

Boston College guidelines for return to research laboratories and core facilities

UPDATED – FEBRUARY 2021

Overview

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic at Boston College can be categorized into four general phases:

Phase I: An initial ramp down of essential research activities on campus.

Phase II: Governor Baker's execution of the shelter in place order: only essential staff and research personnel permitted on campus and in research laboratories to only engage in critical building and instrument/equipment maintenance functions to ensure minimal disruptions and loss of resources and equipment.

Phase III. Gradual, monitored restarting of some research in laboratories and core facilities pending University approval.

Phase IV. Beginning of a return to normal operations with permanently enhanced safety guidelines.

Introduction

Research operations at Boston College were fully ramped down starting March 24, 2020. The Baker-Polito Administration subsequently provided [guidelines](#) which allowed the reopening of laboratories in Massachusetts to begin starting May 25, 2020. Although the situation remains unpredictable, we are continuing the gradual re-opening of research laboratories and core facilities, as directed by the Governor and with approval from the University. The eventual complete re-opening of research on campus will be much slower than the process we implemented to ramp down the research activities and may take weeks to months; it will be phased, monitored, and guided by public health and University advisories. As a research community, we must recognize and be prepared to adjust research activity in response to the evolving nature of the COVID19 pandemic.

We describe below a set of general requirements in laboratory research-intensive buildings (Merkert, Devlin, McGuinn, and Higgins Halls) as we continue in Phase III. While we hope to move forward and bring more researchers back to campus, with an eventual and careful expansion at a later date into Phase IV, the University reserves the right to return to phase II if the situation dictates. Our guiding principle is and will continue to be to mitigate health and safety risks to our employees and students based on the advice of medical experts and public health officials.

To reduce the risks of employees potentially being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 in the workplace or exposing others, our goal is to keep the density of our workforce in the laboratories and core facilities as low as possible at any given time and to employ a monitored, daily plan that maintains self-monitoring of symptoms and physical distancing practices. The most important four elements that will help keep you and others safe are: (i) wearing a face covering; (ii) regular hand washing; (iii) keeping your distance from other people; and (iv) daily self-monitoring of symptoms.

Compliance with the instructions outlined below, as well as those from your chair and University administration is required for continued access; violation may result in the immediate revocation of laboratory access privileges. Although, as described below and in Appendix IV, each laboratory PI is

required to maintain an individual plan for the gradual ramping up of research activities, several common considerations are outlined below.

Each PI should continue to use their best judgement when customizing implementation of the information presented below. Overall directives from the University and other operational divisions (*e.g.*, Environmental Health and Safety) on health monitoring and campus access, and the Boston College "[Guide for Returning to the Workplace](#)" (Human Resources) be sought out and followed. Guidelines for human subject and animal research are provided below in Appendix I and II, respectively. Details on the re-opening of key core research support facilities are provided in Appendix III, and individual ramp-up plans for each core can be found [online](#). In order to reduce our risks as much as possible, this must be a partnership and we urge you to reach out to the Offices of the Vice Provost for Research and Environmental Health and Safety if you feel you need additional guidance.

Boston College research continuity information related to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be posted on the [VPR website](#).

Phase III General Principles

1. Whenever possible, continue to conduct your research remotely. Research that requires access to campus or local field sites will require all faculty to register themselves and their trainees and staff to their departmental chair and the VPR in order to gain approval to access campus for research or to do essential local field work.
2. Requests for approval to conduct local field work should be directed to the appropriate department chair. Furthermore, Boston College has announced that no University-sponsored international travel is allowed. Field work that involves domestic travel requires permission from the Provost, EVP, or VP of Human Resources. Please note that travel restrictions may change as policies set forth by Boston College evolve.
3. Strict physical distancing, face coverings, symptom monitoring (see #4), frequent hand washing, and other safety measures for limiting virus spread must be followed.
4. If you are sick you must stay home, even if you have mild symptoms of illness. You must conduct symptom monitoring, utilizing this [self-checklist](#), prior to reporting to work each day. If you have experienced any of the symptoms in the self-checklist in the past 24 hours, STAY HOME and call your supervisor or your department chair/dean to let them know. You should call your primary care physician for further direction. If you test positive for COVID-19 you should call your supervisor who will notify Human Resources (617-552-3330). For more information, refer to the Guide for Returning to the Workplace [FAQ](#).
5. No visiting trainees, high school students, guests, or pets are allowed at work. Outside visitors for seminars, colloquia, and other short-term visits are prohibited. Undergraduates allowed in research laboratories must follow all appropriate guidelines such as regarding physical distancing, PPE, and sanitization.
6. Any required outside visitors, contractors, or vendor representatives that need to enter research buildings or labs must be entered into the appropriate [COVID-19 Building Department Office Log](#). Any required Vendors, Contractors, and Suppliers that need to enter research buildings or labs must follow the Guidance for Vendors, Contractors, and Suppliers from Procurement Services (see below).

