

Research Resumption and Restart Process
Dean Steve Graham
May 12, 2020

Dear Stanford Earth colleagues,

We are now beginning the process of reopening our buildings, which will take place in three stages over several months. While this email is directed primarily to our faculty, staff and grad students/post docs engaged in lab research, it illustrates the protocols we must establish around our return to work that will ensure a slow, deliberate and *safe* process across the board.

Today, I am sending guidance about the first steps toward our return to **Minimum Basic Research**. Some of our faculty may have seen or reviewed the DRAFT of the Research Recovery Handbook that is being developed under EH&S and Vice Provost/Dean of Research Kam Moler's leadership. I'm writing to share with you the **Stanford Earth framework** for resuming research, including the definitions for allowable work in Stage 0 and Stage 1, as we move ahead.

Stage 0 – Current (Essential workers only)

For the near-term in Stage 0 (now, through June 1, subject to change by county mandate), there are two levels of research happening on campus:

1. COVID-19 related research
2. Maintenance to preserve laboratory/research viability. In this category, we have been operating with essential personnel able to access our facilities to address critical maintenance.

Stage 1 – Estimated early June (Essential workers with a few rotational workers)

As we move towards Stage 1, our next steps will be to identify **Minimum Basic Research Operations** that can be safely supported in our buildings. For us, this will include:

1. **Preparing** our shared facilities to come back online
2. **Identifying** where we have opportunity to allow research to progress through very limited and strategic activities, with the goal of allowing as much remote work to happen as possible. Some examples of allowable on campus work might include making cultures, processing samples that would otherwise degrade, short-term efforts to allow group members to acquire a final piece of data for analyzing and writing up their experiments at home, downloading data that cannot be accessed remotely for analysis at home, and setting up experiments with a limited presence on campus such that the experiments can then be monitored and controlled remotely.

To reiterate, **the goal of Stage 1 is to limit on-campus physical presence to only those personnel needed for existing essential functions and those needed to prepare the campus for additional activity.**

For Stanford Earth, this means our Facilities Team and Lab Managers readying our labs for opening. In addition, we will want to identify those instances with exceptional need for access (either teaching or research). These rare requests will be reviewed and approved by Department Chairs followed by **Scott Fendorf** and **Amy Balsom** (Research Continuity) or **Margot Gerritsen** and **Robyn Dunbar** (Educational Continuity). **Sandy Meyer** will then provide the final approval assessing our ability to maintain social distancing within our facilities. As articulated by the Dean of Research, “most groups should continue to have 0 researchers coming to campus on any day” until we get to Stage 2. Exceptions to this will be truly rare.

Our staging process will be led by Sandy Meyer and our Facilities, Health & Safety, and IT teams, in close collaboration with our lab staff and our principal investigators. This week, school staff will be working on a number of fronts to move this effort forward. Specifically, **Katie Dunn** will be reaching out to those of you with wet labs to get a better assessment of activities that might fall under **Minimum Basic Research Operations** in your lab.

It is CRITICAL that we all understand and manage expectations around research resumption and access to labs and our facilities in general. Before anyone can start coming back in, let me characterize just a few of the MANY steps that need to be completed:

1. Building and lab density must be evaluated.
2. Directional pathways and appropriate signage need to be established.
3. A process for receiving orders/deliveries must be put in place.
4. A mechanism for scheduling work shifts – for each lab, by floor and by building – needs to be developed.
5. We must create a process to ensure compliance in the following:
 - a. Complete COVID-19 Hygiene Training (Register for the course in the Stanford Training and Registration System ([STARS Course Code EHS-2470-WEB](#)) and notify your supervisor of completion; Chrome works best with the STARS system.
 - b. Read and sign a university pledge to abide by safety protocols
 - c. Confirm that the Health Tracker web tool is being used on a daily basis whenever someone comes in

Again, I can't stress enough the slow, deliberate and limited steps we will be taking, both as a school and as a university, to resume on-campus research. We've been patient this long, and we need your help in stretching our patience even further, particularly in support of our concerned graduate students.

My hope is that as we establish these processes for Stage 1, it will allow us to move smoothly into Stage 2 (Limited Activity) when that time comes, perhaps later in the summer, and eventually Stage 3 ('New Normal' until a vaccine) -- all subject to advice from the university and Santa Clara County

Stay safe!

Steve Graham