

Guidance for Increased Research and Creative Activities in Transition from Level 4 Operations May 7, 2020

Goal: To keep everyone safe and healthy while increasing research and creative activities in UNL buildings, facilities and spaces in a phased approach.

Guiding Principles:

- 1) Rely on guidance from CDC, state of Nebraska, and the University system related to access, social distancing, protective equipment, sanitation, monitoring individuals for symptoms, and business travel.
- 2) Protect emotional and physical health and the safety of the research and creative activity workforce and human research subjects.
- 3) Support the careers of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early-stage researchers.
- 4) Formal teaching and learning takes precedence over research for our undergraduate students.
- 5) Implement a fair and transparent process for granting access to buildings, facilities and spaces used for COE? research and creative activities.
- 6) Ensure as rapid as possible return to normal research and creative activities as public health conditions permit.

Guiding Principles and Observations:

- 1) Use guidance from CDC, state of Nebraska, and UN system for staying home, social distancing, protective equipment, sanitation, monitoring workforce health for COVID-19 symptoms, and business travel.
 - a. Observation: Public health authority (PHA) directives have become more restrictive over time. We can expect that relaxing those directives will follow a similar process but that time periods for incrementally relaxing any restrictions may differ.
 - b. Observation: Access for vulnerable populations (e.g., those with underlying health conditions) may be delayed or and personnel cannot be compelled to return.
 - c. Observation: Access will be granted using intermediate phases anticipating 2-3 weeks between each phase, with the possibility of quickly returning to a more restrictive phase should COVID-19 infections rise.
- 2) Protect the health and safety of the research and creative activity workforce, emotional as well as physical and the health and safety of human research subjects.
 - a. Observation: Faculty, staff, and students should not feel forced or compelled to return to work.
 - b. Observation: EHS must be aware of all research activities.
 - c. Observation: Limited access is likely to persist for some time and faculty, staff, and students need to adapt. Access should only be restored once there is more pervasive COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. Ultimately establishing broad population immunity, through serological testing or broad distribution of an

effective vaccine will be a prerequisite for a full return to business as usual and may take many months.

- d. Observation: Productivity will be adversely affected for many months.
- 3) Protect the careers of all faculty, staff, and students, with a priority on graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early-stage researchers.
 - a. Observation: Priority to return to buildings, facilities, spaces should be given to those who cannot perform essential work remotely and are under time constraints to complete degrees, term appointments (e.g., postdoctoral fellows), or for tenure or other mandatory reviews.
 - b. Observation: Administrators should be sensitive to consequences of reduced access to spaces (including on-campus offices) and the impact this will have on careers, especially early career faculty.
 - 4) Undergraduates are students first, researchers second.
 - a. Observation: Engagement of paid undergraduates in research should only be permitted under the most exceptional of situations and may include situations in which: i) the undergraduate student is an essential team member for the project; ii) the project itself has been authorized for access; iii) essential work performed by that student must be performed in person (not remotely); and iv) no work that can be performed remotely is assigned to that student.
 - b. Observation: unpaid undergraduate students do not participate in in-person research or creative activities until operations return to Level 1 (i.e. normal operations).
 - 5) Implement a fair and transparent process for granting access to buildings, facilities and spaces used for UNL research and creative activities.
 - a. Observation: Decisions regarding access will be made by EVC and IANR VC (as appropriate) with input from Deans, Department Heads/Chairs/School Directors.
 - 6) Ensure as rapid as possible increase in research and creative activities as public health conditions permit.
 - a. Observation: Allow flexible schedules (24 hours x 7 days) to allow working in shifts or staggered workdays. Plan to extend custodial and facilities support to enable round the clock operation of laboratories, facilities, libraries, archives, collections, etc.
 - b. Must have access to appropriate PPE while working in buildings, facilities, and spaces.

Additional Considerations:

Before allowing greater access to buildings, facilities, and spaces, a plan for enforcing social distancing directives and health monitoring is necessary, and may include:

- 1) Scheduled work/shift access (calendars posted and monitored)
- 2) Required facial coverings
- 3) Minimum distancing between people (6 feet preferred)

- 4) Density limits (e.g., 2 people/laboratory bench; 1-2 people/144 sq ft laboratory space (University of Michigan guidance); maximum number of individuals allowed to enter office, library, or museum
- 5) Temperature checks of all individuals in spaces at start and end of each work shift
- 6) Disinfecting benches, books, or materials after each use

Each faculty member must think carefully about which lab members will be allowed to return to work. Priority should be given to:

- Trainees (graduate students and postdoctoral fellows) due to need to complete research to meet deadlines (thesis/dissertation, graduation, report and paper submissions, grant applications, etc.).
- Consider occasional rotation of personnel to allow as many people as possible progress on their projects.
- Unpaid undergraduate students will not be allowed in research laboratories until UNL returns to Level 1 operations.

- Faculty develop and post a calendar detailing who is occupying shared spaces.
 - Encourage use of 24 x 7 schedule
 - Density not to exceed 2 people/144 sq ft. (University of Michigan guidance)
 - Require at least 6 feet between people at all times
 - Less than 10 people per group per location
 - Require PPE and proper cleaning/disinfecting between shifts.
 - Stagger start/end times to mitigate violation of 6 feet distancing rule during entrance/exit of shared space.

