

WSU is closely monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19), and has formally activated its system-wide Incident Command System (ICS) team. I encourage you to check www.wsu.edu/covid-19/, which provides regular updates and information about the University's response. WSU has also setup a dedicated email account for questions, comments and suggestions at COVID-19.info@wsu.edu.

The ICS team will continue to monitor COVID-19 developments closely and its potential impact on university research and other activities our community members are engaged in. The safety and well-being of our faculty, staff, and students remains our primary concern, and the most important first step is to plan and prepare ahead of time to help minimize impacts to ongoing research.

Research teams should prepare for the possibility that personnel may be unable to come to work. Advanced planning will reduce disruption to research activities in the event of reduced staffing. We ask our faculty and PI's to exercise best judgement for starting new or continuing research activities. If you believe conditions warrant a slowdown, temporary suspension, or stoppage of your research efforts in order to ensure the safety of your team members, research participants or potentially hazardous procedures, please work in collaboration with your unit leadership, and coordinate with your associate deans or vice chancellors for research and appropriate WSU regulatory/compliance bodies (e.g. the Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee, Office of Campus Veterinarian, Environmental Health and Safety, etc.) to implement your plans.

Our top priority is the safety and health of the research teams (students, staff and faculty), human participants, and general public, so please use this as a guiding principle in regards to all decisions made on continuing research. We have contacted the National Institutes of Health who have indicated primary Health and Human Services COVID-19 communications will come from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) ([see also](#)).

The Office of Research has developed a list of considerations to guide your research preparedness in the context of the evolving COVID-19 situation:

1. Develop a communication and contingency plan with points of contact that facilitates the dissemination of key information in a timely manner.
2. Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff and faculty.

3. Ensure remote access to necessary information and familiarize your teams with University approved remote access tools to carry out work at a distance. Systems being utilized for remote access should abide by [WSU Executive Policy #14](#) and are subject to [WSU Executive Policy #16](#). Please contact your local IT professionals with any questions.
4. Please continue to follow all University data security policies as outlined in [WSU Executive Policy #8](#) and [WSU Executive Policy #37](#).
5. Principal investigators should work with their campus, college, and immediate leadership to develop plans in the event a campus is closed. The plan should prioritize safety of all personnel engaged in research, and ensure laboratories and research areas are placed in a safe configuration that is maintainable for an extended period with available custodial/maintenance personnel.
6. Keep abreast of any changes in funding agency and other changes in deadlines. We are fully expecting ORSO will be able to submit proposals and process awards even if personnel are working remotely. However, if agencies are officially closed, proposals will most likely remain in a queue, pending resumption of agency operations – as has been the case during federal budget-related shutdowns.
 - a. Please note: The Office of Research will disseminate available information from our sponsors and can work with PIs to obtain the latest information.
7. Monitor [travel restrictions](#) and use caution in considering travel to a country with restricted access.
8. Campuses, colleges, and faculty should pass this information on to their students as appropriate.
9. Please refer to your supervisor, and as necessary your leadership team, with any questions.

Please contact the Office of Research with any questions about this guidance at research@wsu.edu or (509) 335-5238. As new information continues to evolve, please check the www.wsu.edu/covid-19/ website for the latest on COVID-19.

Thank you for your partnership and assistance as WSU works to confront these very important issues,

Christopher J. Keane, Vice President for Research