

## Graduate School “Wake Up Research” Guide (11/12/20)

### Overview and scope:

The Wake Forest School of Medicine formulated institutional guidance on conducting research activities during the time of COVID-19 (“WAKE FOREST SCHOOL OF MEDICINE COVID-19 RESPONSE: GUIDE FOR SAFE RE-START OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES”). This plan is addressed specifically to staff and faculty, but biomedical graduate students, hereafter referred to as “students” in this guide, utilize the same research spaces and share many of the same compliance responsibilities, risks, and obligations.

Students are expected to follow the School of Medicine plan. In addition, students should consult their advisor for access and scheduling of laboratory time after June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Newly enrolled students wishing to enter a laboratory for research should consult their program director and research advisor, or potential research advisor, for access and scheduling. The School of Medicine plan places significant control over execution of guide elements at the level of departments, centers, and cores. Student concerns and compliance with safety articulated through a survey of students were communicated as these guidelines were developed. The following guidance is designed to assist students and graduate faculty in implementing the larger institutional objectives and to provide some additional resources.

### Brief Summary of Steps to Take Before Entering a Research Lab:

**Step 1:** Read the School of Medicine [restart guide](#), and this guide (the Graduate School “Wake Up” research guide), in their entirety. Address any questions to the indicated resources within this document prior to entry, or re-entry, into laboratory environments.

**Step 2:** A) Contact your advisor for permission, timeline and schedules for entry, or re-entry, into the research labs or clinical research sites; B) Discuss with your advisor (or program director) your roles and responsibilities as a member of your research team. Clarify your lab’s protocols and SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) including any concerns regarding PPE or disinfection.

**Step 3:** Obtain a mask from either your department, your advisor, or the Graduate School.

**Step 4:** Resume activities, but be mindful that North Carolina Governor’s orders, and Winston-Salem Mayor’s orders, may change student requirements.

### Requirements and Recommendations:

The Graduate School (Biomedical campuses) maintains the following requirements for students returning to research:

- 1) Students must follow the School of Medicine re-start plan for broad guidance on returning to research activities, with careful attention to elements of personal and community safety.
- 2) Students must consult with their research advisor on whether it is necessary to return to the laboratory at this time, and when to do so. The institutional goal is to minimize the numbers of students on campus in order to maintain compliance with social distancing while resuming research activities. If your presence is necessary, and you are allowed to return, you are required to work with your advisor to determine scheduling and

whether a limited schedule is possible – this may include working in shifts, working on alternate days, weekends, or coordinating use of common equipment and cores. If you are not specifically performing an experiment or performing an analysis requiring onsite resources, it is recommended that you not be in the lab or on campus.

- 3) Implementation of the guidelines are dependent upon the unique research environments of laboratories and core spaces, thus concerns about safety of these spaces must be raised to the department chairs and core directors responsible for the spaces in which you work. Any such concerns should also be simultaneously communicated to your Program Director for assistance with resolution.
- 4) The Graduate School continues to hold didactic coursework largely via distance/remote learning until further notice, in order to reduce risk and comply with SoM directives to minimize presence on our campuses. Limited group activities may be allowable, but must comply with CDC masking and social distancing guidelines of the state and city, and must be approved by the Graduate School in advance. Questions on which course directors have applied for and received permission for an “in-person” component in their course may be directed to the course director.
- 5) NOTE: Even if you have permission to enter the campus, you should remain at home and notify your advisor if you are ill. Students must also report COVID19-like symptoms to employee health  
[https://webchartnow.com/wakehealth/webchart.cgi?f=nmc&s=pat&page=PortalHome&svar\\_cobrand\\_patid=133&cobrand\\_patid=133&pat\\_id=8331](https://webchartnow.com/wakehealth/webchart.cgi?f=nmc&s=pat&page=PortalHome&svar_cobrand_patid=133&cobrand_patid=133&pat_id=8331) : Select ILI/COVID/NLI reporting tab). You can also email Samantha Lodish directly ([slodish@wakehealth.edu](mailto:slodish@wakehealth.edu)) Employee health carries the responsibility to track illness and to release students to return to the school environment.
- 6) Students must self-monitor each day using the checklist below and notify Employee Health of any of the following positive symptoms:
  - a. Do you feel like you may have a fever above 100 °F? (If so, take your temperature and stay home if you have a fever).
  - b. Do you have a new or worsening cough that is not related to another medical condition?
  - c. Do you have sore throat not related to another medical condition (e.g. allergies)?
  - d. Do you have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath that is not related to another medical condition?
  - e. Do you have new joint or muscle aches not related to another medical condition or another specific activity (e.g. due to physical exercise)?
  - f. Do you have recent (<5 days) loss of smell and taste?
  - g. Do you have new onset of vomiting or diarrhea not related to another medical condition?

