necessary.

Critical activities are described [here](#), and include ensuring the viability of living organisms, maintaining unique reagents and critical equipment, and human research which offers direct clinical benefit to participants. Investigators should immediately develop plans to ramp down their research and communicate these plans to everyone on their research teams.

Principal Investigators are encouraged to reach out to their local grants administrators with grant-related questions. The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) has provided [information from funding agencies](#) about continuing to pay personnel on grants during COVID-19 related work disruptions and will continue to update this information. OSP will continue to submit proposals prior to agency deadlines and will conduct other business, but some delays should be anticipated.

2. How do I determine if my work is “critical?”

Principal Investigators (PIs) should immediately, in consultation with their Associate (Assistant) Dean for Research, identify research experiments that are at a critical phase, meaning that abandoning them would cause a major or irreversible loss in project momentum (e.g., work involving critical cell lines and animals). Experiments already in progress that require additional time before suspending research operations may be completed **ONLY** with the approval of the Associate (Assistant) Dean for Research of the applicable College. New experiments in ongoing projects should not be initiated. If shared facilities are required for completion, please contact the appropriate supervisor of the shared space and equipment as soon as possible to discuss needs or identify alternatives. Critical work in labs should be staggered to minimize the number of laboratory personnel who are present at any one time, while making sure that at least one person is in earshot for safety. If you are uncertain whether your project is critical, please **first contact your Associate (Assistant) Dean for Research**; after which you may contact the Office of Research if necessary. Additionally, you can find more details about what is considered critical [here](#).

3. What can I do to prepare my laboratory for shutdown?

PIs and lab managers should develop Business Continuity Plans, sustainable for at least two months, that:

- address safety issues that may arise from shutting down laboratories

- identify minimal personnel who will perform critical maintenance activities
- identify activities that research team members (including graduate and undergraduate students) can do remotely to aid in the progress of internally and externally funded research/sponsored activities
- develop schedules for critical personnel that are mindful of social distancing
- consider that university support personnel, from immediate administrative staff to Facilities Maintenance Division personnel and many others, may not be readily available.

[A laboratory shutdown checklist and door sign](#) are available for your assistance.

Further, researchers should not:

- set up new studies
- start new experiments
- order laboratory supplies for the duration of the shelter-in-place order.

4. May non-critical research activities proceed?

PIs should work with their laboratory personnel (research faculty, students, postdocs, and staff) to cease non-critical on-site operations. PIs should plan for a remote-work research operation that could last for an indefinite period and could possibly be longer than two months. We encourage you and your research groups to take this time to identify, assign and focus on activities that can be completed remotely.

5. Can I continue to charge personnel costs (Faculty, student, postdoc) to research projects?

Charges for research personnel time on grants should continue unchanged at this time. PIs are encouraged to consider ways to keep research personnel engaged and working on projects in a remote fashion: writing publications; conducting data analysis; overseeing sub-recipients; collaborating with research partners; assessing progress to date, identifying next steps, identifying which next steps can be performed remotely and performing remote next steps; etc. Additional updates will be provided as we assess our institutional and sponsor policies in response to COVID-19.

6. Can I hire personnel to work in my research group, such as student assistants?

No, due to the current University-wide hiring freeze, no new personnel may be hired to work in research groups, regardless of funding source. This would also include hiring student personnel for summer research.

7. Will human subjects research and IRB be operational?

The IRB Office and the IRB itself are operating in accordance with USG and university guidance. All research activities involving in-person contact with participants MUST be postponed. If possible, modify research into a remote format. Online surveys that automatically collect data may be left open, and data analysis can continue remotely if data security plans do not prescribe otherwise. Studies that operate remotely (without in-person sessions) may continue to enroll participants and collect data. Please direct questions or requests to the Director of Human Subjects at irb@kennesaw.edu.

8. Can I continue to order materials for my critical research?

No, new orders should not be initiated in the short term. Receiving staff are limited which should be taken into consideration with reconciling existing orders. Please coordinate with the relevant parties for your academic unit to ensure materials are received in a timely and appropriate manner.

Office of Research contacts:

- Bill Diong (470-578-5574, bdiong@kennesaw.edu, Assoc. VP for Research)
- Kristine Nowak (470-578-4941, knowak@kennesaw.edu, Director of Research Compliance)
- Chris Cornelison (470-578-5115, ccornel5@kennesaw.edu, Director of IP Development)