If You Feel Sick

Contact your health provider or the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

Coronavirus Hotline: [402-441-8006](tel:402-441-8006). Some providers may be able to offer telemedicine; UNL faculty and staff may have access to Teladoc, for example. The University Health Center is now available to faculty and staff members as an acute care option.

CHI Health has put a simple [two question diagnostic tool](#) online; the State of Nebraska has initiated TestNebraska, a coronavirus testing program, for which you can [register](#). You can also learn about COVID-19 and its symptoms from the [Centers for Disease Control](#).

During this period, members of the UNL community should be more cautious than usual. You should stay home if you have symptoms (coughing, fever, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell) or if you are otherwise feeling ill.

- [What to do if you are sick](#)

Additional information on PPE and Sanitation

1) PPE needs -

Workers with medium exposure risk may need to wear some combination of gloves, a gown, a face mask, and/or a face shield or goggles. OSHA Guidance Document:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

- a) face masks
- b) gloves

Supervisors are responsible for providing coverings; more information can be found [here](#).

2) Health Screening Questionnaire (if needed) -

<http://www.hd.ingham.org/Portals/HD/Home/Documents/cd/coronavirus/ICHDWorkHealthScreening.pdf> The Ingham County Health Department is requiring brief health screenings of all employees who continue to report for work. MSU has created an online [health screening form](#).

More general information on the order can be found [here](#).

3) What precautions should be taken by a person going into the lab alone for critical activities? <https://research.umich.edu/covid-19/covid-19-research-operations>

As is always the case, if an individual is alone in a lab or research space, that individual must: (a) avoid conducting experiments or procedures that could result in harm to themselves or facilities, and (b) inform a colleague in advance about where and when they will be in the laboratory, and confirm with their colleague when they have left the laboratory.

4) Cleaning and disinfecting protocols

<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/cleaning-disinfection-protocols-covid-19.pdf>

Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>

- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops). Clean with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to
- the directions on the label. For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Provide disposable wipes to staff and faculty so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use.
- Ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices

EXAMPLE Laboratory guidelines for return to laboratory

The following guidelines are for working on the 3rd Floor Othmer Work Guidelines:

- The number of people allowed in offices and labs will be limited. A sign will be placed on each door indicating the number of people allowed to work in the space at one time (a list is also provided below).
- Follow social distancing rules in all areas.
- If you have completed your work in a lab or office turn off the lights so others will know the area is vacant.
- Only required personnel are allowed in FDL, PDL, QC Labs and 314.
- Unless you are working in FDL, PDL or a QC Lab enter through the Utility Corridor through the double doors on the south side of Othmer Hall.
- Activities that require staff to work in close proximity (less than 6 feet) must be performed wearing a mask. Make sure the mask covers your nose and mouth for the duration of the activity. Please respect each other's boundaries.
- Always gown appropriately (glasses, gloves, lab coats, close-toed shoes, mask?) when working in the labs.
- The Conference Room has been set up to allow 4 people to meet. Please make sure you sit in the designated spaces.
- If you must travel out-of-state, suspect you have COVID-19, or have come in contact with someone exposed to COVID-19, please notify your Supervisor.
- **Finally, the greatest risk for exposure to the virus is when you are outside the walls of Othmer Hall. Please follow current CDC and University guidelines to help reduce the spread COVID-19.**

In addition to the guidelines for working in the facility, recommendations for staying safe both inside and outside the workplace are below. Additional information is available on the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>).

1. Wash your hand frequently.
2. Wash or sanitize your hands every time you touch something or someone that may be contaminated.
3. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (esp. mobile phones).
4. Do not touch your FACE (eyes, nose, mouth).
5. Stay home unless you need to go to the doctor, grocery store or pharmacy, and if you need to go out, wear a mask.

6. Limit close contact with others, and keep to the 6 foot social distance whenever possible.
7. Monitor your temperature daily
8. If you are not feeling well for any reason, or if you start to notice any of the symptoms noted below, please notify your Supervisor.

NOTE: Symptoms of flu and allergies can be similar to COVID-19.

Watch for Emergency warning signs and seek medical attention if you experience any of the following (this list is not all inclusive):

1. Trouble breathing
2. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
3. Confusion or inability to arouse
4. Bluish lips or face

3rd Floor room occupancy limits:

Area	Maximum # People Allowed to Work in Area
Elevators	2
Main Office (304)	2
Conference Room	4
Bullpen (308)	3
Maintenance Office	1
QA Office	2
Jay/Dustin Office	1
Sandra Office	1
Break Room	2
Client Office	1
QC Office	2
QCC Lab	2
QCM Lab 3 rd Floor (314A)	1
QCM Lab 1 st Floor	1
PDL	3
FDL	4
Anaerobic Prep, Darkroom, Aerobic Prep, IT Office	1
Solution Prep	1
Scale-up Lab (314)	3

Please make every effort to follow the guidelines outlined above and be respectful of the needs and concerns of others during this difficult time. If you have additional suggestions for helping us all stay safe, do not hesitate to share them with your Supervisor or members of the management team.