**COVID-19: Mitigating Disruptions in Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS)** **at UC**

As the coronavirus pandemic becomes more and more urgent, the **UC AHSS scholarly and creative community** should prepare for significant reductions to *specific types* of research and creative capabilities as accessing physical resources, facilities, specialized equipment and materials, both on and off campus, will soon become very challenging, if not impossible, for an unknown period of time.

To assist, the Office of Research staff will continue to provide seamless, remote support to the UC AHSS scholarly and creative community, such as those who wish to turn their attention to research proposals, which is always a challenging task. We are here to help find the right funding match, work with program officers, submit proposals, and much more. As always, we are just a phone call or email away.

Also, the Office of Research has created [an informational website](https://research.uc.edu/coronavirus-and-your-research) for anyone seeking guidance during the perplexing and rapidly-changing time in which we find ourselves. While our faculty working in the areas of AHSS may feel the information on this particular site is heavily geared toward STEMM research, there is good, general information for anyone seeking guidance on ‘how to prepare’; ‘actions to take’, and much more.

The bottom line is that if you are one of our AHSS faculty, staff or students and have questions about research during COVID-19 or how it affects your research and what you should do, the Office of Research is here to help you find the answers.

Feel free to email me ([Pat.Limbach@uc.edu](mailto:Pat.Limbach@uc.edu)) or call our AHSS Research Hotline: 513.556.1470.

Take care,

Pat Limbach

Vice President for Research

# What can I plan to take out of my lab or office?

Researchers should carefully evaluate whether on-campus research functions can be conducted off-campus. Many restrictions apply that are enforced by Federal, State and UC regulations, policies and guidelines.

* Your Associate Dean for Research is a valuable resource in determining appropriate approaches to remote research operations.
* Specific questions regarding what can be taken from your research space can be directed to [integrity@uc.edu](mailto:integrity@uc.edu).

# Will SRS still be submitting proposals?

Sponsored Research Services is providing support for proposal submissions and award negotiations. PI’s should continue to monitor funder websites for updates on proposal submission deadlines or changes due to COVID-19. The [Office of Research website](https://research.uc.edu/coronavirus-and-your-research) will continue to list updated guidance from our major federal funders.

SRS pre- and post- award staff will continue to be available during normal operating hours, although they may be working remotely. PI’s working in colleges with submission authorization (COM, CEAS, A&S, CECH, CON, Pharmacy) should check with their college offices for any details regarding proposal submission. If colleges with submission authorization are unable for any reason to submit proposals during this time, Sponsored Research Services will work directly with PIs in these colleges to provide support.

PI’s conducting sponsored research should inform their appropriate Program Officer of any changes in research plans or progress as a result of COVID-19 impacts to UC.

# What should I do about human-subject research?

The Human Research Protection Program and UC IRB are operating on our normal schedule.

In an effort to minimize the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19 in human participant research interactions, the university is placing temporary restrictions on human subjects research through May 1. We will continue to reevaluate this timeframe

**Some Human Participant Research Studies or Activities Must Be Paused.**

1. **Why must some human participant research studies or specific activities be paused?**

The real or perceived risk of viral transmission, the risk/benefit ratio for in-person contact associated with research activities must be assessed for each protocol. Ethical principles of research and federal regulations for the protection of human research participants require an acceptable risk/benefit ratio.

1. **Which studies or study procedures must be paused?**

* All studies for which there is little to no prospect of direct benefit to participants that involve in-person contact or participant travel for research purposes must be paused, effective immediately or as soon as can be implemented. This includes social-behavioral and biomedical studies. Please contact Dr. Linke [linkemj@uc.edu](mailto:linkemj@uc.edu) or Dr. Holden [holdenjn@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:holdenjn@ucmail.uc.edu) with any questions on whether your studies offer direct benefit to participants.
* All studies involving blood draws or other collection of biological samples with no direct benefit to the research participant.
* If part of the protocol, procedures such as telephone contact or monitoring or remote data collection may continue. If these procedures are not part of the protocol, the study may be modified per the above IRB determination to use remote data collection procedures when appropriate.
* For studies at the College of Medicine that do not involve a study product/medication or device, visits should be postponed and/or conducted by telephone where feasible. Investigators should reach out to protocol/study teams for guidance on how best to proceed when in-person visits are not feasible. If these procedures are not part of the protocol, the study may be modified to use remote data collection procedures when appropriate per the IRB determination described below when appropriate.

