Faculty of Science Process for Resumption of Research Lab Activity

Dear Colleagues,

We have now received a high number of applications to resume research activity in laboratories. In most cases these are being processed by departmental Chairs and then the Dean’s Office. Thank you for your co-operation in developing sensible SWP’s, which does make the assessment process smoother. However, we are requesting further details in some cases to ensure we have confidence that resumption of work is undertaken in a safe manner.

The majority of applications have requested approval to resume research activity in laboratories. However, approval to access your laboratory to resume research is not a default return to regular office access/use. Your office is an additional space and not an automatic extension of your lab.

The resumption of research activity was partly driven by the guiding principle that, if you did not need to be wearing a lab coat and actively performing, or actively supervising experiments in labs – then work should, and can, take place remotely.

From the applications to date, we estimate there will be more than 600 people in the Science buildings following resumption of research activity. It is important that we carefully consider the possible health implications of people transiting between multiple spaces on campus (e.g. >3,600 hallway transits per day), in order to reduce potential exposure and safeguard health and safety. Also consider that we are currently exploring the potential to bring back a smaller but significant number of students for practical lab sessions in the Fall.

The majority of lab access requests did not specify the essential nature of work that can only be carried out in offices, the timeframes of this work, or whether students would be transiting/visiting offices.

Consequently, we must treat laboratory and office spaces as discrete and separate spaces. To be consistent across all faculty and staff, we require separate applications and SWPs for laboratory and office access.
If you are applying to resume operations in a laboratory you have the following options:

**Option 1.**
Work entirely in your laboratory at times when you are on campus.

**OR**

**Option 2.**
To maintain consistency with all requirements of faculty you must complete a separate application and SWP to access your office space. This application will require a rationale for what essential activities and time periods are necessary to enter offices and should include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- No visitors or students will enter your office.
- The time periods it is necessary to enter your office.
- Access to offices is undertaken for limited and targeted means.
- Measures you will adopt to minimise health risks while transiting between your office, laboratory and other spaces on campus.

We understand this may be frustrating. However, I am sure you will appreciate we have created protocols to enable the safe return to research activity and are conscious of ensuring that all faculty and staff are treated in a similar manner.

Kind regards
Paul