

## Restarting Research at Sacramento State

### Frequently Asked Questions

[Q1: I'm a principal investigator \(PI\). How do I get approval to resume research operations?](#)

[Q2: My faculty appointment spans two colleges. Do I need to seek approval from both colleges?](#)

[Q3: I direct a research center or unit that involves faculty affiliates from multiple colleges or that reports to multiple deans. Do I need to seek approval from all involved colleges?](#)

[Q4: I'm a PI, but I'm not a faculty member. How do I get approval to resume research operations?](#)

[Q5: I'm a graduate student. How do I get approval to resume research operations?](#)

[Q6: I already have a VPAA-approved exemption on file for some of my research. Do I still need to submit a research restart approval request?](#)

[Q7: My students/staff researchers and I work in offices, not in a "laboratory." Do I need to seek approval to resume office-based research on site?](#)

[Q8: I'm not comfortable sending my researchers back to campus yet. Am I required to submit a research restart plan or approval request at this time?](#)

[Q9: Where can I get further guidance on submitting my research restart request?](#)

[Q10: Am I supposed to submit my research restart request for all Research Phases or just for the current Research Phase?](#)

[Q11: When will we transition out of current Research Phase and into the next Research Phase?](#)

[Q12: May I require graduate students or research staff in my group or lab to work on-site as part of my restart request?](#)

[Q13: May visiting scholars with signed agreements with Sacramento State work in my research space?](#)

[Q14: May I include undergraduate researchers as part of my restart request?](#)

[Q15: My supervisor/PI is asking me to return to work for research, and I don't feel safe. What should I do?](#)

[Q16: What kinds of research activities are permitted in Research Phase 2?](#)

Q17: Are certain types of research activities being prioritized in Research Phases?

Q18: I had to delay a set of experiments scheduled to last several weeks or months during the shutdown. Can I resume these experiments in Research Phase 2?

Q19: I need to use animals in my research. Should I submit a separate request to the Animal Use and Care Committee?

Q20: My research involves human subjects. Do I need to submit a request to the IRB to resume this work?

Q21: I submitted my restart request, and it was denied by my college leadership. May I appeal to the VPAA?

Q22: What is a “Workforce Number”?

Q23: Is Workforce Number calculated based on headcount or on FTE?

Q24: I already have a VPAA-approved exemption on file for some of my research. The exemption was approved when the Workforce Number allowance was higher. Do I need to scale back the people in my research lab/space?

Q25: Are there policies or other guidance regarding social distancing, face coverings, or other issues that I need to know during the research restart?

Q26: I received notification that my lab is approved to reopen. Now what?

Q27: How does the symptom-screening and testing program work?

Q28: Will we resume in-person staff meetings for our research?

Q29: Can I bring my lunch and eat in the break room?

Q30: Where can I report someone who's not complying with these policies?

Q31: Where can I find information about other research guidelines, apart from these research restart guidelines?

**Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:****Q1: I'm a principal investigator (PI). How do I get approval to resume research operations?**

A: Your request will be reviewed by your department chair, dean, and a campus-level committee before being forwarded to the Provost and President for final approval. Visit the Research Restart website (<https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19>) to find links to the University restart approval processes. Your department chair, college or school that controls the research space (labs, offices or both) that is assigned to you is the unit that will review your request to resume research operations before going to the University level.

**Q2: My faculty appointment spans two colleges. Do I need to seek approval from both colleges?**

A: No. You only need to seek approval from the college or school that controls the research space that is assigned to you. If you're unsure which college/school that is, start by talking with the department chair of the department where you hold your primary appointment.

**Q3: I direct a research center or unit that involves faculty affiliates from multiple colleges or that reports to multiple deans. Do I need to seek approval from all involved colleges?**

A: No. You only need to seek approval from the college or school that controls the research space that is assigned to your center or unit. If you're unsure which college/school that is, start by talking to the dean of the college/school where you hold your primary appointment.

**Q4: I'm a PI, but I'm not a faculty member. How do I get approval to resume research operations?**

A: All PIs who have dedicated research space assigned to them (regardless of whether they are faculty) need formal approval from their college/school to resume research operations on site. Consult with the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development if you are unsure.

**Q5: I'm a graduate student. How do I get approval to resume research operations?**

A: Only faculty submit research restart approval requests. You may be included on your faculty advisor's approved research restart plan. Let your faculty advisor know if you are willing to return to work on site and want to be included in their research restart approval request.

**Q6: I already have a VPAA-approved exemption on file for some of my research. Do I still need to submit a research restart approval request?**

A: Yes, for the purposes of enabling building managers and Facilities to accurately estimate the number of individuals who will be occupying buildings. You should mention your approved exemption in your restart request. **Important note:** If the number of your essential personnel who are approved to work on site under your current exemption is greater than the Workforce Number targeted in the current Research

Phase, you are not allowed to add more people to your research restart request. All current VPAA-approved exemptions expire on DATED INSERTED, as stated in the exemption approval letters.

