



CSUSM Re-populating Faculty and Graduate Students: Framework for Restarting Research and Creative Activities*

This document includes research and creative activity projects conducted in all CSUSM and CSUSM-Corp spaces, including both on-campus and off-campus sites. On-campus sites include but are not limited to, laboratories, the library, performance and art studios, Kinesiology laboratories, and the Extended Learning Building. Off-campus spaces include any other CSUSM or CSUSM-Corp sites used for research or creative activities. Field research and creative activity projects performed at sites not affiliated with CSUSM are also included. Wherever this document references "university space" it shall be understood to include all sites referenced above.

To avoid excess wordiness, the term "Principal Investigator (PI)" is used throughout this document to include all faculty who lead groups involved in research and creative activities, whether supported by the university or by grants. Project personnel refers to students and staff engaged in academic scholarship in university space.

Goals: Restart research and creative activities in a phased approach to optimize:

- Health of university personnel and the community
- Continuity of essential research and creative activities projects
- Re-initiation of other research and creative activities as quickly as feasible based upon public health and safety considerations

Guiding principles:

1. *Only work considered essential (required to protect lives or maintain critical infrastructure and resources such as cell lines, animal colonies, instrumentation, etc.) is allowed while stay-at-home orders are in place.*
2. *Restart research and creative activity projects in phases as public health restrictions are eased, with highest priority research and creative activity projects initiated first.*
 - a. Criteria for the highest priority to restart projects may include:
 - Work that CANNOT be done remotely due to safety, access to instrumentation, laboratory facilities, high end computing facilities, access to studio equipment and facilities, etc.
 - Work that is providing essential services to the public, projects close to completion, deadline driven, or seasonal data collection where continued deferral would lead to catastrophic delay or loss of results.
 - Activities for completion of grants with end dates within 6 months (where the funding agency has not granted extensions).
 - b. The following groups are recommended for high priority:

- Work that is essential for career advancement of early stage faculty.
 - Work by graduate students close to completing their degree or term of appointment.
- c. Until the university resumes normal operation, all research and creative activities involving face to face meetings that can be done remotely should continue to be done remotely (including seminars, group meetings, etc).
- 3. Follow CSU, local, state, and national Public Health authority shelter-in-place/Stay-at-home, social distancing, face-covering, and hygiene directives.**
- a. Public Health authority directives became more restrictive with time in response to COVID-19, including identification of essential businesses and closures, identification of allowable and non- allowed activities like exercise, more restrictive social distancing such as closing of parks and beaches, recommendation/requirements for face coverings, etc. Likewise, the easing of these restrictions is beginning to occur sequentially.
 - b. While the shelter-in-place/stay-at-home order was in place, CSUSM was in an emergency phase and only allowed essential researchers and staff on campus with permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Essential was defined as animal care plus a limited number of other activities to sustain research and equipment.
 - c. Since mid-May, the California State guidelines have been updated to allow reopening of certain businesses for individuals that cannot telework. Continued easing of these guidelines is expected to allow a shift from the Phase 1 emergency restrictions to Phase 2 with low density repopulation of faculty and graduate students who cannot telecommute because they rely on university infrastructure to accomplish their work.
 - d. Personnel diagnosed with COVID-19 or exposed to individuals infected with COVID-19 must follow the current guidance for 14-day self-quarantine prior to reporting to work. Current [San Diego County Health order](#).
 - e. Personnel who feel sick, are coughing, running a fever, or have other COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate, report their absence to their supervisor, and must not come to campus. [CDC COVID symptoms](#).
 - f. Personnel returning from travel to a country or an area within the U.S. that has an elevated travel warning of 3 or 4 must self-isolate and monitor their health. Please review [CSUSM guidelines](#) and [CDC Guidance returning from international travel](#).
 - g. Upon coming to campus each day, all personnel must follow current campus protocols for health and safety prior to starting work.
- 4. Protect the physical and emotional health and safety of university personnel and community members. [Physical distancing, face coverings, disinfection, handwashing, travel restrictions, etc.]**
- a. Safety of spaces and facilities used for research, creative activities, and other activities must be rigorously maintained, with adequate access to PPE and other safety related supplies as appropriate for the position.

