

FAQ FOR POSTDOCS DURING COVID 19 HEALTH CRISIS

Research Concerns:

Will I continue to be paid if my lab activity is adversely impacted?

Social distancing is designed to limit contact with others. It does not mean complete isolation from others. It is likely that you will have to report to the lab to maintain experiments, cell lines, lab animals. You should work with your PI to determine the optimal schedules for you and your fellow lab mates. If the CDC recommends more stringent social limitations, you will need to work with your PI with regard to working from home game plans. MUSC may require you to provide documentation of work you complete at home. Since you will still be working, you will continue to be paid.

When is the best time to make a work from home plan?

Your PI was required to create a contingency plan for your lab during this time of social isolation and hopefully has been communicating that plan with you. If you have not received guidance, do not continue to report to work without discussing what the plan for your lab is now! We expect that PI's are being flexible, compassionate and creative with their plan for managing the lab. But it is your responsibility to work with your PI to manage this crisis. Contact your PI immediately with questions about your research responsibilities moving forward.

What activities are best suited for work from home plans?

All research is predicated on learning and applying new techniques, reviewing literature, writing up research results, analyzing data, planning new experiments. Many of these activities can be adapted to work at home situations. Please work with your PI to develop a work at home plan that includes data analysis, literature review, etc., immediately!

My research progress will be affected by these unique social distancing circumstances, how will I be accountable to my funders?

Depending on your funding source, you will need to coordinate with your Institutional Administrator to determine what if any reporting variances you will need to complete. Since this will be a widespread issue, NIH and other funding sources have been and will continue to provide information related to continued funding. Contact SCTR or your business administrator for details related to this issue or review the [NIH website](#) for details about your particular grant award.

Health Concerns:

What is social distancing?

Social distancing means staying away from other people in order to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 virus. You need to limit your interactions with others face to face to no closer than 6 feet. You need to stay at home and work remotely if at all possible.

I'm concerned that my lab requires me to continue working while the CDC guidelines encourage social distancing.

Research activities and overall university operations are continuing at this time. If there is a reason you can't work in your lab, you should be working with your PI to set the parameters for your work from home options. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs will update you as more information becomes available related to Postdoctoral Trainees. Please have patience during these unprecedented times.

What if I become ill?

If you are experiencing respiratory or flu-like symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever and/or cough, go to the [MUSC Virtual Healthcare Link](#). MUSC recommends you speak to an online virtual care provider. Virtual COVID-19 screenings are free. Just use the code COVID19 when you [log in](#). An MUSC health care provider will assist you and give you clear instructions on your next steps including testing and safe management of your symptoms. **If you are experiencing life threatening symptoms, access emergency medical care immediately.** If you are diagnosed with the virus, **immediately contact your PI/mentor to inform them of your diagnosis so that they can share this information with your lab mates.** Follow all the health care providers recommendations related to isolation and care of yourself and your family.

I am feeling anxious and stressed out during this crisis. What should I do?

[Look at this MUSC page for guidelines to help you manage anxiety and stress](#) or If you need mental health support, please contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#).

I'm an international postdoc and am worried about maintaining my visa status.

If you have concerns related to your VISA or other international issues, please contact

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Most MUSC offices have moved to online platforms to complete their work. Please have patience while we all adjust to our new normal.