**Q7: My students/staff researchers and I work in offices, not in a “laboratory.” Do I need to seek approval to resume office-based research on site?**

A: If you want to resume working on your research on site, then yes. You must submit an approval request. Facilities staff need to know who will be occupying space in buildings, including office space, so that they may anticipate custodial and other building needs appropriately.

**Q8: I’m not comfortable sending my researchers back to campus yet. Am I required to submit a research restart plan or approval request at this time?**

A: If you don’t need or don’t want your researchers to return to campus yet, you do not need to submit a research restart plan at this time. Any research that can be done remotely (data analysis, manuscript preparation, etc.) may continue to be done remotely without obtaining formal approval.

**Q9: Where can I get further guidance on submitting my research restart request?**

A: Talk with your department chair or dean.

Submitting Your Research Restart Approval Request

**The University is currently preparing for Research Phase 1 of resuming research operations. Research Phase 1 will begin on July 10, 2020.** The university is accepting faculty and PI requests to resume **Research Phase 1 activity only**. Refer to the *Sacramento State Research Restart Plan and Phases PDF* located on the Research Restart website (<https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19>) to learn more about what kinds of research activities are permitted in this phase. Follow the links on the Research Restart website to submit your restart approval request in InfoReady (<https://csus.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1770596>).

**Q10: Am I supposed to submit my research restart request for all Research Phases or just for the current Research Phase?**

A: At this time, the university is accepting faculty/PI requests to resume **Research Phase 1 activity only**. You do not need to submit a multi-phase research restart plan.

**Q11: When will we transition out of current Research Phase and into the next Research Phase?**

A: Given the uncertainties surrounding the virus and its spread in the local community, there is no definitive timeline for the duration of each Research Phase. University executive leadership will continually reassess conditions on campus and in our community, which may result in changes to the policies and research activities permitted in each Research Phase. For future Research Phases, in particular, individuals can use the

information about permitted research activities provided in the *Sac State Research Restart Plan and Phases PDF* (<https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19>) to anticipate how on-campus research activity might change over time. As more becomes known about COVID-19, and as we gain experience with increased on-campus activity during the pandemic, the details of permitted activities may evolve over time. We will communicate changes in policy in a timely fashion to allow researchers to plan accordingly.

**Q12: May I require graduate students or research staff in my group or lab to work on-site as part of my restart request?**

A: No. You should prioritize on-site access for your team members who are willing to return to work, and then work with those who decline to return to the laboratory or research space in Research Phase 1 to continue to make progress toward their research and educational objectives. Faculty/PIs may set work-at-home hours and conditions for their groups.

**Q13: May visiting scholars with signed agreements with Sacramento State work in my research space?**

A: The only visiting researchers who can enter Sacramento State research space during Research Phases 1 to 4 are those who have a pre-existing, formal visiting scholar appointment at Sacramento State. For them to work in your research space, you must name them specifically when you submit your research restart plan for review and approval. This includes visiting faculty, graduate students, or undergraduate students. If approved, they may resume work in your lab or research space. Industry collaborators are not permitted on-site without approval as part of your Restart Research Plan.

**Q14: May I include undergraduate researchers as part of my restart request?**

A: Yes, undergraduates who voluntarily agree can participate in research in person and should be included in the Research Restart Plan.

**Q15: My supervisor/PI is asking me to return to work for research, and I don't feel safe. What should I do?**

A: Tell them that you are not comfortable returning to on-site research. If you are unable to come to an agreement with your supervisor directly, you can report your concerns to your department chair, graduate program director, or associate dean.

**Q16: What kinds of research activities are permitted in Research Phase 2?**

A: Refer to the Sacramento State Research Restart Plan and Phases (<https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19>) to learn more about what kinds of research activities are permitted in this Research Phase.

**Q17: Are certain types of research activities being prioritized in Research Phases?**

A: The Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development (ORIED) and College leadership manages the approval process for resuming research operations, including setting priorities for types of research to be resumed. The broad guidelines given in the Sacramento State Research Restart Plan and Phases include:

- Time-sensitive research (COVID-19 or otherwise)
- Seasonal data collection such as field research or experiments close to completion
- Access for graduate students and undergraduate capstone experiences close to completing their degree/term of appointment, including visiting grad students/scholars with previously approved formal visiting agreements on file
- Sponsored research with grant end dates of 8/31/2020 or sooner, for which the funding agency has not granted leniency

**Q18: I had to delay a set of experiments scheduled to last several weeks or months during the shutdown. Can I resume these experiments in Research Phase 2?**

A: We don't recommend it. Given the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic, you should be prepared to rapidly ramp back down to Research Phase 2 (laboratory pause with few exemptions) or even Research Phase 1 (global shutdown of Sac State research) at any time. Refer to the Sac State Research Restart Plan and Phases to see which external conditions could cause a rapid transition between Research Phases.

