Research Town Hall

COVID-19: Operational and Safety Requirements for UTA Research

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C-19 Research Operation Plan

- **Guiding Principles:**

- **Principle 1.** Follow public health policies from governing authorities.

- **Principle 2.** Resume research operations in alignment with the executive UTA campus response to COVID-19.

- **Principle 3.** Protect the emotional and physical health and safety of our clinical and human research subjects, as well as the UTA research workforce.

- **Principle 4.** A PI may enforce stricter policies in spaces assigned to them as may be necessary for the type of research or operational environment. The requirements here represent the minimum level of compliance.
C-19 Research Operation Plan

- Guiding Principles Continued:

  - **Principle 5.** Comply with ethical and legal requirements, as well as policies imposed by the sponsors of funded research as well as any flexibilities afforded due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

  - **Principle 6.** Protect the careers of early stage researchers.

  - **Principle 7.** Conduct research activities to the extent that public health and logistical conditions permit, while remaining agile in anticipation of a resurgence of COVID-19.
C-19 Researcher Toolkit

- **Social Distancing Requirements:**
  - 6 foot separation between personnel.
  - **Masks are required** at all times in labs.
  - Sign-in/out logs are required for labs.
  - Implement shift work assignments and limit length of time of co-occupancy.
  - Continue as much as research remotely as possible.
  - No undergraduate researchers in labs until notified otherwise.
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- **Lab Space Best Practices:**
  - Post map with maximum allowable occupancy of each area to maintain distancing requirements.
  - Use tape to help mark space distances and flow of traffic.
  - Wash hands before and after entry, use of instruments, or shared devices.
  - Consider heightened PPE for the type of activities to be conducted.
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**Equipment Best Practices:**

- Rearrange equipment and instruments to be 6 feet apart.
- Sanitize equipment before and after use.
- Do not share supplies among personnel if possible. Consider individual researcher lab tool sets.
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- **PPE and Sanitization Supplies:**
  - PIs are responsible for ensuring adequate and appropriate PPE for their research. Contact EH&S for assistance in identifying product suppliers for any special PPE required.
  - PIs are responsible for sanitization supplies.
  - UTA will provide 2 washable face coverings for personnel – use the [EH&S Face Mask Request Form](#).
  - Contact Amy Osborn ([Osborn@uta.edu](mailto:Osborn@uta.edu)) for the reopening/ramp-up of lab activity to ensure coordination with EH&S and central supply planning.
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Research Personnel Health:

- **Monitoring of C-19 symptoms** is required for all UTA personnel coming to work on campus.
  - Self assessment should be performed everyday and if any symptoms are realized, stay home and call your healthcare provider. Inform your supervisor.

- If diagnosed with C-19 or if you live with someone that has, stay home and complete UTA’s **Close Contact or Personal Diagnosis Form**. Inform your supervisor.
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Laboratory Impact if C-19 is Diagnosed:

- If someone experiences symptoms of C-19 or tested positive, assume there is spread in your lab.
  - Call EH&S (x2185) to create a re-entry plan and provide necessary supplies and assistance to decontaminate space.
  - Maintain confidentiality of the infected individuals.

- Be prepared for such an event and need to shutdown your laboratory.
Contact Tracing:

- Contact Tracing is important to help control new outbreaks and slow the spread of the disease.
- If health authorities inform you that someone tested positive that you have had contact with, the CDC recommends self-isolation for 14 days.
Refer to C-19 Research Webpage for Updates

OMB issued flexibilities to agencies for administrative and financial requirements on March 19 covering:

- Allowability of costs normally not chargeable to awards (including salary for little to no benefit of a project).
- Prior approval and procurement waivers
- Extensions to reporting / projects
- Expire on June 19th.

Flexible work assignment policy and procedures
C-19 Researcher Toolkit

- **Suspending Research**: For research conducted as part of a sponsored project, if a suspension of research activity is expected to result in:
  - The disengagement of the PI of 3 months or more to the research;
  - A Reduction of 25% or more in the time devoted to the project;
  - A change in scope of work;
  - A significant delay to complete the project on time; or
  - A significant increase in costs to complete the project.

- **Contact**: [Postaward@uta.edu](mailto:Postaward@uta.edu) to help coordinate with program officers.
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• Supplemental Funding:
  • If there is a significant financial impact directly related to C-19 expenditures or the cost efficiency of research progress, may want to contact program officer.
  • Consider supplemental funding to existing projects directly related to C-19 research or stopping the spread of the virus.
• Track C-19 expenditures
C-19 Researcher Toolkit

• **In-Person Human Subject Research** *(June 15th)*:

• In-Person HSR On/Off site must:
  – Maintain all social distancing requirements.
  – Avoid any direct physical contact.
  – Study may not exceed 2 hours.
  – Subject population limited to healthy adults age 18-65 and
    not at a higher risk to C-19.
  – All subjects will need to be prescreened via electronic means
    before campus arrival.
  – Research team members and subjects must have
    temperature checked before engaging in research activity.
  – Addendum to consent form: Special C-19 Information for
    Research Participants
C-19 Researcher Toolkit

- **In-Person Human Subject Research (June 15th):**
  - Notification and Approvals:
    - Inform your Associate Dean of Research or Dean if not applicable for college-level/resource considerations.
    - Inform regulatoryservices@uta.edu for tracking purposes.
      - IRB approval will be necessary if your protocol requires modification due to C-19 related requirements.
    - Off-campus approval of site/location is required. Must follow off-campus site requirements in addition to UTA HSR requirements.
  - Additional phases of in-person HSR will be assessed based on risk, available health data, and UTA or other governmental requirements.
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Stay Healthy, Stay Safe.

Questions?