7. Individuals entering any building other than the location of their primary office or lab, must be entered into the appropriate [COVID-19 Building Department Office Log](#).
8. Entry into some research-intensive building entrances will be card access. Access restrictions may well change, in particular once classes begin.
9. Laboratory personnel must feel safe, and are encouraged to contact their departmental chair or Office of the Vice Provost for Research if they feel direct or implied pressure to risk their own safety. A two-tiered approach will be implemented for students, staff, or post-docs to report concerns and/or complaints. Individual are asked to immediately report concerns/complaints to the appropriate Department Chair or Guillermo Nunez, Executive Director, Research Administration (guillermo.nunez@bc.edu), in the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.
10. Because lab configurations and experimental work in each group are different, every laboratory PI must submit a detailed protocol (refer to Laboratory/Local Field Research Continuity Plan in Appendix IV) to ensure worker safety. The protocol must be approved by your departmental chair before research activities can resume. Environmental Health and Safety may conduct lab walk-throughs.
11. Training is being provided by Environmental Health and Safety to all laboratory workers through the BioRaft System - <https://bc.bioraft.com>, on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission. Each PI and/or designated Group Compliance Liaison is strongly encouraged to perform a lab Self Inspection on BioRAFT before research activities resume. Additional guidance on personal hygiene and safety measures can be found in the Boston College "[Guide for Returning to the Workplace](#)".
12. Researchers who require access to core facilities will need to coordinate with the appropriate core head, and follow the core specific guidelines presented below in Appendix III, and the individual ramp-up plans for each core, which can be found [online](#).
13. Because laboratory workers are prohibited to eat and drink in research laboratories, a space should be identified by the departmental chair for eating and drinking, but with the limited occupancy and appropriate signage for physical distancing, sanitation practices, and other approved hygiene and safety SOPs. The use of break rooms, meeting rooms and communal spaces in buildings/departments will be restricted according to physical distancing and directives by the departmental chair.
14. Given the unpredictability of the ongoing pandemic, everyone should be prepared for the possibility that progress may be slow, or things may have to ramp back down again. Therefore, laboratory work should focus as much as possible on critically important existing projects, rather than new projects, or projects that cannot be stopped again on short notice.
15. In event of a positive case, there must be an immediate full stop of work and a deep cleaning and disinfection of the research laboratory and/or core facility and associated workspaces in accordance with current guidance.
16. Supervisors must post visible signage throughout the laboratories and associated spaces to remind workers of the hygiene and safety protocols. Templates are available from the Office of University Communications [website](#), and lab/core specific signs can be produced
17. Anyone at a higher risk for COVID-19 infection according to [CDC guidelines](#), who is pregnant, or claiming mental health issues resulting from a return to work may engage the special Reasonable

Accommodation process by visiting the University's Office for Institutional Diversity [website](#) or calling them at 617-552-2323.

