

# LingCogSci Research Ramp-up Guidelines

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## Overall

Please commonly check UD's research website concerning guidelines and procedures for research ramp-up, including how to apply for approval to return in each phase.

<https://research.udel.edu/covid-19-return-to-research/>

<https://www.udel.edu/home/coronavirus/ud-campus-phased-reopening/guidelines/>

- Prior to return, you will need to complete the [Campus Coronavirus Awareness Training](#).
- Add your lab to Bioraft: <https://delaware.bioraft.com/>
- During the first time back to the lab and before starting research, perform the EHS ramp-up checklist. <https://research.udel.edu/covid-19-return-to-research/>
- Please submit your completed form to [dehsafety@udel.edu](mailto:dehsafety@udel.edu) and attach it to your BioRAFT profile (Lab Profile > Documents > Attach a New Document).
- Complete the [PI Return to Campus Request Form](#)
- Complete the [Human Subjects Research Checklist](#)
- Amend your IRB protocol, if you have changes to your procedure related to COVID-19 (see below)
- Implement [COVID-19 related health screening protocols](#) for the human subjects in your own lab. Health screening records must be logged and stored separate from other research records.
- Plan for disinfection of non-disposable research equipment/devices that will be used by participants before and after each research participant. 10% bleach or 70% ethanol are good disinfectants. Other products can be found here. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>
- Consider PPE needs (see below).

## Compliance

Compliance with safety procedures is required and critical in allowing the university community to be able to progress through the various research re-opening phases. Every member of the community is accountable for themselves and others. UD endorses a "see something, say something" mindset to ensure health and safety as we return to campus. UD is working on guidance for supervisors as to how to address employees and students who refuse to comply.

If you do not comply with the guidelines, your lab could be shut down. If you believe that an individual is not compliant, speak to the person and his/her PI; a warning is appropriate. If necessary, the UD Compliance Hotline, serviced by EthicsPoint, provides an anonymous, confidential, and independent resource for reporting suspected misconduct and other issues of

concern in the workplace. <https://sites.udel.edu/intaudit/compliance-hotline/>. As an alternative to the UD Compliance Hotline, individuals can also send an anonymous tip using the LiveSafe App (<http://www1.udel.edu/police/livesafe/>) to report non-compliance with guidelines.

If your lab is in a facility owned and operated by someone other than UD, you are also responsible for adhering to their covid-19 safety guidelines. If you are using equipment in a core, such as the magnets in CBBI, you must adopt your procedures to be able to adhere to their covid-19 safety policies at CBBI.

If you are in a high risk group and may need extra accommodations for work, contact disability support services <https://sites.udel.edu/dss/>

### **Mitigating the Spread**

- To mitigate spread of covid-19, you will need to wear appropriate PPE (labs are responsible for paying for these purchases), practice physical distancing ( $\geq 6$ ft), and wash hands frequently.
- Before leaving your home to come to your laboratory, you must conduct a **home health screening every day**.
- Do not enter a University facility or participate in research activities if you display any signs of illness. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- When you first get to the lab, you need to get into the practice of washing your hands. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If your lab does not have a sink, then you should use the nearest lavatory.
- Check the university policy for what to do in case of positive test results.

Current Policy:

- Individual who tests positive for covid:
  - notify your research supervisor. Note: If a covid+ individual does not feel comfortable sharing this information with their supervisor, then they should contact Student Health Services and HR directly.
  - Contact your health care provider
  - Self-isolate for 14 days.
- Supervisor<sup>1</sup>: notify Student Health Services (Dr. Tim Dowling, [tdowling@udel.edu](mailto:tdowling@udel.edu)) and HR (Brooke Minor, [bminor@udel.edu](mailto:bminor@udel.edu)).
- Contact tracing will be handled by state health officials and will work with covid+ individual to develop a close contact list (< 6ft, >15 min). All individuals in close contact are informed of contact with covid+ individuals (without divulging the identity) by HR.
- Spaces are shut down and cleaned before personnel return. Shutdown can be expected to last at least 24 hrs.

<sup>1</sup> In the context of research, the supervisor is the research supervisor. For UG, the supervisor can either be the lab manager, supervising postdoc, or the faculty supervisor. For Grad RAs and Postdocs, the supervisor is the faculty supervisor. For faculty, the supervisor is the department chair.

## **PPE**

### **Ordering**

Email karen.black1@thermofisher.com to place orders for masks (limited 2 packs per size), surgical masks (Catalog number 12-888-001 is the recommended item. limited 10 packs of 50/pk), and hand sanitizer (limited 12 16oz-bottle of liquid sanitizer). Once the order is ready, a return email will be sent, and the order can be picked up at a scheduled time at the loading dock door on the ground floor of Brown Lab (nearest the bulk liquid nitrogen tank).

EHS is acquiring a large stock of cloth masks. These will be distributed to Faculty, Staff, Researchers that do not have their own mask. Their plan is to provide three cloth masks per individual at no cost. Individuals that will be requesting the 3 cloth masks, please let Laura know. If you are purchasing cloth masks, let Laura know.

### **Face Masks**

Masks are required at all times in all common research spaces, hallways, elevators, and bathrooms. These can be UD issued masks (surgical or cloth) or your own personal cloth masks. You are responsible for washing cloth masks at home daily (machine wash warm water/mild agitation).

Study team members and research participants over the age of 2 must wear face coverings during all in-person interactions consistent with CDC guidelines.

For research or teaching procedures where physical distancing can be maintained or the close interaction is less than 15 minutes, cloth masks or disposable surgical masks are acceptable.

For research or teaching procedures where physical distancing cannot be maintained and face-to-face contact is needed beyond 15 minutes (e.g., training a new student on a lab procedure, side-by-side work at a bench or at a piece of equipment, placing an EEG cap on a participant), at the minimum, a disposable surgical mask (3-ply) with a face shield is required. Your best protection is to use a N95 respirator along with a face shield. Face shields should be made available in your labs and disinfected between uses. Do not share face shields.

All researchers performing research that involves biomedical procedures or any procedures that require close contact must wear a surgical mask. This can be covered by a cloth mask to extend life. The cloth masks will need to be washed daily. Surgical masks will last 10 days (2 weeks) when they are covered with cloth that is washed daily.

Infection Prevention guidelines should be followed on the use and re-use of procedure/surgical masks. Damaged procedure/surgical masks should be discarded in the trash. After doffing, surgical masks will be contained in a paper bag on desk for next day of human subjects research (up to 10 days).

Facemasks will be discarded immediately if they are soiled, damaged, or too difficult to breathe through. Disposable masks can be placed into the lab trash box, infectious waste boxes, or any regular municipal trash can.

Researchers must take care not to touch their facemask. If they touch or adjust their facemasks, they must immediately perform hand hygiene. Researchers should leave the area if they need to remove the facemask. See [CDC Guidelines](#) on conserving facemasks.

### **Gloves**

Gloves must be worn if you are preparing for experiments that involve physical contact/proximity (including EEG, fMRI, fNIRS, and ultrasound/EMA). You may need to change gloves more frequently as you use your common equipment. Gloves should also be ordered as soon as possible from the Fisher storeroom.

All gloves should be disposed of in your lab trash box or infectious waste boxes in accordance with the chemical hygiene plan.

### **Physical Distancing and Lab Safety Measures**

For Phase II, 1 person per 250 sq. ft. will be allowed. For Phase III, 1 person per 125 sq. ft. will be allowed.

You will need to have plans for how your lab can be arranged to support physical distancing and/or reduce the number of individuals at a given time. Assess your lab space for ability to meet physical distancing guidelines. Determine how many people can work safely in your lab/facility at a single time while observing appropriate physical distancing. Reduce touching of the same equipment if possible; for example, if you have 3 computers, consider assigning machines to specific individuals. A lab Google calendar should be shared with all individuals in the lab and these individuals will need the ability to “make changes to events” and reserve times to be in lab spaces.

Equipment rooms and shared laboratory workspaces may only allow for one person to be in the room at a time. Thus, all common use equipment must be reserved in advance to facilitate distancing. Work with other faculty to establish guidelines for such space. A common google calendar can be used to facilitate sharing if not already in place, tracking who will work in a shared space/use shared equipment at what time.

