

FAS Science Division & SEAS Coronavirus FAQ  
March 10, 2020

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Information Sources

- *Where can I find reliable information about this virus?*  
One good resource is the CDC web site  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- *Where can I find up-to-date information about Harvard's policies?*  
<https://www.harvard.edu/coronavirus>

Travel

- *Harvard has prohibited non-essential domestic air travel and all international professional travel. Does this apply to field trips for classes?*

Yes. Faculty should find alternative learning opportunities for our students. Instructors who are considering a local, drivable, alternative to air-travel field trips should assess the marginal risk to our community of taking a vanload of students to a remote site, compared to an on-campus meeting of the same group. Confer with your divisional dean to obtain approval for off-campus student trips.

- *Can you help me understand the definition of "university-related travel". For example, if I am giving a seminar or a public lecture is that "university-related"? Or attending a meeting?*

That is considered professional travel and therefore prohibited.

- *What is considered "essential" versus "non-essential"? If I am giving a seminar or a public lecture, is that "essential"? Or attending a meeting?*

"Essential" travel is vital to the functioning of the University, and very few trips meet this condition. Examples might include legally required depositions, and the like. Academic exchanges are (in this context) non-essential activity and the travel ban applies.

- *I have been planning to give a talk outside of town. Do I have to cancel that trip?*

The University has banned all non-essential domestic air and international professional travel. Cancel or reschedule the trip.

- *When do we think travel will return to normal?*

That is hard to predict. The travel ban is currently (as of March 7, 2020) in place through end of April 2020, but may be extended depending on how the situation evolves. For the time being it seems premature to cancel trips planned for after May 1, but stay abreast of our travel policy posted at <https://www.harvard.edu/coronavirus/travel-guidance>.

- *Will I receive reimbursement of cancellation costs?*

For those travelling on University business, the Harvard Travel Policy allows for reimbursement of cancellation or change fees with a valid reason. The current Coronavirus outbreak meets this requirement.

#### On-Campus Meetings, Events, Job Talks, Symposia

- *We have large on-campus meeting (greater than 100 people) planned, should we cancel it?*

Yes. The meeting should be postponed, canceled, or conducted over Zoom or the equivalent.

- *We have a faculty search under way. Should we cancel or defer visits by candidates, even if we have had prior visits by other candidates?*

Yes. Job talks should be conducted over Zoom or the equivalent.

- *Should we cancel or re-schedule visits by seminar speakers?*

Yes. When possible we should invite scholars to deliver their talks remotely.

### Remote Instruction

- *Where can I find information on using Zoom to teach classes remotely?*

A Zoom link exists already on Canvas for all courses. You can use that to schedule online sessions, and to distribute the appropriate link to students registered for the class. A good starting point for learning how to use this tool is at

<https://huit.harvard.edu/zoom-training>

- *What should we be doing to plan for lab-based teaching courses where remote/Zoom options will not be adequate?*

Instructors should be flexible, consider the high-level learning goals for the course, and find alternative ways to impart that knowledge. This is not business-as-usual and we need to be agile.

### Research Program/Lab Operations

- *What impact will this have on my research program?*

The NSF has posted an FAQ page here:

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20053/nsf20053.jsp>

- *I think I might be in a position to undertake a research project relevant to COVID-19. Is there a rapid-response funding opportunity?*

The NSF has established a program you might consider. See

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20052/nsf20052.jsp>

- *I am concerned about long term care of cultures/samples/animals in our lab. Who should I talk to?*

We will take all possible measures to minimize the long-term impact to your research program, subject to personnel safety concerns. Science division faculty should contact Sarah Elwell ([sarah\\_elwell@harvard.edu](mailto:sarah_elwell@harvard.edu)) to craft a contingency plan. The BRI is currently developing business continuity plans for review and approval by the IACUC. We will post those plans once they are finalized and approved.

- *What should I tell our research group? Is Harvard going to close down lab access?*

Other US Universities (Stanford, Univ. of Washington) have implemented remote classes and many Seattle-area businesses have promoted work-from-home policies. We don't

currently know of any US research University that has entirely shut down. But schools overseas have done so. The best course of action right now is contingency planning for a variety of circumstances, and gently prioritizing wrapping up projects rather than starting new ones.

We don't want to over-react, but it's hard to know how this is all going to unfold. From a common-sense perspective, limiting the flow of travelers and keeping to small-group interactions in labs and offices are good steps to take now.

### Social and Community Aspects

- *I seem to have offended someone whose hand I didn't shake. Why are they reacting this way?*

Not everyone appreciates our community's opportunity to attenuate the transmission of germs by avoiding person-to-person social contact. You might explain that your action is not a reflection of your relationship, but rather just following current guidelines from experts (some of whom we are proud to have on the faculty at Harvard!).

- *Should we worry about adverse effects on ethnic or national groups?*

We should all be aware of the possibility that individuals might be apprehensive of possible biases as a result of nationality or ethnic origin, and any such bias is clearly inconsistent with the values of the Harvard community. We will work together to slow the spread of this disease, using an evidence-based appropriate response that draws upon the advice of experts.