

Returning to Campus Research Activities

Click the sections below to view relevant information. Please email research@utdallas.edu for specific questions.

Research in Shared Spaces

Shared Spaces are defined as research spaces where members of a research group routinely interact with each other in the same space, such as science and engineering labs, core facilities, shared spaces in institutes or centers. To the greatest extent possible, research personnel should continue to work from home; in particular, all vulnerable individuals are encouraged to continue to work from home. Research personnel should be aware that depending on the situation, such as an outbreak of COVID-19 or Stay Home executive orders, research may have to be ramped down again within a short amount of time. [Click here](#) to view Signage that should be placed in strategic and relevant areas to remind personnel of the health & safety guidelines required to remain compliant.

Health & Safety Guidelines

Health Checks

Prior to coming to work, individuals must self-screen for any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection, and must include new signs/symptoms among their household members:

- Cough, shortness of breath, persistent pain/pressure in their chest, chills, repeated shaking with chills, runny nose or new sinus congestion, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, fatigue, new GI symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea), new loss of taste or smell, a fever greater than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, or known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.
- **If you or your household members have any of the symptoms on any work-day, do not come on campus.** Contact your immediate supervisor as soon as reasonably possible. Follow the guidelines on the [UT Dallas Covid-19](#) website in the case of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. The Office of Emergency Management and Continuity Planning (OEMCP) will provide additional guidance regarding individual and facilities follow-up actions that may be needed.

Contact Tracing

- Every individual must maintain and regularly update a list of substantive and known face-to-face interactions that they have had during work hours of the preceding two weeks (i.e., lab members they interact with on a daily basis, human subjects they came in contact with during study procedures, etc.). In the case of a coronavirus infection, this list should be made available to university personnel.
- As more robust contact tracing solutions become available, additional information will be provided to the UT Dallas community. Utilizing these resources will be strongly encouraged as they will be a key strategy for preventing further spread of COVID-19.

Meetings & Visitors

- Routine lab/research group meetings should not be conducted face-to-face; conduct meetings virtually.
- Please move all of your visitor meetings and consultations online.
- Research Safety staff will assist Central Receiving in safely handling and delivering packages containing chemical, biological, or radiological materials to laboratories.
- Vendor visits to research laboratories should be coordinated through Research Facilities Operations.

Social Distancing & Spacing

- [CDC guidelines](#) for social distancing of 6 feet or greater must be maintained.
- Shared research spaces must have no more than one (1) individual per 200 sqft per room/workspace unless further density is justified and approved. The PI is responsible for ensuring that this rule is followed at all times. Space out desks and workstations; desks in common areas must be arranged so that individuals occupying desks at the same time are at least 10 ft apart (consider temporary walls between workstations if this spacing cannot be achieved). If a space is designed for single occupancy, the space should not be occupied by more than one individual on the same day.
- Maintaining appropriate fire barriers and life safety protections in buildings and work spaces is critical. Furniture or other items that are rearranged to support physical distancing cannot block or diminish paths of travel (aisles, hallways, corridors), or in any way hinder access to egress doors. Personnel and units must not prop open or inhibit the operation of doors, especially doors that are designed to be self-closing for fire safety or security purposes.

Hygiene Etiquette

- Wash/sanitize hands frequently. At a minimum, this includes before entering and upon leaving a laboratory.
- When available, use soap and water and scrub hands for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least **60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol** and cover all hand surfaces and rub until dry.
- Cough/sneeze into a tissue. Dispose of used tissues immediately into a trashcan and then wash hands. If there are no tissues available, cough/sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth. This can accelerate the spread of infection.

- Wear personal protective equipment, as appropriate in the laboratory.

Face and Hand Coverings

- Face masks/face coverings must be worn at all times in spaces that involve close proximity with other people and when other people are present.
- Hand coverings/gloves should only be worn during work tasks where use is specified by a hazard assessment. When disposable gloves are worn by research personnel, gloves must be discarded after each use. Do not wear gloves in public spaces/common areas, to prevent cross-contamination.
- Masks and gloves must be available in shared research spaces. Obtaining these items is the responsibility of the PI.
- Gloves must be worn and [removed properly](#) when individuals interact with human subjects in close proximity or when in contact with shared devices or equipment.
- Masks and gloves must be made available to human subjects and visitors prior to entering lab spaces. Human subjects and visitors must wear masks and must be given the option to wear gloves.
- If other protective equipment is needed, the PI must ensure their availability. **If any of these are needed and not available to the lab, the lab is not allowed to remain open.**

Safety

- If research is conducted by a single individual in a lab setting where under normal circumstances, two or more individuals are present, notify at least one other person outside the lab as a safety precaution prior to entering the lab and upon leaving.
- Please contact Research, Campus, and Environmental Safety to request support, when more than one person may be needed to safely operate equipment.

