UVic Principles and Guidance for the Resumption of On-Campus Research

Updated July 24 2020 - changes are highlighted

Research under COVID-19 Restrictions

The University of Victoria is committed to the responsible resumption of on-campus research and creative endeavours as soon as possible, based on the direction of the Provincial Health Officer and the University’s ability to provide adequate supplies and services in the current environment.

This document outlines the principles and instructions to be followed to ensure an orderly and safe return to on-campus activities. The information below is based on current guidance. The provincial government has convened a postsecondary sector table, which will develop general protocols for universities. Any new guidance provided by this group will be reflected in updates to this document.

These general principles must be followed by all faculty who request permission to resume on-campus activities.

General Principles

- The health and wellbeing of students, staff and faculty is paramount above all other considerations.
- Research that can be carried out remotely should continue to the extent this is possible. Work from home if and when you can.
- No gatherings of more than 50 people are permitted on campus at any time.
- Routine daily screening has been mandated by the PHO and is required for all individuals working in research spaces. All faculty, staff, and students should self-screen for symptoms daily before coming to campus. Individuals who have symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 with any coughing or sneezing are not permitted onto campus.
- Many departmental general offices and campus food services will remain closed or operate under reduced hours.
- Permissions for on-campus research are contingent on the availability of essential services, such as custodial services and supplies for research facilities and PPE. Please be aware that the province is regulating access to PPE, which means that we need to work within provincial priorities to procure PPE.
- PIs or facility supervisors should consider equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and equal access in their planning for research resumption and should not compel students or employees to work on campus if those individuals have concerns about their safety or are experiencing other COVID-related barriers. Please refer to the FAQs on the UVic COVID website [https://www.uvic.ca/covid-19/research/grant-funded/index.php](https://www.uvic.ca/covid-19/research/grant-funded/index.php).
- The process described here applies to all on-campus research, regardless of whether that research occurs in science-based labs, in shared open spaces, in computer labs, or in other
spaces on campus. For team-based research, physical distancing is required and will need to be taken into account in the development of a safe work plan. A maximum number of research personnel for each space should be established based on the square footage, as instructed on application form. Research personnel may need to work in shifts to accommodate this requirement.

- Resumption of on-campus research *en masse* is not possible – it is necessary to employ a phased approach wherein building and research facilities are opened in priority order.
  - **Research Phase 1** applies to research that is both time sensitive and can be conducted only on campus, using specialized facilities or equipment. Examples of time sensitive research are those projects involving graduate students who will complete their thesis work in 2020, projects using at risk animal lines, or projects that are seasonal in nature. Research that is COVID-19 related or conducted under existing research suspension exemptions will also be considered under phase 1. Phase 1 applications are in the review and approval process and some research has resumed.
  - **Research Phase 2** applies to research that is not time sensitive but can be conducted only on campus, using specialized facilities or equipment. Faculty conducting research in this category may begin applying for permission to resume on-campus activities on June 17, 2020, with on-campus research to resume no sooner than July 1, 2020.
  - **Research Phase 3** applies to research that does not specifically require campus facilities but is more efficient if conducted on campus. Faculty conducting research in this category may begin applying for permission to resume on-campus activities on August 4, 2020.

- The [Human Research Ethics COVID-19 Bulletin #3](#) (July 16) contains new guidelines and documents to support the gradual resumption of in-person research with human participants, on campus and in the community. Please review this information in you are planning to resume in-person research that has been halted or are planning to apply for a new study. Please contact Human Research Ethics Office at ethics@uvic.ca if you have any questions.

- Field research will continue to be managed through the Request to Conduct Field Research Form available on the UVic COVID 19 website. All field research must conform to any restrictions required by local communities and/or third-party host organizations.

- Research conducted with live animals in any animal care spaces on campus will continue to be managed through an exemption process. We anticipate reduced capacity for research and animal housing in our facilities for the next few months due to physical distancing requirements and limited access to supplies.

- Until further notice, any research carried out on campus requires the permission of the relevant Chair/Director and Dean.

- Permissions for on-campus research will be subject to change to maintain alignment with provincial restrictions/requirements and ongoing changes to epidemiological modelling and infection rates.

- All faculty who decide to resume on-campus research must be prepared for a sudden shut down in the event of new government directives or other circumstances that might limit activities.

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**Instructions and Resources for Completing Safe Work Plans**
Each PI or facility supervisor should decide whether a return to research on campus is possible based on the principles outlined above and the current recommendations of the PHO. If the answer is yes, then a “COVID-19 Safe Work Plan (SWP)” application should be completed.

Instructions and resources for completing a SWP application are available from OHSE website, including information about physical distancing, cleaning, hygiene and related COVID safety protocols. The application process is now completely online.

Each PI or facility supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the Safe Work Plan is adhered to, and for addressing all reports of non-compliance in a timely way. Non-compliance is a serious issue and will be investigated according to established procedures for workplace incidents (https://www.uvic.ca/ohse/assets/docs/worksafe/uvic_incident_report.pdf) and the UVic policy on scholarly integrity (https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/AC1105_1160_B.pdf).