

Appendix F: Policies and Procedures for Reopening On-Site Research Activities

I. Overview

This Research Reopening Plan provides a roadmap for the gradual, deliberate, and safe resumption of on-site research activities at Baruch College. As the landscape of the pandemic evolves, this plan will be updated accordingly.

In drafting this document, Baruch College leadership foregrounded the imperative to follow not just CUNY Office of Research policy and guidelines, but also those set forth by the City and State of New York, as well as federally. Ultimately the intent of the Research Reopening Plan is to provide compliant, but also clear and campus-specific, guidelines, policies and best practices supporting the ongoing fulfillment of the Baruch College mission.

Baruch College President David Wu, Provost and Senior Vice President Linda Essig, and Associate Provost for Research Patricia Price have reviewed this Research Reopening Plan as well as the CUNY and State guidelines. We affirm that they will be implemented.

II. Baruch College Research Context

An urban campus with emphases on Business Administration, the Liberal Arts, and Public Policy and International Affairs, Baruch College's research portfolio includes primarily social and behavioral research, some of which is conducted with human subjects and secondarily in the natural sciences and humanities. The research operations of the College are distributed among several multi-story buildings in the Gramercy Park neighborhood of Manhattan. The College has no on-site animal facilities or IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee). That being noted, Baruch researchers in the Natural Sciences do conduct research with invertebrates, as well as limited research with vertebrate animals off-site.

III. Research Reopening at Baruch College: Guiding Principles

The Research Reopening Plan is a part of the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan, located on the [Baruch Forward web page](#), and is guided by the principles set forth therein. All Baruch researchers must familiarize themselves with the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan and abide by it.

IV. Research Reopening at Baruch College: Current Status

Approvals must be obtained prior to going on site. See Section VI below for specific instructions for obtaining approval.

Research may be paused if transmission rates, new cases, or other benchmarks of public health risk are deemed to warrant it. Researchers starting new projects must do so with the knowledge that they may need to be stopped on short notice.

This iteration of the Research Reopening Plan (09.29.21) allows ongoing research approved in previous Stages 1 and 2, and expands on-site access to college-approved medium priority research with limited personnel. On-site access is expanded to professorial-title researchers, regardless of rank or funding (with department chair/program head support); and well as to graduate students and postdoctoral research associates regardless of seniority or funding (with advisor/mentor support). Low-risk human subjects research (i.e., research that does not involve direct physical contact between the subject and the researcher, or physical contact among human subjects; and which will be conducted in an appropriately socially-distanced manner abiding by all campus protocols) *may* be allowable upon RRRP review and approval.

Undergraduate researchers may be allowed to engage in faculty-led research if approved to do so. Approval for undergraduates to be present in labs is contingent on submission, review, and approval by the RRRP of a lab reopening request, and the identification of a suitable space allowing for social distancing, appropriate ventilation, and faculty supervision (in collaboration with the Environmental Health and Safety Officer).

At this time, medium- to high-risk human subjects research (i.e., research that involves direct physical contact between the subject and the researcher, or physical contact among human subjects, or prolonged physical proximity to others; research which cannot be conducted in a socially-distanced manner; research which produces aerosols; and research with Covid patients) is not allowed.

V. Addressing New York State Public Health and Safety Guidance and Incorporating Best Practices

Any plan to restart research requires plans customized for individual research spaces. These individual plans must be approved by the Research Reopening Review Panel (RRRP) before researchers are granted access, see Section VI below, forms can be found on the [Research Reopening web page](#).

A. Occupancy and Physical Distancing

1. All lab occupants must wear masks at all times, unless the individual is alone in an enclosed research space.
2. For any research activities occurring indoors, total occupancy is limited to 50% of the maximum occupancy of a particular area as set by the certificate of occupancy or as otherwise designated by current NYS guidance.
3. Staggered work schedules will be implemented wherever possible. This includes break times, but also staggered shift schedules to reduce the total number of employees on site at any given time. For shared laboratories, researcher lab reopening plans must specify clear procedures to ensure that the 50% occupancy threshold is not surpassed.
4. In the short term, researchers must arrange for pickups of mail, shipped equipment, and supplies from the Mailroom and Receiving areas in the Library Building. If possible, researchers should arrange with their suppliers for all materials including hazardous chemicals to be delivered directly to 17 Lexington Avenue. Special arrangements for delivery of large or hazardous items must be arranged with Public Safety. New

equipment must conform with the [College's Policy on Furniture, Equipment, Paint and Other Finishes](#).

