



3/14/2020

Dear Faculty, Staff, Postdocs and Students who Conduct Laboratory, Human Subjects and/or Clinical Research,

At this time, Stanford is taking steps to further reduce the density of research personnel on campus in the interest of reducing the spread of COVID-19. We ask all researchers to read this note carefully to understand what to do now and what possibilities to plan for in the future. Please continue to check in with each other regularly, now more than ever: promote physical distance, not social isolation.

Earlier this week, Stanford moved in-person classes to virtual formats and encouraged undergraduates to leave campus. On Friday, Santa Clara County leaders and public health officials announced further limits on gatherings and closed public schools for three weeks. Our graduate residences better allow students to practice social distancing than do the highly communal living and dining environments of our undergraduate residences. Also, for many graduate students and postdocs, their current residence is their primary residence. Therefore, we are not asking graduate residents to leave campus.

Most faculty, postdocs, and students have already substantially increased remote work to reduce the spread of COVID-19. *Thank you!* We ask everyone to make every reasonable effort to work remotely and to enable others to do so. For example, schedule meetings remotely and form concrete plans with your group members for what work to do remotely. IT and research computation services will continue, and we are grateful to the many staff who work hard to ensure their continuity.

Laboratory-based research, in-person human subjects research, and clinical research usually cannot be done remotely. Nevertheless, many researchers have already decided to defer all or most of these activities. All laboratories and units should defer whatever non-remote work they can defer. In addition, public health officials or Stanford administration may require individual labs or units to shut down for a period of time, so all labs and units should be ready to suspend operations other than necessary maintenance and critical activities.

Expectations at the present time include:

- All researchers will carefully follow the guidance on [Stanford HealthAlerts](#), including self-care and [cleaning of workspaces](#), to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission while conducting laboratory research.
- Beginning Monday, most buildings will be locked to the public 24/7. Building occupants who currently have ID badge access will continue to have it. Some buildings will continue to be unlocked during building hours, such as those that have public restaurants.
- Service Centers and Cores are asked to evaluate the support that they can provide at this time and to send guidance about their level of activity to their researchers by the end of the day on Monday.
- Principal Investigators and lab heads should work with each of their student and postdoctoral trainees to develop a personalized plan that allows each of them to conduct research remotely to the fullest extent possible, e.g., performing data analysis, literature review, modeling and computation, writing manuscripts and applications, and planning.
- When considering research that requires a physical presence in the laboratory, labs should conduct -- at most -- limited amounts of their highest priority work as established by PIs in consultation with their Department Chairs, Institute Directors and facilities managers. **We understand that there is some subjectivity in the definition of high priority. For all non-human subjects research, these priority lab**

activities should be informed by the evolving situation, by Lab Level Continuity Plans submitted by PIs, and by Department norms established by Chairs.

- All PIs should have already submitted their Lab Level Continuity Plans. **If you have been asked to submit a Lab Level Continuity Plan, and have yet not done so, please do so by the end of the day on Monday.**
- With respect to human subjects research and clinical research, all non-essential, in-person research visits should be postponed until further notice. All community-based, in-person research activities should also be postponed until further notice. All new studies that have not yet started, should be postponed. Research that can be conducted virtually can proceed.
- Whether a student or postdoctoral researcher continues to work physically in the laboratory should be at the discretion of that individual. In other words, unless their presence is required for an essential role, trainees who wish to exclusively work remotely should be allowed to do so, and PIs should work to facilitate those wishes.
- Meetings should be held online or by phone, including one-on-one meetings and formal lab or group meetings. Groups should use the available video conferencing and networking tools to continue to interact regularly to promote individual well-being and the progress of research.
- All community members should continue to implement best practices of self-care and hygiene, e.g., stay home when not feeling well, wash hands often, don't touch your face. It is important to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 infection, to self-isolate if experiencing symptoms, and to [notify the relevant Stanford officials](#) of any positive diagnosis.
- PIs should prepare for the eventuality that an individual in their group will test positive for COVID-19. Given the current projections, this is a likely scenario for many research groups. Laboratory spaces and offices used by an individual found to be COVID-19-positive will be closed, disinfected, and prepared for re-occupancy. Check [Stanford HealthAlerts](#) for the latest update.
- Research with human subjects and clinical research should follow the guidance on [Stanford HealthAlerts](#).

It is important to note that *we are not ceasing all research at this time*. However, **PIs should be prepared for the possibility of research cessation**. If this occurs, we will continue to provide the support required for necessary maintenance and recognize that some critical tasks or equipment may require a human maintenance element. PIs should outline this need in their Lab Level Continuity plans. Basic support, such as utilities and heating/cooling, will remain in place. Lab Level Continuity Plans should clearly indicate what activities would be **critical** to maintaining the capabilities of the lab if research were to cease. Departments, Schools, Dean of Research, and Environmental Health and Safety will work together to determine how best to continue the indicated critical activities.

Finally, for all community members, we realize that there are significant implications of these restrictions for your academic and research progress. Please know that it is entirely reasonable that progress would slow during times of unprecedented global crisis such as this. The most important consideration is that we take care of our health and the health of those around us. The research continuity plans that each laboratory has put in place and the university guidance issued today is intended to help protect the integrity of our research capabilities and ensure your academic progress for a future return to full operations.

We know that you will have many questions. We will continue to monitor the situation, refine our plans in response to your feedback, and update the FAQs at healthalerts.stanford.edu.

Sincerely,

Kam Moler, Vice Provost and Dean of Research; Professor of Applied Physics and of Physics

Stacey Bent, Vice Provost of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Education; Jagdeep and Roshni Singh
Professor of Engineering

Tim Stearns, Chair of the Faculty Senate; Frank Lee and Carol Hall Professor and Professor of Genetics