

To the UNC Research Community:

Thank you for your patience during the difficult situation we have faced over the last two months. With regard to research, UNC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been geared to protecting our faculty, students, staff, trainees and the larger community. This focus has required the University to minimize the volume of work being conducted on-campus while, at the same time, enabling certain critical research and scholarship to continue. The University is now prepared to begin the process of increasing the volume of research taking place on campus.

Starting June 1, 2020, UNC will begin increasing the amount of research conducted on our campus in a phased, careful and sustainable way. The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR) will phase in the return of research faculty, staff and trainees to campus over time in a coordinated process that ensures appropriate physical distancing and the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies to protect against COVID-19.

The University's research labs and facilities are currently operating at approximately one quarter capacity. In the initial phase of ramp-up beginning June 1, we will increase operations in UNC's research labs, clinics and other facilities up to 50% of their on-site capacity.

While labs and facilities will be permitted to increase activity up to 50% of their capacity, all research and scholarship that can be performed remotely (e.g., via teleworking) should continue to be performed in that fashion.

Because every school's research program is unique, the OVCR, in consultation with UNC's infectious disease and epidemiology experts, is partnering with each school and the College of Arts & Sciences to determine the order in which research programs will resume. Each school and the College is currently developing its plans to resume 50% operations and increase faculty and staff on campus. Over the next week, the OVCR will assess these individual plans to ensure they are sufficient to address mission-critical operations, control and manage specific work environments, and adequately access available on-site resources. Approval of plans will be communicated to research deans and center directors, who will then implement them effective June 1. After June 1, research on campus will no longer be restricted to specifically approved "critical research activities," and the forms for that purpose will no longer need to be submitted to the OVCR.

We expect that physical distancing requirements will need to be continued for some time and that, as a result, it will be important to maintain a reduced number of individuals on campus. As staffing on-site increases and operations expand, the OVCR will monitor the status of the pandemic and any potential spread of the virus, as well as the impact of our existing policies and procedures to mitigate it. If localized outbreaks emerge, tighter restrictions and reduced staffing may need to be implemented again.

The links below contain a comprehensive set of guidance and direction for resuming research on campus. They include general required practices as well as specific direction for particular types of research. **These principles must be followed at all times by faculty, trainees and other staff involved in University research.** These baseline practices will be revisited on a regular basis and may be amended based on new information.

Please pay special attention to the requirements for wearing of face masks, physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning practices while on campus. Face masks, cleaning products and hand sanitizers will be distributed to 'distribution coordinators' for each school, department and/or center, who will be responsible for providing them to their researchers.

[DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE FOR ALL ON-CAMPUS RESEARCH AT UNC](#)

Specific Direction and Guidance for:

[LABORATORY-BASED RESEARCH](#)

[HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH](#)

[FIELD-BASED RESEARCH](#)

The OVCR has organized a research study team of infectious disease experts, epidemiologists, molecular virologists, genomics experts and data scientists that is working to develop a voluntary COVID-19 surveillance study that includes testing and contact tracing. This team's work may inform future decisions around the conduct of research on campus. We will provide more details on this effort as it develops.

Note Concerning Travel and Parking: Travel for UNC business is currently restricted to North Carolina and is not permitted outside of the state at this time. The University will release more information about travel when we receive further guidelines from the UNC System and the State. Information on changes to University parking policies and public transit can be found at the [University Transportation & Parking website](#).

Individuals with questions may pose them to vcr@unc.edu. Periodic campus Q&A sessions will also be held as needed. Information on these sessions can be found at the [UNC Research COVID-19 website](#). For additional questions regarding COVID-19, visit the [UNC coronavirus website](#) and the [UNC Health coronavirus website](#).

Thank you for the important work that you do for the University and its research enterprise and for the sacrifices and accommodations you have made in addressing the challenge of COVID-19.

Terry Magnuson
Vice Chancellor for Research