

Ohio University Guidance for Restart of On-Campus Research and Creative Activity

May 25, 2020

Background. With reductions underway by the State of Ohio in public health restrictions linked to COVID-19, Ohio University is taking steps for a phased opening of research and creative activities that have been on hiatus during the pandemic. Planning is being led by a committee chaired by Vice President for Research & Creative Activity Joseph Shields and College of Fine Arts Dean Matthew Shaftel, in coordination with larger university efforts to selectively resume activity while remaining sensitive to safety considerations.

At the current time planning is being initiated for resumption of research and creative activity that necessitates use of on-campus facilities. Such activity will be allowed under a restricted set of provisions at the conclusion of the Stay-at-Home order. *Those engaged in research and creative activity should continue to carry out their activities remotely to the extent possible beyond that date.*

Guiding Principles. Resumption of research and creative activity on-campus will be responsive to the following principles:

- 1) Follow applicable rules, orders and guidelines (“Rules”)of local, state, and national governmental and public health authorities. Such Rules include all directives to shelter-at-home, implement social distancing, etc.
- 2) Protect the health and safety of the OHIO research and creative community and any others we may come in contact with. This includes emotional as well as physical safety.
- 3) Protect the careers of OHIO researchers and creatives (especially early career, post-doctoral, grant-sponsored researchers, etc.).
- 4) Protect the research and creative activities of our OHIO graduate students. Participation of undergraduates in on-campus research and creative activity should be limited to instances where their role is essential to the success of the project or to completion of academic program requirements.
- 5) Provide a fair and transparent process for both start-up (and potential subsequent shutdown) of research and creative activity that permits exceptions as necessary and with decision oversight at the college level.
- 6) All PIs and lead creatives should understand and consider the risk of restarting their research/creative activity, recognizing that work could be shut down with little notice under one or more of the above principles.

Approval Process. Researchers who want to engage in research or creative activity in university facilities at the conclusion of the current Stay-at-Home order are required to submit a **Research/Creative Activity Operation Plan** on the accompanying form to be reviewed for approval by their department chair/school director, relevant Associate Dean in their college, and the Vice President for Research & Creative Activity.

Safety Plan. A central part of the Research and Creative Activity Operation Plan is a Safety Plan that incorporates the following elements, tailored to the specific activities and requirements of the activity.

1. Personnel should review and assume responsibility for following [CDC guidelines](#) for minimizing risk of infection.
2. Before coming to the work site each day, all individuals should complete a self-administered wellness check based on CDC guidelines. If an individual's temperature exceeds 100° or feels feverish, they should not come to work.
3. All personnel must wear facial coverings in the work site, unless eating, alone in a personal (non-shared) work space, or under conditions in which a facial covering would compromise health or safety.
4. All individuals must adhere to social distancing requirements and priority should be given to work where there is only one individual in a particular space at a time.
5. PIs and Lead Creatives must coordinate and document plans for use of shared space with other users and groups to maintain strict compliance with CDC guidelines.

Implementation.

1. The PI/Lead Creative should complete and submit the Research/Creative Activity Restart Form to their Department Chair or School Director, who will review and upon approval submit to the appropriate Associate Dean for review. Upon approval, the Associate Dean will route to the Vice President for Research & Creative Activity and Laboratory Safety Officer for review and sign-off. Approval by the VPRCA constitutes authorization to proceed with the requested activity.
2. The Laboratory Safety Officer will schedule a consultation with the PI or Lead Creative as needed to address any remaining safety considerations for the work site.
3. All personnel will need to complete mandatory COVID-19 safety training through Blackboard, details to be provided, prior to beginning work on-site.
4. The approved Research/Creative Activity Operation Plan must be reviewed and signed by all participants in the activity prior to their participation, and provided to the relevant Department Chair/School Director and Associate Dean to be kept on file for reference.
5. The PI/Lead Creative should establish a process to record all daily personnel activity and entry/exit from research/creative space.
6. Faculty, students, technicians, and other staff should NOT be compelled to engage in activities that they are not comfortable with because of potential health risk due to COVID-19.