18. PIs and core heads must ensure that all laboratory and facility entry and exit is logged.

Physical Distancing

- Work from home activities should continue as much as possible for tasks such as data analysis, and manuscript/grant writing.
- In person laboratory work should be limited to the most critical and time-sensitive experiments, all other research should be postponed.
- Access to research laboratories will be limited and coordinated with research groups working in shifts. PIs will be responsible for determining which individuals will be allowed to work in each designated shift for their group. Each laboratory must monitor daily check-in and check-out of laboratory personnel, laboratory staff density and safety.
- There should be a system established by each PI for logging lab occupancy and to ensure that nobody is working alone without supervision or monitoring. Online calendars for research laboratories and shared instrumentation/core facility use should be implemented.
- Where in person laboratory work is required, physical distancing on campus and in buildings is required, with at least a 6-foot separation between people. If you are working at a typical lab bench, no other person may also be working in the same bay (*i.e.*, laterally). Nobody may be working in the bays directly in front of you or behind you during your shift.
- PIs should consider different types of engineering controls to promote physical distancing including: set up shift scheduling where small groups or cohorts of staff work alternating schedules; provide time between each shift to minimize staff overlap and allow for cleaning of the work environment at regular and appropriate intervals; reduced seating, relocation of routinely used equipment into a shared zone (per safety considerations); demarcate shared space versus private space (*e.g.* individual work bench areas); and emphasis on cleaning/disinfection of all shared spaces. If furniture or instruments need to be moved, please place work orders with Facilities.
- Consider shared responsibilities and cross-training to reduce the number of people required in the laboratory at any one time.
- Avoid shared utilization of phones, computers, desks, research reagents, equipment, or laboratory materials, and/or disinfect between use.
- In person group meetings are not allowed and must be held remotely. Individuals should not congregate or meet in person.
- Particular care must be taken in public areas such as hallways, stairwells, and lavatories.
- Signage will be provided and should be posted clearly denoting capacity, access rules, and safety processes (*e.g.*, wiping down equipment, work areas, hand washing, mask wearing etc.) within research laboratories and buildings. Templates for signs are available from the Office of University Communications [website](#), and lab/core specific signs can be produced.
- When using a public restroom, you must wear a mask or appropriate face covering, maintain physical distancing, and wash your hands as noted above.

- Elevator use: priority should be given to people transporting material and equipment, and anyone with physical limitations necessitating elevator use. All others should use stairs whenever possible. Physical distancing should be maintained in elevators.
- Shipping and deliveries should be completed in designated areas, outside the facility if possible.
- Restrict access of office workers and support personnel to lab facilities.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Masks/face coverings are mandatory in accordance with the [Massachusetts Mask and Face Covering Order](#). Anyone entering campus and a science/research building/laboratory must wear a face mask at all times when in the presence of others and in all public spaces, except where doing so may introduce a safety hazard to workers or where an individual is unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability. Each person, while conducting research, will be issued one mask per day, except in exceptional circumstances if replacements are required. Building operations managers and Environmental Health and Safety can be contacted for more information.
- Wear PPE as required for work in a laboratory environment or in common/public areas.
- N95 masks should be reserved for activities for which they are required. You must be medically cleared, fit-tested and trained to wear an N95 respirator for your work. Contact Environmental Health and Safety for information.
- Gloves, eye protection, face shields, and lab coats should be worn whenever appropriate.
- All PPE should be used appropriately and maintained, and not shared between individuals.
- Routine laboratory safety equipment will continue to be the responsibility of individual PIs and/or departments

Sanitization

- Regular and thorough hand washing is required, in particular before and after conducting any laboratory work.
- Conduct cleaning and disinfection of laboratories at least daily, and more frequently as feasible/needed. Each lab will be issued a bottle of disinfectant, and refills, by the building Operations Manager.
- Regular cleaning of shared spaces/doors/instrumentation/individual work spaces and desks is mandatory.
- All work-related surfaces, shared surfaces or lab equipment must be regularly cleaned with [appropriate procedures](#) and [cleaning products](#) and as per cleaning and disinfection guidelines and as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines posted in the labs.
- High-touch surfaces should be sanitized regularly, such as tables, keyboards, sinks, doorknobs and light switches.
- In order to clean effectively, put all materials away and keep work areas neat.

- Per Massachusetts requirements cleaning logs must be maintained that include date, time, and scope of cleaning, and this will be the responsibility of each PI/core head.