1. **Which studies may continue?**

* Studies for which there is direct benefit to participants may continue.

Please contact Dr. Linke [linkemj@uc.edu](mailto:linkemj@uc.edu) or Dr. Holden [holdenjn@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:holdenjn@ucmail.uc.edu) with any questions on whether your studies offer direct benefit to participants.

* To the extent possible, study activities that can be done remotely by telephone or electronically should be done in this way. If these procedures are not part of the protocol, the study may be modified to use remote data collection procedures when appropriate per the IRB determination described below when appropriate.
* Studies that do not involve face-to-face interactions with participants may continue.
* Studies conducted electronically or via telephone or involving secondary data analysis may continue.
* Additional information for studies conducted at the College of Medicine
  + It is assumed that trials with investigational treatments, including drugs and devices, provide the potential for benefit and should continue.
  + In general, study participants who are taking study product that is treating a health condition should continue on their assigned study product and undergo study visits per their individual protocol. Study medications should be refilled and safety labs obtained per protocol.
  + Some study visits that can be delayed or postponed safely should be done where there is concern about the transmission of COVID-19. This should be decided on a case-by-case basis by the local study lead investigator in consultation with study teams/protocol teams and local institutional officials. If these procedures are not part of the protocol, the study may be modified to use remote data collection procedures when appropriate per the IRB determination described below.
  + In addition, each investigator should limit study staff to be utilized to conduct visits to limit contact for study personnel, study participants and other individuals. Supervisory research personnel should discuss upcoming schedules in the next 6-8 weeks and how to limit the number of study personnel required to conduct visits that must be completed.
  + All study participants should be contacted by telephone and asked about any respiratory symptoms or fever prior to their visits on the day prior to the scheduled visit. If study participants have any respiratory symptoms or fever they should be referred for appropriate testing before coming to a study visit. Upon arrival to UC Health or UC Medical Center, study participants should be asked again about respiratory symptoms or fever, and, if they report any, should be immediately moved to an isolated room and asked to put on a mask. Study personnel should wear appropriate personal protective equipment when conducting a study visit with a participant who is having respiratory symptoms or fever and refer the study participant for appropriate testing for infectious diseases.
  + Study investigators should use their best judgment to limit contact that is not absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of the study participant and ensure the integrity of the research.

1. **What if a human research study needs to be modified in response to COVID-19?**

Per UC SOP HRP-029 Review of Study Modifications “Modifications in approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards”. If protocols must be modified to address immediate safety concerns to participants or study staff related to the COVID-19 epidemic, the UC IRB has determined that these modifications meet this exception. Any modifications made per this exception should be subsequently submitted for IRB notification using the Reportable New Information (RNI) function in RAP as an Unreviewed change: *Change to the protocol taken without prior IRB review to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to a subject*.

Please contact the HRPP office at [irb@uc.edu](mailto:irb@uc.edu) or 513-558-5259 with any questions.

# Additional Information

UC Libraries

<https://libraries.uc.edu/about/covid-19.html>

Clermont

<https://ucclermont.edu/coronavirus.html>

UCBA

<https://ucblueash.edu/campus-services.html>

DAAP

<https://daap.uc.edu/covid-19-communications/covid-19-student-faqs>

A&S, CCM, Taft

<https://www.uc.edu/publichealth.html>

*Last updated 18 March 2020*