**Q19: I need to use animals in my research. Should I submit a separate research restart request to the Animal Use and Care Committee?**

A: No, you do not need to submit a separate request. The University's request form includes questions regarding animal research. Note your needs there.

**Q20: My research involves human subjects. Do I need to submit a request to the IRB to resume this work?**

A: Per the Sacramento State Research Restart Plan and Phases, face-to-face human subject research will not be permitted in Research Phase 1 or 2. You may not bring any study subjects to campus in Research Phase 2, nor may you interact with them in person off site. You may continue to interact with study participants 100% virtually if you have obtained IRB approval to do so.

**Q21: I submitted my restart request, and it was denied by my college leadership. May I appeal to the VPAA?**

A: No. Decisions made by colleges and schools or the University Research Restart Committee are final.

[Campus Workforce Number and Allowable Work Schedules](#)

Refer to the [Sacramento State Research Restart Plan and Phases PDF \(https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19\)](https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19) to learn the percentages of campus population workforce number is defined and to see target workforce number for each phase of restart.

**Q22: What is a “Workforce Number”?**

A: The term “Workforce Number” refers to the number of unique individual researchers (faculty, undergraduate and graduate students and staff) performing work and research or involved in instruction on-site at Sacramento State. This number is expressed in terms of percent relative to normal, full-scale workforce operations. Target Workforce Number percentages have been defined for each phase of research restart. See the Sacramento Research Restart Plan and Phases (<https://www.csus.edu/experience/innovation-creativity/oried/covid-19-restarting-research-creative-activity.html#CSUS%20#%20COVID19>) to review these target percentages.

**Q23: Is Workforce Number calculated based on headcount or on FTE?**

A: It’s calculated based on the headcount of personnel as of March 20, 2020.

**Q24: I already have a VPAA-approved exemption on file for some of my research. The exemption was approved when the Workforce Number allowance was higher. Do I need to scale back the people in my research lab/space?**

A: If approved by the leadership, you may continue to operate at the level that was approved for your exemption. You will not be allowed to add more people to your research restart request. When submitting your restart request, be sure to mention your previously approved exemption and to include the number/names of people that you wish to continue working on site for the current Research Phase.

Policies and Best Practices for Resuming Research

Refer to the Sacramento State Restart Plan and Phases PDF and the Sacramento State Research Start Plan.

**Q25: Are there policies or other guidance regarding social distancing, face coverings, or other issues that I need to know during the research restart?**

A. Yes. The Sacramento State Restart Plan outlines guidance on the following topics:

- Social distancing
- Illness in research personnel, including symptom tracking, self-monitoring, and what to do if someone in your group shows symptoms of COVID-19
- Face coverings for general use
- Keeping your research space clean
- Contact tracing
- Research-specific PPE

The Sacramento State Restart Plan also includes downloadable templates, such as a lab sign-in sheet and checklist for resuming research operations.

**Q26: I received notification that my lab is approved to reopen. Now what?**

A: You should receive detailed instructions from your lab PI/advisor on exactly when you may be in the lab. A schedule has been put into place for each lab; this will allow you and your lab to adhere to physical distancing guidelines. You should not begin any on-campus lab activities until the restart research plan has been communicated to you by the lab PI, including required procedures for all personnel returning to the labs.

**Q27: How does the symptom-screening and testing program work?**

A: Your PI/advisor will provide you with details. You may be required to complete an online screening form each day. If you develop symptoms, you will be contacted for further evaluation.

**Q28: Will we resume in-person staff meetings for our research?**

A: No. All activities that can be performed virtually, must be, including individual meetings with your advisor.

**Q29: Can I bring my lunch and eat in the break room?**

A: Yes, if you observe all guidelines provided to you and those listed in the Sacramento State Restart Research Plan. If you are eating in your work environment (break room, office, etc.), maintain at least 6 feet distance between you and others, and for no more than 10 minutes. Do not share food. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Only remove your mask or face covering in order to eat, then put it back on. If it is possible, please consider eating outdoors with appropriate social distancing.

**Q30: Where can I report someone who's not complying with these policies?**

A: You may report noncompliance with policies to your department chair or dean.

[More COVID-19 Research FAQs](#)

Visit the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development (ORIED) website for guidance on research policies not mentioned here.

**Q31: Where can I find information about other research guidelines, apart from these research restart guidelines?**

A. Visit the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development (ORIED) website for additional research guidance during the pandemic.