

Research Safety Plan for Students

Spring 2021 semester

Wake Forest University recognizes that the ability for both graduate and undergraduate students to conduct mentored research on campus is important for both the education of our students and for the productivity of our faculty. This document provides general safety guidelines for conducting scholarly projects with Wake Forest faculty members (or their designates) in laboratories, studio spaces, offices, and other areas in which mentored scholarship may happen between faculty and the students of Wake Forest.

The guidelines provided here will be in effect from January 24 to May 13, 2021. These guidelines only apply to mentored research and scholarship activities. These guidelines apply to both graduate and undergraduate students who are enrolled at Wake Forest. As for students from nearby schools, such as Winston-Salem State University and Salem College, they will be treated similarly to other non-WFU researchers, such as visiting scientists, or collaborators, whose activities in research at Wake will be curtailed. Exceptional cases (of non-WFU researchers/students being given access to campus research facilities) would need to be recommended by the department chair/Dean to the Associate Provost for Research, for appeal to the Campus Activity Review committee.

Until such time as COVID-related concerns have passed, any faculty-student collaboration/research project or scholarly activity that can achieve success remotely should continue to do so in order to minimize unnecessary campus occupancy. Such activities include regularly scheduled laboratory group meetings, journal clubs, student presentations, virtual scientific research interventions, and research planning meetings. It is recognized, however, that some projects require efforts in laboratories or spaces that cannot be utilized in a remote manner. However, we strongly encourage group meetings, etc. be conducted remotely. If such a meeting needs to be convened, a large enough room must be used to maintain social distancing, and data/discussion points must be projected on a wall screen so that no one has to view the same monitor. This guide aims to assist our faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students in reducing their risk of COVID-19 infection, and is in line with COVID-19 workplace guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS).

The goal of these guidelines is to outline safe practices for mentored research between faculty (or their designates) with graduate and undergraduate students, and are in addition to Project 1.A.03 - Protocols for Resumption of Research Activity [Research Restart Guide](#) from last summer. It is assumed that the same guidelines in place this fall for mentoring graduate and undergraduate students in research be applied to the conduct of research during the winter intersession. Faculty and laboratory managers are referred to the text of Project 1.A.03 for these guidelines.

Additional resources can be found at:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>
- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
- <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance>

Goals

- Allow students to continue to participate in research and creative activities, while continuing to protect the health and safety of our employees, students, patients, and community.
- Encourage continued social distancing and limited on-site activity to only that which is necessary, identifying creative approaches to completing work remotely without compromising study integrity or mentorship experiences.

Integration of Students into Mentored Research & Scholarship

Students will be permitted to engage in on-campus mentored research & scholarship activities from January 23 to May 13, 2021 under the following conditions and standards. This guidance will remain in place during the spring semester.

The most important four elements that will help keep students and others safe are:

- (i) You must use the SneezeSafe app on a daily basis - do not come to your scholarly space (i.e., office/laboratory/studio) if you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- (ii) wear a [CDC recommended face covering](#) (i.e., multi-layer cloth mask, surgical mask, or any N95 mask that does not have an exhalation valve - no bandanas or single-layer masks, etc.). However, N95 masks are generally not to be worn, unless a specific procedure requires it, as indicated in the table at the end of the Human Subjects part of the [Research Restart Guide](#). Masks must cover your nose and reach below your chin.
- (iii) wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.
- (iv) keep at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and others whenever possible.

Compliance with these guidelines, provided by public health authorities, are the backbone of current safe practices. In addition, guidelines for reporting and conduct, as well as specific guidance from mentors/research supervisors, Principal Investigators (PIs), and building administrators is required for the continued safe operations of and access to Wake Forest University work spaces.

As faculty consider re-integrating undergraduates into their laboratories and other creative activities, they must consider the plausibility of whether these general guidelines can be applied on a case-by-case basis. Students who are already trained may be relatively easy to re-integrate while maintaining six feet of distance from others in the laboratory/work space. For students who require training on laboratory or studio procedures, in some instances it may be possible to train remotely or with sufficient distancing. However, in other cases it may be impossible to train a new undergraduate while maintaining a safe distance. Faculty members, as they choose/offer to work with students, must be cognizant that some forms of training and research may simply not be possible within the constraints of ongoing public health recommendations. If that is true for any individual case, then the undergraduate is **not permitted** to engage in the project.