Equipment Concerns

- Plan ahead to ensure availability of parts, consumables, and reagents needed for equipment restart and operation.
- Verify or resume delivery of gases and cryogenics (e.g. carbon dioxide and liquid nitrogen).
- Equipment should be thoroughly cleaned (e.g., with 70% ethanol or equivalent solution), checked for performance, and have all required calibrations and quality control monitoring run before commencing regular operation.
- Water lines, coolants, hydraulics, and lubricants should be checked before equipment restart.
- Equipment should be cleaned regularly, especially between users, however instrument vendors may need to be consulted to ensure compatibility with cleaning supplies.
- Check chemical storage areas to be sure that all chemical containers are intact and properly stored. Be careful when opening refrigerators. Make sure materials in all storage areas are secure.

Guidance for Vendors, Contractors, and Suppliers from Procurement Services

Boston College has established policies informed by medical professionals and applicable guidance issued from local, state, and federal public health authorities, including guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MADPH) (collectively the “Guidelines”). Boston College requires all vendors, contractors, and suppliers to comply with all federal, state and local guidance regarding Covid-19, including providing facemasks and personal protective equipment (“PPE”) for their employees while on the College’s campus. Please see other requirements listed below under Minimal Standard Operating Procedures.

Boston College has established Minimal Standard Operating Procedures for all vendors, suppliers, and contractors to Boston College.

Minimal Standard Operating Procedures for Vendors, Contractors and Suppliers (MSOP): Boston College is restricting visits to the campus at this time. Only those vendors, suppliers, contractors, and visitors that must be on campus are allowed. If you must be on campus, please adhere to the following MSOP:

- You are required to conduct and pass a daily health self-assessment prior to coming to campus.
 - bc.edu/check
- Do not arrive on campus if you have any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you are prohibited from campus for 14 days while you quarantine.
- A face covering that complies with MADPH and/or CDC guidelines must be worn at all times when providing services or visiting campus. Please note that Boston College is not able to supply

vendors or visitors with face coverings or other personal protective equipment unless stated otherwise in their Boston College contract.

- Vendors, suppliers, contactors and visitors should routinely clean and wipe down high-touch surfaces in the area(s) within their work zone(s) and must follow CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection and use products that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19. Please note that Boston College is unable to provide cleaning supplies unless otherwise stated in their Boston College contract.
- [Social distancing practices](#) must be followed at all times. Activities that do not allow for social distancing must be reviewed and approved by the vendor and contractor's primary Boston College contact.
- Boston College is now a smoke free, tobacco free campus and as such smoking or the use of tobacco products is not allowed on any Boston College property.
- Boston College requires background checks on your employees if they visit campus.

All vendors, contractors, and suppliers sending employees to the College to visit or to provide a service are deemed to have acknowledged that (i) they have received this Notice, (ii) will comply with the requirements of this Notice, and (iii) have informed those employees about the College's policies and requirements, and their obligations to comply. Failure to comply may cause denial of entry onto the College campus and cancellation of the work. Questions regarding these requirements should be directed to purchase@bc.edu.

APPENDIX I

Guidelines for Continuation of Human Subjects Research

Overview

On March 17, we posted an update on human subjects research guidelines, which included the following:

- Ongoing research activities involving face-to-face interactions with participants, including new enrollment into these studies, were stopped immediately. For any studies that could be changed to remote/virtual participation (via Zoom, etc.), researchers were encouraged to submit an amendment requesting to do so.
- Approved research activities that do not involve face-to-face interactions could continue.
- Pending and new IRB submissions that did not involve in-person data collection continued to be reviewed and approved. For studies involving travel or face-to-face interactions, the Office for Research Protections would review the study, but specifically noted that the study was not approved for starting enrollment of subjects until COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.
- All on-campus labs engaging in human subjects data collection in person had to stop in-person interactions with participants immediately.

Return to Face-to-Face Interactions in Human Subjects Research

At this time, all human subjects research that can be conducted remotely must continue to be conducted remotely. This may include data collection via Zoom, phone, Qualtrics, Redcap, or other remote modalities (see below). Researchers must continue to submit IRB amendments for any changes to their protocols, including data collection method, through Cyber IRB.

For protocols where data collection cannot be completed remotely, researchers must submit an In-Person Data Collection Exemption Request via this [Google Forms link](#). This link will be available on the [Office for Research Protections website](#), as well as the [Vice Provost for Research website](#). The form will require researchers to provide a strong rationale for why their research cannot be conducted remotely, and how they will protect research team members and study participants in accordance with Massachusetts and Boston College public health guidelines.

