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Subject: Additional Guidance for Researchers in Response to COVID-19



As San Diego State University is reducing personnel on campus and encouraging social distancing to limit the potential spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are providing additional information specific to our research community.

Telework Guidance

As an important first step, many of our faculty, staff, post-docs, and students have already transitioned to telework, or are currently doing so. However, not all work can be done remotely. Each researcher will need to categorize their work and that of their students and staff as:

- Critical research that requires an on-campus presence
- Research that is high priority but can be done remotely
- Research that can be deferred

We realize the terms critical, essential, and high priority are somewhat subjective, but guidance from departmental norms and conversations with the chairs and deans should help guide faculty decisions as conditions continue to evolve. Research that is non-critical and normally conducted on campus should be delayed or conducted remotely, if possible.

We also need to recognize that some individuals are at greater risk than others due to their age, personal health issues, or because they are immunocompromised. As such, research in health care facilities or involving individuals at risk is highly discouraged and must be informed by the evolving situation (see [Guidance for Human Subjects Research Studies](#)).

Readiness Recommendations

SDSU remains open; the campus is not closed. The university receives new information to guide updates and new decisions multiple times each day, so please be attentive to university email and speak with your chairs and deans regularly.

Faculty should prepare for the possibility of a pause of all research for an undefined term, if mandated by government entities and public health authorities.

While policies may change in response to updated information, our recommendations at this time include the following:

Lab Continuity Plans

To ensure that SDSU and the SDSU Research Foundation are aware of any essential infrastructure needs, complete the [Research Critical Processes form](#) by Thursday, March 19.

[Lab continuity plans](#) should be developed that identify critical services or conditions that must be maintained if research were to cease. Share the developed plan with your chair and dean to help ensure continuity of any critical, on-campus research.

Basic support, such as utilities and heating/cooling, will remain in place in both SDSU and SDSU Research Foundation facilities.

Personalized Plans

Principal investigators and research lab directors should work with their personnel to develop a personalized plan for each individual to work remotely whenever possible. Examples might include writing grant proposals, conducting literature searches, analysis of data, virtual training in targeted research topics, project reports, or simulation modeling.

University employees should review and follow [Work Arrangements for Staff and Management Employees During the COVID-19 Crisis](#) guidelines; SDSU Research Foundation employees should complete the [Temporary Telework Application Agreement Form](#) and follow [Temporary Telework Guidelines](#).

For research involving human subjects, see the following

document: [Guidance for Human Subject Research Studies](#).

Care of animals under SDSU supervision will continue as mandated by federal guidelines.

For any research that is continued on campus, social distancing should be maximized by limiting the number of people within a space to no more than 10, staggering work schedules, or physical separation by six feet. Time on campus should be limited exclusively to work that cannot be done off campus.

Alternatives for Graduate Students

If a trainee wishes to work remotely and their work is non-essential, every effort should be made to accommodate this request. Please inform your chair, director, or dean of any ongoing critical research that will still be conducted on campus.

Faculty should consider the ramifications for research students whose graduation may be impacted by disruption of their current research. Faculty should consider exploring alternative ways for graduate students to continue work on their research projects that do not require immediate time in the laboratory or face-to-face human subjects research, such as writing a review of the literature, writing sections for their thesis or dissertation, or other projects. Critical undergraduate student research under employment agreements may continue, following the guidelines that will apply to all other campus and research foundation employees.

Campus units are working together closely to monitor and quickly respond to coronavirus (COVID-19) developments. For more information, review:

- Graduate and Research Affairs updates: [GRA coronavirus information webpage](#)
- [FAQs for researchers](#)
- [FAQs for SDSU Research Foundation employees](#)
- [SDSU's primary coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#) is the central repository for information and updates related to SDSU's preparedness, guidance, and COVID-19-related decisions.

We recognize there are significant ramifications for the changes proposed to our research efforts. We do not take these changes

lightly, but we are in a state of very challenging, and rapidly changing conditions. Nevertheless, we must continue to prioritize the health of our faculty, staff, students, and community.

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