



March 18, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vice Presidents, Deans, Associate Deans, Directors, Department Heads, Graduate Coordinators and Graduate Students

FROM: Ron Walcott, Interim Dean

RE: Updated guidance for graduate assistants in response to COVID-19

We understand the unique challenges graduate students are experiencing during these unprecedented times. The Graduate School is working with other campus partners and services to ensure your safety. We will update our [FAQ site](#) as quickly as possible in the face of rapidly changing information.

In response to the recent Arch News memo “[Update of Campus Operations](#)” released March 17, 2020, the Graduate School is providing additional guidance to graduate students on an assistantship and to faculty, administrators, and staff engaged in graduate education.

By 5 pm Friday, March 20, all routine research activities, with the exception of research conducted remotely from UGA campuses, is expected to come to a stop. Only essential research activities, including, but not limited to, ensuring the viability of living organisms and maintaining unique reagents and essential equipment are allowed to continue beyond March 20. Please contact your supervisors immediately to learn which activities are considered essential and what role (if any) you will play in these activities. Graduate students will be allowed to visit campus to perform these duties but should not remain on campus any longer than is absolutely necessary.

All graduate students on a research assistantship **must be allowed to telework** to fulfill their work expectations. This work can include, but is not limited to, completing literature reviews, data analysis, drafting manuscripts, working on dissertations and theses, etc. Because the cessation of research activity is mandated by the University of Georgia, graduate students on a research assistantship must **continue to be paid** during the period in which they will be teleworking, **regardless of the source of funding for their assistantship**.

Students who are close to graduating and need to complete time sensitive activities to meet Spring graduation deadlines should consult with their advisors. Safety should be the highest priority when making decisions regarding presence on campus. Best practices to maximize social distancing in the research laboratory can be found on the [UGA Research](#) FAQ.

Graduate students on a teaching assistantship should continue to work with their faculty to transition courses to online instruction and support teaching activities when instruction resumes on March 30, 2020. Other graduate students on an assistantship should contact their supervisor(s) to determine the best way to meet their work expectations remotely. Graduate students employed as student workers on campus **must** contact their supervisors as soon as possible to determine their work expectations and the safest way to accomplish them.

We appreciate your patience and flexibility as the University takes the necessary steps to ensure the safety of our community.