

Res Updates 2020 Mar17 - Updates on COVID-19

CUNY Guideline on COVID-19 Research Continuity

To the extent possible, Principal Investigators (PIs) should continue their research, particularly aspects of research that can be conducted without visiting a campus or site, such as manuscript writing, data analysis, report writing, administrative tasks. PIs should consider suspending projects or not starting new projects, but if study activities can be conducted remotely, research should proceed in this way (see below). The research enterprise must continue to follow appropriate regulatory guidance. Federal sponsors are allowing for maximal flexibility with regard to administrative, cost, and reporting requirements (see [NSF](#), [NIH](#)). If a study needs to be paused, use the standard process to notify the sponsor as soon as feasible. Unless otherwise notified by the sponsor, all reports due to sponsors must continue to be submitted.

Ramping Down

PIs should follow the guidance from their campuses, many of which are having PIs ramp down to only essential functions. PIs should consider whether maintenance of research resources (e.g., equipment, animals) require emergency personnel (trained people to work on site), in case the University were to close, or mass transit is impacted. It may take time to develop sufficient plans to ramp down research activities. Planning now will help us to be proactive and responsive if the University were to close.

Note for students engaged in any research (from undergraduates to graduate students, for courses, theses, dissertations, etc.), they should be guided by their faculty, who should be guided by their campus and the information below. All research engagement, whether funded or not, requires compliance with federal guidelines.

Human Subjects Research

For research involving interactions with people, interactions should be limited to minimize risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, in accordance with [CUNY Coronavirus Guidance](#), [CDC Guidance](#), and [campus guidance](#). Follow your campus guidelines, but in general **human subject research involving direct interaction with study participants should be paused and no study participants should travel to CUNY colleges** (except studies with therapeutic benefit, see below). Ethical principles of research and federal regulations for the protection of human research participants require an acceptable risk/benefit ratio for in-person contact associated with research.

Studies which offer direct therapeutic benefit to participants or where stopping procedures would cause harm to study participants may continue, on a case-by-case basis. For health and safety, changes to protect study participants can be instituted immediately. Please submit a modification to the IRB to indicate temporary modifications within 5 business days.

Studies which do not offer direct therapeutic benefit to participants or where stopping procedures will NOT cause harm to participants and PIs would like to continue the study, PIs must submit a modification to change study procedures requiring NO face-to-face interactions. Studies which do not involve face-to-face interactions (i.e., conducted electronically or via telephone) may continue.

PIs should notify Mike Brown, Assistant Director for Research Compliance at michael.brown@qc.cuny.edu and their sponsor of any changes in research procedures and submit all HRPP/IRB modifications via [Ideate](#).

Data Use Agreements

For studies of data access and analysis covered by data use agreements (DUA), PIs *may* need to request modification if you require a different platform that covered by the DUA. Please contact the [Agreements Point Person](#) (Yongwu Rong at yrong@qc.cuny.edu). If the DUA involves human subjects and the protocol requires modifications, an IRB modification should be submitted via Ideate.

Non-human animal research

For animal care, essential personnel should be identified and trained. PIs should work with campus leadership to determine which personnel are needed on campus to provide such essential campus services. This is consistent with Governor Cuomo's [Executive Order](#), which defines essential personnel as "anyone whose job function is essential to the effective operation of their agency or authority, or who must be physically present to perform their job, or who is involved in the COVID-19 emergency response." In the case of University closure, identification of emergency essential personnel may be depend on ease of access to the animal facility and public transit availability. Extra food and bedding for animals should be ordered, as well as extra Personal Protective Equipment for animal husbandry staff. Orders for additional animals should be suspended, except on a case-by-case basis. If a campus shuts down, PIs should follow their campus and IACUC policies when determining whether a holding protocol is appropriate.

Tissue and Other non-IACUC Materials Research

For tissue and other non-IACUC materials such as insects, plants, and sea animals, additional orders should be suspended, except on a case-by-case basis. PIs should decide which to maintain (e.g., freeze) and which to abandon. PIs who work with such materials should contact their campus EHS Officer to design a contingency plan appropriate to the materials in question.

Equipment/Facilities

For equipment/facilities that require human attention and/or supplies for operation, preparations should be made for extra supplies and training of essential personnel, who would be able to maintain equipment if necessary, in case of University shut down. PIs should communicate this via the proper campus contacts (including campus safety). PIs should follow their campus policies regarding ramping down equipment/facilities.

Researcher Travel

For researcher travel, including conferences and field research, researchers should follow CUNY travel guidance on the [CUNY Coronavirus](#) portal. For guidance about NSF or NIH reimbursement, see the [CUNY Research](#) links.

Additional guidelines for PIs from federal funders can be found on the [CUNY Office of Research](#), which also links to the [CUNY Research Foundation](#).

Weblinks related to COVID 19

NSF FAQs <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20053/nsf20053.jsp#q9>

NIH FAQs <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

CUNY official guidance for COVID 19 <https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus/>

QC website for Key Updates and Resources related to COVID 19

<https://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/health/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

RF Guidance for PIs and Employees (added March 12, 2020)

RF has updated their coronavirus guidance for PIs and employees through RF. Please see links below which also link to COGR Guidance that includes FAQs for NSF and NIH:

<https://www.rfcuny.org/RFWebsite/about/announcements/coronavirus-guidance/>

<https://www.rfcuny.org/RFWebsite/learning-resources/covid-19-guidance/workplace-guidance-related-to-covid-19-for-field-staff/>

<https://www.rfcuny.org/RFWebsite/learning-resources/covid-19-guidance/covid-19-event-guidance-and-faqs-for-cuny-pis/>

<https://www.rfcuny.org/RFWWebsite/learning-resources/covid-19-guidance/rfcuny-remote-work-guidelines-for-the-covid-19-event/>

[COVID-19 Resources for Applicants and Recipients of NIH Funding](#)

Due to the potential exceptional impact of the declared public health emergency, we want to assure our recipient community that NIH will be doing our part to help you continue your research. See a video message from Dr. Mike Lauer discussing the flexibilities available for applicants and recipients. [Continue reading](#) →

[Guidance for NIH-Funded Clinical Trials and Human Subjects Studies Affected by COVID-19](#)

For details on expanded flexibilities, such as mid-project period extensions and administrative supplements for unanticipated costs, see [NOT-OD-20-087](#). [Continue reading](#) →

[NIH Late Application Policy, Administrative Flexibilities, and FAQs Related to 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

When delays occur because the applicant or recipient organization is officially closed or unable to submit grant applications due to the effects of COVID-19, the NIH will consider accepting applications late, on a case-by-case basis. [Continue reading](#) →

[Flexibilities for Assured Institutions for Activities of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees \(IACUCs\) Due to COVID-19](#)

See [NOT-OD-20-088](#) for flexibilities provided in the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals ([Policy](#)) that are applicable to implementing a pandemic plan for animal care and use programs. [Continue reading](#) →

[Special OLAW Webinar on March 19: Pandemic Contingency Planning and Its Impact on Animal Care](#)

Are you testing or implementing your institution's pandemic response plan for the first time? Do you have questions about flexibilities provided by the PHS Policy that may be helpful during a pandemic? We are hosting a [special webinar](#) on March 19th to help your institution prepare for a pandemic that may impact the animal care and use program. [Continue reading](#) →

Additional concerns related to research can be communicated to us at yrong@qc.cuny.edu