- b. Safety Health & Sustainability must be made aware of all research and creative activities within university spaces.
- c. Prior to returning, all personnel involved in research and creative activities must complete COVID-19 return to work safety training.
- d. While social distancing requirements are in place per the most current Public Health Order, personnel must not exceed the maximum density specified for rooms and must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between individuals in all rooms and public spaces.
- e. University facilities will not be authorized for faculty and graduate student access unless a Project Continuity Plan (PCP), using a Reactivating Research Health & Safety Plan (RRHSP) form, that describes appropriate safety measures is submitted by the PI, reviewed by the corresponding College Dean, and then approved by SH&S and the Research Reactivation Committee, and university compliance committees, including IACUC, IRB, and IBC as needed.
- f. Shared spaces shall be addressed in the required Project Continuity Plan, using the RRHSP form, submitted by the primary PI responsible for the space, agreed to by all PIs using the space, is reviewed by the corresponding Dean, and then approved by SH&S and the Research Reactivation Committee, and university compliance committees, including IACUC, IRB, and IBC as needed.
- g. For each phase of re-starting research and creative activities, PIs must identify which of their personnel will be granted access (including replacements or backups for other personnel) and any planned temporal staging of personnel to maximize social distancing (including scheduling access in shifts or on alternate days).
- h. No volunteers or visitors who are not university employees or students will be allowed in spaces dedicated to laboratory research or creative activities until the university resumes normal operation.
- i. Volunteers in Human Subjects research projects that require face-to-face interactions, including Clinical Research may participate as long as appropriate approval is provided by the county, physical distancing and hygiene protocols are enforced, a Project Continuity Plan has been approved, and the project has been reviewed and approved by the IRB.
- j. Research and creative activity projects that have successfully transitioned to being fully remote and require infrequent or no access to university spaces should continue to work remotely until all public health recommendations have been lifted and the university resumes normal operation.
- k. Per the Public Health Order, vulnerable populations, including those 65 or older, with a chronic underlying condition, or compromised immune system are strongly recommended not to return to work on-site until the university resumes normal operation. Employees who are concerned about returning to work may consult with Human Resources. Concerned graduate students may consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.
- l. Graduate students with concerns about their emotional or psychological well-being may consult with CSUSM Student Health and Counseling Services. Faculty and Staff should consult with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Human Resources or their medical provider.
- m. Lifting of travel restrictions must occur before research and creative activities projects requiring travel can begin. This includes human subject research that is conducted off- campus. [Current CSU travel restrictions extend through July 31, 2020.]

5. *Recognize that undergraduates are students first, researchers second.*

Undergraduate students will not be allowed to conduct on-site research and creative activities until density restrictions are lifted. Exceptions may be approved by the appropriate Administrator or Dean if the undergraduate student plays an essential role that must be performed in-person and on-site, or if the undergraduate student depends upon participation in those activities for financial aid and remote work is not available.

6. *Develop Project Continuity Plans that address public health and university safety requirements before reinitiating on-site research and creative activities.*

a. Templates for these plans are available to CSUSM PI's via designated campus websites from the [OGSR](#) and [SH&S](#) office . The plans should address personnel and space usage as follows:

- o Prioritize personnel and projects to ensure adequate social and physical distancing in spaces used for research and creative activity. This may include planning multiple shifts that include sufficient time between shifts to avoid overlap.
- o Describe how work surfaces will be disinfected before and after use, availability and use of appropriate PPE, and proper training of personnel. Currently, the university does not plan to provide face coverings, but any appropriate covering that is disposable or washable is acceptable. Other PPE and supplies must be provided by the PI
- o The research plan must first be submitted by the PI, reviewed by the appropriate college Dean and then approved by SH&S.

b. PIs must develop a calendar to schedule and monitor activities within their labs or other facilities, including staggered work shifts or workdays as needed to maintain required social and physical distancing. PIs are expected to monitor the calendar regularly to ensure efficiency and compliance.

c. Research and creative activity projects that use shared space or shared equipment must coordinate plans to ensure appropriate social and physical distancing of users.

d. All animal research must be coordinated with vivarium staff and IACUC prior to initiating work.

e. PIs who fail to comply with their approved Project Continuity Plans will lose campus access until the issues are adequately rectified based upon reevaluation by the Dean, Provost, and SH&S.

7. *Physical infrastructure and campus operations plans must be in place before opening facilities, including:*

a. Staged opening of buildings.

b. Social distancing plan for each building, with appropriate signage and possible traffic management in hallways, restrooms, elevators, etc.

c. Deans will work with the PI or Faculty member to ensure availability of SH&S and Facilities Development & Management support needed for operation of laboratories, other facilities, and building functions before approving plans.

