

Guidance on Conducting Research During Covid-19 Restrictions

Biosafety and Radiation Safety FAQ. UPDATE 03.04.2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all members of the community, including our Western Sydney research community. Information and advice from Government, health agencies and the University is changing constantly and the key message for all researchers is to be aware of that advice and adhere to it.

The Western Sydney University Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee provides the following advice for researchers and academics with ongoing research/teaching projects.

These FAQs will be updated regularly. If you would like a copy of the latest FAQs please email biosafetyradiation@westernsydney.edu.au

1. Will the Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committee (BRSC) still meet to review new applications, annual reports and amendments?

The BRSC currently meet via Zoom to review applications, reports and amendments. The meeting schedule for 2020 remains unchanged. Please visit

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research/research_ethics_and_integrity/biosafety for more information.

Researchers are still required under guidelines mandated by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the University to provide annual progress reports to the committee.

2. I currently have an ongoing experiment, should I continue it?

If your current experiment/work is critical and requires you to be on campus (e.g. for monitoring requirements such as in the case of animal work or plant growth), then please discuss this with your supervisor. You will need to gain specific approval from the Dean of School or Institute Director for such projects by outlining why it is crucial to complete the experiments.

Staff and researchers are reminded that they are required to practice physical distancing and undertake additional precautions regarding cleaning, handwashing and general hygiene when working on campus.

3. I have some new experiments planned, am I able to start them now?

New experiments due to start over the next few months may need to be postponed due to the current situation. For example, if monitoring requirements for certain projects (such as plant growth) cannot be adequately maintained due to decreased access to University facilities

4. My research was delayed by the COVID-19 situation, what should I do?

If your research has been/will be delayed due to the current COVID-19 situation, it may be possible to extend your project approval period beyond the specified maximum period of 3 years. More information will be provided soon.

5. What other information about the Covid-19 situation and University activities is available to me?

The University's Vice Chancellor is making regular updates via email. There is advice from the [IT Coronavirus webpage](#). There are health and wellbeing tips [here](#).

Please be assured that all Research Services staff, including the ethics team and the ethics committees, continue to work to assist the Western Sydney University's research community through this period and come out the other side ready to move forward. As all staff are now offsite, if you wish to speak with an ethics team member please email biosafetyradiation@westernsydney.edu.au and provide a phone number or outline your query in the email.

If your work also involves animal or human research ethics, please see the respective FAQs.