

Hello Managers,

Thank you for your ongoing patience as we figure out how to continue our work in unprecedented times. This email focuses on the restrictions surrounding New Hires, especially regarding summer field crews, which some of you have already been asking about. At this time, HR managers are being directed to postpone ongoing and new recruitments unless they meet certain criteria.

Suspension of non-critical hiring

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, effective March 24, 2020 until otherwise stated, departments are strongly encouraged to postpone ongoing recruitments and not create new positions unless they meet the definition of critical position. Guidance about this is available on the newly published suspension of non-critical hiring web page. This applies to all recruitments for regular and limited term classified non-union, contract covered, and professional staff, temporary staff (including direct hire and UTemp) positions, even if the job duties can be performed remotely, regardless of funding source. In general, recruitments already underway as of March 24, 2020 may continue if the department considers the position necessary for successful operational continuity.

How to determine if the position I want to recruit is critical or not?

Critical hires will be performing work that is *critical* to research as identified by the requirements outlined in Mary Lidstrom's email on March 24, 2020 (see attached "UW Admin Research update") or operational needs in association with Restricted Operations. If you are unsure, review the attached "Research and Facilities Decision Tree." If you have new hires that you feel should be designated as a "Critical Hire," please send me the following:

Supervisor / PI (hiring authority)

Prospective Job Title(s)

Exemption: specify if this is for a Research exemption or an Operational exemption and explain/describe (see attachments)

Brief description of critical job function(s) that need to take place now and cannot be postponed until after "Stay Home" order has finished. For the work, describe the frequency and duration of the work that will need to be performed at the employee's work or field station.

Health and Safety plan for employee/team of employees to conduct work following the public health guidelines

I will collect these and send them to the Executive Committee who will review all critical new hire requests. If your position(s) is deemed critical, I will contact you and we will

begin/continue the hiring process. If the position(s) is/are non-critical, I will let you know and set aside the hire(s) until the Stay Home order is lifted.

As always, please feel free to follow up with questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Wanjiku

Note: the information provided below is our best understanding at this time. Since this is a rapidly moving area, it may change. Please check the UW Coronavirus website often for updates.

What areas of in-person research are allowable under the new Stay Home, Stay Healthy directive?

Below are examples of areas of research applicable to COVID-19 response.

All areas listed are potentially valuable to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or potentially useful to recovery efforts. Many such areas may not be obvious now but should be considered for continued operations. You may wish to consider the [Population Health](#) areas as a useful framework for assessing areas that might be appropriate.

Research Area Examples

- Areas of biological and biomedical research working with SARS-CoV2 nucleic acid, proteins, virus or samples or involving COVID-19, including aspects of the virus, disease, transmission, vaccines, health care, therapies, and recovery from the infection or pandemic, as examples
- Areas of biological and biomedical research, including those that may involve engineering, chemistry or physics, that can be reasonably justified as having a possible impact on COVID-19 including impacts that might have a sparing effect on resources needed to fight the pandemic. Examples might be research on underlying health conditions or other infectious diseases.
- All areas of public health research that have relevance to COVID-19, that is, community health research, including the compilation, modeling, analysis and communication of public health information
- All areas involving environmental factors that might play into transmission, reservoirs, survival of the SARS-CoV2 virus
- All areas of humanities, social sciences, information sciences, and business that impact our understanding of misinformation, public perception, social isolation, stress, communication, economic impacts, and business concerns that may relate to COVID-19
- All areas of mathematics, statistics, and computer science addressing the ability to track or model or analyze data of importance to COVID-19
- All areas of importance to logistics of COVID-19 response, including supply chain, modeling, health care logistics, GPS-based analysis
- All areas of materials science that might impact novel therapeutics
- Others as appropriate

Facilities

- All facilities that store, analyze, or otherwise process samples that are either biological or materials that might be applicable to therapies

- All animal facilities
- All computational facilities
- All facilities for which shutting down would result in significant effort and/or cost both for the shut-down and the subsequent start-up.

Others

- Research involving long-term experiments, or maintaining vital equipment, cell lines, animals, and other time-sensitive research items, for which a pause would cause undue harm and/or cost
- Research that is essential to meet thesis requirements for a final defense in Spring Quarter, or requirements of a new position that has already been accepted

I have reviewed this guidance, including the decision tree below, and I am still not sure my research qualifies, who can I ask?

Send your question to research@uw.edu with the subject line COVID-19 and we will reply as soon as possible.