5. Non-essential visitors will not be allowed in campus buildings except as allowed under Baruch campus policy and protocol. Non-CUNY visitors must abide by the CUNY Visitor Policy, per CUNY guidance effective 08.16.21.
- B. Gatherings in Enclosed Spaces
1. All staff meetings, seminars and events for researchers must be held in accordance with Baruch and CUNY policies. Meetings and seminars that cannot be held effectively in person should be conducted virtually.
 2. Communal areas such as lunch areas and cafeteria spaces will not be used for gatherings.
 3. Conference room use will be limited to 50% capacity with all individuals masked.
- C. Protective Equipment
1. Masks must be worn at all times in accordance with the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan, and CUNY mask mandate effective 08.16.21.
 2. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, commercially available), surgical masks, and face shield (with a face covering underneath). Users should consult CDC guidance for these types ([How to Wear Face Coverings](#)).
 3. Cloth, disposable, or homemade face coverings are not acceptable for workplace activities that typically require a higher degree of protection for PPE due to the nature of the work (e.g. if working with flammable materials or chemicals, ensure face coverings are flame-resistant). If contact with hazardous materials require more stringent protection, a hazard assessment will be conducted by Environmental Health and Safety for the hazardous agent will be used, where the hierarchy of controls will be employed to eliminate, substitute, engineer control, administratively control, and/or create protective barriers for workers.
 4. All researchers should be provided information on cleaning, replacing and sharing face coverings, in accordance with [CDC Guidance for Wearing Masks](#).
 5. All personnel should limit the sharing of objects, such as tools, equipment, machinery, touchscreens, and vehicles, as well as the touching of shared surfaces. In scenarios where this is unachievable, personnel should use a combination of the following methods:
 - Disinfect the object immediately after use - this is the most effective and desirable method
 - Wash hands with soap and water before and after using a shared object; if soap and water is not readily accessible, hand sanitizer is acceptable
 - Utilize a clean pair of gloves when using shared objects where feasible
- D. Shared Spaces
- Researchers working in common areas with common equipment should develop a shared calendar system visible to all users. Depending on the maximum space occupancy, this method

will ensure that all maintain these limits. In scenarios where more than one researcher needs to use a common area concurrently, social distancing, and masking will be maintained as required. Prior to using equipment, users are also required to clean the equipment. Care will be taken to ensure cleaners or disinfectants will not be harmful to the shared equipment. Whenever possible, the time between common area usage should be extended (30 minutes to one hour) to minimize interactions and allow disinfection to be completed by the prior user. Ultimately, all personnel should follow a principle of “clean as you go” when possible. The cleaning for common areas of the building will be handled by the College Facilities Department who use products and equipment designed to neutralize germs and bio-contaminants.

E. Hygiene, Cleaning, Disinfection

Refer to the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan for College-wide guidance

F. Communication

Signage shall be posted around campus, including research labs, to remind all personnel of the CDC guidelines for COVID-19 safety in the workplace. These signs will include reminders to remain socially distant where possible and are consistent with NYS Department of Health language. Refer to the Baruch College Safe Campus Reopening Plan for the minimum instructions to be conveyed by signage.

G. Vaccination Status

After October 7, 2021, all Baruch students wishing to enter Baruch buildings must show proof of vaccination or an approved medical or religious exemption; details are housed on the [CUNY Fall 2021 Safety Guidance web page](#). Campus access for CUNY-affiliated students, staff and faculty is outlined on the [CUNY Access Pass web page](#). Campus access for non-CUNY affiliated personnel is outlined on the [CUNY Visitor Policy web page](#).

H. Laboratory Permits

All researchers working in labs with FDNY Non-Production Laboratory Permits must hold a valid C-14 certification while building occupancy is limited. At a minimum, there must be a C-14 holder on the floor any time permitted labs are in operation.

I. Building Entry Points

Entry to each of the buildings must be through the following entrances:

- 17 Lexington – Lexington Avenue entrance
- Administration Building – 22nd Street Entrance
- Newman Vertical Campus – 24th Street entrance or Plaza entrance
- Library Building – 25th Street Entrance

VI. Approval Process for Baruch Researchers

Principal Investigators (PIs) have first-line responsibility for the conduct of their research groups and compliance with policies and rules developed during the reinstatement of research. Schools/Divisions should continually monitor research reopening in their area to assure public health and safety.

Labs previously approved for reopening under a previous Stage of Reopening remain approved; you do not need to reapply. However, any substantive modification to or deviation from an approved plan must be requested via written addendum to the RRRP.

- A. **Baruch PIs who wish to apply for consideration to conduct on-site research activities, including but not limited to research with human subjects**, must first apply to the RRRP for, and be granted by the RRRP, permission to conduct these activities. The process set forth in this section applies both to wet labs and behavioral labs, and includes provision for on-site human subjects research that does not require direct physical contact between researcher and subject (i.e., low-risk research). On-site human subjects research that requires direct physical contact between researcher and subject (e.g., applying electrodes to the subject's body) will not be considered at this time.

