

RESEARCH RAMP-UP GUIDANCE

Spelman College is committed to maintaining the vibrant intellectual community as well as minimizing the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health & safety of our campus community. The purpose of this document is to layout a framework to resume scholarly activities in a manner that is consistent with the public health guidelines outlined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Note: For the purpose of this document, ‘Research spaces’ refer to research laboratories and creative spaces (e.g. studios), and ‘Research Supervisor’ refer to the person who leads a lab or team.

Individuals are not allowed in research spaces if they have symptoms that are associated with COVID-19. Common symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or running nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.

Research Supervisors are required to submit the ‘Resumption of on-campus Research & Creative Pursuits’ form to resume scholarly activities on campus. This form requires a “return to research” plan. Responses submitted in the request form must follow the guidelines outlined below. Research Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all research personnel working in their research spaces are in compliance with the guidelines described below. Failure to adhere to the guidelines may result in denial of future access to the research spaces.

Research Supervisors must be aware that scholarly activities may have to be halted again due to an outbreak (second wave) of COVID-19 or national, state or local orders.

Guidelines listed below must be followed when resuming scholarly activities on campus

General

- All research personnel who are able to work remotely should continue to do so unless otherwise instructed by their supervisor.
- All research personnel must participate in “Return to Work” training (under development by the College) prior to beginning on-campus scholarly activities.
- Research Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all research personnel working in their research spaces complete the “Return to Work” training.
- Frequent handwashing is highly encouraged. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds upon entry to research space(s), and before departure.
- Research Supervisors must notify Spelman’s Office of Human Resources if a person who has been in their research spaces has tested positive for COVID-19 as this will require a shut down for a thorough cleaning and disinfecting.

- Human Subjects research requiring in-person contact is still suspended to minimize the transmission of COVID-19. Suspended activities include all in-person interviews, focus groups, surveys, and studies employing observation methods. Projects that do not require direct contact are permitted to continue or begin data collection. Examples of remote or virtual data collection methods include online surveys, phone calls, and virtual meetings. All Human Subjects research requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Maintaining Physical Distancing

- Research Supervisors must identify key personnel who will be permitted to work in their research space(s).
- Work schedules can be staggered to limit the number of personnel allowed in the research spaces to maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet at all times.
 - No more than two (2) individuals are allowed per 250 square feet of a research space.
 - It is recommended that occupancy be at 25% of the maximum room occupancy.
 - It is recommended to allow at least 15 minutes break between shifts to minimize in-person contact.

Note: Signage with maximum occupancy limits must be posted in the work/research spaces.

The work schedule must be posted inside the shared research space areas.

- Workstations should be spaced out to ensure physical distancing.
- Personnel space can be mapped out for maintaining physical distancing. Use of visual cues such as tape and floor decals to mark individual workspaces is recommended.
- Concurrent use of bench tops that face one-another must be avoided.
- Research Supervisors utilizing shared spaces must coordinate with each other to ensure physical distancing is maintained and in-person contact is minimized.
- Entry into shared spaces should be logged. Common examples of shared spaces are the Innovation Lab, Core Lab, temperature control rooms, equipment room, ice machine room, stock room(s), computer labs, supply closets, etc.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Face masks/coverings must be worn at all times while on campus.
- All research personnel must have an individual set of lab coats and safety glasses/goggles.
- Lab coats, gloves, and any other PPE used in the laboratories must **not** be worn outside the research lab spaces.
- Disposable gloves must not be reused.
- Research supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all research personnel working in their research spaces have access to face masks/coverings and gloves.
- Use of shared PPE (e.g., thermal gloves, face shields, etc.) is highly discouraged. Inventory of these items should be increased to ensure research personnel have an individual set of PPE. If the inventory cannot be increased, research personnel must disinfect shared PPE

before and after each use. It is recommended that a clean pair of gloves be worn when handling shared PPE.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Research Supervisors must ensure that adequate amounts of soap, paper towels, and disinfectants are available in their research spaces. Facilities Management & Services (FMS) (404-270-5440) can be contacted for acquiring the aforementioned supplies.
- Disinfectants recommended for cleaning and disinfecting are 10% bleach solution, 70% ethanol, and [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#). It is recommended that disposable gloves be worn when using disinfectants. *Note: Please ensure the disinfectants used are compatible with the surface being cleaned. Pay attention to disinfectants that are flammable, corrosive and toxic (10% bleach solution can be toxic to eyes/skin, 70% ethanol is flammable).*
- Research Supervisors must create a schedule for disinfection. It is recommended that research personnel disinfect common areas and frequently touched surfaces before the start and after the end of their shift and as frequently as possible. Examples of frequently touched surfaces include:
 - Doorknobs and light switches
 - Benchtops and other work surfaces
 - Desktop, keyboards, mouse, and other electrical equipment
 - Chair backs and armrests
 - Drawer and cabinet handles
 - Faucet handles and spray grips
 - Equipment handles and latches
 - Equipment controls and touchpads
 - Sashes of chemical safety fume hoods and biosafety cabinets (*located in Science Center labs*)
 - Chemical containers and lids, including chemical waste containers

Equipment

- If possible, sharing of equipment/materials must be kept to a minimum.
- It is required that a sign-up sheet for shared equipment be maintained to minimize in-person contact and ensure physical distancing.
- Disinfectants must be readily available in areas where equipment is located. It is prudent to ensure all users disinfect equipment before and after each use.
- It is strongly recommended that equipment manuals and standard operating procedures (SOPs) be reviewed for startup instructions.

Prudent Practices for Working in Science Center Laboratories

- Ensure that bench tops and other work surfaces are disinfected before and after each use.
- Keep laboratory doors closed at all times to allow maximum air ventilation.

- Check for the following upon returning to the research space(s):
 - Chemical spills
 - Local alarms indicating disruption of equipment
 - Sharp odor

If any of the above is encountered, the hazard should be isolated (e.g., closing the door to the lab), other research personnel in the area notified, and the situation must be reported to the Environmental Health & Safety Compliance (EHSC) Unit (mdhakal@spelman.edu, 404-270-5709) and Core Laboratory Technician (williamsnicolelisa@spelman.edu, 404-270-5785).

- Dispose any chemicals that might have expired during the shut-down (shelter-in-place order). Pay attention to time-sensitive chemicals such as chloroform and peroxide-forming chemicals. Contact EHSC Unit for disposal of any chemicals or chemical waste.
- Ensure chemicals are segregated per hazard classification.
- Power up equipment one at a time to avoid overload of electrical circuits.
- Ensure electrical equipment cords are in good condition before connecting to power sources. **Do not use extension cords.** If using power strips, ensure they are connected directly to a wall outlet.
- Confirm fume hoods are operating as normal. If the hood does not have a flow monitoring device, use a tissue or Kimwipe to ensure air flow. Adequate air flow will draw a tissue or Kimwipe towards the hood. Ensure that the sash of the hood can be raised to the mechanical stop or 18 inches. Contact EHSC Unit for any maintenance issues.
- Clean and disinfect door knobs, common lab equipment, and other frequently touched surfaces as assigned by the Research Supervisor.
- Ensure all compressed gas cylinders are chained/secured.

Resources

[CDC Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

[CDC Considerations for Reopening Institutes of Higher Education](#)

[EPA Registered Household Disinfectants](#)