Disinfecting Labs & Equipment

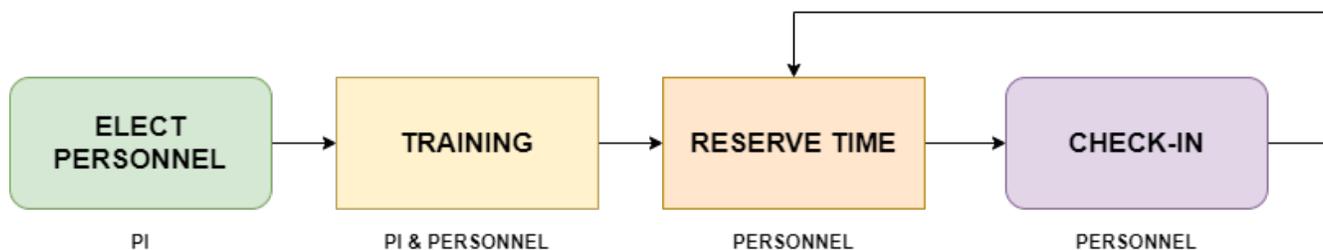
- Disinfect common research areas and frequently touched surfaces (lab benches, doorknobs, sink handles, freezer doors, fume hood sashes, keyboards, microscopes, etc.) at the end of each shift prior to the next shift arriving at the workplace.
- Designate one or more individuals responsible for cleaning and disinfecting and have them document on a daily work sheet that they completed the cleaning.
- Minimize the sharing of equipment and devices. If they need to be shared, thoroughly disinfect the device between uses by different individuals.
- Please go to the [Office of Research](#) website for frequently asked questions on disinfecting labs.

Non-Human Subjects Research

Elect

In order for lab personnel to return to campus, they must first be approved (or elected) by the Principal Investigator (PI) of their lab. Please follow the process as described below.

1. **Elect Personnel:** PIs complete [this form](#) to designate research personnel who will need to come to campus to complete research activities.
2. **Complete and Certify Training:** Elected personnel and the PI will each receive an email containing 2 links. The first link is to a required training module and the second link allows personnel to submit their certification form after the training has been completed.
3. **Reserve Research Time:** After training has been completed and certified, *within a business day*, personnel will receive email authorization to reserve research time on campus using [Lab Resources Scheduler](#). Time slots available will be specific to their lab PI.
 - a. A phase-specific capacity is enforced by the scheduler for PI elected personnel via available slots in the system. Certain slots are restricted to categories of personnel such as PI-specific, undergraduate-specific, and undergraduate mentor-specific. The slots should not be utilized by other personnel.
 - b. Research personnel should each individually reserve campus time, i.e. the principal investigator should not make reservations for their elected personnel.
 - c. For situations that may require exceptions, please submit your election and contact Kathan.McCallister@utdallas.edu for confirmation of mitigations and approval.
4. **Daily Check-ins:** All research personnel will be required to complete daily health check-ins. Daily health check-ins will be received via email.



Training & Certification

1. Navigate to [eLearning](#) and sign-in using your NetID and password.
2. Click "Safely Resuming On-Campus Research" under "My Organizations". Then, click "Returning to Research Training" to begin the training.
3. Once you've completed training, click the second link in the email to complete the "Declaration of Commitment to Public Health Practices" form to certify that you have completed and understood the training.

After completing training and certification, personnel will be notified via email that they have been authorized to reserve time on campus specific to their PI.