[NOTE - Employee Health prefers that reports come in through the Employee Portal:

[https://webchartnow.com/wakehealth/webchart.cgi?f=nmc&s=pat&page=PortalHome&svar\\_cobrand\\_patid=133&cobrand\\_patid=133&pat\\_id=8331](https://webchartnow.com/wakehealth/webchart.cgi?f=nmc&s=pat&page=PortalHome&svar_cobrand_patid=133&cobrand_patid=133&pat_id=8331) Select ILI/COVID/NLI reporting tab). You may still report through telephone (336-716-4801 option 2), and you may email Samantha Lodish ([slodish@wakehealth.edu](mailto:slodish@wakehealth.edu))

but you may be directed back to the portal. Be sure to identify yourself as a student.

- 7) Students must continue to adhere to CDC guidelines all times. This means: 1) wear a mask; 2) Maintain safe social distances of approximately 2 meters (6 feet) from others, even if you're well; 3) Maintain CDC handwashing recommendations (20 seconds with hot water) or use hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) when water isn't available. 4) Avoid touching your face. **As a student of Wake Forest University, you are expected to follow these guidelines even when not on campus.**
- 8) Students must obtain and wear a protective mask when in the facilities in common areas, and when traveling to and from laboratories. Masks are being provided through some departments, and the Graduate School has an additional supply for those who don't possess one. The guide permits only limited conditions for removing your mask in the laboratory environment. If you are in a common area (e.g., parking deck, hallways, restrooms, conference rooms, or classrooms), you must wear a mask. Other personal protective equipment may be required based on your specific laboratory. Consult your advisor for any additional requirements unique to your lab. Be aware that as our knowledge of the virus and how it is spread grows, masking requirements may change. So-called "super spreader" events appear to involve large indoor gatherings, so these must be avoided.
- 9) Students must participate in maintaining disinfection of laboratory common equipment, and for following your laboratory's specific safety guidance. Report depleted hand sanitizer dispensers to environmental services (<https://wakehealth.sharepoint.com/sites/SRC/sr/>).
- 10) Students must follow Animal Research Program protocols when working in those spaces, or clinical research protocols for working safely with human subjects.
- 11) Research spaces are limited to enrolled students as part of a graduate program of study. Non-degree activity (e.g., shadowing or visitors) is not supported by the Graduate School without specific approval by the School of Medicine. Students working or attending classes off site (including the Reynolda campus) must follow guidance offered by those remote spaces, as well as these guidelines. Ensuring compliance of non-degree students with elements of this guide and the School of Medicine guide is the responsibility of the hosting department chair and research advisor.
- 12) Students must follow the institutional security policy of wearing badges in visible locations on your person. It is particularly important to comply with the employee identification policy during this period of mandatory mask usage.

CDC and institutional guidelines are intended to keep our community safe. It is therefore imperative that we support one another in promoting and maintaining a culture of safety. Accordingly, **persistent failure to uphold safety protocols are reportable as a violation of the Graduate School Student Code of Conduct.** Failure of staff or visitors to adhere to guidelines should be reported to your advisor. Each student is required to attest to their understanding of these requirements and the risk of a Code of Conduct violation should they not be followed.