Conditions that must be met and/or maintained to engage in mentored scholarship:

- No current Shelter in Place Orders (Federal, State & Local)
- Continued guidance from clinical and public health experts that we are not putting our employees, students, patients, and/or community at undue risk through the conduct of research.
- Adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) for clinical, research, and education enterprises must be maintained by those mentoring such students. As recommended by the EH & S Office, there is a need for a two-week supply of PPE for any office, laboratory, studio, or research space in which one-on-one mentoring will happen between faculty and students.
- Ability to implement and maintain strategies to reduce potential COVID-19 transmission in the workplace. Faculty mentors of students must be in compliance with guidelines for Building Standards, Requirements on Use of Personal Protection Equipment and Face Coverings prior to engaging in mentored scholarship, and provide training for their students on the Requirements to Access and Use Research Laboratories as outlined in Project 1.A.03 (Protocols for Resumption of Research Activity [Research Restart Guide](#)). We will assume faculty mentors have provided students with such training without the need to formally report it, as part of their responsibility to conduct research in their labs and other spaces safely. If students were already trained in the fall, then safety training is not required unless warranted by a change in the research activities.

Personal Responsibility and Notification Requirements:

Prior to beginning mentored scholarship and creative activities with a faculty member, the student should consider if s/he might be at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. If so, these concerns should be discussed between the student and the faculty member (without the student having to disclose the reason why the student is at higher risk), *prior to* the beginning of any on-campus activity. However, a student may prefer to discuss these concerns with the Learning Assistance Center – Disability Services or the Student Health Service, and the student may submit a request for an accommodation.

Without exception, all laboratory and studio personnel must stay home if they are sick. **On a daily basis, students must perform the daily wellness check (SneezSafe app) administered through the Student Health Service. Completion of this wellness check is required before performing any scholarly or creative activity in a university managed space.**

Students or personnel who have been tested for COVID-19 (awaiting results) or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should NOT come to work until they receive either a negative test result, or if their test is positive they are fever-free for 24 hours, their symptoms have improved, and they are 10 days past symptom onset. For further up-to-date guidance, see these [CDC guidelines](#).

- **Students** should report their positive test result to the Wake Forest Student Health Services (336-758-5218 or traceshs@wfu.edu).
- Infected persons have the right to privacy. Employers have been encouraged by the CDC to question their employees regarding travel, exposure, or symptoms related to COVID-19. Any medical information disclosed as part of this dialogue should be treated as confidential. If a positive case is identified, Wake Forest Employee Health Services will assist with contact tracing.
- **Current guidance states that anyone who has been within 6 ft. of someone who tests positive with COVID-19 for >15 minutes cumulative over a 24-hour period will be required to quarantine for up to 14 days.**

Necessary training for Students prior to engaging in on-campus mentored scholarship:

The Reynolda Campus has formulated a [Research Restart Guide](#), which outlines Building Standards, Requirements on the Use of Personal Protection Equipment and Face Coverings, and specific Requirements to Access and Use Research Laboratories (which are applicable to all spaces in which mentored scholarship is to happen). The **Guide** also specifically outlines safety guidelines specific to the conduct of Human Subjects Research, which are required of all personnel (including students) involved in such projects.

The **Guide** applies to all researchers including students. Faculty, staff, and all students should read and abide by all of the standards and procedures set therein.

All newly engaged students must follow the steps below prior to beginning research in Reynolda Campus programs (including those located at Wake Downtown or other locations where doing research under the mentorship of WFU faculty). If you have been engaged in research with the mentor already, then you may continue conducting scholarly activities under the same guidelines you operated under in the fall.

1. *Read and understand the [Research Restart Guide](#).* It is required that faculty mentors will discuss the implementation of the *Guide* as it relates to the student's project and work within the laboratory/studio/research space. A record of this discussion is to be made, and kept on site.
2. *Understand your laboratory or studio cleaning protocols.* Prior to reopening, research and performance spaces are required to have a standard operating procedure for cleaning and sanitizing workspaces (see Protocols for Resumption of Research Activity [Research Restart Guide](#)). Undergraduates must read and understand the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for any laboratory, studio, or research space where they are conducting mentored scholarship. If needed, faculty should update the SOP on file to incorporate undergraduates.
3. *Understand your PPE requirements.* To minimize viral spread, all members of the research team (including faculty and undergraduate students) should wear their daily-cleaned face covering and wash their hands regularly. Laboratory gloves, lab coats, and goggles should be used, as appropriate, based on the demands of the research project.

Guidelines for the washing of face coverings can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>

4. *Schedule your time in the laboratory.* Faculty and students should work together to discuss those research activities that must be performed in the laboratory. Activities should be pre-planned by the research team in order to ensure 6-foot distancing can be maintained while team members are in the lab; in some cases this may necessitate rotating shifts with other lab members.
5. *Pre-plan your time in the laboratory or performance area.* Design the experiments to be conducted on campus efficiently, minimizing your time in the laboratory when possible.