At this point the decision to keep a laboratory open should be based on following the decision tree at the bottom of this document and in close consultation with your department chair or director, and College or School.

Decision tree to determine whether your in-person research meets criteria for operation under the Stay Home, Stay Healthy directive

1. Is your research allowable based on one or more of the exclusion criteria below?

Question 1a. Does your research fall into any of the above categories?

If yes, go to question 2.

Question 1b. Do you help support a facility that stores, analyzes, or otherwise processes samples, houses and/or carries out procedures with animals, or carries out computation?

If yes, go to question 2.

Question 1c. Do you support a facility for which shutting down would result in significant effort and/or cost both for the shut-down and the subsequent start-up?

If yes, go to question 2.

Question 1d. Does your research involve long-term experiments, time-sensitive samples, equipment that requires monitoring and/or maintenance?

If yes, go to question 2.

Question 1e. Do you have a time-sensitive deadline, such as a thesis defense Spring Quarter or an accepted position with requirements, that requires you to finish in-person experiments?

If yes, go to question 2.

If you answer yes to any of these questions, go to question 2. If you answer no to all of them, you need to shut down your research for the next two weeks. Please see the EH&S shutdown checklist on their website.

Question 2. Safety standards--can you accommodate all of the safety standards below?

Question 2a. Can you maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times when researchers are in the laboratory? This will preclude training new techniques to others, unless it can be accomplished while maintaining at least 6 feet distance. It will also preclude techniques that need more than 2 hands, unless an alternate approach can be devised. It will also preclude dangerous experiments that require two people in close proximity. In some cases, it will require strict scheduling.

If yes, go to question 2b.

Question 2b. Can you carry out frequent laboratory decontamination procedures? This requires access to disinfecting solutions or wipes, and a schedule to wipe down surfaces regularly, wipe down common equipment before and after use, and wipe down lab benchtops before and after use.

If yes, go to question 2c.

Question 2c. Can you maintain personal safety with appropriate personal protective equipment and frequent hand-washing?

If yes, go to question 3.

If you answer yes to all of these questions, go to question 3. If you answer no to any one of them, you need to shut down your research for the next two weeks. Please see the EH&S shutdown checklist on their website.

Question 3. Personnel

Question 3a. Do you have personnel available to carry out the research? It may be difficult to hire new personnel under the current situation.

If yes, go to question 3b.

If no, you need to ramp down your research for the next two weeks. Please see the EH&S rampdown checklist on the UW coronavirus website.

Question 3b. Are the personnel you need to do the experiments willing to come into your facility to carry them out? You cannot pressure or require them to work, unless they are critical personnel for specific tasks. In that case, you still cannot ask them to do more than is required by their designation.

If yes, **you are approved** for carrying out in-person research. Please be sure to minimize the number of personnel in your research space at any one time.

If no, you need to ramp down your research for the next two weeks. Please see the EH&S rampdown checklist on the UW coronavirus website.

From: [UWAdministration](#) on behalf of [Mary E. Lidstrom](#)
To: uwadministration@uw.edu; uwbodc@uw.edu
Subject: [UW Administration] Research update on Stay Home, Stay Healthy directive – Follow-up
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2020 12:56:16 PM
Attachments: [ATT00001.txt](#)

Dear Colleagues,

I'm writing to provide clarity for research activities, after Governor Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" proclamation yesterday evening. Note, this message **does not** apply to clinical activities, only research activities.

Let me start by stating that the University is not closed. The directive allows for all research carried out remotely to continue, and in addition, for critical in-person research to continue, with additional restrictions and important requirements noted below. In accordance with these directives, we ask that the number of people working at their usual place of work be kept to a minimum. While the Stay Home, Stay Healthy directive will add some additional and enhanced restrictions, for the most part, strict adherence to advice already in place will be sufficient to maintain critical research operations.

Note, the Stay Home, Stay Healthy directive takes effect 5:00 pm tomorrow, March 25, and will be in effect for 2 weeks, until 5:00 pm on April 8.

Please note the following:

1. Should every researcher at the University of Washington stay home?

Every researcher who can work remotely, must stay home for the next two weeks. At the same time, the Governor has noted that research is critically important to curb the pandemic and to assist in recovery afterwards. In many cases, that work can only continue with in-person effort. In addition, some critical in-person research functions **must** continue, such as maintaining animals, taking care of sensitive equipment, and monitoring for safety. This work must be carried out by designated critical personnel, who should already be identified in your Continuity and Recovery Plans. I encourage you to review your protocols and plan accordingly.