For those who are collecting data at a site (such as a school, museum, or healthcare facility), an updated site permission letter must be submitted with the application stating any requirements around physical distancing, PPE usage, COVID testing, and sanitization procedures at the site. Research teams will be responsible for supplying their own PPE and sanitization materials, which can be ordered through WB Mason. Researchers who do not already have a WB Mason account can [click here](#) for information from Procurement Services on setting up an account with BC contracted pricing.

Researchers should be familiar with Massachusetts COVID-19 [regulations and guidance](#), such as physical distancing requirements, and develop a plan to maintain 6 feet of space between researchers and participants during data collection. It is important to note that even if a participant consented to participate before the research ramp-down due to COVID-19, they may no longer wish to participate in the research study, and should not be pressured to do so. It is recommended that they be immediately removed from the research study if they do not want to continue participating for any reason.

No research team member determined to be at a high risk for COVID-19 infection should be compelled to collect data in-person from human subjects. Any research team members who feel they are at a high risk for COVID-19 infection, either due to age or an underlying medical condition, may request reasonable [accommodations](#) through the Office of Institutional Diversity Special Accommodation process. In addition, PIs retain the prerogative to assign alternative research activities, if such activities exist, to team members who do not feel comfortable conducting in-person data collection.

Currently, Boston College has announced that no University-sponsored international travel is allowed. Data collection that involves domestic travel requires permission from the Provost, EVP, or VP of Human Resources. Please note that travel restrictions may change as policies set forth by Boston College evolve.

Research staff will be required to complete the [daily self-checklist](#) before each data collection session in accordance with Boston College guidelines, and develop a plan for how they will monitor the health status of research participants.

For researchers whose sites require a negative COVID-19 test before data collection begins, the VPR Office will help to coordinate on-campus testing of your research team members before your site visit.

Once your application has been received, it will be reviewed by a committee in the Office of the Vice Provost of Research. The Offices of Human Resources and Environmental Health and Safety will be consulted when necessary. Researchers will receive a written determination about the status of their request within 10 days of receipt.

As the public health situation may quickly change over the coming weeks and months, this plan is subject to change as well. Please reference the [VPR Research Continuity webpage](#) for up-to-date information. Questions about this policy can be forwarded to Erin Sibley, Director, Research Protections (erin.sibley@bc.edu).

Alternatives to In-Person Data Collection

Many Boston College researchers have taken advantage of platforms such as Zoom to collect data while maintaining social distancing orders. We encourage you to continue to use alternatives to in-person data collection whenever possible so that your research program may move forward. Please note that if you would like to explore an alternative data collection method, you should check to see if it is already included in BC's approved technology list which is overseen by Information Technology Services. If it is not, you will need to submit a technology acquisition request form to Information Technology Services. These links can be found [here](#). The Office for Research Protections cannot approve an alternative data collection technology if it has not been fully vetted by Information Technology Services.

Craft a Plan Specific to Your Protocol

Please refer to the above guidelines "Boston College guidelines for return to research laboratories and core facilities" to assist you in developing a specific research plan that will work best for their own protocols and their research team. As noted above, PIs and their co-researchers should be prepared to rapidly ramp down on short notice. If you are collecting data virtually at a site, you should work with your contact there to put a plan in place for how you will handle interruptions in data collection while minimizing risk to and burden on participants. If a research team member becomes sick or tests positive

for COVID-19 this should be reported to the PI immediately. If there is any concern that a research participant may have been exposed to the sick team member or PI, the IRB should be contacted immediately.

Consider your short-term and long-term research plans and how feasible it will be to collect the data remotely, and/or implement any other measures that will help research to continue as seamlessly as possible in the event of illness or a sudden research ramp-down. For example, this is not the time to plan a longitudinal study that can only be completed with in-person data collection visits.

As always, our office is here as a resource to help you navigate alternative data collection methods. We understand that these are stressful times for human subjects researchers, and we want to offer our support in any way we can. If you have any questions about best practices, ways to obtain consent remotely, or anything else, please email us at irb@bc.edu or call us at 617.552.4778.