In all circumstances, adherence to the [Research Restart Guide](#) is expected. If Environmental Health and Safety personnel observe violations to these guidelines, they will notify researcher supervisors, who should take appropriate action by changing work practices or by re-emphasizing practices already expected to be adhered to for the safety of all. Of course, ultimately each person in a shared space is responsible for individually adhering to the guidelines established by the university and by their mentors and the research group.

Note regarding shared research and performance spaces: The above training and guidelines are the minimum required for a student to begin working in research spaces. Specialized facilities, such as the Microscopy Core (Winston Hall) or the Special Collections (in ZSR library) may have specific rules and requirements for safety and training that go beyond those provided here.

Scholarly Activities in Scales Fine Arts Center

Many faculty in the Theatre and Dance, Art and Music departments conduct research with students throughout the school year as we rehearse, design, and prepare for productions in our theatres, studios, shops and practice spaces. Often, these spaces are also used as teaching spaces as well as for scholarship, as there are no dedicated research spaces separate from where classes are conducted. On Wednesday, July 29, 2020, department chairs in SFAC met with John Shenette and Chris Poe to finalize space use in the fall. D101 and 204, Tedford Stage and House (seating), The Ring Stage and Ring House plans were all approved by Shenette and Poe. In addition, the SFAC Scene Shop and 211 Design rooms have also been approved by Associate Dean Laura Giovanelli's group. The Hanes Gallery space (under the office of the Provost), though not a teaching space or a research space per se, will feature an exciting exhibition this year that students and faculty alike will reference in their scholarly research. Its floor plan and the stArt gallery floor plans (in Reynolda Village) are attached. The access plan for both spaces is currently being reviewed by Shenette and Poe and will be updated accordingly via the space committee run by Laura Giavonelli.

Scholarly Activities at the WFU School of Medicine

Since undergraduate students can engage in research and scholarly activities with mentors on the Reynolda Campus, they should also be allowed to be mentored by faculty at the Medical School, as long as they agree to abide by the guidelines established by the medical school for employees engaged in research. This means that the students must adhere to the medical school's COVID-19 policies and those of the collaborating department.

Scholarly Activities Form for Students

The Reynolda Campus has formulated a [Research Restart Guide](#). The **Guide** applies to all researchers including students. All newly engaged research students who have not done so already should read and abide by all of the standards and procedures set therein.

Students beginning to conduct scholarly activities in research spaces (laboratories, studios, other work spaces) **for the first time** must follow the steps below to restart research activities in Reynolda Campus programs (including those located at Wake Downtown or other locations where doing research under the mentorship of WFU faculty).

1. *Read and understand the **Research Restart Guide**.* Contact your advisor with any questions. Not all sections will apply to all undergraduates, e.g. the part on Human Subjects research will only be required by those working with patients or other participants needed for their research or scholarly activities.
2. *Understand your laboratory cleaning protocols.* Work with your advisor and research group members to develop an appropriate cleaning regimen and understand your part in the process. Work with your advisor to ensure you have training in all safety practices needed to maintain a safe work environment in your advisor's spaces in which you will be working.
3. *Understand your PPE requirements.* To minimize viral spread, wear your daily-cleaned face covering and wash your hands regularly. Use laboratory gloves, lab coats, and goggles where appropriate based on your research protocols.
4. *Schedule your time in the laboratory.* Contact your advisor to discuss those research activities that must be performed in the laboratory. Work with your advisor and group members to schedule your time to ensure 6 foot distancing can be maintained while in the lab; in some cases this may necessitate rotating shifts with other lab members.
5. *Pre-plan your time in the laboratory.* Design the experiments to be conducted on campus efficiently, minimizing your time in the laboratory when possible.

In all circumstances, adherence to the [Research Restart Guide](#) is expected. If Environmental Health and Safety personnel observe or are informed of violations to these guidelines, they will notify researcher supervisors, who have the ultimate responsibility for safe laboratory operations at all times.

If you have specific health and safety concerns about your return to the laboratory or scholarly space, please consult with your advisor, the Learning Assistance Center – Disability Services, or the Student Health Service.

Signature Required. Before restarting research or scholarly activities at Wake Forest, undergraduate students must sign this form to attest that they have read, have understood, and will follow these guidelines.

Sign: _____

Print name: _____

This page must be signed and turned in to your mentor/advisor.