

From: [President Mark S. Schlissel](#)
To: hjablon@umich.edu
Subject: Our plans for safely and gradually resuming activities
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To All Members of the University Community:

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has announced that in-person [laboratory research can resume](#) with limitations based on public health guidance.

As the largest public research university in the nation, this is a significant development for our state and our university as we continue to adapt to the coronavirus pandemic. We're beginning to see how certain activities can resume in a public health-informed manner, while also understanding that work will be very different in the months ahead. Here's what this means for us right now:

All work that can be done remotely must continue to be done remotely. This includes office and dry lab work.

Our state remains under the governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe order, but as detailed in her [MI Safe Start Plan](#), various economic and work activities can resume in phases. We are taking a similar approach at U-M, and planning for a safe and gradual return is underway at the university level and in our schools, colleges and units. Initially, we are only bringing back a subset of labs for in-person work.

In fact, some of the same U-M public health experts who are providing advice at the state level also are helping us formulate guidance for our campuses. This is a complex endeavor for a university as large and diverse as ours, and I appreciate the thoughtful work that is being done to help us all be safe.

Some in-person research labs and studios will open under strict public health guidelines.

The Office of the Vice President for Research has been working on plans to ramp up in-person research almost from the moment when we had to suspend it two months ago. This extensive planning has included close collaboration with leaders and investigators in our schools, colleges, institutes and regional campuses.

They have mapped out a plan, in alignment with state and other public health guidelines, to bring back in-person experimental lab and studio-based research in waves so as to minimize risk. The first pilot wave will involve a few carefully chosen labs, with strict public health guidelines for faculty, staff and graduate students. Guidelines will include such things as monitored entry into buildings, a requirement to wear a face covering and maintaining a low density of people in a lab at any one time. We'll track performance metrics for each wave, and that will determine how and when we open additional labs. Additional details will be sent soon

to the research community and published in [The University Record](#).

Please note that even though individual labs in different buildings will resume operation, this does not mean that everyone in those buildings can return immediately. It's quite the contrary. We still need to manage density of spaces and strictly abide by the best public health practices, including requiring all work to be done remotely that can be done remotely.

We need your continued cooperation.

This differential and staggered approach to resumption of activity will be the next great test of our resolve and compassion for one another. Full compliance with state and other public health guidelines will help to ensure that we'll be able to resume more work as quickly and safely as possible. We have to accept this shared responsibility even as different parts of our university resume activity at varying speeds.

I know this is difficult. We all want to be back to in-person work. I very much miss seeing the vibrancy of campus each day and look forward to being able to walk into the office again. To help us reach the day when we can all be together, shared responsibility is essential, not just for our mission but for each other, our families and our future health.

While we know that life and work will be not be the same for a long time, I am very optimistic about our future. The planning taking place at all levels is thorough and impressive, and we'll share more information as soon as we can. This includes our [preparations for the fall](#), as we hope to be able to deliver a public health-informed fall semester with in-person instruction on our campuses.

What's clear right now is that the care we have for our students, faculty, staff, patients, visitors and communities is always at the forefront of our efforts. The immediate future of the University of Michigan will look very different than what we have been accustomed to, but it will continue to be determined by the excellence and hard work of the many people who are devoted to our public mission. That's why I am optimistic.

Thank you, all, for your continued diligence. Stay healthy.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Schlissel, M.D., Ph.D.
President

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