Department of Botany
Principles and procedures for research re-entry.

Purpose: To implement a work plan that minimizes the number of people in the lab at one time to maintain physical distancing. The COVID-19 virus remains a serious concern during the phased ending of research curtailment, and thus we will need to adopt new habits that (i) allow us to continue our work, while (ii) minimizing the risk of acquiring and spreading the virus. The health and safety of all research personnel, staff, and PIs is paramount.

Note: In this document, we use “research personnel” to include students, post-docs, research associates, staff, and technicians for research, but not faculty. All research personnel will have completed mandatory training, which is documented in their personal Botany Safety training (yellow folder). No new research personnel lacking mandatory training (including volunteers) will be permitted in phase 1. Principle Investigators (PI) refers to research-stream tenure-track faculty.

Reference Documents:
The following guidance documents and resources on the Safety & Risk Services COVID-19 Website were used in the development of this plan:

Monitoring your health.
According to the WHO, common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, dry cough, tiredness, loss of sense of taste/smell, sore throat. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stay at home. Use the BC Health Self-Assessment tool to determine if you require further testing or medical care: https://bc.thrive.health/. If members of your immediate family/roommates (i.e., a member of your household) are ill, you should also remain at home in quarantine.

If you or someone from your household falls ill, you should inform all colleagues that you have come into contact with, and they too should go into self-isolation and monitor signs and symptoms for 14 days.

Be aware that people without symptoms might still be infected. Even if you or your co-worker feel fine, you should assume that either of you could be an asymptomatic carrier, and take all due precautions, such as frequent hand-washing and maintaining appropriate physical distance.

Key principles of the restart plan:
1. BC Health guidelines are the law in BC; all who return to work must comply with the guidelines.
2. No one with symptoms should leave their home.
3. Always maintain a minimum distance of two metres to the next person.
4. The number of persons allowed in each room is defined and must not be exceeded.
5. Avoid social contact by keeping your distance and minimizing contact in common spaces.
6. Building-specific rules (e.g., BRC, MSL) should be respected, but the general principles outlined here apply to all Botany Department PIs and personnel in their labs.

7. PIs and research personnel are responsible for coordinating individual/shared lab space to minimize interpersonal conflict.

8. No one is to enter laboratories without explicit written authorization of the PI in the form of the posted lab schedule.

9. It is the responsibility of PIs to set procedures that allow safe lab work, and the responsibility of research personnel to observe all rules and procedures. PIs should check periodically to ensure that procedures are being observed, and adjust flexible aspects (as needed, but observing general principles).

10. Violations are considered to be against UBC SC6 Scholarly Integrity Policy (see end of document), and will have negative consequences (i) for research personnel, such as loss of building access, and (ii) PIs, potential investigations of scholarly misconduct by the VPRI.

Procedures:

Time spent in the building must still be kept to the bare minimum required to achieve research goals.

1. Minimize time at UBC; work from home whenever possible. Those with suitable remote work should stay working remotely. No in-person small meetings, seminars, or journal clubs, etc.

2. Return to work hours are 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday. This allows custodial staff to do the necessary extra cleaning without other people around. All research must end by 5:30 pm and there is no research on the weekends. There will be a sweep of all the labs by designated personnel from 5:30 pm to 6:00 pm to ensure that labs and the buildings are empty so that custodial staff can work. Any exemptions to this for experiments will need have a special permission from the Head.

3. Communication.
   • This Botany Return to Research document will be emailed to all research personnel and PIs, and it will be posted on the Botany Department website. (https://safety.botany.ubc.ca/covid-return-work).
   • The PI will review and co-sign this document with each research personnel prior to their reentry into the lab. The signed documents will be retained in the Botany office.
   • Signs and directional aids will be posted throughout the Biodiversity Research Centre and Biological Sciences building to reinforce and remind building occupants about the safety plans. Specifically, signage and decals will be posted at all entrances, elevators, stair wells.
   • Each PI will submit the weekly plan to the department: planned schedule should be emailed before 7 AM on Monday morning to Isabel Ferens (for Sean Graham and Botany staff access via Workspace), posted at the lab door, and archived by the PI for 3 weeks.

