

NJIT Pandemic Recovery Plan
Research Continuity and Phased Recovery Plan
Guidelines and Protocols: Phase-1, Phase-2 and Phase-3 Research Operations
Updated: July 27, 2020

NJIT faculty, staff, and students at research facilities must follow the specific social distancing and safety protocols including the use of personnel protective equipment (PPE) as required by the institutional, state and federal guidelines in the respective phase of the research continuity plan. State and national information regarding current conditions can be found at:

- New Jersey’s COVID-19 information hub: <https://covid19.nj.gov/index.html>
- White House Plan for Opening up America Again: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-Opening-Up-America-Again.pdf>
- CDC guidelines on “Symptoms of Coronavirus”:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- CDC guidelines on “Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19”:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

For Phase-1 Research Recovery Plan with minimal research operations, the following protocols and guidelines should be adapted.

Recovery Phase-1 Protocol

Minimal research operations approved through chairs, deans and senior vice provost for research to pursue time-sensitive priority research such as projects related to COVID-19 response; approved Essential Research Operation (ERO) plans in Phase-0; long-term research experiments with cell-lines, animals, and human subjects that were already underway before Phase-0; grants and contracts expiring within six months; submission of proposals in response to special solicitations (Requests for Proposals); and projects involving students with graduation requirements.

- Requests for projects considered time-sensitive should be directed to departmental chairs. The dean and senior vice provost for research will provide guidance as needed.
- All research operations at NJIT facilities in this phase must follow the highest possible level of social distancing implemented.
- Research that can be conducted remotely should be continued to the extent possible.
- As on-campus operations are limited following the state and institutional safety regulations, visiting access to on-campus facilities is restricted.
- New applications for visiting scholars for research are on hold until NJIT enters the “new normal” phase of recovery.

Recovery Phase-1 Implementation Guidelines:

The minimal research operations including all approved essential research operation (ERO) plans approved in Phase-0 and time-sensitive research non-essential research operations (approved through chair, dean and research offices) should be restored. All social distancing and safety protocols must be strictly followed in research labs as follows.

1. **Phase-1 Research Operation (PRO-1) Plan Approval:** (Initiated by faculty/PI; approved by chair, dean and senior vice provost for research): The faculty who have submitted ERO plans for Phase-0 do not need to resubmit their project descriptions as long as there are no significant changes in research operations and social distancing and safety protocols are followed. Additional time-sensitive non-essential research operation plans as defined above should be submitted following the Phase-1 Research Operation (PRO-1) form to department chair and college dean for their approvals and forwarding to the research office for institutional approval. The PRO-1 form can be downloaded from the research website <https://research.njit.edu/njit-pandemic-recovery-plan>.
2. **Lab Access Schedule:** (Initiated by faculty/PI; approved by chair): Number of people in a research lab should be limited to observe safe distancing. Depending on the type of experiment and research equipment in the lab, it is up to the research lab/center director or PI to develop a time-based schedule to allow specific researchers (faculty, research professors, post-docs, students and staff) access to the lab. It is recommended that flexible schedules specifically for researchers requiring supervision should be developed to access research labs. These lab access schedules should be submitted to respective department chair along with specific needs to implement safety protocols such as disinfecting supplies, face masks, gloves etc.
3. **Lab Access and Safety Monitoring Logbook:** (Implemented by faculty/PI and reported to department chair): The research lab/center director should maintain a Lab Access and Safety Monitoring (LASM) logbook to follow the lab access schedules and safety monitoring of individual researchers on a daily basis. The following is the suggested format for the logbook (a template spreadsheet file is posted on the website <https://research.njit.edu/njit-pandemic-recovery-plan>). If the answer to any question from column 4 to 6 is positive, the researcher must inform the lab director who should report it to the HR following the institutional reporting policy. If the answer to the question in column 7 is negative, the researcher should immediately inform the lab director/staff to access PPE supplies. If any answer to the questions in column 8-9 is negative, the researcher should immediately inform the lab director/staff who should report it as a potential incidence as described in section (4) below.

Lab/Center/Lab/Facility Name:								
Lab/Center/Lab/Facility Location:								
Lab Director/PI Name and Contact Information:								
Lab Staff Name (If applicable):								
Date:								
Researcher Name and Contact Information	Arrival Time	Leaving Time	Do you have any temperature or COVID-19 symptoms today?	Did you have any temperature or COVID-19 symptoms in last two weeks related to COVID-19?	Do you think that you had any exposure to COVID-19 in past two weeks?	Do you have personnel protective equipment (PPE) with you?	During your time in the lab did you maintain safe distancing all the time?	During your time in the lab did you use PPE all the time?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Target Answers			No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

4. **Safety Instruction Displays and Incidence Reporting:** (Implemented by faculty/PI and reported to department chair, college dean and other offices as needed): All research labs and centers should display posters on social distancing and safety instructions as recommended by the EHS department. Any incidence of violation of safety protocols

should be promptly reported to department chair, campus safety and HR following the institutional guidelines.

Following the CDC guidelines, it is recommended that disposable face coverings and dust/surgical masks should be used for general activities in NJIT research laboratories. The N-95 masks are appropriately used for high risk activities in health care delivery, emergency response, and law enforcement. If there are specific laboratory hazards that require the use of N-95 masks for healthcare or medical needs following the OSHA guidelines, they should be separately discussed with the college dean and EHS department for further consideration outside the general research recovery plan.

Phase-2 Recovery Protocol

Most research operations, whether sponsored through external grants and contracts or internally funded, may be restarted through the approval of department chairs using significant social distancing and safety protocols with restrictions on the number of researchers and staff present in laboratories at one time.

- The Phase 2 restart may require developing flexible work schedules, plan for supply chain issues, and prepare core and fabrication facilities in advance of need. To ensure social distancing requirements and to reduce density of research personnel in university research spaces, the lab directors should consider permitting flexible lab access schedules, work shifts or staggered workdays, and extended facilities support to enable more round-the-clock operation of research facilities. Under no circumstances should safety be sacrificed due to lack of adequate supplies, type, and quality of PPE.
- Research that can be conducted completely remotely should continue to be conducted in that manner. In addition, work that can be done remotely in conjunction with necessary on-campus work should be done remotely.
- As on-campus operations are limited following the state and institutional safety regulations, visiting access to on-campus facilities is restricted.
- New applications for visiting scholars for research are on hold until NJIT enters the “new normal” phase of recovery.

Recovery Phase-2 Implementation Guidelines:

The most research operations including all approved essential research operation (ERO) and non-essential Phase-1 Research Operations (PRO-1) plans approved, respectively, in Phase-0 and Phase-1, and Phase-2 Research Operations (PRO-2) with funded research projects (approved by department chair) should be restored. All required social distancing and safety protocols must be strictly followed in research labs as follows,

1. **Phase-2 Research Operation (PRO-2) Plan Approval:** (Initiated by faculty/PI; approved by chair): The faculty who have submitted ERO plans for Phase-0 and PRO-1 plans for Phase-1 do not need to resubmit their project descriptions as long as there are no significant changes in research operations and required social distancing and safety protocols are followed. Additional externally and internally funded research operation plans should be submitted following the Phase-2 Research Operation (PRO-2) form to department chair for approval.
2. **Lab Access Schedule:** (Initiated by faculty/PI; approved by chair): Number of people in a research lab should be limited to observe safe distancing. Depending on the type of experiment and research equipment in the lab, it is up to the research lab/center director

or PI to develop a time-based schedule to allow specific researchers (faculty, research professors, post-docs, students and staff) access to the lab. It is recommended that flexible schedules specifically for researchers requiring supervision should be developed to access research labs. Researchers and students may work in the lab in small groups on different days and/or at different times during the days to enforce social distancing and avoid overcrowding at the facility. These lab access schedules should be submitted to respective department chair along with specific needs to implement safety protocols such as disinfecting supplies, face masks, gloves etc.

- Lab Access and Safety Monitoring Logbook:** (Implemented by faculty/PI and reported to department chair): The research lab/center director should maintain a Lab Access and Safety Monitoring (LASM) logbook to follow the lab access schedules and safety monitoring of individual researchers on a daily basis. The following is the suggested format for the logbook (a Google spreadsheet template file is posted on the website/shared-drive). If the answer to any question from column 4 to 6 is positive, the researcher must inform the lab director who should report it to the HR following the institutional reporting policy. If the answer to the question in column 7 is negative, the researcher should immediately inform the lab director/staff to access PPE supplies. If any answer to the questions in column 8-9 is negative, the researcher should immediately inform the lab director/staff who should report it as a potential incidence as described in section (4) below.

Lab/Center/Lab/Facility Name:								
Lab/Center/Lab/Facility Location:								
Lab Director/PI Name and Contact Information:								
Lab Staff Name (If applicable):								
Date:								
Researcher Name and Contact Information	Arrival Time	Leaving Time	Do you have any temperature or COVID-19 symptoms today?	Did you have any temperature or COVID-19 symptoms in last two weeks related to COVID-19?	Do you think that you had any exposure to COVID-19 in past two weeks?	Do you have personnel protective equipment (PPE) with you?	During your time in the lab did you maintain safe distancing all the time?	During your time in the lab did you use PPE all the time?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Target Answers			No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

- Safety Guidelines, Instruction Displays and Incidence Reporting:** (Implemented by faculty/PI and reported to department chair, college dean and other offices as needed): All research labs and centers should display posters on social distancing and safety instructions as recommended by the EHS department. COVID-19 safety protocols should not supersede existing laboratory safety requirements. Any incidence of violation of safety protocols should be promptly reported to department chair, campus safety and HR following the institutional guidelines.

