Advanced Operational Guidelines to Improve Lab Research Safety

Fall 2020
Guide to Returning to the Workplace

The guide and other information can be found online [here](#).
Research Space and Activities

University research spaces include science (wet) and engineering (dry) research labs, shared facilities for scientific equipment, and computational facilities on both the Kennesaw and Marietta campuses. Labs, KSU field station, and studios.

Guidance on other aspects of research activities available:

https://research.kennesaw.edu/coronavirus.
Research Personnel – Beginning in August 2020

- Research faculty and staff may return to campus as permitted by the Workplace and Health Safety guidelines set forth by the USG, & by following hygiene and distancing procedures detailed below.

- **Health and Safety Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and **Professional Ethics** forms must be submitted to the Associate/Assistant Dean for Research (ADR) before research on campus may resume.

- Graduate and undergraduate students may resume on-campus academic/research activities as permitted by the Workplace and Health Safety guidelines set forth by the USG, and by following hygiene and distancing procedures detailed in the next few slides, **and** with permission and supervision from their faculty advisor.
Required social distancing conditions for ALL research spaces:

- All efforts must be taken to adhere to best practices for preventing spread of COVID-19, as set forth by CDC, GA Department of Public Health, & Workplace & Health Safety guidelines set forth by USG for initial return of faculty/staff.
- Wear a face mask **at all times** while in ALL shared research space (labs/studios/facilities), if possible.
- Other standard lab attire & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be worn in research labs as required by lab safety protocols already in place. No sharing of PPE allowed.
- Keep a **minimum 6-feet (2 meters)** distance between you and ANY colleague.
- Keep a **maximum of two (2)** people per wet lab bench, or studio surface, in situations where minimum safe distancing can still be applied. Alternative measures (ex. staggered work shifts or work rotations, extended hours of operation) to accommodate staff when physical space prevents safe distancing.
Ensure health and well-being of research personnel:

Encourage research personnel to take personal responsibility for monitoring personal temperature every morning per CDC guidelines, and DO NOT come to campus with a 100.4°F (38°C) or above or the following conditions:

- Symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
- Household member diagnosed with COVID-19 or demonstrated COVID-19 symptoms within the last 14 days.
- Close contact (within 6 feet for 10+ minutes) with anyone outside your home with confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis/symptoms within the last 14 days.
Enhanced standard laboratory safety measures:

- Implement and maintain enhanced standard laboratory safety measures to assure safe operations in a reduced staff environment.
- Ensure that proper cleaning/disinfection safeguards are conducted for shared research/studio equipment.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, rinse, and dry hands with paper towels after using shared equipment and before leaving the lab.
To maintain appropriate physical distance, develop schedule for shared facilities/equipment/studios, such as fume hoods and biosafety cabinets, procedure rooms, and instruments.

Implement staff rotation that maintains restricted use of research space to limited number of individuals at any given time. Rotation should be done to allow for graduate students to have equal/fair access to research space/studio/equipment.

Undergraduates may be added to the rotation schedule, but a phased approach is recommended, with graduate students being brought into research first. If this is successful, then undergraduate researchers can be phased in gradually.
Priority should be given to undergraduates as follows:

- Undergraduates cannot be forced to work in laboratories & should not be academically penalized if they do not have the same ability to access the lab due to COVID-19 circumstances (e.g., they are essential workers). Undergraduates should be added to research group schedule when space/time are available after research staff, postdocs, and graduate students.
- Priority should go to students who have research as part of their academic plan for their degree & are actively earning credit for their work.
- Next, priority access should be given to those students who work for pay, due to the impact on personal financial situations.
- Volunteer students may be allowed in the laboratories only if there is enough space and time for them in the research group’s schedule.
- Undergraduates need lab safety training before undertaking lab work. If new undergraduates are accepted, as for all other activities, mentors will need to install mechanisms to maintain social distances during lab safety training.
Maintain appropriate physical distance:

- Limit number of personnel in research space at any given time. Research personnel whose work does not require them to be in research space should not come to the lab.
- Establish buddy system for lab personnel to make sure no one is working alone in lab without the knowledge of someone else. Virtual buddies can monitor safety of other lab members via electronic means while not physically present in lab.
- Prohibit all non-KSU persons (public), including high school students, from entering the facility, to ensure minimal occupancy of research spaces.
Prior to ramping-up of research operations, perform pre-startup check to:

- Ensure key lab safety equipment such as fume hoods, biosafety cabinets, & others are operating normally.
- Confirm adequate PPE equipment is available for near-term research needs.
- Confirm adequate supply of cleaning & disinfecting supplies.
- Check for integrity of chemical containers. Contact Environmental Health & Safety to request pick-up of expired chemicals or damaged containers.
- Check for leaks or unusual physical conditions in the lab that need to be addressed. Contact Facilities if an issue is identified.
Perform pre-startup checks:

- Run water from sinks and discard old ice in ice makers so that it is fresh from chlorine residue.

- Computers should be rebooted and updates applied as provided by UITS. No interruptions should occur during time of updating/rebooting. UITS should be contacted if stalls in rebooting/updating occur.

- Ensure appropriate contact information, including emergency contact information, is available.
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