Summary of Phased Return to Research
# Phased Return to Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>External/Internal Conditions</th>
<th>On-campus activity capacity</th>
<th>Expected Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 – 2A</td>
<td>Governor’s Executive Orders 55 and 61 in place</td>
<td>Limited to critical research and essential functions; designated personnel only</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2B</td>
<td>Governor’s Executive Orders 55 and 61 lifted/revised <em>(further guidance anticipated by June 10)</em></td>
<td>Maximum of 25% total personnel with physical distancing; shift work recommended to increase total number working</td>
<td>Expected June 10 but dependent on Governor revising Executive Orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2C</td>
<td>VPRI determination based on internal consultations and external public health circumstances</td>
<td>Maximum of 50% total personnel with above recommendations</td>
<td>VPRI, in consultation with VP for Administration, will make the determination to proceed to this phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2D</td>
<td>VPRI determination based on internal consultations and external public health circumstances</td>
<td>Maximum of 85% total personnel with above recommendations</td>
<td>VPRI, in consultation with VP for Administration, will make the determination to proceed to this phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>No or minimal state restrictions</td>
<td>All types of on campus research are allowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that Phase 3 involves the return of students and staff that are unable to complete work remotely.
Principles of the Phased Return to Research

Our priority: The safety of our students, faculty, and staff while increasing research activity in a phased approach as safety becomes easier to maintain.

1. Follow applicable local, state, and national public health authority current and future directives for institutes of higher education. Hold the safety and health of research participants, students and employees paramount. Support the integrity of research and the careers of early-stage researchers.
2. Undergraduates are students first, researchers second.
3. Implement a fair and transparent process for granting access to research facilities.
4. As public health conditions permit, ensure as rapid a research restart as possible.
5. Prioritize support for participation in finding cures and preventions for COVID-19, and in assessing and addressing the economic, political, and cultural impacts of the virus.
6. Risks and potential benefits (if any) to participants taking part in human subject research must be a top priority when restarting studies.
# Human Subjects Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Study types</th>
<th>Current status &amp; actions needed to resume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | High potential for direct health benefit to participants                    | • Research submitted and approved as Tier 1 was not paused  
• Modifications may be necessary to safely resume the research protocol given access to facilities/services, resources, personnel and applicable VCU guidelines |
| 2    | Moderate potential for health benefit                                      | • Human research submitted and approved as Tier 2 was not paused  
• Modifications may be necessary to safely resume the research protocol given access to facilities/services, resources, personnel and applicable VCU guidelines |
| 3    | Limited or no direct health benefit (including in-person interactions with participants) | • Research currently paused may restart following applicable guidelines only after the Governor’s Executive Orders 55 and 61 are lifted  
• Modifications may be necessary to safely resume the research protocol  
• Consider eliminating/switching all in-person interaction to remote (Tier 4) |
| 4    | No in-person interactions with participants                                | • Research not paused (e.g. chart review, phone interview, online survey)  
• Follow all applicable VCU guidelines about employees returning to campus |
Human Subjects Research

Key considerations for human subjects research for all phases:

• All departments and study teams should assess the risk of being on campus and taking part in face-to-face research

• Research interactions with participants that can be done remotely should continue being done remotely

• Amendments must be prospectively submitted and approved by the IRB for any new or altered procedures

• The study’s risk/benefit ratio needs to be evaluated by departments and study teams on a project by project basis prior to restarting and then reassessed weekly based on the changing status of the COVID-19 pandemic
Human Subjects Research

For studies being conducted during all phases:

• If a participant or research personnel is already on campus or in a clinic for non-research reasons and there would be no additional COVID-related risk for participating in/conducting the research, this could be taken into account.

• Health system guidelines must be observed as the minimum required standards for clinical research conducted in the health system.

• Research at off-site locations and in participants’ homes should follow the most conservative guidelines for physical distancing, cleaning, and cloth face covering use (state, VCU/VCU Health, or off-site location guidelines).

