MEMORANDUM

TO: ECU Official

FROM: Dr. Paul Gemperline, Dean of Graduate Studies

DATE: July 29, 2020

SUBJECT: Guidance for Graduate Assistants Participating in Research and Teaching Activities

This document is meant to gather the relevant documents and policies regarding COVID-19 and the return of graduate assistants (GAs) to their teaching or research duties while physically on the ECU campus in Greenville. The graduate assistant should expect guidance from the faculty or staff supervising the assistantship experience including relevant policies, procedures, and information on reporting concerns.

Policies relevant to all Graduate Assistants

- Face coverings
  - https://www.ecu.edu/prr/05/20/11
  - The University Regulation on Face Coverings is to be implemented in all campus spaces and provides links to related policies including Eye and Face Protection, Respiratory Protection, and other similar policies.
  - Section 3.2 of the Regulation on Face Coverings describes the exceptions where face covering is not mandatory. If an exception is needed, the student should consult with the Disability Student Support Office. https://accessibility.ecu.edu/
  - This regulation also contains information on the face covering minimum standards.

- Graduate Assistants (GA/RA/TA) who experience COVID-19 symptoms (CDC symptoms link) should report their condition to the ECU Office of Prospective Health (252-744-2070). The ECU Office of Prospective Health will advise the student employee if self-quarantining is necessary. ECU Prospective Health will encourage graduate assistants to notify their supervisors of the timeline and conditions for the employee to emerge from self-quarantine conditions.
  - Graduate students who experience COVID-19 symptoms but are not employees of ECU should report their symptoms to ECU Student Health using the ECU COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form.

- Review the Return of Pirate Nation Master Plan which includes guidance on PPE, university faculty use expectations, and expectations for social distancing within academic spaces, etc.
- Review the ECU COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form website to ensure compliance.
- Review the Mobile Device Registration process and the ECU COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form and compliance information.
Guidance for Safety in Research and Laboratory Spaces

Prior to starting a new assignment, the Graduate Assistant should:

- Obtain guidance/instructions/standard operating procedures for that lab space from the lab manager, primary investigator (PI) or the faculty member supervising that lab space. This should include guidelines on social distancing for the space, limits to the number of people who can work in the space on a daily basis or at one time, daily disinfecting and cleaning procedures, personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements and daily log/calendar of personnel entering and exiting the lab space. Many labs will have lab calendars to track who will work at what times and will have posted occupancy limits.
- Special considerations for each lab could include determining which procedures need to be modified to ensure 6-foot social distancing space.
- Ensure compliance with the University Regulation on Face Coverings. If an exception is needed, the student should consult with the Disability Student Support Office. 
  [https://accessibility.ecu.edu/](https://accessibility.ecu.edu/)
- Ensure they are aware of locations for personal hygiene including regular handwashing, disposal of PPE, and available hand sanitizer.
- Ensure they understand the daily cleaning and disinfecting procedures done regularly for the work in that lab and extra procedures implemented due to COVID-19. This should include procedures for shared spaces, including offices, break areas, food preparation areas, restrooms, copy rooms, and other common areas. It should also include procedures for disinfection of phones, computers and non-research equipment such as fax machines.

In addition, the Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement (REDE) has published the Guidance for Restarting Research Activity website. [https://rede.ecu.edu/covid-ramp-up/](https://rede.ecu.edu/covid-ramp-up/). Additional information was provided to the campus community on the Coronavirus website and includes the Safe Conduct of Exempted or Restarted Research During Pandemic Response Period document.

Guidance for Safety in Teaching Spaces

Prior to starting a new teaching assistantship assignment, the graduate assistant should:

- Obtain guidance/instructions/standard operating procedures for the teaching spaces that will be used. This could include university classrooms, laboratories, or offices. Specific information for each type of teaching space should be obtained from the teaching supervisor or other personnel responsible for management of the space.
  - Information obtained should include:
    - guidelines on social distancing for the space
    - limits to the number of learners and graduate assistants who can work in the space at one time and allowable seating arrangements for the space
    - daily disinfecting and cleaning procedures AND disinfecting/cleaning procedures the graduate assistant should perform before and after the teaching experience
- Ensure compliance with the University Regulation on Face Coverings. If an exception is needed, the student should consult with the Disability Student Support Office [https://accessibility.ecu.edu/](https://accessibility.ecu.edu/)
- Ensure they are aware of locations for personal hygiene including regular handwashing, disposal of PPE, and available hand sanitizer.
- Ensure they communicate all safety precautions for the space to the students involved in the learning, as appropriate and as directed by the instructor of record or faculty member supervising the assistantship. This could include information presented in a face-to-face class or posted in Canvas as course materials.
All Links and Documents Cited:
Safe Conduct of Exempted or Restarted Research During Pandemic Response [LINK]
University Regulation on Face Coverings [LINK]
Guidance for Restarting Research Activity [LINK]
Main Coronavirus updates website [LINK]
Return of Pirate Nation website [LINK]
Return of Pirate Nation master plan [LINK] This PDF is updated regularly and new versions should be reviewed by going to the Return of Pirate Nation website and clicking on the master plan again for the most recent version.
Guidelines for Campus Safety for Students [LINK]
ECU COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form [LINK]
Symptom Screening - Mobile Device Registration [LINK]
Symptoms Screening – East Carolina University COVID-19 Self-Reporting Form [LINK]