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Pepperdine guidance on research activities during COVID 19

1 message

Office of the Provost <provost@pepperdine.edu>

Thu, May 6, 2021 at 5:14 PM

Cc: Katy Carr <katy.carr@pepperdine.edu>

Dear Colleagues,

Guidance and Requirements for Research Ramp-Up

Research activity at Pepperdine University is core to our mission and commitment to academic excellence. Our goal is to enable as much research activity where possible, while continuing to maintain adherence to local, state, national, and institutional requirements, as well as enhanced safety protocols. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our community and allowable on-campus and research activities, we are providing the below guidance and requirements to begin the gradual restarting of research operations.

General

The health and safety of our community remains our top priority, and we continue to adhere to public health guidance to mitigate the health and safety risks to our faculty, staff, and students, as well as the public and human and animal research subjects. Please continue to refer to Pepperdine's [COVID-19 Protocols and Resources website](#) for institutional protocols, restrictions, and guidance. Faculty, staff, and students should continue to work with their school-level COVID-19 processes.

- It remains the case that all research/creative activities that can be conducted remotely should remain remote.
- Limited research activities may be conducted on campus, at local field sites, and in the community. School-level approval from your divisional dean (as applicable) and dean are required to resume research activity.
- Essential field work that involves domestic travel requires permission from your divisional dean (as applicable), dean, and/or Steering Team representative. Pepperdine continues to prohibit university-sponsored international travel; rare exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Outside, non-essential visitors are not permitted on any of our campuses at this time and are prohibited from entering any research facilities or laboratories. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis and require the approval of your divisional dean (as applicable) and dean. In addition, campus access must be requested through the [Office of Emergency Services](#) and be sent at least 24 hours prior to the desired visit.

Research Personnel

- Researchers must follow all local (research site), state, national, and international guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and other official public health organizations with regard to in-person contact and travel, as well as Pepperdine's institutional policies.
- Faculty remain responsible for providing direction and oversight of their projects, labs, and/or research sites, and any additional personnel including students and staff.
- The health and safety of our community remains paramount. Faculty, staff, and students conducting research must feel safe. We encourage you to contact your divisional dean or dean with any concerns, non-compliance to safety protocols, or other grievances. You may also contact Lee Kats at lee.kats@pepperdine.edu.

Laboratory and Studio Operations

- Remote research and activity should be considered the default; only reserve in-person lab/studio time for activities that can only be accomplished with the equipment and materials in those spaces.
- Use of these spaces will be limited and considered on a case-by-case basis. Procedures have been discussed and prepared with the relevant school deans, divisions, and divisional deans. Therefore we encourage you to contact your divisional dean or dean to receive school-level approval to gain access to these spaces.

Human Subject Research

- Research with human subjects should be conducted remotely as much as possible. Changes to protocols to conduct the research remotely must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Research Board (IRB) prior to implementation. These amendments will continue to be reviewed by the IRB as quickly as possible.
- While researchers are encouraged to design protocols that include remote-only interactions, on a limited, case-by-case basis, the IRB will begin to review submissions for studies involving in-person interactions. In an IRB application for in-person research, researchers must include: a brief description of why the study cannot be done remotely, or why the study's methodology or expected results might be compromised without in-person interaction, a description the local (research site), state, national, and/or international guidelines they will adhere to in an effort to mitigate the health and safety risks to our faculty, staff, and students, as well as the public and human subjects. Researchers must include the specific methods/procedures involving in-person research that adhere to COVID-19 safety guidelines. For example, if the researcher is collecting a biological specimen (blood, urine), then the researcher must provide a step-by-step description of how the collection will occur within COVID-19 safety guidelines.
- Human subjects (remote or in-person) cannot be conducted without the express approval of the IRB.

Animal Research

- At this time, animal research does not require any additional prior approvals, other than from [Pepperdine's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#).

Sponsored Projects and Grants

- [Research and Sponsored Programs](#) (RSP) is fully operational and continues to support faculty, staff, and student research.
- Many sponsors are considering the impact of COVID-19 on project timelines, and most federal sponsors allow for a one-time, no cost extension for 12 months. Please reach out to [RSP](#) with any questions or if you would like to file a request for a no cost extension.

At this time, our research support units (Research and Sponsored Programs, IRB, and Animal Care) continue to operate remotely. The University will continue to work to clarify the written guidelines for research activities and will provide updates when appropriate. Amid the evolving and unpredictable circumstances surrounding COVID-19, faculty and staff should remain prepared for a quick ramp-down of research activities should the need arise. If you have additional questions, please contact Katy Carr at katy.carr@pepperdine.edu.

Sincerely,

Rick R. Marrs
Provost