

Dear SOM MS and PHD Students,

We understand how disruptive the COVID-19 pandemic has been to your research and academic training, along with many other aspects of your lives. We also understand how eager students and advisors are to return to on-campus research activities. As I am sure you are aware, the importance of everyone's safety necessitates a phased return to on-campus research.

You should have received several messages outlining our phased approach. Here, I provide an overview of key aspects of the phased return to research and research training for graduate MS and Ph.D. students in the School of Medicine.

- All students must follow all [VCU](#), School of Medicine, departmental and program guidance at all times.
- MS and Ph.D. students can return to research and research training according to the staffing guidelines for Phase 2 of the [OVPRI's Return 2 Research plan](#).
- Although Phase 2 starts Monday, June 15, students should recognize that:
  - All research that can be performed remotely should continue to be conducted in that manner.
  - Students will not be able to return to their research training on campus on June 15 given the time required to complete the requisite steps below.
  - Students who do not feel safe or comfortable returning to on-campus work will not be compelled to do so. Students should contact [me](#) if they feel pressured to return.
- Before returning to on-campus research, each student must:
  - Complete the re-boarding module on Blackboard and provide their advisor with a screenshot or other documentation confirming completion of the module. This module is expected to be available to students very soon.
  - Coordinate with and be approved to return by their advisor and their advisor's department/unit.
- While on campus, all students must:
  - Wear a face covering or mask. Upon returning to campus, students will be given a safety kit from their department or advisor. This kit will include cloth face coverings, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray and safety information.
  - Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others.
  - Monitor their health daily.
  - Clean and disinfect personal and shared spaces before and after use. Cleaning supplies will be available in numerous locations.

On behalf of the School of Medicine, I thank you for your patience and understanding as we phase in graduate student research and research training. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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