**Phase-in Research and Creative Activities as Public Health
Risk Decreases:**

Based upon the goals and guiding principles listed above, a 4-stage process for phasing-in research and creative activities by faculty and students is shown in the following tables. The table details important considerations at each step. This plan coincides with phases for restarting research disseminated by the CSU Chancellors' Office. The document is entitled "[Research Scholarship and Creative Activities Considerations in the Context of COVID-19](#)". There were a few nomenclature changes and edits to address our program here at CSUSM made to the original document.

During Shelter-in-place/Stay-at-home orders, only research and creative activities projects deemed essential by the College Dean, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Provost, and President can continue operations on campus. Additional research and creative activities projects will be added in two phases as public health conditions improve. Phase 4 is the reopening of all university research and creative activities. Until the campus returns to normal operation, all activities that can be done remotely must continue to be done remotely.

Moving between the phases will be based upon the ability to effectively comply with local, state, and federal public health recommendations, including social and physical distancing between personnel, availability of proper PPE, and implementation of disinfection and handwashing practices.

Approval to restart or ramp-up research or creative activity on-campus or in the field will be contingent on i) an approved Project Continuity Plan, using the RRHSP form and ii) approval from the Reactivating Research Committee (RRC). The Reactivating Research Committee (RRC) will be charged with prioritizing occupancy and determining specifics of effort level of on-campus research labs guided by the priorities outlined in the CSU-wide research priority list (below). Researchers with restart/ramp-up approval may then restart or ramp-up on-campus/field research in alignment with their RRHSP approved protocols and recommendations of RRC. In Phase 2, roughly 35% of normal research effort will be allowed and in Phase 3 roughly 50% of normal research effort.

Similarly, occupancy will be dependent on adequate custodial support and efforts of PIs to ensure that necessary hygiene and oversight of physical spaces is maintained. To date, custodial support has been severely curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Planning for use of our university library facilities (e.g. occupation density, flow and delivery of materials, traffic flow and management) will be overseen by the Dean of the Library following campus protocols for health and hygiene.

If public health conditions demand, there may be a need to rapidly return to an emergency pause or a more restricted phase at any time.

**This draft was adapted from a planning document created by UC Berkeley in partnership with the APLU and borrowing liberally from other institutions, including SDSU, UCSD, UCLA, UCSD, UCI, Univ Washington, Stanford, Yale, and many other universities. Links to the plans for some other universities are shown at the end of this document.*

Model for Phased Approach to Restoration of Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities				
Phase	External Conditions	Summary	Actions	Time Period
1	<p>Situation unknown and changing State-wide Safer-at- Home Order is in place.</p> <p>Evidence indicates incidence and prevalence of new COVID 19 infections are on the rise (e.g., number of diagnoses, number of deaths, number of hospitalizations, other criteria yet-to-be-determined).</p> <p>Testing limited, capacity to do contact tracking limited, PPE shortages, limited access to treatment (hospital beds, ventilators, etc.).</p>	<p>Only activities to support research and scholarship continuity are allowed. In consultation with the Chancellor, exceptions can be made at the campus level by the President.</p> <p>Individuals identified as “essential” to maintaining research and scholarship capability are allowed on campus.</p> <p>All research, scholarship and creative activities that can be conducted remotely should continue in that mode.</p>	<p>RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY CONTINUITY ONLY</p> <p>Research facilities are in an “emergency pause” mode and field stations are closed, except where personnel are required to protect life safety and critical research infrastructure/capability (maintaining cell lines, animal health, instrumentation, etc.). Studios and other facilities for scholarship and creative activity are similarly closed.</p> <p>Staffing limited to essential personnel at the minimum number possible.</p> <p>Authorization for one-time access to faculty offices to pick up books and materials, shut down instrumentation, etc., delegated to deans.</p> <p>In consultation with the Chancellor, Campus Presidents may grant exceptions based on</p>	Current