In addition to the requirements above, the Graduate School recommends the following practices:

- 1) Limit (as much as possible) campus movement to traveling to and from the lab. Limit movement between labs.
- 2) Coordinate occupancy of laboratory spaces, entry/exit and security protocols with your advisor and technical staff. Be mindful of your path to and from lab.
- 3) Be mindful that returning to research spaces still requires maintaining social distancing in all interactions. Continue to communicate through remote means (phone and WebEx) and avoid in-person meetings where possible.
- 4) The institution will follow state and city restrictions on dining services. Otherwise, avoid onsite dining in campus dining areas. If you must use these services and they are available, we recommend using “take-out” or “to-go” services.
- 5) Be mindful of social distancing in the more restrictive space of restrooms. If you notice unsanitary conditions, report them to housekeeping.
- 6) Consider limiting elevator use and be mindful of social distancing in this more restrictive space. The institution recommends a maximum of 2 riders per elevator while maintaining social distance (Please refer to guidelines posted on elevators as some may be restricted to one rider per elevator). If you must use an elevator, avoid pressing the button with your hand (you can use a pencil or elbow) or disinfect hands after use. Take stairs and maintain social distancing in stairwells, keeping in mind that stair rails are high touch surfaces.
- 7) Even though there will be an increased cleaning schedule during the period of COVID-19, it is safest to treat a common area as if it is not clean.
- 8) Hand sanitizer should be available to you, but we encourage you to carry personal hand sanitizer for use traveling to and from the lab. Remember, soap and water are most effective in killing the virus, and all labs should have ample availability.
- 9) If your plan of study includes a research or clinical experience and you are uncomfortable returning to the research or clinical environment for any reason and are unable to come to an agreement with your advisor to ensure academic progress, you may contact the Graduate School to discuss taking a leave of absence. See also the CDC website if you require special precautions.  
[\(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html)

Following this guide, as well as the School of Medicine Guide, does not eliminate the risk of COVID-19. However, by paying close attention to safety and holding each other accountable in our controlled research environment, we can minimize risk to the degree possible. As the virus spreads through the community, you may occasionally receive notice that a student has tested positive for the virus. The Graduate School will do our best to inform you when this occurs, though we are restricted in the detail we may offer.

#### Questions/Contacts:

- For general research questions on the institutional research re-entry plan, contact Greg Burke ([gburke@wakehealth.edu](mailto:gburke@wakehealth.edu)). For questions on human subjects research, contact IRB staff at 336-716-4542.
- For questions on animal care, contact Melaney Gee ([mgee@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mgee@wakehealth.edu)).

- For questions about on-site research visits, contact Selvin Ohene in the Office of Clinical Research (sohene@wakehealth.edu) or Joseph Andrews (jandrews@wakehealth.edu) in the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Research Integrity.
- For specific questions regarding facilities, contact Jason Kaplan (jakaplan@wakehealth.edu).
- If you become ill at work, or suspect COVID19 exposure, call Employee Health. Employee Health will continue to provide students with a mechanism to:
  - Report travel and provide travel-related guidance, both going to a location and returning from a location
  - Report exposures to COVID-19
  - Report the development of any symptoms consistent with COVID-19
  - Provide clearance to return to lab following recovery from COVID-19
  - For COVID-19 symptom and travel reporting (Employee Health):  
[https://webchartnow.com/wakehealth/webchart.cgi?f=layout&name=Home&pat\\_id=1046&svar\\_cobrand\\_patid=133&cobrand\\_patid=133&module=Patient+Portal](https://webchartnow.com/wakehealth/webchart.cgi?f=layout&name=Home&pat_id=1046&svar_cobrand_patid=133&cobrand_patid=133&module=Patient+Portal) (Select ILI/COVID/NLI reporting tab).

#### Additional Resources:

- Social distancing guide: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/pages/social-distancing-guidelines.aspx>
- CDC website on clinical risk assessment: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>
- CDC guide for individuals who may need additional precautions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>
- Living in close quarters: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/living-in-close-quarters.html>
- What to do if someone in your household gets sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/checklist-household-ready.html>
- Protect yourself: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
- What to do if you are sick: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

- Detailed Planning Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

Consult your program director or the Graduate School if you have additional questions.