(Updated 3/29/2020)

Colorado State University Office of the Vice President for Research
COVID-19 Research Continuity Response to Frequently Asked Questions

The Office of the Vice President for Research has created a COVID-19 specific email address for the CSU community to submit COVID-19 research operations questions. This FAQ document answers questions submitted to that email account within the last week. To submit additional research operations questions not answered in this FAQ document, please email VPR_ResearchContinuity@colostate.edu.

Questions about Software

- Researchers need a computer program that is licensed software. This requires a connection over VPN and Pulse Secure for access. Is there a limit on the number of VPN licenses? And, is there an alternate way to use licensed software?
    - Please consult Academic Computing and Network Services (ACNS) for up-to-date information on accessing these resources (https://www.acns.colostate.edu/).
- Is remote desktop to computers in campus labs still the best way for researchers to use their required software or should they be bringing their desktops home? Can other equipment (screens, chair, office supplies, etc.) be taken home?
    - Remote access is a great solution. Employees can take computers and equipment home, so long as 1) their home unit/department approves; and 2) anything taken home is reported to their supervisor. You don't have to have essential-in-person status to come to campus briefly to pick up stuff from your office or workstation that you may have forgotten. To pick up office items. Not to do work nor research, unless you are considered essential-in-person.

Questions about Working Remotely/Virtual Campus

- What does "labs will be closed" mean? Can researchers work at their own risk?
    - If you are NOT considered essential-in-person, you are NOT authorized to conduct research on-campus nor in the field. Everyone considered essential-in-person MUST be designated by their appropriate Research Associate Dean. We are gathering a University-wide list of critical research personnel and critical research operations.
    - Please see the Research Continuity Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic for further details, (https://www.research.colostate.edu/covid19/) and President McConnell's March 19th Message to the University Community (https://president.colostate.edu/message-on-covid19/).
    - To be clear, researchers CANNOT work "at their own risk."
    - Wherever possible, we encourage everyone to engage in work activities that can be performed remotely, such as professional development, training, policy and Standard Operating Procedures development, etc. Talk to your supervisor about any ideas you have that are not your usual work but would still advance your work or university functions.
- Do we anticipate any power outages on campus?
    - We are not anticipating any power outages as a result of CSU moving to online and virtual services. In the event of power outage, we have made provisions to allow those considered essential-in-person to access instrumentation and computers that would need to be restarted manually. Check with your Department Head/Chair and Research Associate Dean to ensure any critical research resources have been identified.

- Because my research falls under non-critical status, I understand that I should not be going into the labs/office to do research. Will I have access to my labs/office during the shutdown, especially if it only takes a short amount of time to do what I need on occasion? Will key card access be revoked during the shutdown?
    - If you are NOT considered essential-in-person, you are NOT authorized to conduct research on-campus nor in the field. Everyone considered essential-in-person MUST be designated by their appropriate Research Associate Dean. We are gathering a University-wide list of critical research personnel and critical research operations. However, you don't have to have essential-in-person status to come to campus briefly to pick up stuff from your office or workstation that you may have forgotten. To pick office items up. Not to do work nor research, unless you are considered essential-in-person.
    - Please see the Research Continuity Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic for further details (https://www.research.colostate.edu/covid19/) and President McConnell's March 19th Message to the University Community (https://president.colostate.edu/message-on-covid19/).
- How does this impact people whose primary job is NOT considered essential-in-person? I understand we will work from home, but if this continues for a long period of time, will we keep our jobs? When research staff are told not to come to work, will they be required to take sick leave or vacation time? If they are on "paid administrative leave," who is going to be paying? What if revenue is generated via fee-for-service?
    - As CSU moves to online and virtual services, everyone NOT deemed essential-in-person is expected to actively work from their remote sites in accordance to schedules and work plans provided by their supervisors.
    - Wherever possible, we encourage everyone to engage in work activities that can be performed remotely, such as professional development, training, policy and Standard Operating Procedures development, etc. Talk to your supervisor about any ideas you have that are not your usual work but would still advance your work or university functions.
    - Currently, the university is committed to meeting payroll obligations for all employees.
        - Hourly employees will receive paychecks in the amount equal of your two-week earnings to date this semester. Your supervisor will submit time on your behalf.
        - Salaried employees will receive their usual checks.
        - All compensation in this circumstance within TimeClock Plus should be recorded as Admin Leave Pandemic. In the event we receive either Federal or State resources to support CSU during this time, we need to appropriately document the costs incurred. Supervisors will record and approve time for both hourly and salaried employees who are unable to work remotely.
    - If this situation changes, the action must be approved by the Chancellor and Board of Governors and comply with federal and state law. At this time, we do face payroll challenges for some employees funded through contracts, grants, or fee-for-service revenue sources. The University is working quickly and diligently to find solutions to these challenges. We will communicate further as soon as we have answers.
    - Please consult your Supervisor and Human Resources for the latest information on this topic (http://www.hrs.colostate.edu/coronavirus.html) and for a determination on any specific case.
- Most labs consist of a small number of people who are working in a low-traffic environment. Whereas it makes sense to eliminate classes where many people are in close contact, what is the justification for closing labs?

