

Guidance for Sponsored Programs and Research Activities Related to COVID-19

March 18, 2020

COVID-19 has presented challenges to our campuses that are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. We are extremely grateful for the collective commitment, resiliency, and camaraderie demonstrated by the SUNY research community during this time. This communication provides guidance to support the continuing operation of our research activities.

Resources

For information related to sponsored programs, please visit [Information for the Research Administration Community](#). This link will take you to a library of FAQs and other resources including guidance from funding agencies as well as SUNY and SUNY RF. This page will expand and be updated as COVID-19 situation evolves. We encourage you to visit this page regularly.

For coronavirus information, please visit [SUNY's Health Alert, the RF website](#), or campus websites.

For questions not addressed on the website or through this guidance, please email SVCREd@suny.edu.

Personnel Associated with Sponsored Programs

- In response to the threat posed by the spread of COVID-19, any employee that has traveled to countries or areas within the U.S. that pose a [high risk](#) of contact with infected persons, has been directly exposed to COVID-19, and/or has come to close contact with others that have been exposed, should follow the guidance of your local Health Department, of SUNY and your campus.
- Employees working on sponsored research programs required to work remotely, or subject to a mandatory quarantine, should work with their Principal Investigators and the campus Human Resources office to ensure compliance.
- While working remotely, employees must be able to conduct their normal operations or be reassigned alternative duties. For situations in which neither of those options is viable, employees should contact campus Human Resources office to seek solutions.
- To ensure a consistent response to all issues related to COVID-19, all employees must follow the directives and policies in place at their campus with respect to travel restrictions, working remotely, the determination of essential vs. nonessential personnel, and all other campus decisions to ensure personnel health and safety (regardless of SUNY or RF affiliation).
- For research personnel funded via a sponsored program (e.g., graduate students, postdocs and staff working on a grant), opportunities to work remotely may be considered to promote social distancing. If such personnel are not able to work remotely, they should follow the guidance of campus, RF and sponsor agencies.
- For additional Human Resources issues, [FAQs](#) are posted on the RF website and will be updated as needed. The RF website also includes links to the latest guidance from federal sponsors (e.g., NIH).

Research Labs and Office Spaces

- When a campus remains open, most research laboratories are considered open. A campus may decide to close or reduce the usage of certain research labs after evaluating factors such as safety, security, and availability of resources.
- Faculty, students and staff should adopt the practice of regularly washing hands and using hand sanitizers, as well as all non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI), following [CDC guidelines](#).
- Faculty, students and staff should adopt social distancing practices in research labs and office spaces wherever possible. The following practices are recommended:
 - Consider rearranging schedules (shifts, assigned days, etc.) to reduce density.
 - Minimize the number of people in each lab. Because, for safety reasons, working alone is not permitted in many labs, it is recommended that distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) is maintained between any two people.
 - Minimize in-person meetings by utilizing video- or tele-conferences whenever possible.
 - Reduce the number of days each researcher must be on campus by conducting remotely activities that do not require presence in a lab, such as data analysis, literature search, writing, or research meetings.
 - Keep your lab and office area organized to make it easier for regular cleaning.
 - Clean your lab and office area, particularly the shared spaces and equipment including benches, desks, chairs, keyboards, phones, etc., regularly by following [CDC Guidelines](#).
 - Please be mindful that regular cleaning chemicals may not be applicable for certain labs. Please consult with your campus Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) and/or biosafety team for appropriate cleaning procedures and materials.

Proposal Submissions

- Please continue to submit proposals as usual.
- At this time, SUNY RF remains open and continues to support proposal submission and grant management as usual. In the event that SUNY RF Central employees need to work remotely, a Business Continuity plan is in place to maintain operations as smoothly as practical.
- Some federal agencies may consider relaxing or extending proposal submission deadlines in the future. Please check [Information for the Research Administration Community regularly](#).

Research Compliance

- All researchers are expected to continue to maintain a high quality of research compliance.
- While working remotely, it is critical to continue to maintain security of data and other materials, as applicable.

Information Technology

- The following RF business applications can be accessed directly from home via the website <https://www.rfsuny.org/>
 - RF Oracle Business Applications
 - Self Service applications
 - RF Report Center
 - Pre-Award and Compliance System (PACS)
 - Certify Your Effort (eCrt)