

Maintaining Progress in Research Activities

Created and distributed by UAF (3/23/2020)

Adapted to UAA and distributed (3/24/2020)

Principal Investigators and research labs must discuss plans now for emergency scenarios, like the on-going COVID-19 outbreak, including a lack of personnel physically able to be in the lab, disruptions in supplies, or suspension of operations. While we hope contingency measures will not be required, preparedness minimizes impact if they become necessary.

Create a Staffing and Essential Duty Coverage Plan

- Prepare for a reduced number of personnel to be in the research facilities for a 30- to 60-day period or longer if necessary.
- Consider how research projects may be re-scoped from active laboratory experiments or field studies to more cerebral, computational, or promotion activities such as data analyses, modeling, report, publication writing, video or audio recording, or digital presentation. If a major re-scoping is required, you *must* communicate and secure approvals from funding agency program managers.
- Learn the UA's definitions of emergency conditions
- Identify and assign roles and responsibilities for essential functions.
- Identify any experiments that can be ramped down, curtailed or delayed.
- Determine delegation of authority in case the responsible individual is unable to make decisions.
- Consider having the minimum number of individuals at a time in the lab to perform essential functions safely and effectively. Maintain a communication plan and system in place to verify the individual(s) are safe during this time in the lab.
- Cross-train personnel to cover essential functions.
- Plan for a decontamination of workspaces should a local illness occur. Use the [CDC's Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for Laboratories](#). If you have questions about types of disinfectants for sensitive equipment, contact UAF's [Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management](#).
- Coordinate with colleagues who have similar research activities to identify ways to ensure coverage of critical activities.
- Prepare to implement a shutdown checklist.
- Escalation to alternate operations or shutdown may mean buildings would be locked 24/7, so you may require a University ID to enter your building.
- In extreme circumstances, access may be restricted to critical personnel.
- Coordinate with support offices such as Dean/Director, VPR, IRB, IACUC, OSP, EH&S etc.

Prepare Personnel to Work Remotely

- Researchers who are immuno-compromised or have other individual circumstances must work with their advisors, PIs, or supervisors on alternative arrangements as needed.
- Personnel who are ill must stay home.
- Ensure emergency contact information is current in myUA, and other campus directories.
- Create a contact list of all members of your group (employees, student, postdocs, trainees, visiting scientists, etc...).
- Make this contact information accessible and available.
- Share this contact information with your business manager/department administrator
- Confirm personnel have remote access (VPN) and remote desktop if required (<https://alaska.edu/virtual-campus/#checklist>).
- Verify access to necessary files, data, software applications, etc.
- Determine how you will communicate with remote personnel. Email, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Google Chat, Slack, etc.
- Review your plans with all personnel in your group.

Lab Equipment

- Identify critical lab equipment.
- Determine if there is any equipment that cannot be shut down and equipment that requires routine monitoring such as liquid nitrogen dewars, inert atmosphere gloveboxes, vacuum lines, freezers, and incubators.
- Determine how long it will take to shutdown equipment and experiments. Document the safest and most expeditious procedures.
- Determine availability of remote monitoring and back-up power supplies to maintain critical equipment.
- If required monitoring cannot be performed, notify your Dean/Director and EH&S.
- Plan for the unavailability of repairs performed by facilities and other service providers.

Materials and Supplies

Removing materials from the lab

- Researchers take materials, with supervisor approval, offsite like laptops, data storage devices, or computers offsite (e.g., to their homes) to ensure research continuity during a curtailment. All essential research must be conducted within the confines of appropriate laboratory space.

- You may arrange with your PI or lab manager to take notebooks, data storage devices, or computers to help you work remotely.
- Care must be taken with identifiable human subjects and animal subjects' data. You must with IRB and IACUC to determine appropriate data handling alternatives.
- Under no circumstances is it allowable to remove animals from the university.

Contingency Planning

- Identify critical materials and supplies including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Determine if any special contingencies may be required due to brief or extended utility outages. For example, temperature sensitive materials.
- Secure hazardous materials (e.g., radioactive materials) and store hazardous materials and waste in the appropriate environment (e.g., containment, shielding, etc) in case access is not available for an extended period.
- Plan for a disruption in orders, vendors, service providers.
- Determine assess to supplies or services are truly critical.
- Contact vendors now regarding the potential for disruption. Identify alternative sources.
- For supplies or services that would be needed even during research curtailment, work with your group and with your department or building manager to include this need in your continuity plan.
- Plan for the unavailability of scientific service centers and other fee-for-service resources.

