



THE UNIVERSITY of
MISSISSIPPI

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH
313 Lyceum University, MS 38677-1848
Telephone (662) 915-7583 | Fax (662) 915-5202

To: UM Research Community
From: Josh Gladden, VCRSP 
Date: March 13, 2020
Subject: UM Research Continuity Guidance

Dear Colleagues,

I am sure you all have seen the university communication on March 12 regarding current UM and IHL guidance in response to COVID-19. I write to you to address research activities specifically. In addition to this memo, ORSP has established a webpage where we will post updated information as we get it as well as post links to guidelines coming from our government partners. The URL is: research.olemiss.edu/covid-19/.

General Comments

First, the university is still “open for business,” despite academic instruction being moved to alternative methods of delivery. In contrast to instruction, the majority of research and scholarly activity at the university is performed by small groups of students, faculty, and staff.

Thus, current guidance from ORSP is that research activity continue as planned as much as possible. For the foreseeable future, we would ask that **maximal social distancing** be observed while conducting research activity on campus. In addition, everyone should follow the CDC-recommended everyday actions for preventing the spread of respiratory viruses, as summarized at <https://provost.olemiss.edu/covid-19update/>. We recognize that the nature of research and scholarly activity varies greatly across disciplines and even projects within disciplines. If productivity can be maintained, we encourage you and your students and staff to work remotely. If any member of your team develops any of the symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, breathing difficulties), they should not report to campus and should follow the general university guidance at the web address above.



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Below is guidance on specific topics typically of concern to our research community.

Travel

Currently, UM has prohibited all university-affiliated international travel. Non-essential university-affiliated domestic travel is currently discouraged; therefore, please include a statement on your travel authorization forms about why any proposed domestic travel is essential to your research/professional activity. If you have applied for an ORSP or SEC travel grant for a trip that must be canceled or postponed for any reason, please let ORSP know (orspresdev@olemiss.edu). In some cases, we may be able to provide you credit for the grant towards a future trip.

Personnel who are returning from international travel are required to self-quarantine and self-monitor for 14 days. They should be in touch with their supervisors and fill out the [Travel Reporting Portal](#).

Please stay abreast of general travel guidelines issued from the university on the Provost's web address above.

On-campus events and meetings

According to UM guidance, all university-sponsored events (including research events) are canceled until further notice. Smaller meetings and hosting of visitors should be kept to an absolute minimum, and we suggest converting these meetings to video-conferences or calls where possible.

Guidance from Federal Sponsors

ORSP has received guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that schedules for deliverables, reports, and audits will be relaxed during this period. Again, we encourage you to maintain progress as best as possible but understand schedules may need to be adjusted. I encourage you to be in touch with your program officers to discuss any delays. The Council on Governmental Relations has started a useful [webpage](#) with updated guidance from various federal agencies.

Graduate Research Assistants

We encourage RAs to continue their planned activities to keep projects and thesis work on track. Depending on circumstances, working remotely may be the best option. If that is not



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possible, we encourage students to work with their advisor/supervisor or dean/director to formulate a plan. Consistent with guidance from some federal agencies, PIs should continue to pay stipends and salaries for their research assistants regardless of working conditions. Please consult your supervisor and HR (hr.olemiss.edu/coronavirus/) for students supported by internal funds.

Field Work

For research projects requiring field work or similar off-campus activity, we advise trying to postpone that work until travel advisories are lifted. If that is not possible, please refer to the travel guidance from the Office of the Provost.

Concerns and Questions

If you have specific concerns or questions, or if you are concerned COVID-19 will have a significant impact on your sponsored program, please first contact your supervisor. If further guidance is required, feel free to address questions to:

General policy questions or concerns

Josh Gladden, VCRSP (jgladden@olemiss.edu)

Federal agency, proposal, and awards questions

Melissa Hodge-Penn, Assistant VCRSP (mhodge@olemiss.edu)

Animal or human research questions

Mandy King, Director for Research Integrity and Compliance (mlking9@olemiss.edu)

Upcoming UM research travel, events & internal grants

Jason Hale, Director for Research Development (jghale@olemiss.edu)

As you all know, this is a rapidly developing situation and we are closely monitoring aspects that impact our research activities. Our highest priority is the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We will issue additional communications as necessary.