

## **CMUQ Biological Sciences Program's plan for return to on-site research activities**

As in-person research activities are essential for the continuation of projects at the Biological Sciences Program at CMUQ, faculty are requesting phased return to the laboratories at CMUQ building.

- Phase 1 would include only faculty and trained staff.
- Phase 2 would include students who need to complete their projects as funded students in programs like QSIURP and UREP
- Phase 3 would include students registered for at least 3 units of the course 03-445 (undergraduate research).

The timing of these phases depends on the current situation in Qatar. However, during these phases, especially Phase 1, the procedures/policies below would be enacted to ensure safety of everyone involved in these activities.

### **The laboratories and rooms/offices for which access is requested are:**

3027: Research lab

3142: BSL2 space inside 3027

2033: Biology lab

3025: Teaching lab

3021: flow cytometry lab

3222: Storage room on third floor

2179: Reflection room

3070: Prof. Ihab Younis office

3179: Prof. Annette Vincent office

3180: Prof. Mohamed Bouaouina office

3183: Prof. Gordon Rule office

Additional office request may be added by interested faculty.

### **Conditions for return to on-site research:**

1. The list of people allowed to return will be reviewed by the program director (Annette Vincent) and area head (Gordon Rule) and submitted to Facilities for approval prior to reopening. Updates to the list will follow the same process.
2. Follow physical distancing rules as determined by CMUQ. Staggered work schedules, modified work spaces, and one person in an elevator at a time are examples of appropriate strategies to ensure proper physical distancing (proper signage will be put in place). An online calendar system will be implemented to assist in scheduling staggered work hours and contact tracing.

3. Follow CMUQ's established protocol for building entry.

**Policies for return to on-site research:**

4. At all times, a face mask (sufficient to cover the nose and mouth) and gloves are to be worn, including while alone in private offices or other CMUQ spaces and facilities. Each person allowed to return will be issued a box of masks and gloves as needed.
5. While in the laboratories, proper PPE is to be worn, including: face mask, lab coats and gloves. Gloves are to be removed and disposed of in the trash before leaving the laboratory. Lab coats will be removed and will remain in the lab, following standard EH&S practices. Disposable lab coats, if used, will be discarded in the trash.
6. After entering and before leaving each room, the user will disinfect the door knob and light switches that have been used with disinfecting wipes. In addition, work spaces (bench tops) will be decontaminated, by the user, at least at the beginning and end of the work-shift. All materials used for disinfection must be discarded immediately in the trash.
7. No roaming is allowed in the building. Each person stays on their floor unless they are going to a certain lab for research-related work. In-person meetings are not allowed until physical distancing is no longer enforced in CMUQ. All meetings are to be held via zoom.
8. Faculty and staff will eat inside their offices or in an area that is well ventilated and that there is no gathering of people when eating as face coverings must be removed. Pantries will only be used to get access to water dispensers (all appliances will be turned off and utensils removed). However, faculty and staff will be encouraged to bring their own source of water and the water dispenser in the pantry should be used as a last resort.
9. Only one staff member is allowed per office. We request additional office space to be made available to satisfy this condition. People are asked to limit their presence in the building and to perform any extended analysis/office work from home.
10. If members of multiple research groups use the same lab space, CMUQ physical distancing rules will apply. If necessary, lab users can use the teaching lab (3025) to maintain physical distancing rules, while working. Whenever physical distancing rules cannot be applied (due to narrow space, e.g. BSL2 in 3027) alternate work schedules will be used to avoid co-presence.
11. A google calendar (shared with facilities) will be used to allow each of the lab users to log in their activities in the building in case there is a need for contact tracing (this will also be used for scheduling small spaces)
12. Prior to using common core equipment, users will sanitize (or change) their gloves. Core equipment (used by multiple researchers) will be supplied with alcohol wipes. All handles and operating parts should be wiped before and after using and the material used for disinfection placed immediately in a waste container.
13. Hands are to be washed frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizers are to be used as well. In addition, each person should clean and disinfect their personal items including phone, keyboard, mouse, monitor, computer, and desk on entry and exit from their workspace.
14. All faculty engaging in research will need to be trained as Pandemic Safety Officer (PSO), who will ensure that lab users have the information and resources to comply with the

approved procedures and policies, act as a liaison with CMUQ facilities/administration to relay guidelines and reports:

<https://www.cmu.edu/ehs/Workplace-Construction/pandemic-safety-officer.html>

Contact information of PSOs will be provided to all users.

### **Contingency plan and reporting:**

15. Anyone who feels ill, must not come to work and they must notify their advisor/PSO immediately. The PSO will report the incident to facilities/administration as soon as possible including the tracing log and a list of the colleagues/staff who came in contact with the potential infected person. Any personnel who has exhibited COVID-19 symptoms, has received a positive diagnosis or had close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual within the last 14 days must inform Human Resources and stay at home, following medical advice. The infected personnel cannot return on-site until they are cleared by a healthcare practitioner and they must provide documentation of that clearance to Human Resources. Such documentation could include a green status on Ehteraz.
16. If someone coughs or sneezes, they are to cover their mouth with their elbow. If a tissue is used, it needs to be discarded into a waste container immediately. Then, hands are to be washed thoroughly, or sanitized with alcohol.
17. Each faculty conducting research will submit to the PSO a 1-page weekly status report and feedback on the progress and issues encountered with their return to on-site research. After review, the PSO will discuss these reports with facilities/administration.
18. In case a lab shut down is ordered due to infection spread or emergency, the following shut down plan will be executed:
  - Ensure freezers (-20C & -80C degrees) and fridges are connected to emergency power.
  - Ensure that one fume cupboard is connected to emergency power
  - Samples and chemicals in the freezers that are temperature sensitive will remain in freezers with emergency backup
  - Actively growing cultures will be placed immediately into fridges; if opportunity to freeze (time permission) this will be done.
  - All equipment (with the exception of freezers and fridges) will be disconnected from power supply; especially heat equipment like water bath, heating blocks and ovens
  - Chemicals in the portable fume cupboard (2033) will be moved to non-portable fume cupboards in 2196 or 3025.
  - Benchtop will be cleared and wiped down and freed of clutter
  - All personal belongings will be removed from labs
  - Glass bottles or reagents (at room temperature) will be stored away into cupboards.
  - Volatile chemicals will be stored away in the respective fume cupboards, all flammables will be stored away into flammable cabinets
  - Chemical waste will collect in one satellite collection point – this fume cupboard should be connected to the emergency power outlet
  - Accumulated waste will be autoclaved (if time permits)