The faculty PI must download and complete the "Request to Return to On-site Research" Template, provided on the [Research Reopening web page](#), and submit the completed form via email to the Associate Provost for Research (patricia.price@baruch.cuny.edu) for review by the Research Reopening Review Panel.

For research activities that involve human subjects research, the submission, review, and approval of the "Request to Return to On-site Research" by the Baruch RRRP is not a substitute for IRB review, which must also be conducted prior to recruiting human subjects for new or substantively revised protocols and prior to requesting permission to conduct on-site human subjects research. Please contact the Office of Research Compliance and Outreach for further advisement if needed via email to janet.badillo@baruch.cuny.edu.

Note that if you are re-starting an existing research protocol and need to make non-trivial changes to that protocol, you must submit an amendment via the IRB Manager system. However, per OHRP guidance, changes to accommodate COVID-19 risk mitigation, such the use of PPE, disinfecting protocols, health screening, social distancing, and so forth, generally do not constitute a substantive change to an existing protocol and do not require amendment. If your existing research protocol was only approved for online research, you will likely need to add the on-site research location and any consequent changes to the consent process, as well as data acquisition and storage, to your protocol through an amendment in order to conduct the research on-site.

Case Reporting and Contact Tracing:

- Any authorized individual working in the research space – whether faculty, student or staff – who has been diagnosed with or tests positive for Covid-19, is experiencing symptoms associated with Covid-19, or has had recent close contact with someone with Covid-19, must immediately report this to the PI of the lab, and to the Coronavirus Campus Liaison, Executive Director for Human Resources (andrea.caviness@baruch.cuny.edu) if faculty or staff; or to the Dean of Students (deanofstudents@baruch.cuny.edu) if a student.

Studies using Department Subject Pools:

- Departments and Programs utilizing student subject pools administered via the SONA system must ensure that no student feels coerced to participate in on-site subject pool research and that opportunities to engage remotely are available to students.

- B. **Requests to conduct in-person off-site research activities involving human subjects** must submit a Request to Conduct Off-Campus Research with Human Subjects Plan for review and approval to the Research Reopening Review Panel (note that this is in addition to any standard application(s), IRB review, site-specific approval, etc. that would normally be required to gain permission to conduct your human subjects research). This form can be found on the [Research Reopening web page](#), and requires proof of offsite permission to conduct human subjects research (if applicable). The offsite location described in the RRRP request form should match the off-site location approved by the IRB (note: this includes foreign countries). These materials should be emailed to Associate Provost for Research Patricia Price (patricia.price@baruch.cuny.edu), who will forward your Plan to the Research Reopening Review Panel, and your Dean, for review and approval. Note that research conducted in foreign countries may subject to [Export Control restrictions](#).

The submission, review, and approval of your Plan to Conduct Off-Site Human Subjects Research by the Baruch RRRP is not a substitute for IRB review, which must also be conducted prior to recruiting human subjects, for new or substantively revised protocols. Please contact the Office of Research Compliance and Outreach for further advisement if needed via email to janet.badillo@baruch.cuny.edu.

Note that if you are re-starting an existing research protocol and need to make non-trivial changes to that protocol, you must submit an amendment via the IRB Manager system. However, per OHRP guidance, administrative changes to accommodate COVID-19 risk mitigation, such the use of PPE, disinfecting protocols, health screening, social distancing, and so forth, generally do not constitute a substantive change to an existing protocol and do not require amendment.

VII. Training and Reporting Unsafe Practices

A. Training and Education

All returning research personnel (faculty, staff, and students) must take the [CITI Program Back to Campus Course](#). The purpose is to train staff, students, and faculty on COVID-19 safety for their return to campus. All returning personnel must provide a certificate of completion with the Request to Return to On-Site Research application.

B. Reporting Unsafe Practices

If you observe unsafe practices, you may [report this anonymously here](#).

VIII. Communication Plans and Campus Contacts

- A. The [Research Reopening web page](#) houses campus-wide communications about research reopening, application forms, training, and other resources.
- B. Adverse Events
Should you experience any COVID-19 research-related adverse events, you must pause your research and immediately report the adverse event(s) to Associate Provost Price via email to patricia.price@baruch.cuny.edu
- C. Environmental Health and Safety
All issues related to Environmental Health & Safety should be reported to Environmental Health and Safety Officer James Kaznosky at james.kazosky@baruch.cuny.edu. Emergent issues can be called in at 646-660-6048 or by contacting Public Safety at 646-312-3333.
- D. Buildings and Grounds
Requests for service (custodial and trades related work) can be submitted through the [Archibus System](#).
- E. Public Safety
Public Safety can be contacted for issues related to public safety, first aid, possible crime, safety issues, and building access questions at 646-312-3333. The Building Access procedures are currently posted at the [home page for Public Safety](#).