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1			<p>appeals that identify criticality, social distancing and sanitizing protocols.</p> <p><i>Preparations for Next Phase:</i></p> <p><i>Necessary core facilities are staffed and operational; rigorous cleaning and sanitization is scheduled for completion prior to repopulations.</i></p> <p><i>Labs are able to purchase necessary supplies.</i></p> <p><i>The PI has social distancing plans written and reviewed by Dean, approved by campus Safety Health & Sustainability (SH&S); facial coverings and gloves available for all on-campus personnel; cleaning measures and schedule understood and supplies in place to comply with county public health/safety orders; COVID-19 lab risk mitigation training completed.</i></p> <p><i>Travel protocols have been developed for field research; approvals have been requested as necessary.</i></p>	Currently we are preparing for Phase 2

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Phase	External Conditions	Summary	Actions	Time Period
2	<p>Public health authorities and Governor relax restrictions on Safer-at-Home.</p> <p>COVID 19 incidence and prevalence declining.</p> <p>COVID-19 testing and contact tracing capacity increases.</p> <p>PPE shortages and restrictions to health care may still exist.</p>	<p>Time-sensitive (deadline or seasonal) research and scholarship projects resume</p> <p>All research, scholarship and creative activities that can be conducted remotely should continue in that modality, including all seminars, group meetings, etc.</p> <p>Onsite research, scholarship and creative activity transitions to levels that equate to approximately 35% of the PI's usual research effort</p> <p>Prioritize participation by students near graduation</p> <p>Align participation to unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic in the surrounding community</p> <p>Plans for sudden return to Phase 1 are in place if circumstances deteriorate.</p>	<p>RESEARCH AT APPROXIMATELY 35% OF NORMAL EFFORT</p> <p>Priority will be given to deadline-driven research and scholarship activities: activities that are deadline-driven whose pause or deferral would lead to catastrophic delay or loss of research results. Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal data collection such as field and agricultural work; • Surveys conducted proximate to a particular calendar milestone; • Experiments close to completion; or • Animal experiments where a delay would result in euthanasia or loss of a colony. <p>Campuses may prioritize access to campus facilities for graduate students and undergraduates close to completing their degree/term of appointment.</p> <p>Campuses may prioritize research for completion of grants with end dates within three months (where the funding agency has not granted leniency).</p> <p>Core facilities should be restarted/reopened based on sufficient demand (approved projects) and only in cases where work</p>	TBA

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2			<p>cannot be performed remotely.</p> <p>For field research, approvals should depend on current public health restrictions in the counties where field research is to be conducted.</p> <p><i>Preparations for next phase:</i></p> <p><i>Core campus functions are staffed and operational support is provided to handle increased work load in consultation with SH&S, Risk Management, etc.</i></p> <p><i>PI social distancing plans updated and approved by Dean and SH&S</i></p> <p><i>Social distancing continues to be practiced, adequate supply of face masks and gloves are available, and cleaning measures are understood and in place for expansion of research efforts.</i></p>	
3	<p>Further relaxation of Safer-at-Home restrictions. Continue to follow Governor, county, and city ordinances.</p> <p>COVID-19 infections and fatalities continue to decrease.</p>	<p>Reduced density of research and scholarship effort allowed by gradually expanding the number/hours of people on campus, while maintaining social</p>	<p>RESEARCH AT APPROXIMATELY 50% OF NORMAL EFFORT</p> <p>PI's plans for ensuring social distancing and other safety/health measures should be updated and approved by Dean, SH&S, and Risk Management.</p>	TBA

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3	<p>COVID-19 testing capacity near maximum of needed capacity.</p> <p>PPE widely available.</p>	<p>distancing.</p> <p>All research, scholarship and creative activities that can be conducted remotely should continue in that modality, including all seminars, group meetings, etc.</p> <p>Onsite research, scholarship and creative activity transitions to levels that equate to approximately 50% of the PI's usual research effort</p> <p>Plans for sudden return to Phase 1 are in place if circumstances deteriorate.</p>	<p>Campuses must maintain social distancing and regulate maximum occupancy per building or room. Campuses will need to consider and respond to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria should be used to determine the order of return to campus? • How does the department control the number of people in any given building or facility? <p>Campuses may resume data collection and reinitiate experiments on campus based on PI-determined priorities, but such endeavors should be limited to approximately 50% of normal research and/or scholarship activity-levels for the PI research lab or other relevant facility.</p> <p>Campuses may resume data collection and reinitiate field-based research consistent with local public health restrictions. The PI's risk mitigation plan must be reviewed on case-by-case basis. Travel should comport with prevailing CSU guidelines regarding COVID-19-related restrictions.</p> <p>As relevant, campuses should also assess the condition of the relevant facility and</p>	

