



RUTGERS

Office of Research and
Economic Development

Status Update: Research Operations and Contingency Planning

March 25, 2020

Dear Researchers,

Thank you for your rapid and effective response to our prior request for research continuity plans. We recognize that these are unprecedented times and that we all share concerns about the sustainable support for and future of our research enterprise. This memo summarizes the current status of research operations and highlights further contingency planning steps ahead should additional research restrictions be necessary.

The recently passed Executive Order 107 from Governor Murphy on March 20, 2020 allows laboratory researchers to travel to the campus and does not significantly restrict our critical research operations.

Guidance for Social Distancing

As a follow-up to the email issued by University Human Resources on March 19, 2020, which provided guidance to promote telecommuting wherever feasible, and to the memo from March 17, 2019 requesting [research preparedness](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, we communicate the following mandates for responsible research operations:



1. Telecommuting - Research and research related activities that can be performed remotely, must be performed remotely until further notification.
2. Onsite Work - Any presence onsite requires strict adherence to social distancing and may require rescheduling researchers to reduce their density in the research labs. Research laboratories should minimize overlap among the roles of key personnel onsite at any given time to ensure strict enforcement of university and [CDC](#) guidance on [healthcare](#) and minimize the risk that an entire cohort of researchers could become infected.

These mandates apply to all graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, research staff and faculty.

We understand that these measures will have an adverse impact on important research, but our imperative to help flatten the mortality curve and save lives must take priority.

Further Contingency Planning

In the event that further restrictions are imposed through State directives, we may have to further constrain onsite laboratory research. In that event, we will advise you to suspend all onsite lab research projects, except those which are deemed **critical**. We use this memo to urge all researchers to thoughtfully plan ahead and consider which specific research experiments, studies and projects may fit the **critical** classification, and to develop these plans in the event they



may be required. We are not requesting that these plans be submitted; however, careful preparation is needed to mitigate the impact of a possible suspension of your research. New State restrictions may affect our ability to conduct our research, and Rutgers researchers need to be vigilant and responsive to potential changes.

Critical research includes :

- COVID-19 related research, both clinical and non-clinical;
- Ongoing clinical research that is key to the health and safety of the patients;
- Other research activities deemed to be critical by the Vice Chancellor of Research and endorsed by the Chancellor and Senior Vice President of Research (Examples: laboratory or field work where discontinuation would result in loss of significant time-series data and samples; work that is directly related to national security; work to maintain rare genotypes in animal research, etc.).

Planning for More Severe Restrictions

If severe additional restrictions are imposed, no new projects should be initiated that could not be sustained, and researchers should wind down ongoing projects in a manner consistent with social distancing precautions. The heads of research units should plan to take steps to place research activities in a state that allows them to be restarted with minimal loss when research constraints are lifted. Face-to-face interactions with human subjects are suspended, except for clinical studies that are critical to the [health and safety](#) of the patients. All research with animals is now operating under Phase III as defined in our [communication](#) of March 20, and researchers are required to comply with the necessary actions mandated in that communication. These actions parallel those of other states and of many of our Big Ten plus peer institutions.



Further guidance will be provided within each Chancellor unit by the Vice Chancellor for Research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S. David Kimball', written in dark ink.

S. David Kimball, Senior Vice President for Research & Economic Development

Vice Chancellors for Research:

Rutgers-New Brunswick: Prabhas Moghe, Provost, Executive Vice Chancellor for Research
Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences: Kathleen Scotto, Vice Chancellor for Research
Rutgers-Newark: Piotr Piotrowiak, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research and Collaborations
Rutgers-Camden: Benedetto Piccoli, Vice Chancellor for Research

Thank you for your cooperation.