



Oregon State
University

Research Office

OSU colleagues:

Thank you for working to quickly adjust to a new way of doing business during the COVID-19 crisis. We continue to receive questions from the research community about critical research activities and essential travel. While the decision to authorize these requests is up to your unit leaders, I will communicate as needed to address questions and provide guidance as a partner.

This is an unprecedented situation for everyone involved, but we will get through it together. I know working from home comes with unique challenges, but as the provost's message indicates, significant measures are needed to reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19 and for the university to remain in compliance with the executive orders issued by Gov. Kate Brown.

Recent messages defined critical OSU research activities as those that maintain the continued viability of large and complex projects, as well as unique specimens and collections, plants and animals or cultures; highly specialized analytical, manufacturing, computing facilities; and field-based facilities and laboratories.

A lot can fall within this definition. As a result, one may be able to justify many activities as being critical and essential, assuming proper social distancing and other public health measures are practiced. However, we must all accept that the most important thing we each can do right now is to help slow the spread of the virus by "flattening the curve" and managing the exponentially growing number of COVID-19 cases. Many studies suggest the virus can last for days on surfaces, and many who carry it may be asymptomatic. Following the university's requirements on working from home and public health guidelines will help minimize risk to those who must be on-site to perform critical functions and reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19 locally. For any lab and field work, these should be critical considerations to protect yourselves, students and our community.

Please **ONLY** consider making a request to work within an OSU facility that involves research that is critical to continue if the experiment and data collection have started and stopping would set it back significantly due to the time needed to restart. If you have samples and data that are currently being collected, and it would require a long time to restart if the work is stopped, then the work can be considered critical. In the meantime, every laboratory should transition to a state of minimal operations, which should require only infrequent and short-term visits by critical personnel, with the areas to be visited and used sanitized between uses. In the meantime, please consider whether your staff and students can be working on some other aspects of research and prioritize the work that can be completed remotely. Additionally, please contact your program directors to find out whether there can be extensions on the deadlines for major proposal submission opportunities or on major deliverables, as most sponsoring agencies are well aware of the constraints we all face.

Finally, I want to assure you that the Research Office continues to support our most critical functions remotely. Our staff is ready to help answer your questions and support you as strategic partners.

Please stay safe and healthy by continuing to follow public health guidelines. And please do not hesitate to reach out to me and/or my leadership if you have any concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

Irem Y. Tumer, Ph.D., ASME Fellow
Vice President for Research, Interim

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