Regarding use of student desk space in Phase II and beyond as students need to move back and forth between the lab and desk (e.g. while something is incubating in the lab): As far as spacing in student offices, the guidance continues to be 1) separation needs to be at least 6 ft while wearing masks; 2) no shared offices—for smaller offices (thinking about examples like the student offices where we co-locate 2-3 student desks in ~150 sq.ft. Those offices need to be singly occupied; 3) open office carrel spaces- Use desks so that individuals are always 6 ft apart. This may mean using every other, or every third carrel depending on how they are arranged.

It is preferred that research activities are conducted during regular working hours if possible. Shift work though is what will allow the greatest number of folks to be able to get some work done in our research labs.

Researchers are responsible for cleaning surfaces in labs, including high touch points (e.g., faucets, keyboards, door handles, freezer handles, light switches). These are not cleaned by custodial staff. Electrical equipment, especially light switches, should be cleaned with 10% bleach solution as a non-flammable disinfectant. 70% Isopropanol solution can be used to clean non-flammable surfaces and surfaces without ignition sources nearby. Ensure a contact time of at least 1 min. Also, develop disinfecting processes for your research procedures/equipment and lab space. Develop new SOPs as appropriate. Each lab will need to purchase their own disinfectants.

Researchers will need to get in the habit of disinfecting workspaces before and after their work shift. An appropriate amount of time between scheduled use of workspaces must be provided to allow for decontamination of the space.

### **IRB amendment**

As we move through phases of reopening, in-person human subjects research will return and physical distancing in some of those scenarios may not be possible. Minimize the number of researchers in research space with a research participant while maintaining any required safety protocols. The minimum number of research staff for safety should always be utilized.

Researchers do not need to submit amendments to the IRB if the only changes that they will make to their protocols are steps to follow physical distancing or screening guidelines (e.g., take participants' temperature, ask participants standard questions about Covid symptoms, remain 6 feet from participants whenever possible, everyone wear masks, etc.).

What does require an amendment- e.g. If a study included participants visiting campus three times, but researchers reduced the number of visits to two to avoid unnecessary contact, that would require an amendment. Or, if a study was conducted in-person, but researchers were able to move it online to continue during Covid, that requires an amendment. Or, if you are changing the informed consent from in-person to phone/online in order to reduce direct contact.

### **Pre-Screening of Research Participants**

Upon scheduling, all research participants will need to be screened with CDC recommended screening. Consider contacting participants the day before to confirm there have been no changes to avoid them coming to campus with symptoms or following contact with an infected individual.

### **Logging of Visitors and Notification of Infections**

To facilitate contact tracing, laboratories can maintain a **log** of who enters a building or laboratory, the time of entry and departure, and contact information (email and phone number). Research participants may be asked to contact the lab if they develop a covid-19 infection after the session

(e.g., within 14 days), and the lab may be required to contact all subjects and research staff who were in the lab within a short time (e.g., 48 hours) of an infected person.

When a participant comes to campus, ask the following three CDC **pre-screening questions**: whether or not 1) they took their temperature at home, 2) they have been in close contact (e.g., within 6 feet for more than a few minutes) with a person with confirmed covid-19 infection, or 3) have symptoms of respiratory infection (fever, cough, shortness of breath, or muscle aches).

Temperature checks are not required by UD, but PIs/labs can use an **infrared thermometer** to read a participant's temperature upon their arrival. If someone does not pass the screening, they should not be allowed to participate in the study and should be sent home.

Covid-19 screening information can be kept without IRB approval, as long as those data will not be used for research/research record.

Participants should be **scheduled** so that there is no overlap in participants and at intervals that allow for rooms and equipment to be disinfected in between testing sessions.

For research participants coming from off campus, because there will be no common areas open for waiting, consider asking participants to wait in their car until called. At this time, UD strongly discourages studies from allowing participants to use mass transit.

All research participants will need to be wearing a cloth mask at a minimum. If they do not have a mask, then a disposable surgical mask must be provided to them. If they are not compliant, they should be asked to leave.

For research where it is key that participants are able to see facial expressions of researchers, you may want to consider having some transparent masks available. Example <https://www.etsy.com/listing/798832395/transparent-face-mask-with-plastic>. There would need to be a protocol for how they will be disinfected between uses; if physical distancing cannot be maintained, a face shield needs to be worn as well.