    - For a clear statement of the importance of taking the step to shutdown non-critical research and services, please see President McConnell's March 19th Message to the University Community (https://president.colostate.edu/message-on-covid19/).
    - Furthermore, your safety is our number one priority! Please realize that there will be limited research safety support and personnel available on-campus as a result of the University's shift to online and virtual services, per President McConnell. We will not have the resources to adequately ensure researcher safety or address issues arising from those NOT considered essential-in-person continuing to conduct research and/or research operations.
- We have employees who are working on research OFF campus. Can these employees continue to conduct their research off-campus, or do they need to stop? How does this affect working from home on research?
    - Employees already working from home do not need to cease work. Indeed, President McConnell has moved most University operations online and virtual. Please see her message to campus on this topic (https://president.colostate.edu/message-on-covid19/).
    - Wherever possible, we encourage everyone to engage in work activities that can be performed remotely, such as professional development, training, policy and Standard Operating Procedures development, etc. Talk to your supervisor about any ideas you have that are not your usual work but would still advance your work or university functions.
    - Only research that is deemed critical can continue within research facilities and in the field. Please see the Research Continuity Guidance during COVID-19 Pandemic for further details specifically detailing critical research personnel and critical research operations designations (https://www.research.colostate.edu/covid19/).
    - All university international and domestic travel, including travel within Colorado, that has not yet commenced is suspended effective March 23 (https://safety.colostate.edu/coronavirus/).
    - We will re-evaluate and issue further guidelines later this spring. Exceptions may be granted based on critical need.
- Our lab processes samples from outside entities and extension programs. Since we are NOT technically a research lab, do we need to comply with the shutdown?
    - Yes, you must comply! President McConnell has decided to move most operations online and virtual (https://president.colostate.edu/message-on-covid19/).
    - Only laboratory and/or fieldwork that is deemed critical can continue. And only researchers designated essential-in-person may conduct such work. Please see the Research Continuity Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic for further details specifically detailing critical research personnel and critical research operations designations (https://www.research.colostate.edu/covid19/).

Questions about Student Employees and Non-Student Hourly Positions

- I am funded as a GRA. Can GRAs be funded if they work remotely and produce results?
    - Yes! You can still get paid if you work remotely and produce results. Please consult the Office of Sponsored Programs website for further details and the latest information from federal (and other) funding agencies (https://www.research.colostate.edu/osp/).
    - Wherever possible, we encourage everyone to engage in work activities that can be performed remotely, such as professional development, training, policy and Standard Operating Procedures development, etc. Talk to your supervisor about any ideas you have that are not your usual work but would still advance your work or university functions.

- I am an hourly, non-work study student in a research lab. Given the shutdown of non-critical research, what financial arrangements are being made for students who are now unable to work? Can I enter an average number of hours for each of week that non-critical research labs are shutdown?
    - Information for student employment will be added soon to the HR website (http://www.hrs.colostate.edu/coronavirus.html).
- Does this suspension of non-critical research apply to graduate student research? What guidance would you provide to graduate students who are currently conducting research?
    - Yes! This suspension of non-critical research applies to all researchers, including graduate students. Specific information for graduate students can be found at https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/safety/
    - Wherever possible, we encourage everyone to engage in work activities that can be performed remotely, such as professional development, training, policy and Standard Operating Procedures development, etc. Talk to your supervisor about any ideas you have that are not your usual work but would still advance your work or university functions.

Questions about Research Related Travel

- I have been asked to attend an off-campus research-related meeting at the end of March. Am I allowed to attend such meetings off-campus while representing my institute and Colorado State University if the meeting planners decide to hold the meeting?
    - All university international and domestic travel, including travel within Colorado, that has not yet commenced is suspended effective March 23 (https://safety.colostate.edu/coronavirus/).
    - We will re-evaluate and issue further guidelines later this spring. Exceptions may be granted based on critical need.

Questions about Research Funding

- We have been notified that a research project sponsor is unwilling to change the project timeline but the project has been deemed non-critical and thus will be suspended. This project cannot be conducted remotely due to the equipment and staff needed for the tasks. How do we respond? This same project utilizes a technical support staff member who can only perform their duties at the lab. How do we pay this employee during the shutdown?
    - Please consult the Office of Sponsored Programs for more information regarding the latest guidance from a range of sponsors (https://www.research.colostate.edu/osp/) and consult HR for issues involving personnel (http://www.hrs.colostate.edu/coronavirus.html).
    - Send the information received from a sponsor that is unwilling to change the project timeline to Diane Barrett, Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs (diane.barrett@colostate.edu). OSP will see if there are any options available.
- I am a foreign research assistant. Are we going to keep receiving our stipend since we are still working virtually and staying in the United States?
    - Yes. In regards to your specific case, please consult the Office of Sponsored Programs (https://www.research.colostate.edu/osp/), and also the HR website for specific information that may be relevant to your case (http://www.hrs.colostate.edu/coronavirus.html).
    - Specific information for graduate students can be found on the graduate school's website at https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/safety/.

- Are you considering cancelling the REU Program? Is so, when would students who have been accepted be notified? Would there be any way we can make up the program, perhaps at another time?
    - The graduate school runs an enhancement program for REU students in the summer. Regarding whether the actual REU programs on campus will run is an NSF question for the most part (as almost all the REU programs on campus are NSF funded). The grad school has been discussing our planning for the enhancement program and right now we are in a holding pattern until NSF releases guidance.

Questions about Field Work or Field Research

- I was wondering if there has been any thought as to whether summer field work will be allowed to take place once school is out? My field work will just consist of my team and I traveling to remote areas in the West with very minimum contact with others since we will primarily be camping. I would just like to know what your thoughts were on the subject so I know if I should halt my planning for the upcoming summer.
    - At this time, all university international and domestic travel, including travel within Colorado, that has not yet commenced is suspended effective March 23 (https://safety.colostate.edu/coronavirus/).
    - We will re-evaluate and issue further guidelines later this spring. Exceptions may be granted based on critical need.
- What about field research, even within Colorado? Can we continue to obtain field samples? Can we transport field samples to testing facilities? If we are not allowed to obtain these field samples now, we will have to wait until next season.
    - Only research, including fieldwork and other similar off campus research, that is deemed critical can continue. Please see the Research Continuity Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic for further details specifically detailing how to designate essential-in-person researchers and critical research operations (https://www.research.colostate.edu/covid19/).
    - All university international and domestic travel, including travel within Colorado, that has not yet commenced is suspended effective March 23 (https://safety.colostate.edu/coronavirus/).
    - We will re-evaluate and issue further guidelines later this spring. Exceptions may be granted based on critical need.