APPENDIX II

Guidelines for Return to Research in the Animal Care Facility

For an overview of BC's guidelines for return to research in laboratories and facilities, please see the "Boston College guidelines for return to research laboratories and core facilities." It outlines physical distancing guidelines for labs, a self-monitoring measure that should be used daily by all lab employees, requirements for PPE, sanitization, and lab equipment. It is extremely important that even as students and other research staff return to campus, physical distancing must be maintained in all ACF rooms. It is the PI's responsibility to ensure that their lab has a schedule shared among all staff members to ensure the lowest possible density of researchers in workspaces at all times.

As research was ramped down at Boston College due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our priorities were to reduce the density of staff required in the ACF. With that in mind, we took a number of steps in the interest of the animals, the ACF staff, and researchers. This included reducing animal inventory, slowing breeding activities, delaying the purchase or transfer of animals, and staggering work schedules of ACF staff members.

As research gradually resumes across campus, we would like to share the following updates:

- The ACF staff members are now working their normal schedules while observing physical distancing guidelines. The ACF manager works remotely in the mornings, and comes to the ACF in the afternoons. Our top priority remains the provision of critical services that ensure animal welfare while maintaining the safety of our workers.
- ACF users must wear a mask into the ACF, remove it upon entering the ACF, and put on a clean mask before going into their workspace. They must also sign in and sign out of the facility log when entering and exiting the ACF.
- As the possibility remains that a new phase of public health emergency may create the renewed need to work remotely, animal researchers should consider the ramifications on their animal subjects of another ramp down while developing new projects and breeding protocols. However, animal ordering and breeding has resumed.
- IACUC approval processes remain the same, and any changes to research protocols must be submitted to IACUC for review and approval prior to implementation.
- ACF Orientation will not be held in person in most cases. Instead, researchers requiring orientation will be sent a digital copy of the training presentation, and will go through the presentation with the ACF Manager via Zoom or phone call. If an orientation session must take place in-person, these meetings will be held in the break room and conducted by the ACF Manager with one researcher at a time. Physical distancing must be maintained and masks must be worn at all times.
- Occupational health exams are still taking place at Physician One Urgent Care in Chestnut Hill, but the pulmonary function testing (PFT) is not being performed due to COVID-19.
- No more than two people at a time are allowed in the break room. Masks must be worn and physical distancing must be maintained.

- Laboratory safety must be considered during times of low staff density. Those working with hazardous chemicals or materials are encouraged not to work alone and not to work at off hours when fewer people are present.

APPENDIX III

Guidelines for Return to Core Facilities Operations

Overview

The same four general phases described in the general research laboratory guidelines will be followed in Boston College core facilities and recharge centers.

Introduction

Although all appropriate general research laboratory guidelines will be followed in core facilities and recharge centers, given the specific conditions and considerations within shared user laboratories, further specific information is being provided to assist core facility staff during research ramp-up, and to inform core facility users in certain new procedures that will need to be followed moving forward. Given the multi-user nature of many core facilities and recharge centers, issues regarding health assessment, reporting, individual behavior, and sanitization are especially important and need to be taken extremely seriously. While each core facility has developed a specific ramp-up plan which can be found on the [core webpages](#), this document provides general information regarding common aspects of core lab preparation and operation. This information is relevant to all university core facilities and research recharge centers including: The Center for Isotope Geochemistry, Flow Cytometry, the Imaging Facility, the Mass Spectrometry Center, the Magnetic Resonance Center (MRC), Scientific Instrumentation and Machining Services (SIMS), the X-ray Crystallography Center, the Scanning Electron Microscope and Transmission Electron Microscope Facilities (SEM/TEM), the Clean Room and Nanofabrication Facility (CRNF), and the Animal Care Facility (ACF). Issues specific to animal research are not included, as these are covered in separate guidance (Appendix II, above). In order to reduce our risks as much as possible, this must be a partnership and we urge you to reach out to the Offices of the Vice Provost for Research and Environmental Health and Safety if you feel you need additional guidance.