4. Personal hygiene measures:
   • Hand sanitizer will be provided at the building entrances and must be used when entering or leaving the building.
   • Hands should be washed any time you move between areas (labs, common areas, etc.).
   • All laptops brought on campus are should be wiped down with disinfectant before and after entry into the building.

5. Mask Use:
   • Mask (mouth-nose protection) usage will be according to BC Health guidelines. Bringing and using your own cloth masks is explicitly encouraged. Masks should be washed after
each use. As mask use is not possible for some individuals, masks are strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

- Mask usage is encouraged in common areas: labs, equipment rooms, hallways.

6. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment):
- Use of PPE, such as lab coats, should follow UBC ‘Safety and Risk Services’ (SRS) Guidelines (https://srs.ubc.ca/health-safety/research-safety/general-lab-safety). Always wear a lab coat; change weekly or if contaminated. Lab coat laundry will be coordinated through BioSciences Shipping & Receiving.

7. Lab occupancy:
- **Each PI will establish occupancy procedures** on who can be present in the lab area at a given time to facilitate appropriate social distancing. The written schedule stating who is authorized to be in the lab that day or week will be posted at the lab entrance.
- No lab will operate until their ‘Request to Return to Research’ application is approved by the department, and each room has the ‘Access Agreement’ form from the VPRI posted indicating maximum occupancy. The ‘Request to Return to Research’ documents will detail room and floor level occupancy plans, and they will be available on Workspace.
- Every lab will have a sign in/sign out sheet posted near the schedule. All researchers will sign in before beginning their work, and sign out when they leave.
- Only personnel required to complete an experiment should be in the lab at a given time. To avoid tying up lab space during long experiments, alternate space such as free lab bays or teaching lab space can be identified for waiting during experiments.
- Only 1 person is allowed in a single bay at a time.
- In cases where research personnel must work together (e.g., moving a piece of heavy equipment, working on equipment that requires two operators), full PPE must be worn at all times (gloves, facemasks/ goggles, lab coats).
- Occupancy will be coordinated between labs with shared space (e.g., common lab space shared with other research groups).
- When research personnel work alone, they should make arrangements with a contact person (e.g. PI or lab manager) to make sure someone knows when they enter and leave the lab.
- Emergency contact numbers should be readily available to PIs and the Botany office.

8. Common areas outside labs:
- Keep a minimum 2-metre safety distance in all common areas including lunch areas.
- All lunch and kitchen areas will be closed for food preparation using microwaves or kettles. Pack your food in and take all food home with you. Kitchens may be used for hand washing. No office microwaves should be used.
- Follow designated stairwells for ascending and descending between floors; these will be clearly marked (see attached Biodiversity and Biological Sciences Building plans).
- Use elevators only for heavy loads and accessibility needs; elevators must be limited to one person at a time.
- Regular office use is not permitted in phase I (Faculty of Science directive).
- Common bathrooms will have a notification system, if occupied. One person at a time is permitted in a bathroom.

9. Shared equipment (Biological Sciences Building room 2234, 2214, 2203, 3302):
- Shared equipment will be arranged to reduce congestion and permit one person/bay. A reservation system using Google calendars will be used to manage usage by one person at a time.
• Equipment will be wiped down with disinfectant (80% ethanol, Virox, or equivalent) both before to use and after.
• Shared equipment in the Bioimaging Facility (BIF, room 0120) will be used by appointment only (see Appendix for details of BIF operations).

10. Surface cleaning:
• Disinfectant (80% ethanol, Virox, or equivalent) should be used to wipe down any common surfaces or equipment before and prior to use.
• A checklist for lab cleaning of commonly used equipment, tools, etc. will be established by each lab to document cleaning between shifts.

11. Shipping and receiving:
• Shipping and receiving will be open in Biosciences.
• Face masks should be worn, if possible, and will be provided if necessary.
• Access will be limited to one person at time – physically distancing lines will be in place.
• All carts will be cleaned after use.

