

# Microbiology and Immunology Plan for the Return to On Campus Research

## **Context:**

The Department of Microbiology and Immunology plan for the return to on-campus research during the COVID-19 pandemic is to be in accordance with BC Health, WorkSafe BC. The rules, guidelines, and procedures to be followed are in addition to those defined for the building (eg. LSC, LMRS) and institute (eg. LSI, MSL) where work is being conducted. The plan will be submitted to the Faculty of Science as part of the process overseen by the office of the VPRI. For more information see:

<https://research.ubc.ca/phased-resumption-campus-research-scholarship-and-creative-activities>

## **Guiding principles:**

The UBC guiding principles for a phased resumption of on-campus research are:

- The health and well-being of faculty members, students and staff is paramount
- The orders, notices and guidance of the Provincial Health Officer will be followed
- Permission to conduct on-campus research and scholarship can only be granted to those who require on-campus resources and cannot work remotely
- There will be a phased and coordinated approach across each campus
- Phased resumption of activity may need to be reversed and stricter curtailment conditions imposed in response to public health guidance or changes to the situation on our campuses
- If an employee has a concern about returning to work, they will have an opportunity to discuss with their supervisor, Human Resources and their employee group, as appropriate
- Equity will be considered in evaluating how to plan and conduct research resumption

In addition the department has the following principle:

- If a student or postdoc has a concern about returning to work, they will have an opportunity to discuss with their supervisor, the graduate advisor, or the department head as appropriate

## **Responsibilities**

### **Head is responsible for**

- The development and maintenance of this safety plan.

- Approving faculty safety plans for their labs that ensure physical distancing and safe working practices.
- Assign and schedule monitors to ensure safety
- Communicate the department and building safety plans to faculty and research personnel

#### **Faculty / Principal Investigators are responsible to**

- Ensure all personnel under their supervision have read and understood all policies pertaining to their research site and adhere to all the Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC policies.
- Provide lab specific training for COVID prevention and record taking of lab specific training.
- Provide PPE to all lab personnel as required.
- Schedule on campus work for all personnel under their supervision to be compliant with UBC policies.
- Keep a log of all personnel under their supervision upon entering and leaving buildings on campus.
- Post the VPRI access agreement stating the maximum occupancy on lab entrances.
- Employ procedures including regular wiping of surfaces and shared equipment and the appropriate use of PPE for the safety of lab personnel.
- Lab personnel are to avoid working alone. If necessary, the worker is to notify the lab supervisor or designate when they enter and leave the lab.

#### **All on-campus faculty, staff, and trainees are to**

- Read, understand and signoff that they consent to following all the Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC policies pertaining to performing research during COVID-19.
- Report concerns regarding COVID-19 to faculty supervisors, as appropriate in the context of UBC and BC privacy regulations.
- Take the mandatory and required UBC COVID-specific training course.

### **Procedures**

#### **Before traveling to campus**

1. All work that can be done remotely must be done remotely. For example, data processing, writing manuscripts, creating presentations, studying, online library research, computations, should be done from home. If a suitable remote work environment is unavailable, you can request from your supervisor to work on campus.
2. Before coming to work, all staff, research personnel, teaching personnel and trainees must check their health status. Personnel experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, sneezing, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell/taste, sore throat, tiredness, fever) **must not come to work** and should contact a health care provider. The BC Health Self-Assessment tool can be used to determine if you require further testing or medical care: <https://bc.thrive.health/>.

3. Individuals displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (described above) must remain at home and isolated for at least 14 days. Personnel who have been in contact with a person confirmed or presumed to have COVID-19 must also self-isolate.

Note: If a person feels that the workplace is unsafe then they are required to tell their supervisor. If they feel uncomfortable to do so or do not get a resolution, then they may approach the graduate advisor or Head and do not report to work.

### **On-campus work**

Minimize time at UBC, work from work from home whenever possible. Time spent in a campus building must be kept to the minimum required to achieve research goals. During Phase 1, no in-person meetings will be allowed. Meetings will continue to be held remotely. In phase 1, ~1/3 of the normal occupancy of buildings will be allowed. Access will be limited and scheduled for M-F 7:00 am – 6:00 pm or M-F 7:00 am – 12:00 noon + 3:30 pm – 8:00 pm for shifts to ensure custodial staff can clean labs and other spaces. Any PI/lab wanting to work on a shift basis will need to make a request through their building administrator.

1. Scheduling and logs.
  - The number of personnel from a research group present concurrently will be determined by the Head subject to building policy.
  - Priority for lab access will determined by the PI in accordance with UBC equity policies.
  - The PI or a delegate will schedule access of lab personnel to buildings. The schedule is to be made available to the Head on request. The schedule must abide by building hours, the need for custodial services, and UBC policy.
  - Group personnel will log entering and leaving. Use of online tools for tracking lab accesses is encouraged.
2. Physical distancing
  - Strict physical distancing of 2 meters (6 feet) must be maintained at all times. If physical distancing cannot be achieved appropriate PPE must be worn as per UBC policy.
  - Follow directions in buildings for elevators, stairwells, etc.
  - Do not congregate in common areas. No gatherings are permitted and meetings are to be held remotely.
3. Use of PPE
  - Additional PPE usage will be according to BC Health requirements and is otherwise a personal choice.
  - Additional use of PPE may be required by building or institute rules and use should follow Safety and Risk Services guidelines.

4. Masks
  - Mask usage is encouraged in common areas and is required when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Bringing and using your own cloth masks is allowed and explicitly encouraged.
5. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer when entering or leaving any space such as
  - entering or leaving a building
  - common labs and other spaces
6. Lab and office cleaning
  - Disinfectant should be used to wipe down any frequently touched surfaces pre- and post- use.
  - Principal investigators will establish lab specific cleaning procedures.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an emergency, building emergency plans are to be followed while adhering to the best possible physical distancing practices. The LSC Emergency Response Procedures can be found at: <https://mednet.med.ubc.ca/ServicesAndResources/Facilities/LSC/Health-Safety/Pages/Emergency-Contacts-Procedures.aspx>

### **Maintaining a safe working environment for everyone**

A safe work environment is a shared responsibility. The UBC, Faculty, building, and Department plans and policies do not cover every possible circumstance that may arise. Faculty, staff, and trainees are encouraged to discuss (from a safe distance, or preferably online) work place safety and recommend changes to common practice in their workplace and to this document.

Overall compliance will be monitored by inspection of electronic sign in logs, key card access, and periodic checks by safety staff. Concerns about non-compliance should be reported to their lab manager, supervisor, or the Department Head. A monitor (typically a faculty member, but may be another responsible person like a health and safety office or department administrator) will be designated for each day who is a safety contact in the event of an accident. The contact information of the monitor will be broadcasted so that they can be reached if there is a safety incident. The monitor will inform the lab supervisor (and Head/Director if necessary) of any infractions. A pattern of non-compliance could result in losing building access.

### **Communications**

This plan will be emailed to all faculty, staff, and students engaged in research. A copy will be made available on the department website under resources with a link on the home page. A physical copy of this document will be available on the bulletin board located on the main floor of LSC, located in the main colonnade, near the entry points to LSC1 and the West Atrium.