Phase-3 Recovery Protocol

Most research operations on funded and unfunded projects along with research required for future proposal submissions are restored with minimal social distancing and personnel safety protocols.

- Group meetings and research presentations with faculty, staff and students should be restricted and kept to a minimal size protecting any vulnerable participants. If possible, these meetings should continue to be held online until we reach a state of full recovery.
- Other laboratory safety protocols must be strictly followed.
- Research that can be conducted completely remotely should continue to be conducted in that manner. In addition, work that can be done remotely in conjunction with necessary on-campus work should be done remotely.
- New applications for visiting scholars for research are on hold until NJIT enters the “new normal” phase of recovery.

Phase-3 Recovery Implementation Guidelines:

Please follow the guidelines as described in Phase-2 but with the required minimal social distancing and safety protocols as announced by the state, local and NJIT at that time.

Full Recovery (New Normal): All research operations are restored fully with no specific social distancing requirements. However, all laboratory and personnel safety protocols must be strictly followed.

This document refers to research conducted on the NJIT campus in Newark, NJ, including the physical campus and activities that have direct contact with individuals (human subjects) anywhere. Satellite locations, such as the Big Bear Solar Observatory in California, must follow a similar phased approach informed by local conditions.

Safety Guidelines for Research with Human Subjects:

The NJIT IRB has made the following determinations with regard to approved human subject research protocols. All research activity involving human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to its start:

Type of Activity Involved in Human Subject Research	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Full Recovery
COVID-19 research	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Direct health benefit to subjects	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
Face-to-face interaction with little or no health benefit to the subjects	Studies must be halted unless approved by chair, dean, and the NJIT IRB. ¹	Studies must be halted unless approved by chair, dean, and IRB co-chairs.	Studies must be halted unless approved by chair, dean, and IRB co-chairs.	Permitted

¹ During the recovery phases, the campus is still not fully open to the general community. Human subject research that has no direct benefit to the subjects, but requires face-to-face interaction needs to be evaluated to ensure that all public health measures can be met, that alternative procedures not involving face-to-face interaction are not possible, and that all subjects are members of the NJIT community as campus would remain closed to the general public. The chair and dean must certify the public health and institutional requirements may be met. The IRB co-chairs will determine if the new conditions continue to pose minimal or less-than-minimal harm to the

Online interactions with human subjects or between researchers (No face-to-face interaction)	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
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Guidelines or processes put in place for public health considerations are not research procedures and do not need to be reviewed by the IRB. Research changes mad to eliminate apparent immediate risk or hazards to the study subjects may be made prior to IRB review (consistent with 45 CFR 46.108(a)(3)(iii) and 45 CFR 46.103(b)(4)(iii)). Such change must be reported to the IRB when possible. If researchers determine that the current situation requires a change in an approved study, the change may be submitted to the IRB for review at any time. If the changes are minor (e.g. changing from in-person interviews to online or phone interviews), the IRB will use an expedited review process for approval consistent with 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1)(ii) and 45 CFR 46.110(b)(2). Research that is suspended by the researcher or institutional officials (e.g. because of campus closure) do not need to be reported.

Questions regarding human subject research should be directed to the IRB co-chairs, Britt Holbrook and Eric Hetherington, at irb@njit.edu .

Lab Safety Guidelines for Animal Care:

Research involving animals at NJIT is regulated by the guidelines outlined in this plan, determinations by Rutgers Newark IACUC, and the status of Rutgers animal care facilities. NJIT and Rutgers Newark’s phased reopening will be in alignment as much as possible, however researchers are to keep in mind that local guidelines take precedent (e.g. activities at NJIT must be in accordance with our recovery phase).

Following the Rutgers Newark IACUC guidelines, The chairs and deans for each unit will be approving studies as well as lab schedules who can access the animal facility. Each research lab is expected to submit their lab access plans along with who in the lab would be authorized to work in the vivarium.

Questions regarding research involving animals and animal care procedures at NJIT should contact Eric Hetherington (erich@njit.edu) or Eric Fortune (eric.s.fortune@njit.edu).

subjects. During phase-1, the whole IRB committee will be consulted as necessary on cases that involve substantial face-to-face subject interactions.