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3			<p>adequate ventilation/air flow. This should be conducted in partnership with SH&S.</p> <p>Campuses should allow access to single occupancy offices only, for up to 1-3 days per week for work that cannot be done elsewhere.</p>	
4	<p>Continue to follow Governor's Office, county, and city expectations for increased repopulation while comporting with public health requirements.</p> <p>New cases of COVID-19 have begun to reduce over a period of time.</p> <p>COVID-19 testing and contact tracing is at maximum needed capacity.</p> <p>PPE availability is normal and reliable.</p>	<p>Continued expansion of research toward normal density while maintaining social distancing practices is allowed.</p> <p>All research, scholarship and creative activities that can be conducted remotely should continue in that modality, including all seminars, group meetings, etc.</p> <p>Onsite research, scholarship and creative activity transitions to levels that equate to approximately 75% of the PI's usual research effort</p>	<p>RESEARCH AT APPROXIMATELY 75% OF NORMAL EFFORT</p> <p>The PI(s) should ensure that plans for increasing density research effort and maintaining social distancing have been updated and approved by the Dean, and SH&S.</p> <p>Maintain social distancing and regulate max occupancy per building. Again, as relevant, campuses should also assess the condition of the relevant facility and ensure there is appropriate, adequate ventilation/air flow. This should be conducted in partnership with Safety Health & Sustainability.</p> <p>Resume data collection and resumption of experiments on-campus based on PI- determined priorities but limited to approximately 75% of normal.</p>	TBA

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Phase	External Conditions	Summary	Actions	Time Period
4		Plans for sudden return to Phase 1 are in place if circumstances deteriorate.	<p>Field Research - further expand on case by case basis (depending on local conditions/restrictions at field sites, travel restrictions, ability to travel safely and ability to social distance at field sites).</p> <p>Prioritize access for graduate students and senior undergraduates close to completing their degree/term of appointment.</p> <p>Allow access to single occupancy offices 3-7 days/week.</p> <p>Campuses will need to consider at what point undergraduate student research is allowed to fully resume.</p>	
5	<p>No or minimal state restrictions.</p> <p>Vaccine widely available and used in combination with widespread testing and contact tracing following new COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>Timely quarantine and isolation being implemented in accordance with all public health guidelines</p>	All types of research, scholarship and creative activities are allowed.	<p>RESEARCH RESTORED, I.E., AT 100% OF NORMAL EFFORT</p> <p>Campuses may allow all lab, studio and field research operations to recommence.</p> <p>In consultation with SH&S and Risk Management, campus may consider reducing or eliminating all COVID 19 Standard Operating Procedures.</p>	TBA

For questions about this supplemental guidance, please contact Dr. Ganesh Raman, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Research in the CSU Chancellor's Office (email: gaman@calstate.edu). For CSUSM information, contact Regina Frasca (email: rfrasca@csusm.edu) or Dr. Charles De Leone (cdeleone@csusm.edu).

Additional References:

- CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Institutes of Higher Education: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>
- CDC guidelines on disinfection for community spaces: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- CDC Guidelines for collecting, handling, and testing clinical COVID-19 specimens: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>
- CDC list of people at high risk for severe illness: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
- California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Updates: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>
- California roadmap / Four stages for returning to work: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf>
- Definition of Essential Employees: <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>
- San Diego County Public Health Order: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/health_order.html
- Nature 4/3/20: Safely conducting essential research in the face of COVID-19 <https://go.nature.com/34lHmUd>
- UC Berkeley Planning: <https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-continuity-planning-covid-19>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sOn1N6lN6hj6FNVDMOomMKisPxcBWViCdHCKPgZMykM/edit>
- Univ Washington Planning: <https://www.washington.edu/research/announcements/mitigating-impacts-to-research-activities-due-to-covid-19/>
- <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/UWLabContinuityPlan.pdf>
- Yale University Planning: <https://research.yale.edu/covid-19-information-faculty-and-researchers>
- <https://ehs.yale.edu/covid-19-research-continuity>
- UCI list of research priorities: <https://news.research.uci.edu/vcr/uci-research-shutdown/>
- UCD guidelines for research ramp-up: <https://research.ucdavis.edu/guidelines-for-uc-davis-research-ramp-up-ramp-down-april-23-2020/>
- UCSD: <https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/covid-19/index.html#Vice-Chancellor-and-UCOP-Resear>