

This message is sent on behalf of Dr. Digvir Jayas, Vice-President (Research and International).

Dear Researcher:

Please recognize that this is a rapidly evolving situation. The information contained herein is subject to frequent updates. Please check the University's COVID-19 website for updates.

The University is committed to taking measures to protect the health and safety of our campuses and our wider community. Our top priority is doing our part to help contain the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, our researchers and our research community must make adjustments to how we conduct research. The overarching principles that must apply to all research moving forward are:

- social distancing (maintain a minimum 2 m spacing);
- wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer when needed;
- cough or sneeze into your elbow; and
- stay home if you do not feel well – with any symptoms related to flu, a cold etc.

Principal investigators must:

1. not start new experiments until April 15 and to complete any ongoing experiments with great care with respect to the safety of all research personnel
2. develop a plan to stop all research including field research, should it become necessary to do so based on viral transmission dynamics
3. reduce the physical interaction between graduate students, postdocs, research associates, and research technicians in labs; specifically, ensure a minimum spacing between researchers of no less than 2 m
4. have lab members work in shifts if the minimum required social distancing cannot be maintained
5. suspend all research requiring bringing people together, such as, in-person focus groups; continue such activities only if these can be managed using electronic means such as Bluejeans, Webex, or other suitable videoconference platform
6. suspend studio activity unless social distance of 2 m among team members can be assured
7. conduct group meetings of lab members virtually
8. continue to pay research personnel (*i.e.*, graduate students, postdocs, research associates, and research technicians) their salary/stipend as they endeavour to work remotely
9. ask research personnel who are at the data analysis and writing stage to work from home if possible based on the need for accessing research data and/or availability of virtual tools or laptops
10. discontinue the use of graduate student spaces with multiple carrels that do not comply with the required social distancing; graduate students are to work remotely when possible

11. develop a protocol to disinfect surfaces to reduce the risk of surface transmission; this would include, but is not limited to, lab benches, fume hoods, instrumentation panels, taps, etc.
12. in the case of multi-user research facilities (*e.g.*, Manitoba Institute for Materials (MIM); small animal imaging, etc.), all personnel must take careful and thorough steps to clean and sanitize to the greatest degree possible, all equipment that was used/handled. [It has been suggested that a chlorine-based cleaner (*e.g.*, Clorox or Lysol) be applied to perform this cleaning.]

Principal investigators are to have their plan in place by the close of business (4:30 PM) Wednesday, March 18.

The Tri-Agencies will be sharing information this week regarding extensions, peer review processes, travel, etc.

Please share this communique with research personnel in your group.

The possible impact of COVID-19 plans on Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA), Undergraduate Research Awards (URA), and other summer research experiences is unknown at this time until the transmission trajectory of this virus is better understood.

A FAQ will be posted on the university website. Please check this site for updates. COVID-19 is a fluid situation. Plans and interim measures will adjust as the trajectory of this virus becomes clearer. If you have questions, please contact: Digvir.Jayas@umanitoba.ca (474-9404).

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