

March 31, 2020

Dear MacEwan Research Community,

With the upcoming restrictions on access to campus and the March 17 state of Public Health Emergency declaration by the Province, I wanted to send another update on research activity at MacEwan and COVID-19.

First off, I recognize the challenge that the COVID-19 crisis poses on people's abilities to conduct research. Many of you have found creative ways to advance your research through remote interactions that have helped protect your students, research personnel and the public. I thank all of you for your collegiality and cooperation in the interests of the safety of MacEwan staff and students as well as our external communities. My office and I are here to support people's research endeavors during this difficult time and do not hesitate to get in touch with us should you need research assistance.

Conducting Research

The campus access restrictions and physical distancing requirements means that we expect all research activities to be performed remotely. We realize there may be circumstances where on-campus research activity may need to continue as a disruption could result in a serious loss of research data, material or equipment. Faculty who believe their research to fall into this category must complete a form to request an exception to conduct on campus research. The form must be signed by your Dean and submitted to me. E-mail research@macewan.ca to request the research exception form. Send your completed form to kuzienskyc@macewan.ca

People with approved exception status that are conducting research on campus must ensure you are familiar with and follow any protocols for working alone, as well as recommendations for physical distancing and hygiene. MacEwan's Health Safety and Environment can provide more information on safety protocols via their website at <https://sites.google.com/macewan.ca/hse/home> with specific information on working alone available at <https://sites.google.com/macewan.ca/hse/safety-programs/work-alone?authuser=0> Information on social distancing guidelines and other preventive techniques can be found on the Alberta Health Services Website <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16997.aspx>

Some of you with research labs or offices have indicated that you will not be using these facilities during the campus access restrictions. Some consideration for shutting down research labs, office or facilities include:

- Turn off appliances, computers, hot plates, ovens, and other equipment. Unplug or shut down and unplug sensitive electrical equipment is possible
- Inspect all equipment requiring uninterrupted power for electricity supplied through an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) and by emergency power (emergency generator)
- Turn off all water (e.g. to water filtration systems, vacuum filtration, etc.)
- Check that refrigerator, freezer, and incubator doors are tightly closed
- Surface decontaminate the inside work area of biosafety cabinets, close the sash and power down. Clear fume hoods of all hazards and shut the sash

Off-Campus Field Research

Researchers conducting off-campus field research may continue to do so, providing the research is compliant with government policies on social gatherings and distancing. In determining whether you should be conducting field research there are several questions you need to answer:

- Are you able to travel to and from your research sites in compliance with current government and University travel advisories/restrictions and social distancing?
- What are the proposed dates for this fieldwork?
- If you are working with others, does the size of your research team allow for appropriate social distancing?
- What plans are in place should a member of the research team develop COVID-19 symptoms?
- If your research will bring you into contact with local communities, how will you ensure you follow required social distancing protocols?

Please note that any field research must also continue to abide by Research Ethics Board guidelines and approvals. As communicated before, there is a national SOP from the Tri-Council Policy statement on REB review during publicly declared emergencies, where REB procedures become more flexible that we can use as a guide during this time. The policy allows people to change their protocol from face-to-face to virtual meetings where the change is necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participant(s) (TCPS2 Article 6.15). Such changes may be implemented but must be reported to the REB at the earliest opportunity (5 business days is suggested). If you have any questions about this, please contact Rebecca Mitchell at mitchellr38@macewan.ca

Conducting Research Remotely

Remote Support for Research

There are several tools available to help you conduct research remotely. The MacEwan portal has a comprehensive section dedicated to software and access for working remotely/at home. It can be accessed by navigating to My MacEwan Portal > Tech Support > General

Specific links for accessing PeopleSoft and various collaborative software tools include:

VPN (for accessing PeopleSoft):

Software > Software at Home > VPN

<https://myportal.macewan.ca/staff/tech-support/general.html>

Webex

<https://myportal.macewan.ca/staff/tech-support/conferencing.html>

Microsoft Outlook

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/default.aspx>

Microsoft Teams

<https://teams.microsoft.com/downloads>

SharePoint

<https://products.office.com/en-ca/sharepoint/collaboration>

My office is also working on a guide for other tools for supporting remote research. Please contact us should you have any specific needs around virtual research support.

The library has moved online but remain available to help you with your research such as support for literature reviews, citations or writing support. Library support is available at <https://library.macewan.ca/about/covid-19>

Research Collaboration on COVID-19

Research on COVID-19 will obviously be a focus of the international research community for years to come. The Canadian Tri-Agency funding bodies have already created special funding calls for COVID-19. The Government of Canada is also trying to promote research collaborations for COVID-19 research within Canada and abroad. A UK UK-based open innovation network *CrowdHelix*, in partnership with Brussels-based media company *Science|Business*, has launched a free online match-making service to help COVID-19 researchers find one another across the globe, check out funding opportunities, and pursue research opportunities for COVID-19. The service, at <https://network.crowdhelix.com/covid-19>, is a simple online tool to help COVID-19 researchers connect, whatever their country or specialty. If you are interested in pursuing research on COVID-19 please contact Garson Law at lawg22@macewan.ca

Research Funding

The Federal Tri-Agency funding bodies have made several changes to their policies to accommodate COVID-19. They previously communicated that they will consider the costs associated with canceled and postponed travel events paid through agency funds as allowable project expenses. The Tri-Agencies have also extended many of the upcoming deadlines for funding calls and that may present new opportunities to apply for funding. Please contact Garson Law at lawg22@macewan.ca to discuss any upcoming funding calls.

For details on specific grants please check the appropriate websites:

CIHR	https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51917.html
NSERC	https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/NewsRelease-CommuniqueDePresse_eng.asp?ID=1139
SSHRC	https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/news_room-salle_de_presse/covid-19-eng.aspx

We are also adjusting the deadlines for internal research grants. Please contact my office should you have any questions about internal grants or COVID-19 related research expenses.

Office of Research Services

ORS continue to be available for virtual consultation on the supports we offer including research proposals, funding opportunities, expenses or ethics. The following table provides contact information for ORS staff and the areas they are responsible for:

ORS Staff Member	Area of Responsibility	E-mail
Garson Law	Internal/external research grant funding, research program development	lawg22@macewan.ca
Rebecca Mitchell	Research ethics (human and animal)	mitchellr38@macewan.ca
Bryce Wicks	Project accounts & paying research students or personnel, expense claim eligibility, other financial issues	wicksb2@macewan.ca
Nicole Zastawny	Expense claim submission or general inquiries	Nicole.Zastawny@macewan.ca

Any general inquires can be directed to research@macewan.ca

As always, I am available to answer any questions you might have.

Stay safe and my best wishes to you all.

Regards,



Craig Kuziemy, PhD
Associate Vice-President, Research
MacEwan University