

## UCANR | Directive Regarding Research

*COVID-19 Pandemic*

Rev. March 21, 2020

All requests must come through a single, collated ask by a REC Director or a County Director. PIs must work with their County Director or Rec Director to request approval. PIs should not send in requests themselves. Campus-based personnel working at a REC must work with the REC Director. Campus-based personnel working in counties must follow their campus procedure. Any research activity that can be performed from home (grant writing, data analysis, online surveys, etc.) does not require approval.

### Scale-down of research operations

Principal investigators (PIs) and Research and Extension Center Directors must move quickly to a complete cessation of non-critical research activity, while maintaining critical systems. Unfortunately, there are a number of projects and functions that, while of high importance, will cease. These are unusual times and we must follow [Executive Order N-33-20](#). Research groups/staff may engage in only those research continuity activities that have been specifically approved by the UC ANR Associate Vice President (AVP). No one supporting the UC research enterprise can engage in activities that have not been designated by the AVP as appropriate. If you are inappropriately pressured to come to your workplace for non-critical research functions, please contact the [Associate Vice President](#) or the [Vice Provost of Research and Extension](#).

Some personnel must continue to work on-site (potentially at UC-owned or cooperator properties) to adhere with safety procedures, support critical research efforts, and maintain critical research functions. The REC Directors and County Directors, in consultation with the Vice Provost of Research & Extension and the Associate Vice President, are responsible for defining critical research activities. Critical research is research that would result in catastrophic loss, if discontinued. When defining critical research activities, Directors and PIs must consider the current and projected availability of critical resources required to support the research (such as water, labor, and equipment for field agriculture, or feed, veterinary care, etc. for projects that include animals).

### Definitions of critical research and essential personnel

Research activity approved as critical may vary based on local criteria or interpretation of the [national Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#) (see [Food & Agriculture-specific plan](#) for details on agriculture) but is generally defined as:

- Research that, if discontinued, would result in data and sample loss that would be effectively irreplaceable.
- Research that has a narrow time window for completion, i.e.
  - Time-sensitive experiments involving research materials that are perishable or not easily replaceable.
  - Experiments with a specific measurement that can only take place a few times per year.

- Maintenance of critical equipment and a safe standby mode of laboratories.
- Maintaining critical animal populations or crops with critical research value.
- Maintenance of roads, fences, water systems, and facility security.

**Essential Personnel are those personnel necessary to ensure the ongoing viability of research, including the well-being of research animals and other not easily replaceable perishable research materials, such as:**

- Staff responsible for animal care.
- Faculty and/or research staff necessary to maintain other, not easily replaceable, perishable research materials. This could include germplasm collections or long-term experiments that would incur considerable cost and/or time if ended.
- Faculty and/or research staff necessary to carry-out approved critical research.
- Personnel responsible for maintaining equipment that could be damaged if not properly maintained and researchers working on experiments that have a small window of time for completion are also considered essential personnel.

Teams essential to maintaining operations should be divided into two or more fixed member groups. This will ensure continuity of critical functions should a single team member no longer be able to participate due to illness, and avoid potentially leading to all members of the team having to stop work. If critical operations rely on a single individual, contingency plans must be developed. Where possible, written operational procedures should be documented, and cross training of personnel may need to be accelerated. In the worst case, shutting down operations may be required.

Researchers should consider their supply chains, particularly where critical supplies may be sole-sourced or come from regions that are hit hard by COVID-19.

See the [guidance issued on March 19](#) for information on conditions that must be met for any work that continues.

## Expected duration of modified research protocols

We should anticipate that the pandemic could last several months. We will continue to evaluate and communicate updates based upon information from public health professionals, government officials, and university experts. Please plan for a protracted period of disruption and we will keep in regular contact.

## Process

Principal Investigators, via their unit leaders (REC Directors, County Directors) must seek approval for continuation of critical research and essential personnel. Requests to maintain research functions and essential personnel associated with performing those functions should be sent to the Vice Provost of Research and Extension. The following information must be included:

- Research project or function description – include location, work to be performed and frequency/duration
- Justification for continuation – note that this is not a function of convenience but one of catastrophic loss if discontinued
- Personnel involved and measures taken to ensure their safety and well-being

***Requests should be submitted to Vice Provost Lagrimini no later than Tuesday March 24, 2020.***