

Humboldt State University Office of Research & Sponsored Programs
COVID-19 Guidance for Research Continuity

Last updated 3/23/20

This guidance is subject to change in consultation with HSU and CSU leadership. We will continue to review these guidelines frequently to ensure their continued appropriateness as circumstances evolve.

Accessing labs/research spaces:

As long as work locations remain partially open to ‘essential personnel,’ employees (faculty, staff & students) whose positions are not feasible with telecommuting may continue to work from their usual research facilities, with the understanding that they must adhere to proper social distancing protocols.

For those projects where work locations are on the HSU campus, employees must be approved by their appropriate administrator to remain on campus or to maintain a connection to campus. Examples include those needing to be physically on campus to protect equipment, animals, supplies, and research subjects/projects.

PI’s/researchers who need to access their labs/spaces intermittently during this time should communicate with their Deans. Campus facilities have now closed to the general public and Humboldt County has issued a ‘shelter in place’ event effective 3/20/20. We recognize the importance of being able to access your lab spaces and we are making it a priority to work with campus leadership to ensure your needs are met, while also maintaining your health and safety.

Travel to field sites:

“Essential travel” is defined as University/Auxiliary sponsored travel that is required or under contractual obligation to: Preserve the safety of a research subject and cannot be postponed; or Preserve the results of a research activity and cannot be postponed.

"Domestic travel" is considered anything *outside of Humboldt County*. Currently, you do not need any special approvals to travel to field sites *within* the county.

If you are traveling to conduct remote field work *within Humboldt County* that cannot be postponed, you are fine to continue so long as you adhere to the CDC guidelines (see tips below).

If you are planning Domestic travel to a field site that cannot be postponed, you must contact your Post-Award Grant Analyst to discuss obtaining approval *prior* to travel. If you will be traveling domestically to/from an area with community-level spread you must stay off-campus for 14 days and should self-isolate at home.

International travel remains suspended.

That said, please be aware, effective 3/20/20 Humboldt County issued a ‘shelter in place’ which requires that all non-essential businesses close and that most people not leave their home except for essential needs. During such events, outdoor activities are generally permitted, but with six feet of distance between each person.

Conducting field work:

Here are some tips for surveying with social distancing in mind:

- Stay home if you feel sick;
- If you normally carpool, drive separately;
- Divide tasks so that only one person is touching supplies, samples, equipment for the day;
- Use disposable gloves;
- Bring hand sanitizer or soap/water along with you, and use it to clean all lab/sampling materials before and after use;
- Keep a six-foot distance between yourself and others;
- Remain in cell phone contact & check in/out with your Principal Investigator/supervisor at the end of each field day.

Research with Human Subjects:

Any research work by HSU students, staff, or faculty should conform to University guidance on social distancing and self isolation.

We are strongly encouraging those with active IRB protocols to switch to Zoom or telephone for interviews and to use online methods for recruitment of subjects. Online surveys should also replace in-person surveys. Faculty and students are also encouraged to suspend research that entails collection of bodily fluids or to follow the more stringent CDC guidelines in your protocols and get permission to proceed.

If you have an active IRB protocol and need to submit a modification for any of the reasons cited above, we will respond quickly. Here is the link: <https://hsu-forms.humboldt.edu/irbsub/>

We will continue to review protocols, modifications, and renewals in a timely manner, with the priority of protecting the safety of researchers and participants. Please also remember that any protocol deviations, unanticipated problems or adverse events need to be reported to the IRB as usual. Please contact Susan Brater via email (sb64@humboldt.edu) or phone (707-825-8841 or 707-845-8933) with any questions.

Research with Animal Subjects:

Please contact Rick Zechman via email (rick.zechman@humboldt.edu) if you have questions or concerns about your current IACUC protocols.

After reviewing this document, if there are any remaining questions you still have, please contact (707) 826-5159 or email kacie.flynn@humboldt.edu