

CSUSM Research & Creative Activities FAQ's

Will all research programs be able to return to on-site (or off-campus field site) work?

No, only those research programs (wet labs, etc.) that receive approval and meet health and safety requirements may be able to have staff return to on-site work. Research programs will be phased in per the Public Health Order and San Diego County's allowable research guidelines while the campus is closed. We are also following the CSU phasing cycles and CSUSM's ability to accommodate personnel and operations. Programs approved to resume on-site work must do so with limited personnel -- generally no more than 50% of normal personnel/effort on-site due to social distancing requirements and restrictions on the number of people who may occupy a space at the same time.

Should I include students with research project requirements in my project continuity planning?

Yes. As they review your ramp-up plans, Deans will want to know how you are addressing the needs of students with required projects (honors, thesis, dissertation, etc.).

How should I advise (undergraduate and graduate) students about returning to work onsite?

Remember that a student's first responsibility is to be a student. Undergraduate and graduate students cannot be required to work on-site during this current phase. Because research is an essential element of the CSUSM educational experience, faculty should make efforts to support students in credit-bearing research activity, while not compelling them to work on-site. During Phase 2-3, students may only work on-site by exception.

Do you have any suggestions for how I can create my ramp-up plan?

Can different staff come to work on-site on different days?

Absolutely. You could have different shifts in a day (morning, afternoon, evening) and/or stagger schedules by days of the week (M, T, W, Th, F, Sa). Another example is to divide your team and have one-part work 3 days on-site, 10 days off-site (this timing has been suggested by some to limit the possibility of transmission by alternating periods of potential contact on-site with periods of working from home.)

Who needs to approve my plan?

Your plan will go through two levels of approval (see chart below). The online reporting tool will prompt you for the names of the appropriate persons and will automatically route your plan to them for approval. The Office of Graduate Studies and Research, the Research Reactivation Committee and Safety, Health & Sustainability may also review plans.

It is impossible for me to conduct my research while also following the requirements for PPE use or social distancing. What should I do?

It's important to recognize that not all kinds of research, scholarship and creative activity can resume at this time for this very reason. However, we encourage you to think creatively about ways to conduct your research in compliance with requirements to protect your health. Some things to consider are:

- Can you restructure workflows or work schedules? Can you create a schedule that will enable your team to work in shifts so that social distancing can still be maintained?
- Can you reconfigure workspaces? Are you able to rearrange desks or equipment to maintain social distancing (If you need to move large equipment or furniture, please consult Planning, Design & Construction)? Can you move to a new location (e.g. from a small rehearsal room to a large auditorium)?
- Can you add dividers such as plexiglass partitions to create personal spaces for team members working at the same time?

If you can develop an alternative strategy, please fill out a [Risk Mitigation Plan](#). Risk Mitigation Plans must be reviewed and approved before they can take effect. Chairs and Deans will be very cautious in considering exceptions to the standard health and safety requirements. Risk Mitigation Plans are subject to additional review by area experts (e.g., SH&S, Facility Services & PD&C).

If you are not able to develop an approved alternate strategy, you will need to wait until the risks associated with COVID-19 are reduced before you resume your on-site activity.

Is there any flexibility in the social distancing guidelines, such as only having 1 person per bench in wet labs?

We believe that our guidelines represent the best way to balance the safety of our campus community with the goal of resuming research, scholarship and creative activity. We do recognize that there are some situations in which it will be necessary to find alternative ways of achieving this goal. If you are not able to abide by stated guidelines, you may submit a [Risk Mitigation Plan](#). All Risk Mitigation Plans must be submitted and approved before they can take effect. If your plan is not approved, you may not be able to resume your work at this time.

I understand that my team will have to sanitize workspaces and commonly touched surfaces (such as doorknobs and light switches) inside my research area. Who is taking care of the common spaces (such as restrooms)?

If you share research support areas (e.g., autoclaves, cell culture rooms) with other researchers, you need to coordinate with them to make sure everyone shares responsibility for keeping those areas sanitized. You will be asked to identify these common support areas and confirm that you have coordinated with others as part of your Reactivating Research Health and Safety Plan submission.

Public areas – elevators, hallways, restrooms – will be cleaned by Facility Services. You can read about their [Cleaning and Disinfection protocol submitted to the CO on our website](#).

How do we maintain safe practices in common areas outside my lab, such as restrooms, stairwells, elevators, lounges and hallways?

