



Oregon State
University

Research Office

March 13, 2020

Dear members of the OSU research community,

I write to share further information about how the university's plans to limit the spread of COVID-19 by enacting social distancing measures might affect research.

I urge us all to remain positive that the university remains fully open, that all OSU research facilities are open, and that research activities continue throughout the university.

During this time, I ask that you follow the university's COVID-19 response requirements outlined Wednesday March 11, 2020 by Provost Ed Feser in his communication to the university community. Here is [a link to that message](#).

- Please advise your students and technicians to work from home, if at all possible. If students and staff must come to campus to perform duties or go out into field-based laboratories, it is recommended that they follow best practices and social distancing guidelines. Also please continue to follow any safety procedures and protocols that are in place for the particular laboratory. If your students or staff are not feeling well, please advise them to stay home and contact their primary care physician, Student Health Services, or a medical clinic for appropriate medical attention. If they are uncomfortable coming to work -- even though healthy -- please extend compassion and your best judgement, given that a person's underlying medical conditions may not always be known.
- Please conduct all meetings possible utilizing Zoom. If this is not possible, follow best practices and guidelines around social distancing. For graduate students needing to complete their qualifiers, preliminary examinations or thesis defense, please follow guidelines provided in Vice Provost Phil Mote's message to campus issued on March 12, 2020.
- All OSU research compliance functions (EH&S, Biosafety, IRB, IACUC, COI, Small Boat & Dive Safety, etc.) are fully operational. Similarly, all functions related to grants and contracts are currently not affected, including proposal submission, award negotiation and acceptance, subcontracts/subawards, and processing of other sponsor requests, even if staff are working remotely.
- At this time, there are no plans for restricting access to any university facilities. However, it would be prudent to plan for this possibility by identifying in advance essential personnel and confirming that they know what to do in the event of suspended operations. Also remind all personnel of your communication plan. If you do not have one, please create a plan.
- Identify priority experiments in case of restricted access, prioritizing experiments as appropriate, and carry out tests to ensure you have remote access to files, data, and servers.
- There may be situations where you find that a grant-funded student or staff member is not

able to perform their duties, and that you would feel uneasy about continuing to charge their time to your grant. Please be creative about how you can keep the staff member engaged in meaningful work related to your grant (e.g. literature work, experimental or field planning, writing). We are working with granting agencies to clarify how they would like us to address these concerns. We will provide updates as we receive them. For now, [NSF's FAQ](#) provides some limited guidance. If your grant is industry-funded, please connect with the industry contract manager who negotiated your contract. They will work with you and the company to find an appropriate solution.

- At this time, all non-essential OSU-sponsored travel is suspended. OSU-sponsored travel includes all travel related to research projects sponsored by various funding agencies, including federal agencies. This decision might impact research-related field work or other trips that you had planned. If this is the case, and you have concerns, please reach out to your department/school/college leadership as well as the Research Office with details of the work you have planned. Details may include field work planned, the timing, the location, mode of transportation, whether or not social distancing is possible, and information about the circumstances that might necessitate an exception. Please know that exceptions will be very rare. Universities all over the world are suspending travel, and funding agencies are aware and advising them to do so; containment of the virus's spread is our top priority.
- If you are planning on traveling later in the spring or summer, it may be possible for you to book travel on refundable fares. Please contact OSRAA to see if prior approval or documentation is required by the sponsor.
- For expenses related to travel that is cancelled and is funded on a grant index, please consult with your Business Center and the Research Office staff to see if the funding agency will reimburse the associated cost. If it is determined that the funding agency cannot provide reimbursement, the university will reimburse those expenses. Please submit documentation of the determination with your travel reimbursement request.
- Finally, we are working on assembling an FAQ web page to relay information to you as it becomes available. So stay tuned.

These are difficult and complicated times. We are committed to work with each of you, as well as with funding agencies, OSU's leadership, and colleges, centers and institutes to get a better sense of emerging issues and potential solutions.

We will report any findings to you as they become available. And we will continue to be fully committed to supporting the research enterprise at OSU in all ways possible. In the meantime, please share your questions and concerns by contacting us at COVID19_RO@oregonstate.edu. We will monitor this email account closely. If you choose to contact us by phone, leave us a message.

Please stay safe and healthy by following the preventive measures described in Provost Feser's message and be supportive of your friends and colleagues.

Regards,

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