• The study’s on-site participants, use of space and resources and its impact on other units and organizational operations should be taken into consideration.
Animal Research

Key considerations for animal research for all phases:

• Animal orders will be ramped up gradually over time and expectations for immediate animal delivery will be limited.

• DAR will expand animal deliveries as staffing capacity permits.

• Breeding colonies should be re-established gradually. We will provide guidelines for investigators.

• DAR will require physical distancing in all animal facilities where possible. This may be mitigated by PPE use and increased facility hygiene.
Field Research

• Field research is limited to VCU and state travel restrictions currently in place.

• Investigators should become aware of temporal or other restrictions at off-site locations prior to travel.

• The Rice Rivers Center field station is coordinating at least two shifts that adhere to % occupancy limit at each phase. Contact Amie Knapp (aknapp2@vcu.edu) to schedule and to receive specific guidelines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>External/Internal Conditions</th>
<th>On-campus Activity Capacity*</th>
<th>Prioritization Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 – 2A</td>
<td>Governor’s Executive Orders 55 and 61 in place</td>
<td>Limited to critical research and essential functions; designated personnel only</td>
<td>Designated personnel only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2B</td>
<td>Governor’s Executive Orders 55 and 61 lifted/revised</td>
<td>Target of 25% total occupancy and not to exceed 1 person per 250 sq. ft. for labs with multiple occupants; shift work recommended to increase lab access</td>
<td>Graduate students, postdocs, post baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2C</td>
<td>VPRI determination based on internal consultations and external public health circumstances</td>
<td>Target of 50% total occupancy not to exceed 2 people per 250 sq. ft.</td>
<td>Technicians, hourly workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2D</td>
<td>VPRI determination based on internal consultations and external public health circumstances</td>
<td>Target of 85% total personnel</td>
<td>Any remaining team members including undergraduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>No or minimal state restrictions</td>
<td>All types of on campus research are allowed</td>
<td></td>
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*Consider the use of multiple shifts to maximize the number of researchers who can work during each phase.
Research Cores, Service Centers & Studios

One size does not fit all: each facility may have unique requirements

Key considerations for core facilities for all phases:

• Core facilities will reopen, but availability will be constrained by reduced availability of staff and occupancy limitations for shared instrumentation or other shared-use spaces.
• Cores involving animal research will have policies coordinated with those of animal research generally.
• Core use and sample submission will be restricted to those investigators approved for on-campus research activity.
• Special procedures for sample submission, enhanced PPE, and high contact surface/instrument decontamination will be implemented.
• Users should anticipate that Instrument availability/sample processing/turnaround time, etc. are likely to be significantly reduced/lengthened.
Research Cores, Service Centers, & Studios

One size does not fit all: each facility may have unique requirements

Key considerations for service centers and studios for all phases:

• Access will be restricted to those approved for on-campus presence during the applicable phase.
• Will reopen, but availability will be constrained by reduced availability of staff and occupancy limitations for shared equipment.
• Those that most resemble an office environment will abide by the regulations for the building in general. Those that more closely resemble a wet laboratory may follow general procedures for core laboratories.
• Special procedures for job submission, interactions with facility staff, enhanced PPE, and high contact surface / equipment decontamination will be implemented.
• Users should anticipate that availability / turn-around time, etc. are likely to be significantly reduced / lengthened.
Division of Sponsored Programs

• Salaries should **continue** to be charged to sponsored projects even if idle (keeping in mind sponsor specific requirements)
  – Industry and non-profit sponsors may be less flexible than the federal government

• New individuals (or individuals on new grants) should not be charged unless they are able to perform work on the project

• COVID-19 impacts to sponsored projects should be reported to federal sponsors through the progress report process
Division of Sponsored Programs

• Costs related to the ramp up of research activities (including PPE needed to comply with the research ramp up guidelines) will typically be allowed to be charged to sponsored projects.
  – Industry and non-profit sponsors may be less flexible than the federal government

• Any questions regarding allowability of costs should be directed to your OSP Team
Frequently Asked Questions

- The OVPRI will be collecting questions and posting answers on a FAQ page on our website.
- Questions can be submitted to rescomply@vcu.edu.