



RESEARCH GUIDELINES RELATED TO COVID-19

The following guidelines address some of the key concerns related to ongoing research activities. These guidelines are adapted from the University of British Columbia, the University of Winnipeg, and Ryerson University.

These guidelines will be updated frequently as information from the Tri-Agencies and other sources is made available. For the latest information from the University and general health recommendations, visit msvu.ca/coronavirus.

IT&S offers several tools to enable you to work remotely. Learn more about [working from home](#).

Ongoing Research Activities

1. Ongoing research projects involving face-to-face contact should be discontinued to reduce unnecessary physical contact.
2. If applicable, create a communications plan for your research team and your participants. Send a copy of this plan to the [Associate Vice-President Research](#).
3. Back up research data and records so that they may be accessed remotely. If you have questions about best practices in data storage, contact IT&S.
4. Ensure precautions to access email/voicemail/network drives/web conferencing remotely and in compliance with information security standards.
5. To mitigate the potential absence of individual members with specific skills and/or knowledge, consider cross-training and sharing information across your research team,

Research Assistants and Support Staff

1. Ensure that your entire team determines works remotely, unless designated in your communications plan (See #2 above).
2. Encourage research assistants, project managers, postdoctoral fellows, and other research-related personnel to work remotely.
3. Ensure all contacts for your research team are up-to-date.

Internal Grants

1. All international travel has been suspended, including for research purposes.
2. Any internal grant or travel awarded for an interrupted conference can be held if the event is rescheduled.
3. The deadline to submit applications to the SSHRC Explore and Exchange and Release Time Award opportunities has been extended to May 1st, 2020. Notification of further deadline extensions will be communicated via e-mail and on the Research Office website.

External Grants and Funding

1. Research grant and contract reviews will continue, pending staff availability. Please note that timelines may be impacted.
2. Grant and grant application extensions are being considered at the Federal level.
3. Planned peer review activities may be impacted.

Updated March 17th, 2020



4. For updates to external grants and funding, please consult the individual Tri-Agency program. More information can be found here: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/news_room-salle_de_presse/latest_news-nouvelles_recentes/2020/covid-19_tri-agency-trois-organismes-eng.aspx.

Contract-Based Research

1. It is the responsibility of the PI on a research contract to connect with the funder directly to request an extension or modification.
2. It is important to note that some changes may require contract amendments, so notify [Jessica Long](#) in the Research Office as soon as possible.
3. Based on type of funding, work that is outstanding, or needs to be done or moved forward, faculty are encouraged to develop revised work plans and/or timelines for external funders.

Research Involving Human Participants

1. The intake and review of new applications will continue if circumstances allow. Researchers should be aware that REB clearance of any new applications will be delayed until May 1st, 2020 at this time.
 - a. New research related to or arising from the COVID-19 pandemic that is submitted for ethical review may be given priority for review.
2. Should the University experience a complete closure to all non-essential personnel, all current research with human participants will immediately be placed on hold. An announcement to that effect will be sent electronically from the Research Office.
3. In the interests of public safety and minimizing personal contact, ongoing research conducted face-to-face that cannot be moved online or via telephone must cease for the time being.
 - a. Modifications to this effect ([REB.FORM.002](#)) is required.
 - b. If research with human participants cannot be postponed, please contact the REB at ethics@msvu.ca and provide details.
4. Researchers with questions or concerns are encouraged to contact the Research Ethics Board via email at ethics@msvu.ca.

Research Involving Animals

1. Please Refer to CCAC for updates: <https://www.ccac.ca/en/news-and-events/news/2020headlines/crisis-management-and-covid-19.html> or contact our Joint Animal Care Committee at Saint Mary's University via email at animalcare@smu.ca
2. Please connect with your Dean, the AVPR, and the Director of Facilities to determine access considerations.



Guidelines for Researchers with On-Campus Labs/ Facilities

Principal investigators should work immediately to develop a research plan that adheres to changes in access to campus and other protocols for slowing the spread of Covid-19. These changes will include disruption to research activities both on campus and in the field. For the latest information from the University and general health recommendations, visit msvu.ca/coronavirus.

We are asking that you forward your plans by Thursday, March 19th 2020 to the [AVP Research](#).

General Guidelines for On-Campus Research Labs

1. Refrain from starting new lab experiments until further notice. Ongoing tests, procedures, etc., that can be interrupted should be terminated by Thursday, March 19th, 2020.
Please contact the AVPR if ongoing research is considered essential.
2. Limit access and reduce unnecessary activities.
3. Consider the use of virtual meetings for research teams.
4. Protocols for disinfecting surfaces to reduce the risk of surface transmission should be strictly followed and repeated; this would include, but is not limited to, lab benches, fume hoods, instrumentation panels, taps, etc.
5. Designate a secondary contact (preferably staff) for entry into the lab.

Research Plan Requirements for On-Campus Research Labs

Please address the following in your research plan:

1. How to make labs intrinsically safe during a possible shutdown.
2. Determine what equipment can be shut down, what needs to be monitored (and by whom) and communicate this to the AVPR in your contingency plan.
3. If fume hoods, or any other equipment that involves chemicals, need to be shut down, they need to be emptied and all chemicals designated for secure storage in assigned areas. Existing hazardous waste should follow similar protocols.
4. Designate the primary and secondary contacts for all lab spaces.
5. If some entry to your lab by someone other than you/your designate is required during a potential shutdown, identify what, if any, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required, and any relevant SOPs that pertain to such entry.
6. Identify any equipment that is malfunctioning or not performing to specifications.
7. Include the date of your last chemical inventory.
8. Include if you have a -80 freezer and if it is supported by a generator.

Research Materials/Supplies for On-Campus Labs

1. Shipping and receiving functions may be limited at this time. Please ensure you connect with Facilities and/or suppliers or others if you expect there to be interruptions.
2. Please notify Facilities if there are any special circumstances with respect to shipments and delivery locations.
3. All efforts should be made to limit non-essential deliveries.



Please direct your question to one of the contacts below:

Dr. Gayle MacDonald, Associate Vice-President Research

gayle.macdonald@msvu.ca

Research Development Professional Development
New Scholars Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Contract, MOU/MOA Responsible Conduct of Research
Review

Contact jessica.long1@msvu.ca to make an appointment with Dr. Gayle MacDonald

Brenda Gagné, Research Ethics Coordinator

brenda.gagne@msvu.ca

Research Ethics Animal Care
Data Management LimeSurvey Access
Indigenous Research

Veronica Bacher, Research Grants Coordinator

veronica.bacher@msvu.ca

Grant Funding Release of Funds
Internal Grants Letters of Support
External Grants

Jessica Long, Research Capacity Liaison

jessica.long1@msvu.ca

Scheduling and
Communications
General Inquires
Website Administration
Events