Common areas are cleaned by Facility Services daily -- you can read about their [Cleaning and Disinfection protocol submitted to the CO on our website](#). To avoid overcrowding in these areas, it is important that building managers, Faculty/PIs/research leads, department chairs and deans consider the cumulative impact of an individual researcher's work plans on the whole floor/building, and use strategies such as staggered scheduling to avoid "rush hour" crowds when it may be difficult to maintain social distancing. Regardless of how crowded (or uncrowded) common areas may be, all personnel shall practice good hand hygiene after visiting common areas.

How can I get PPE supplies like face masks for my lab/work group? How can I get supplies to sanitize my lab/work group? Do I have to pay for these items? Can I charge my grant?

The Emergency Operations Center & Safety, Health & Sustainability will provide face coverings (CPE), other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE- gloves, face shields, etc.), and sanitization supplies while supplies last. Departments are responsible for ordering PPE that they will need for their courses. If departments experience challenges with supply chains, then they should contact SH&S and request only the supplies needed (based on the requirements for your particular lab) through the Covered Cougar Distribution Center. *After* your plan is approved by the RRC, SH&S will review and contact you about your request.

CSUSM Bookstore stocks PPE, face coverings and disinfecting materials that will be available for students to procure. Significant quantities of these items are also being stocked by CSUSM to meet the needs of many instructional labs and departments. Please request only what your lab or office will need in two week

increments so we can ensure that as many areas as possible across campus can take advantage of this supply. If you anticipate a significantly larger than normal bulk order, please reach out to Procurement for assistance with your order.

Personal protective equipment needed to perform grant work by a PI should be a direct charge to the grant. Sanitization and other cleaning supplies will be covered fiscally and provided by campus.

Are some PPE purchases tax exempt?

Yes, certain PPE purchases that protect public health may qualify for the California state tax exemption under [Executive Order N-46-20](#). If you believe the items in your order qualify for this tax exemption, contact Procurement to see if it meets the exemption criteria. If it does, Procurement can provide direction to adjust the tax rate and add any necessary clauses. See FAQ for accomplishing PPE / COVID 19 related purchases for more information.

How do I process PPE / COVID 19 related purchases?

Please accomplish any PPE or emergency purchases via ProCard through [Campus Marketplace](#) (CSUBUY) or via requisition to ensure compliance with CSU policies and procedures and FEMA requirements. Please contact marketplace@csusm.edu, pcard@csusm.edu or procurementservices@csusm.edu for guidance.

Will packages and mail be delivered and/or available for pickup?

[Distribution & Property Control Services](#) will support the return of labs by doing the following:

Shipping & Receiving will provide:

- Packages: will be delivered to labs once per week, on Wednesdays after 1:00 p.m. Outgoing items can be picked up at this time.
- Temperature sensitive items: recipient will be contacted upon arrival, if no one can pick up, we'll deliver to the cold room listed on the package.
- Freight/pallets: recipient will be contacted to arrange delivery.
- Pickup/drop off: (other than hazardous materials packages) available: Monday thru Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at USB loading dock.
- Faculty and ISTs wanting to pick up their packages are asked to email distributionservices@csusm.edu 24 hours prior to pick up.

***Please Note:** When temperature sensitive items are purchased, please inform the vendor that we are **CLOSED on Friday's**. There will be no one available at the dock to sign for your package. Our vendors (UPS, FedEx and USPS) know we are closed Friday and will not make an attempt to deliver. Your temperature sensitive items should be shipped overnight to guarantee date/time specific delivery. Keep in mind that ground deliveries are made in 1 – 5 business days and do not have a guaranteed delivery date.

Mail Center will provide:

- US Mail: Admin. Coordinators are encouraged to pick up when they are scheduled to come to campus.
- US Mail Pickup/drop off available: Monday thru Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at USB loading dock
- Faculty and ISTs wanting to pick up their US Mail pieces are asked to email distributionservices@csusm.edu 24 hours prior to pick up.

How will we know what phase we are in? How soon will we move to the next phase?

The phases that we have described are based on CDC, state and local guidelines and requirements. The campus determination of entry into/exit from each phase will be defined by the status of the public health environment (as shaped by state and county public health directives and epidemiological data, and CSU guidelines) and a campus assessment of how best to protect members of our community. We will notify the campus research community regarding the status and phase level of CSUSM's current research and creative activities. All available scientific evidence indicates that the threat of community spread of SARS-CoV-2 will remain for months to come, and that we should prepare to move back and forth between varying levels of activity on campus.

*Developed in collaboration with UCSD