Impacted Research – Notice to Sponsors

If you are concerned that your research will be negatively impacted because you are unable to meet timelines, milestones, deliverables, etc., notice to the sponsor (government, non-profit, industry) is necessary.

If you must change the scope of your proposed plans to ensure continued progress of your research, the PI must contact their program officer after a viable alternate plan has been created and before investing substantial resources. Be certain to secure approval from the program manager in writing for substantial project changes. Subsequent processing of this action, if required, will be performed through interaction between the PI, their department Research Administrator, and the Office of Sponsored Programs (e.g. contract modification, no cost extension, etc.).

Questions concerning your externally funded award must be directed to your program officer or contact person and carbon copy (CC) Office of Sponsored Programs Post Award to ensure UAA administration is in the communication loop.

Some of this information was compiled based on information from universities across the US related to COVID-19 <https://collaborate.ncura.edu/samplepoliciesandprocedures>.

Contact & Feedback

- Submit COVID-19 questions to the Office of Research using this [LINK](#)

- OSP Contact Information
 - General Questions: email uaa_postaward@alaska.edu
 - Project Specific Questions using an online form at this [LINK](#)

Federal Flexibilities

(selected extraction from UAF OGCA on 03/24/2020, see <https://www.uaf.edu/ogca/resources/regulations/index.php> for additional sponsors or contact Office of Sponsored Programs if you have questions about your specific sponsor)

Council on Governmental Relations (COGR)

- M-20-18: [Managing Federal Contract Performance Issues Associated with the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) (3/20/20)
- M-20-17: [Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) due to Loss of Operations](#) (3/19/20)
- M-20-11: [Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)(3/9/20)
- [Institutional and Agency Responses to COVID-19 and Additional Resources](#)
- [FAQs Regarding COVID-19's Impact on Federal Awards](#)

Department of Energy (DOE)

- [Accommodating Interruptions due to COVID-19](#) (03/13/20)

Department of Health and Human Services (3/14/20)

- [Preparation for Potential COVID-19 Impact on Contract and Contractor Performance](#)

Department of the Air Force (Sent to Contractors, Subject to Change)

- [Potential Contract Impacts due to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)(3/17/20)

Food and Drug Administration

- [FDA Guidance on Conduct of Clinical Trials of Medical Products during COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (3/10/20)

- [Assistant Administrator for Procurement Message on Coronavirus](#)

National Endowment for the Arts

- [FAQs in response to COVID-19](#) - 3/16/20

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)

- [Information on NEH and COVID-19](#) Press Release

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Information for NIH Applicants and Recipients
- [NIH Message to Applicants and Recipients of NIH Funds on Flexibilities Needed for COVID-19](#)(Youtube, 3/17/20)
- [NOT-OD-20-087 Guidance for NIH-funded Clinical Trials and Human Subjects Studies Affected by COVID-19](#)(3/16/20)
- [NOT-OD-20-086 Flexibilities Available to Applicants and Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance Affected by COVID-19](#)(3/12/20)
- [FAQs on COVID-19 Flexibilities for Applicants and Recipients](#)
- [NOT-OD-20-082 NIH LATE APPLICATION POLICY Due to Public Health Emergency for United States for 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)(3/9/20)
- [NOT-OD-20-083 General Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) - Proposal Submission and Award Management Related to COVID-19](#)(3/10/20)
- [NIH Guidance on Travel and Meetings Hosted by NIH](#) (3/9/20)
- [NIH Extramural Response to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies](#)
- [Special OLAW Webinar on March 19: Pandemic Contingency Planning and Its Impact on Animal Care](#)(3/19/20)
- [NOT-OD-20-088 Flexibilities for Assured Institutions for Activities of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees \(IACUCs\) Due to COVID-19](#)(3/16/20)
- [Emergency Updates](#)
- [NCI CIRB](#)
- [NIH Extramural Nexus](#)

National Science Foundation (NSF)

- [NSF Implementation of OMB Memorandum M-20-17](#)(3/23/20)
- [Coronavirus Information](#)

- [Impact on Existing Deadline Dates](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) About the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) for National Science Foundation \(NSF\) Proposers and Awardees](#)
- [Dear Colleague Letter: Provisioning Advanced Cyberinfrastructure to Further Research on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [NSF Guidance for Major Facilities and Contracts Regarding COVID-19](#)
 - [Interim Travel Guidance \(PDF\)](#)

Office of Justice Programs, DOJ (Guidance sent to Grantees, Subject to Change)

- [OJP Grantee Update #1 COVID-19 Impacts](#) (3/16/20)

Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW)

- [Disaster Planning and Response Resources](#) - 3/16/20

USDA - National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

- [NIFA Deadline Extensions due to COVID-19](#)