Reserve Campus Time

Log-into [Lab Resources Scheduler](#) using your NetID and password. Personnel will only be able to see the availability of Resources (Campus Time) that they have been granted permission to reserve. Time on campus can only be reserved from 8:00AM-6:00PM, including weekends. *Remember that personnel will be notified via email that they have been authorized to reserve time on campus specific to their PI only after they complete training and certification.*

Reservation Rules

- Check-in & check-out is required through the scheduling system.
- In adherence to social distancing, there is a 30 minute buffer that is automatically added between reservations.
- Reservations must be booked at least 30 minutes in advance.
- Campus Time can be reserved from 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM, including weekends.
- **You may check-in for a reservation up to 15 minutes before the reservation starts and check-out up to 30 minutes after the reservation ends.**

Bookings

1. In the top navigation bar, click on 'Schedule', and select 'Bookings'
2. This view is akin to a gantt chart; you can see the resource schedule for both PI slots. Click on the calendar icon, or the green arrows, to adjust the date time frame.
3. Click on a time slot and fill out the reservation form. Note that you can click and drag to select a longer period of time.
4. Once you have reserved a time slot, you will receive a Daily Reservation email containing a link to access the check-in process. This should only be completed when you enter the building at your reserved time slot.

 **To see a step-by-step visual walk through,** [visit our how-to guide.](#)

Onsite Check-in & Check-out

When entering/exiting a building, check-in/check-out through the Lab Resources Scheduler. You will receive an email on the day of your reservation with a link that will take you directly to the reservation. Find the reservation manually by navigation to 'Bookings' or 'My Calendar'.

Check-in

Navigate to the reservation details. In the top right, an orange check-in button will become available once it's time to check-in. Click it to check-in.

- The button will appear 15 minutes before the start of the reservation, allowing you to check-in early.
- In the dashboard section of Lab Resources Scheduler, under the section "Upcoming Reservations" you can alternatively check-in by pressing the yellow check-in button.

Check-out

Navigate to the reservation details. In the top right, click on the same button that now reads as 'check-out'.

- **The check-out button will disappear 30 minutes after the reservation has ended. In other words, you will miss the check-out window if you attempt to check-out 30 minutes after the reservation has passed.**
- If you sign-in early, the check-out button will not appear until after the official start of the reservation.
- In the dashboard section of Lab Resources Scheduler, under the section "Upcoming Reservations" you can alternatively check-in by pressing the yellow check-out button.

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Human Subjects Research

Update 8/26/2020

On May 26 the scope human research operations was expanded to include in-person research activities. Since that time conditions in the North Texas region related to COVID-19 have continued to deteriorate. In recent days, we have seen record numbers of new cases, total active cases and, most worryingly, hospitalizations of individuals who have confirmed cases of COVID-19. In light of the current risk to human safety, **the Office of Research is extending the suspension of all in-person human subjects research activities until further notice.** All human subjects activities that can take place via virtual platforms (Microsoft Teams, online surveys, etc.) should be conducted virtually to avoid in-person contact.

We recognize there are projects that provide a direct benefit to the participant. We will review requests to continue in-person procedures on a case-by-case basis. To make an exception request, please complete the [Conducting Beneficial Human Subject In-Person Procedures Request Form](#). Researchers may contact irb@utdallas.edu for more information.

All IRB protocols will be reviewed on an individual basis to evaluate risk to participants and to the UTD research community.

Animal Research

The process to [elect personnel](#), [train](#), and [reserve campus time](#) must be followed in addition to the animal research guidelines below.

Restricting entrance to the animal facilities

- By entering the facility, research personnel certify that they do not exhibit any of the symptoms at the time of entering the facility: new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit. If they exhibit any of these symptoms or if the investigator knows that they have come in close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, they are not allowed into the animal facility.
- Investigators not abiding by the social distancing or use of a proper PPE will have their animal facility access removed.

Prepare for supply changes

- LARC currently has enough inventory of PPE and cleaning agents to cover current needs within the animal facility. The situation, however, may change rapidly. Investigators are prohibited from removing PPE and cleaning supplies from the animal facility. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in denial of future access to the animal facility during the pandemic. LARC will inform everyone if rationing of PPE supplies is required.

IACUC approval

- If any modifications to the animal protocol are being made due to the COVID-19 situation (for example, shortening procedure durations or ordering animals over the number approved by the IACUC), please ensure a [modification form](#) is submitted.

Additional Resources

Resources for training student researchers

- [Social Ethical Responsibility of Conducting Academic Research in the Pandemic Era \(non-Human Subjects Research\)](#)
- [Social Ethical Responsibility of Conducting Academic Research in the Pandemic Era \(Human Subjects Research\)](#)

 Please [visit the FAQ](#) for frequently asked questions.