



Dear Johns Hopkins Community:

As we begin our 10th week of significantly reduced campus operations, I join you in the collective desire to return to our campuses, labs, classrooms, workspaces, and some sense of normalcy. While [our operational status remains unchanged](#), the university is actively and thoughtfully planning for what a safe, phased, informed return will look like.

On behalf of the 2020 Research Workgroup, I share you with [our draft recommended guidelines](#) for a gradual, phased approach to reestablishing the full breadth of research activities at Johns Hopkins University. The workgroup has deliberated on the many facets of research carried out at Johns Hopkins and received significant input and review from research faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students, and school leadership.

The recommended guidelines are shaped by [the planning framework](#) shared with you on May 5 and are intended to elicit community feedback. They will be revised further based on that feedback and review by the deans.

**Tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m., I will host a [virtual town hall meeting](#) to review the path forward, address your questions, and incorporate your feedback into the planning process.** I will be joined by Antony Rosen, professor and vice dean for research at the School of Medicine, and moderator Stephen Gange, professor and executive vice provost for academic affairs. You can submit questions for the town hall by email to [covidthownhall@jhu.edu](mailto:covidthownhall@jhu.edu). If you cannot attend, you can provide feedback on all aspects of the planning process through the [online comment form](#). Students are also encouraged to reach out to members of the [Student Advisory Committee](#).

No final decisions or specific timelines have been set, as the health and safety of our community remains paramount, and we continue to monitor local and state regulations. In the meantime, advancing our planning and preparedness will better position us to resume suspended research activities to the greatest extent possible as soon as it is prudent. As with many things in this current environment of uncertainty, we must also recognize the need for flexibility and expect that we may need to adjust, advance, or retreat as deemed appropriate to ever-changing circumstances.

### **Guiding Principles**

Our JHU Research Return to Campus plan has been developed based on the following basic guiding principles:

- Our highest priority is to put health and safety first. We will implement physical distancing and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the controllable environments of our laboratories, libraries, and associated spaces. And we will pay special attention to the needs of vulnerable populations, making reasonable accommodations through Human Resources and Disability Services where warranted. More guidance is forthcoming.
- We will adopt an evidence-based risk management approach to the COVID-19 challenge, and our decisions will be guided by state and local public leaders and health experts. We will abide by federal, state, and local restrictions and the most current OSHA, CDC, and related government guidance.
- At this time (while we are still prior to Phase 1 of our plan), and when we enter Phase 1, personnel should be on campus in a laboratory only to perform necessary experiments and other research activities that require physical presence; all other work should continue to be performed at home.

### **Phased Approach to Resuming Research Activity**

In keeping with the university's broad approach to resuming all activities, we will follow a similarly designed pathway to resuming research activity through multiple phases consistent with both state and local restrictions and our own public health experts' assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic and the complexities inherent in protecting the health and safety of our students and postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and staff.

The draft recommended guidelines posted today address a range of issues researchers will face during Phase 1 of our resumption of activities, including health and safety issues (occupancy limits, hygiene, cleaning, health monitoring and other issues); preparation for PIs; concerns for lab personnel and decisions about participation by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; plans for access to library resources; and other matters. The document is meant to integrate seamlessly with other university guidance, divisional planning efforts, and critical cross-cutting university functions—including facilities, Health, Safety and Environment (HSE), health and wellness (including testing and contact tracing), human resources, information technology, transportation, and security—to safely support full resumption of research and other activities on campus. Detailed guidance in those areas will follow in the coming weeks.

On behalf of the university's leadership, I am grateful for your cooperation, fortitude, and creativity during this time. Over the last several months in response to COVID 19, Johns Hopkins has further elevated its prominence globally in research expertise, leadership, and ingenuity. Moving forward, we are counting on all of you as we meet and exceed our own expectations in addressing one of the greatest challenges of our lifetimes.

Sincerely,

Denis Wirtz  
Vice Provost for Research

TH Smoot Professor, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering