

Message sent on behalf of the Research Office, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences

Dear Researchers,

As noted in previous communications from Karen Mossman and Jonathan Bramson, McMaster is formulating a plan for the gradual resumption of research activities, with Phase 1 expected to launch on June 1st.

It is important to note that during Phase 1, **only those research activities that: i) require campus-based equipment and facilities or ii) involved situations where an inability to conduct fieldwork presents serious obstacles and consequences for graduate students and researchers completing their studies will be eligible for return to campus.**

The following general principles have been articulated by McMaster as this ramping up period begins (we have incorporated some recent updates here):

- The health and safety of the researchers and the community is paramount. No researcher should feel compelled to work on campus. No supervisor should influence their staff's decisions with regard to working on campus. Mechanisms will be in place for workers who feel their concerns are not being heeded by their supervisors.
- Similar to the hospitals, self-screening tools will be used to assess whether an individual should stay at home due to possible SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- In the first phase of the ramp up, activity on campus will be limited to research that cannot be conducted remotely. Data analysis, literature review, team meetings, etc., will not be allowed on campus and must be carried out remotely.
- Physical distancing requirements will limit the number of staff that can occupy the lab space. Discuss the possibility of working in shifts with your team.
- As your staff members may become infected with SARS-CoV-2 at any time during the ramp-up, be sure to have redundancy within your team.
- Research that requires face-to-face interactions with community members will not be allowed unless deemed essential as per the current process.
- Do not plan to return to 100% of research capacity during the first phase of the ramp up. The acceptable level of activity will be different for each group based on unique parameters including available staff, capacity for shift work, opportunity for remote work and availability of resources.
- The 24-hour shut down requirement is being relaxed to reflect the reality of shutting down a research operation on short notice. There will be a wider window for a shutdown, but there is still the need to plan for a quick exit from labs and facilities, in case of an outbreak or new directives from the Province. We are advising that PIs consider the risk of starting long term studies in Phase 1, given the potential need for a quick shutdown.
- The position on undergrad students and volunteers has shifted. The key factor in determining who will be eligible to access the lab in Phase 1 of the Return to Research plan is whether the

trainee is fully trained and can use the required infrastructure safely. Anyone who requires hands on training will not be granted access to the lab.

Guidelines for Return to Research (Phase 1):

Researchers will need to apply for permission to utilize campus facilities during Phase 1. A web-based application form will be released on the [VPR COVID website](#). The form must be filled out as part of the planned return to research. More information on this application form will be released by this Friday, May 22nd.

Individuals wishing to restart research activities will need to submit a plan that identifies measures they will take within their lab (e.g., physical distancing) to ensure the safety of all researchers; this plan will need to follow the parameters for return to campus activities outlined by the institution where your research is housed (i.e., McMaster Campus, SJHH, HHS, etc) and will require approval from Nick as Chair of our Department and by Jonathan Bramson as FHS' Vice Dean, Research. This plan is required for all researchers who would like to perform research activities on campus (defined broadly as McMaster, SJHH, HHS, and our affiliated hospitals), including researchers who had received previous permission to conduct research on campus in Phase 0.

Please note that for research groups conducting research at SJHH, additional approval from the VP of Research, SJHH is required to restart research activities and can be applied for through a separate, but similar application process. **If you have labs at both SJHH and McMaster, you will need to submit separate applications for your different labs.**

We are awaiting advice from HHS, and will forward this information out as soon as available.

Additional guidelines for each of our main research sites can be found here:

- [McMaster HR](#) / [McMaster Research](#)
- SJHH (attached to this email)
- HHS – ***information has not yet been released; it will be forwarded when made available.***

For now, for our planning purposes, we would like to estimate of how many researchers plan to apply for resumption of some research activities during Phase 1. **If you are a principal investigator and you plan to apply for approval for Phase 1 research activities, please reply to this message.** In that reply, please indicate approximately how many researchers from your lab will need building access during Phase 1, indicate your lab site, and outline approximately the hours you would like your research team to attend the your lab space (i.e., how many days per week, how many hours per day).

Please cc Nicole Sloss (nsloss@mcmaster.ca) and Alison Kerkhof (kerkhofa@mcmaster.ca) on your reply.

All the best,

Margaret, Alison and Nicole