Core Laboratory Specific Instructions

- All physical distancing, PPE, and sanitization instructions described in the general research laboratory guidelines will be followed in core facilities at all times
- The [Association of Biomolecular Resource Facilities \(ABRF\) Core Facility Ramp-Up information document](#) should be employed in development of core facility specific SOPs and guidelines
- Signage describing core facility specific guidelines will be posted. Templates are available from the Office of University Communications website, and core specific signs can be produced
- New facility specific SOPs and guidelines will be disseminated to all core users and placed on the webpage of each core facility
- Core staff and users should immediately communicate any concerns regarding health and safety in core facilities to Joshua Rappoport, the Executive Director, Research Infrastructure (rappopoj@bc.edu)
- Research activity in core facilities may require with significantly reduced access, capacity, and throughput

- Online calendars will be generated by core staff and disseminated to facility users to permit scheduling of sample drop-off, and access to facility space and instruments
- There should be a system established by each core head for logging facility occupancy and to ensure that nobody is working alone without supervision or monitoring
- In person training of core facility users must be approved in advance by the relevant core head, the Executive Director, Research Infrastructure, and Environmental Health & Safety - for information please reach out to the Joshua Rappoport, the Executive Director, Research Infrastructure (rappopoj@bc.edu)
- All consultations between users and core staff should take place remotely
- Sample drop-off procedures that eliminate in-person conduct must be followed
- Support of users operating instruments should be performed remotely
- Instrument operation by core staff in the place of users should be implemented where possible
- All multi-user instruments and workspaces will be sanitized before and after utilization (see the Equipment Concerns section above)
- Core staff should continue to work from home as appropriate for administrative tasks, remote facility monitoring, user consultations, and other activities that do not require physical presence in the laboratory
- Cores with multiple staff members should consider working in shifts, and cross-training where necessary and appropriate
- Supplies, reagents, and consumables required for operation of core facilities should be ordered as soon as possible to reduce potential delays
- Core facility heads should communicate with each other regularly to share best practices, and potentially develop integrated plans for managing distribution of common items that might be difficult to procure
- Any required outside visitors, contractors, or vendor representatives that need to enter research buildings or labs must be entered into the appropriate [COVID-19 Building Department Office Log](#). Any required Vendors, Contractors, and Suppliers that need to enter research buildings or labs must follow the Guidance for Vendors, Contractors, and Suppliers from Procurement Services (see above). External users of core facilities must be approved in advance by the relevant core head, the Executive Director, Research Infrastructure, and Environmental Health & Safety - for information please reach out to the Joshua Rappoport, the Executive Director, Research Infrastructure (rappopoj@bc.edu)
- Core staff should consider contacting vendors to discuss the potential for remote software controls for equipment or offline data analysis tools
- ITS Technical Consultants may be able to assist core staff with tools for remote monitoring or operation of instruments

APPENDIX IV

Boston College

Laboratory/Local Field Research Continuity Plan

Request for Approval

Person submitting this form (Name, email, and cell phone number)

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Faculty (Name, email and cell phone number)

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Research Group/Laboratory Name

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Department and College

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Building and Room Number(s)

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Alternate Contact (Name, email and cell phone number)

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Describe the critical research activity that requires On-Site Personnel and/or local field research. What is the schedule (days and times) for On-Site Personnel to be on campus and/or in the field? Indicate if access is needed to shared equipment and facilities other than the rooms listed above, *e.g.* Animal Care Facility, Core Instrumentation Facilities, Departmental shared instrumentation/equipment. What would be the impact if On-Site Personnel are unable to come to campus? (300-500 words).

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Note, if local field work is proposed, indicate the location of site research in the state of Massachusetts and described how the research can be performed in accordance with public health guidance and that appropriate measures are taken to minimize the possibility of reintroducing the virus to the local area or that of the field. Include details about ramping down/contingency plans for research activities at the remote field site if they become impossible due to changing conditions at the state, local, or at the field site.

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Describe the on-site monitoring that will occur, *e.g.*, for safety of workers, maintenance of equipment etc. Indicate the schedule required.

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Identify On-Site Personnel who would require access to the laboratory or field work (Name, email and cell phone number).

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Describe the steps that will ensure social distancing and regular cleaning to ensure safety of personnel.

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What regular communication will take place with the personnel?

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Please list any special issues or concerns your department chair/head, dean, and the institution should be aware of.

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Please submit the completed via email to your departmental chair. You will receive confirmation via email and further communication as necessary.