12. Botany vehicles
• Face masks should be worn, if possible, while driving the vehicle.
• Same day return only.

13. Workshop
• By appointment only and please contact John Gourlay (john.gourlay@botany.ubc.ca)
• Workshop duties will alternate between Botany and Zoology to ensure sole office occupancy and only as needed to ensure worker safety

Research Personnel: What to do if you have concerns:
There will be one ‘Responsible Person’, either a faculty member or Research Associate, who is available Monday-Friday from 9 AM-5 PM to answer questions, provide guidance, and make periodic checks on the number of people in the labs. The schedule and contact information for the responsible person will be circulated each week.

Supervisors cannot require research personnel or staff to work if their health, or the health of those in their household, creates unacceptable risk. If you are unable to work, do not report to work and contact your supervisor. If you are unable to contact your supervisor or for assistance in having a discussion with your supervisor, graduate students should contact your graduate advisor (senior graduate advisor Patrick Martone or others). Staff can contact Alison Munro (botany.admin@ubc.ca); faculty and postdoctoral fellows/RAs, can contact Jessica Sui (jessica.sui@botany.ubc.ca). PIs and research personnel shall work in a manner that is cooperative, respectful and friendly to minimize (and if necessary) resolve interpersonal conflicts related to access to shared space. Any confidential concerns can be sent to Botany Head, Sean Graham (botany.head@ubc.ca).

Building Emergency Response Plans (BERP)
• All ‘Responsible Persons’ will be certified Fire Wardens, responsible for BERP protocols (https://wpl.ubc.ca/browse/srs/epc/courses/wpl-srs-fwtc). They will be supplied with a list of the research personnel and laboratory rooms that are occupied each day.
• Both the Biological Sciences Building Emergency Response Plan and the Biodiversity Research Centre have comprehensive document that provides safety and emergency contacts as well as an emergency response plan. They are publicly available at: BiosciencesPlan.pdf and https://biodiversity.ubc.ca/resources.
Responsibilities
Faculty are responsible for:

• Establishing and implementing procedures for their lab that adhere to these guidelines.
• Establishing research, personnel and maintenance schedules for their lab, documenting and archiving schedules of lab use (with names and times), and sign-in/sign-out sheets, and coordinating with other PIs on shared areas, as needed.
• Deciding who has authorization to work in the laboratory.
• Posting contact info on all lab entrances.
• Providing contact information for themselves and all personnel who will be entering the lab to Jessica Trat (jessica.trat@botany.ubc.ca), Katie Beall (BRC; brcadmin@biodiversity.ubc.ca) or Karen Reid (MSL; kereid@msl.ubc.ca), as applicable.
• Ensuring all personnel under their supervision have read, understood, and signed this document and all policies pertaining to their research site, and adhere to all relevant Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC policies.

Non-compliance by Principal Investigators, including condoning/not acting on their research personnel's misbehaviour, will be considered a violation of UBC Policy. The Scholarly Integrity policy (SC6-section 2.1.1) states that the PI is responsible for “…complying with the requirements of …University and other policies, … and laws and regulations.”

Research Personnel are responsible for:

• Following all social distancing, safe-work, sign-in/sign-out, and working-alone procedures.
• Reading, understanding, and consenting to following all Federal/Provincial regulations and UBC policies pertaining to performing research during the return to work.
• Reporting concerns regarding these procedures to their supervisor, the Responsible Person on site, a graduate advisor, or the Department Head.

Non-compliance by research personnel will be reported to the supervisor and Head, and may result in the trainee losing access to their laboratory and other consequences.

NOTE: Compliance will be monitored by key card access, periodic checks by the Responsible Person, and the Department Head. Anyone with concerns about non-compliance should contact Botany Head Sean Graham (botany.head@ubc.ca). Research Personnel with concerns may also email to accessfeedback@science.ubc.ca. This email will be monitored by Associate Dean of Research Mark MacLachlan, and complaints will be treated discreetly with the Botany Head.

Signature line for researcher acknowledgment
I, ____________________________  [...enter name in legible writing], have read and understand the additional precautions being taken during this time in order to reduce our risk from COVID-19.

I sign below to verify that when* I return to will work it will be in full compliance with all of the policies and procedures described here:

RESEARCH PERSONNEL SIGNATURE: ____________________________  DATE: ______________

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE: ____________________________  DATE: ______________

*No one should be required to return to work under this plan if they have personal safety or health risks/concerns; this is solely their decision.