We expect you to provide maximum flexibility to support at home work for research personnel. At home they can conduct literature reviews, data analysis, and write papers and other documents; they can participate in lab meetings and meetings with research personnel via Zoom, conference call or other remote methods, and they can complete online training requirements for research. There **must be no** expectation that personnel come to campus or to their usual workplace to conduct any research activities that can be adapted to telework.

Remember, anyone who is sick must stay home. In addition, anyone experiencing symptoms that may be related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, respiratory symptoms) should contact your healthcare provider and then notify the Environmental Health and Safety Department's (EH&S) Employee Health Center at emphlth@uw.edu. Anyone who has been in close

contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case **must stay home** for 14 days since their last contact with that person. If someone showing symptoms or self-isolating is designated as critical personnel, an alternate must be identified.

2. What areas of in-person research are still allowed and what restrictions are in place?

The goal of the Stay Home, Stay Healthy directive is to minimize the amount of close contact between people for the next two weeks. Some in-person research is still allowed, but **only if it is possible to maintain appropriate safety standards:**

- social distancing of at least 6 feet
- frequent laboratory decontamination procedures
- personal safety with appropriate personal protective equipment and frequent hand-washing

If you cannot maintain these standards, you may not continue to operate in-person research projects and must either ramp down your research efforts to a level meeting safety standards or shut down your research entirely.

Types of in-person research that are allowed, **if they can meet the safety standards** noted above:

- research that will help deal with the pandemic
- public health research
- research that will help the nation recover after the pandemic eases
- research that is essential to meet thesis requirements for a final defense in Spring Quarter, or requirements of a new position that has already been accepted
- long-term experiments, or maintaining vital equipment, cell lines, animals, and other time-sensitive research items, for which a pause would cause undue harm and/or cost
- facilities that support the work noted in the above bullets

The Office of Research will be providing a checklist later today to assist researchers in determining whether their in-person research is allowed.

The in-person research noted above is allowed, but no research personnel may be **required** or **pressured** to come to campus or to their usual work location or go into the field, unless they are designated critical personnel, required to maintain critical operations (see above). **All other research personnel must be given the option to work remotely for the next two weeks** (see point 3 below).

Three conditions must be met for you to continue in-person research:

1. Your research falls under the allowable categories
2. You are able to follow the required safety standards
3. Personnel are available and willing to carry out the work

If your research meets these conditions for in-person work, here are guidelines:

- Minimize the number of researchers in the laboratory or other facility at any one time. The concept of a “skeleton crew” should be in place, but it could be a rotating crew. In that case, scheduling is critical.
- Maintain whatever work is essential to ensure that when restrictions are lifted, a rapid

return to normal will be possible. For instance, if completely shutting down a piece of equipment will require extensive efforts to start it up again, minimal effort in maintaining such equipment is allowed.

The Office of Research will be providing further guidance soon, including who to contact with questions. For now, you are allowed to finish in-person experiments for the next 48 hours, but should only start new experiments or finish longer-term experiments if the above conditions are met. While we can offer no guarantees, we will be working with funding agencies on these issues in the weeks and months to come. We are optimistic that most funding agencies will be flexible given these unprecedented circumstances. It is widely understood that the research enterprise is critical to our region's and our country's well being now and over the long term.

If you feel that the best course of action for your research group is to ramp down your research activities or shut them down entirely, you should do so. You are not required to keep your research activities open. If you do ramp down or shut down, please see the checklist on the EH&S website for helpful guidance.

3. How will research personnel of any type (students, postdocs, staff, faculty) be paid if their work cannot be done remotely from home for the next two weeks?

We expect those instances will be rare, given the nature of inquiry and the authority you have to exercise flexibility within the research enterprise. Our goal remains to keep as many employees working, paid and connected to UW benefits as we possibly can during this disruption. In cases in which absolutely no remote work is possible, HR and Academic HR are working on guidance, which includes no personnel actions related to employment status for these two weeks. **As noted in today's message from President Cauce, do not** take any significant personnel actions during this two week Stay Home, Stay Healthy period.

Finally, thank you. We recognize how challenging these times are, and appreciate all of the work that you do to keep this university moving forward. We will do everything we can to help you.

Mary Lidstrom
Vice Provost for Research

****Please forward on within your unit as appropriate.**