



Research Transition Plans for Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III

This document was developed collaboratively with input from CAST and other departments and colleges with active research programs. Keeping our students, staff, and faculty safe is the highest priority, yet faculty-led research is central to DSU's mission, vision and strategic plan, while student-involvement in research is a vital component of our academic programs. With those facts in mind, the goal of the transition plan is to ensure that DSU's research activities resume as rapidly, and to the maximum extent, that is compatible with the safety of all personnel.

Executive Summary:

The keys to ensuring safety during reopening is a commitment from faculty, staff and students involved in research to: 1) reduce the presence of personnel on campus to the minimum required effective research operations; 2) carefully practice social distancing, limiting the number of people per room and maintaining 6 foot distances between individuals; 3) where social distancing is not possible ensuring that individuals are protected with appropriate PPE, including N95 masks in situations where close contact is unavoidable; and 4) conducting regular and thorough sanitation of all common spaces and commonly touched items.

These guidelines assume that all personnel are following university-wide guidelines on health screening, staying home and seeking medical treatment when feeling ill, and not coming to campus if they are in a vulnerable category.

Phase 1: June 15 – July 12

1. Allowed personnel on campus – Only faculty, research staff and graduate students are allowed to conduct research activities on campus.
2. Limiting the number of people on campus – Personnel should conduct all possible work remotely, and PIs are responsible for ensuring that their students and research staff have the necessary equipment and software to carry out as much work as possible off campus.
3. Lab/research meetings – laboratory meetings or other types of meetings that bring people together must be carried out via phone or videoconference.
4. Strictly limit occupancy of rooms – Each room must have an occupancy limit determined based on social distancing of 6 feet, and that limit must be posted on the door. A list of individuals authorized to access each room must be posted on the door.
5. Scheduling of time on campus – Each PI must establish a work schedule for lab personnel that limits the number of people on campus and ensures that room occupancy limits are not crossed. The schedule should be fair and prioritize graduate students who are close to graduation and post-doctoral fellows. Weekly lab work schedules should be scheduled with the appropriate Dean's office while keeping the Chair informed as needed.
6. Strict social distancing must be followed – individuals may not be within 6 feet proximity for more than a few moments. There will be no in-person human subjects research, and no training of individuals on equipment or joint use of equipment unless it can be carried out more than 6 feet apart.
7. PPE and protective coverings - Face coverings must be worn by individuals in hallways and other common areas, in rooms where there is more than one person, and in any situation where two individuals may come in contact. Gloves must be used when handling shared equipment, and the gloves must be frequently changed or rinsed with 70% ethanol.

8. Sanitization – Stations with hand-sanitizer will be located at all building entrance/exits. Research personnel must sanitize workspaces with 70% ethanol or sanitary wipes before beginning work and before ending for the day. Research personnel must sanitize shared equipment that they use with 70% ethanol or sanitary wipes before and after each use. Each PI is responsible for ensuring that a sanitization protocol is created for each laboratory space and posted in that space.

Phase 2: Implementation Target July 13, 2020

Campus and room occupancy limited as in phase 1, social distancing requirements remain as phase 1.

1. Training and research requiring close proximity – Instrument training, joint data collection and other activities that require close physical proximity between researchers may resume under the following conditions. Individuals who will be working in close contact must wear N95, KN95 or similar masks, and lab coats for the duration of the time in which they are in close contact. Acceptable face coverings include N95 or KN95 masks or a combination of a surgical mask with face shield. PIs are responsible for ensuring that people who will be working in close contact have access to N95 masks and lab coats.
2. Human subjects research - Research projects that involve collecting data from human subjects may resume with the following requirements.
 - a. Social distancing required – no more than one human subject is allowed in the research space at a time, and there must be sufficient time between subject visits (at least 15 minutes) for the facility to be sanitized.
 - b. Researcher and subject must both wear protection – cloth/surgical masks if researcher and subject do not have physical contact, N95 or equivalent mask and gloves if researcher and subject must be in physical contact. Masks and gloves must be provided for subjects, and must be discarded or sterilized after each subject.
 - c. Sanitization – all equipment and items that a subject has touched or come into contact with must be discarded or sanitized with 70% ethanol or sanitizing wipes after each subject.
 - d. Each researcher must develop a detailed standard operating plan (SOP) for collecting data from human subjects that details the social distancing and sanitization protocol. The SOP will be shared with the dept. chair and the office of the Associate Vice President of Research. Research staff must be trained on the protocol, and the training must be documented.

Phase III – When students return to campus

1. On campus undergraduate research – Undergraduate students may return to conduct research in campus labs under conditions of social distancing. Room occupancy limits must be maintained, and work must be scheduled so that all personnel, including the undergraduate students are 6 feet apart or 1 person/room. Students must wear masks whenever they are in hallways or common areas or in proximity with other people. When participating in training or other activities that require close proximity with another person, both participants must wear N95 or similar mask. PIs with the support of the administration are responsible for ensuring that appropriate masks are available.

Phase IV – Return to normalcy

In alignment with federal guidelines, physical distancing restrictions, PPE requirements and other COVID-19 prevention measures can be lifted when safe and effective tools for mitigating the risk of the virus are available, including broad surveillance, therapeutics that can effectively treat patients with significant disease or prevent serious illness in those most at risk, or a safe and effective vaccine.