

## **MU-RR Stage 4: Return to Steady State Operations with On-going COVID-19 Protections**

Stage 4 represents a return to steady state operations with, however, on-going COVID-19 Protections. The VPRI will, in consultation with the University's COVID-19 Response Team, determine the timeframe for transition to Stage 4. This timeline will be determined following an evaluation of the level of strict adherence to the requirements of prior stages, current public health status, and the University's capacity to support the increased level of activity.

Note: current University guidelines require 6' social distancing and wearing a cloth mask when in shared spaces. This includes individuals who are vaccinated. Researchers will continue to follow the University's guidelines. We will continue update and modify requirements based on changes to the University's Recovery Plan Protocols. Social distancing requirements will lifted on June 1, 2021, following the City of Milwaukee orders. Further guidance on mask wearing requirements will be forthcoming.

### General Laboratory Guidelines

Stage 4 for returning to work in the research laboratories of Marquette University will be guided by the following principles. These may be adapted prior to, or during, implementation based upon best public health practices and University policy. Stage 4 permits in-person meetings and return to campus for other types of research work that was previously done remotely, assuming that the guidelines below are followed as well as any University requirements. Note that Appendix B is no longer required.

- Research will be conducted in University offices and laboratory facilities. Remote work practices will follow normal University policies.
- Research meetings, including laboratory meetings, can be conducted within the facilities, complying with current University restrictions on meeting size and social distancing requirements.
- Individuals uncomfortable with working on-site must work with their faculty supervisors and Department Chair to resolve conflicts on workplace safety and determine an acceptable plan for participating in research activities.
- Anyone entering any University facility must successfully complete the COVID Cheq self-assessment prior to starting work.
  - Faculty and students who have been automatically opted out of COVID Cheq at the end of the academic term can opt back in for daily reminders [by completing this form](#) (note that the same form allows you to opt out if you are currently opted in). If you are not regularly on campus, you can request a [COVID Cheq Single Day Pass](#), which will allow you to take the screening in order to visit campus for the day.
  - Individuals developing viral symptoms while at work must leave the facility immediately.
  - Researchers are required to assist with contact tracing when needed.
- Social distancing requirements of 6' remain in effect at this time. Face masks are required when in spaces occupied by others and in common use areas.
- Consistent and regular handwashing is expected.
- Laboratory workspace, keyboards, etc. should be cleaned regularly, particularly for shared equipment and areas.
- On-campus research activities involving populations under 18 years of age will require review by the University.

### Work with Human Research Participants

Note that IRB review and approval is required for all research involving human participants. See <https://www.marquette.edu/research-compliance/irb/> for detailed information.

- Research participants coming to campus should be screened prior to arrival and follow the protocols described in Appendix E. University guidelines with respect to mask wearing and social distancing must be followed.
- Research activities where social distancing is not possible require an approved PPE plan. In most cases, PPE guidelines can follow the current practices in related Marquette clinical programs.
- New research projects (as well as existing projects that have been paused) that require face-to-face contact can be initiated so long as they adhere to the previously established guidelines and review and approval processes.
- A detailed SOP for working with human research participants (Appendix G) and a COVID-19 risk information sheet for research participants (Appendix H) have been created and reviewed by the Marquette COVID-19 medical team. Please contact the Office of Research and Innovation ([innovation@marquette.edu](mailto:innovation@marquette.edu)) if you have questions or need to discuss other options for your study.

### Field Work and Community-Based Research Activities

- Field, clinical, and community-based research with human participants where social distancing can be maintained (6 feet distance between researcher and participant) and/or risk mitigated to a minimal level, is allowed. Note that local and specific site settings may have additional guidelines that will need to be adhered to.
  - Researchers should consult with partners at off-campus sites prior to engaging in research activities to ensure that there is a common understanding of protocols.
- Researchers should wear masks when traveling in groups to off-campus research locations.

### Animal Resource Center

Research faculty must complete the Stage 4 Animal Research Activities Survey that will be sent by the ARC Director. This survey will require information to be provided on:

- Current cage utilization within the animal holding room(s) of the ARC facilities.
- Projected cage capacity needs for Stage 4 by the research faculty for the next 6 months. This includes experiments and animal breeding.
- Tentative timeline on the projected Stage 4 cage increase so that the Animal Resource Center staff can decide if any sub-phasing needs to be accommodated due to staffing issues for husbandry and animal care.

At this stage, the standard operating procedure (SOP) that was used to approve and review essential animal research activities will be discontinued. The ARC will resume normal animal ordering procedures for review and approval.

Coordination and approval with the ARC Management staff must take place to ensure compliance with all safety and COVID-19 guidelines, PPE requirements, and ARC facility and staff needs.

- All ARC users will adhere to the above general laboratory safety guidelines.
- Social distancing guidelines will be followed in the ARC facility rooms.
- Occupancy signs for all ARC facility spaces will be posted and must be adhered to.
- **Refer to Appendix C – Animal Resource Center Ramp Up Plan for further information.**

Stage 4 represents a phased return to full animal research operations. The return to the new normal protocols may be gradual and, in some cases, it may require additional sub-phases, which can be defined under guidance of Department Chair, ARC Management, and the VPRI.

#### Research Travel

University travel for the purposes of attending research conferences will be allowed in Fiscal Year 2022 (starting July 1, 2021), contingent on the ability to travel safely and the local guidelines at the destination. Faculty seeking to attend an in-person conference will need to request and receive approval from their dean prior to making any travel plans. Note that University funding for conference attendance will be limited. Travel is also allowed for conducting essential research, defined at this time as travel to locations outside of the Milwaukee metropolitan area to perform research that cannot be done via remote alternatives and that is time-sensitive and cannot be reasonably postponed (e.g. work with project deadlines, grant milestones, funding timelines, faculty at critical career junctures, graduate students who need to complete degree requirements, or field work with seasonally dependent data collection). Researchers who wish to engage in essential research travel, as defined above, must request and receive permission from their dean prior to scheduling any travel. The general university travel guidance must be followed. Faculty should discuss with their deans how to mitigate potential impact on other university duties if they end up needing to quarantine after returning or if they cannot return as initially planned, as part of the approval process. Note that travel to international destinations, whether for conferences or for conducting research, will be reviewed with respect to the current U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories.