Research on Campus - Guidelines for the Department of Geography

Supplementing guidelines provided by

SFU, Faculty of Environment (FENV), federal/provincial/territorial governments and WorkSafe BC

The Department of Geography takes the health and safety of all of its members very seriously. This makes the following measures necessary as we navigate a safe return to campus for those researchers (faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students) who have received approval from SFU and essential staff. All staff and researchers will work from home whenever possible.

Every department member needs to be prepared for a sudden shut down following SFU or government directives or if the specific circumstances necessitate this step for a certain area of operations.

Every principal investigator (PI) must take responsibility for both adhering to safety protocols and ensuring that such protocols are adhered to by personnel under their supervision or guidance. Supervisors/PIs cannot delegate their responsibility in adhering to safety protocols.

All faculty members, staff, and students, who are on campus, have a duty of care to protect themselves and others from exposure to or transmission of the virus. This is true whether the visit is a one-off agreement with the Chair/Department Managers or part of ongoing (research) activities that have prior approval from SFU’s VPRI.

This document addresses the following areas:

- Check-in/check-out
- Lunch room (RCB 7125) and graduate student lounge (RCB 7231)
- Photocopy room (RCB 7127)
- Office/lab access and waste disposal
- Shared equipment
- Rooms with shared equipment
- Field work protocol
Check-in/check-out

Returning to work on campus requires prior written approval to be obtained using FENV’s Return-to-Work Request form.

The check-in/check-out guideline is for one-off visits to campus only. Such visits require you to:

- Receive prior written approval from the Chair of the Department of Geography
- Complete the COVID-19 Awareness and Safe Return to Work Training module and provide confirmation of training completion to the Chair of the Department of Geography as well as the Manager, Academic and Administrative Services; you will only have to do this the first time you would like to come to campus.
- Check-in/check-out by emailing the Chair of the Department of Geography as well as the Manager, Academic and Administrative Services, and the (acting) Manager, Logistics and Technical Operations when you arrive on campus and when you leave campus. This will make it easier to ensure physical distancing for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, students and staff.
- Complete the daily self-assessment and sign-in; the required documents can be found on the FENV website.

Lunch room (RCB 7125) and graduate student lounge (RCB 7231)

The lunch room and graduate student lounge remain closed as we are unable to ensure an adequate cleaning protocol. That means there is no access to the communal fridge and microwave in those rooms.

Photocopy room (RCB 7127)

The photocopy room will be available. Please note that SFU will make disinfectant wipes available.

- Please let Joyce Chen know via email if the disinfectant wipes need to be restocked.
- Please disinfect any surface in the room before AND after touching/using it.
- Please clean the keypad and door knob after you leave the room.

Office/lab access and waste disposal

We will ask Facilities & Maintenance (FM) to only empty garbage in public spaces (hallways) to limit possible exposure in offices/labs and minimize the chances for cross-contamination. Please do not dispose of your garbage in your office/lab. Recycling stations are available on every floor.

Please note that FM employees may still enter your workspaces as smoke detectors, etc. are all still under regular maintenance schedules. We recommend cleaning all surfaces and equipment prior to use (incl. door handles, chairs, keyboard, mouse, tools, microscopes, etc.).

Please post a sign that the room is "In Use" for the day (or for the shift).
Shared equipment

- Please disinfect shared research equipment before AND after every use. Staff will not be available to do this. Non-compliance can impact your access to shared equipment in the future.
- Please consider using gloves for handling shared equipment.

Rooms with shared equipment

- All guidelines for Office/lab access and waste disposal outlined above apply.
- Please limit access to only one person at any given time unless distancing can safely be maintained. Information on maximum occupancy will be posted on the door for your reference.
- The doors to shared facilities should always be kept closed. An “in use” sign indicates that somebody is using the room. If the room is not in use, you can enter and place the “in use” sign at the door. Do not forget to remove the sign when leaving the room.
- Please disinfect shared equipment before AND after every use; wipe down any instrument parts that you have touched (e.g., knobs, controls, displays, keyboards, eye pieces for microscopes).

Field work protocol

All field-based activities will require approval of the Chair of the Department of Geography and Dean of the Faculty of Environment (or designate) via FENV’s Return-to-Work Request form. All of the "normal" protocols and policies for field work set out by the Department of Geography and SFU remain in place (e.g., Field Activity Plans). Field safety plans have to be submitted in advance of any activity. Please contact the (acting) Manager, Logistics and Technical Operations, if you have any questions.

All field-based activities must also adhere to current directives and restrictions given by relevant authorities, including: Provincial and Territorial Governments, Provincial and Territorial Health Authorities, any applicable Regional Health Authority, Simon Fraser University, and SFU Faculty of Environment. If directives change, the ones in place at the time of your field work apply. It is your responsibility to stay informed.

Your field safety plan should take into consideration COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, concerns of potentially impacted small communities, and any Provincial or Territorial requirements as well as SFU and FENV guidelines.

Please outline the procedures detailing adherence to such directives/restrictions specific to each field activity in your field safety plan that will be reviewed for approval by the Chair of the Department of Geography and Dean of the Faculty of Environment.