

Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Chemistry Department Research Re-opening

Questions and answers assembled by Ethan Perets (ethan.perets@yale.edu) and Lizzy Stone (elizabeth.stone@yale.edu) based on Chemistry Department graduate student town-hall (5/4/2020) and discussion with Kurt Zilm, Jon Ellman, and Pat Holland. Please contact Ethan and Lizzy with additional questions, concerns, and comments, and this page will be updated regularly.

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Q: If I was not able to return to the Department during Phase 1, can I return during Phase 2?

A: Phase 1 permitted those who could not do their research without access to a lab to return to the Department. All others who wish to return to the Department may do so during Phase 2. Non-research staff will continue to work remotely.

Q: Can in-person meetings take place during Phase 2?

A: Meetings should still be conducted via Zoom.

Q: Will the parking garages remain open without needing a parking permit during Phase 2?

A: Parking fees are scheduled to be reinstated on September 1, 2020.

Q: Are there new guidelines for COVID-19 testing during Phase 2?

A: Yale is continuing to provide on demand voluntary testing for individuals returning to campus. It is suggested that anyone who has not had a test should participate in this program.

The frequency of testing will increase as the fall semester nears. Everyone on campus in the fall semester will be tested both before coming to campus and when they arrive (this extends to individuals who have already been on campus during Phases 1 and 2). Undergraduates will have mandatory weekly testing. Please consult the University COVID-19 information site at <https://covid19.yale.edu> and <https://covid19.yale.edu/health-safety-guidelines>.

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Q: When will trainees (graduate students and post-docs) return to the Chemistry Department?

A: At the direction of the [Provost \(5/13/2020\)](#), the earliest return will be June 1.

Q: Will I be required to wear a mask in the Chemistry Department?

A: Everyone in SCL, KCL, and CRB will be required to wear a mask. EHS will provide non-ASTM 3-ply surgical masks to all members of the Chemistry Department that will be distributed through the stockroom. Upon return to the Chemistry Department, fifty masks per person will be provided. Flame resistant masks will be available per request to EHS.

Q: What safety protocols are labs required to take?

A: Every PI will be required to submit a safety plan in consultation with group members. Safety plans must describe how labs will: inventory PPE; strategize for ensuring social distancing; schedule sanitization of working spaces; implement contact-tracing. All safety plans and research activities must be approved by the Department and Dean of Science before group members are allowed to return.

Q: If each lab is coming up with their own safety plan, will lab-to-lab interactions be possible?

A: Social distancing protocols should be practiced to the extent possible. All labs that share spaces and equipment must develop protocols to enable contact tracing. For labs that share research equipment, chemicals, and space, PIs must discuss with one another their plans for handling lab-to-lab interactions, in consultation with group members. Students should talk to their PIs before sharing materials between labs.

Q: Will graduate student funding (stipend and health insurance) be affected?

A: No. Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Graduate Studies (Jon Ellman, jonathan.ellman@yale.edu) with any specific concerns about funding.

Q: Is the A/C system in SCL, KCL, and CRB equipped to limit the spread of contaminated air?

A: Due to engineering requirements, all buildings in the Chemistry Department receive 100% outside make-up air, and exhaust is not recirculated. Therefore, the A/C system is equipped to minimize the spread of potentially COVID-19-contaminated air. For more details, you may contact Yale EHS or the Chemistry Department Chair (Kurt Zilm, kurt.zilm@yale.edu).

Q: Will training for individuals be provided for safe practices for returning to labs?

A: All researchers will be required to complete online safety training provided by EHS before returning to the Chemistry Department (<https://ehs.yale.edu/trainings/reactivation>).

Q: How will I access the Chemistry Department buildings?

A: A Yale University ID will be required at all times for entry into SCL, CRB, and KCL. A University ID should be visibly worn by personnel on campus at all times.

Q: If I feel uncomfortable returning to campus, am I required to come into the laboratory?

A: As specified in the trainee policy sent by [Dean Cooley \(5/19/2020\)](#), return to campus is on a strictly voluntary basis. There are strict rules against any coercion. If you feel there has been a violation of this policy, you may reach out to the Chemistry Director of Graduate Studies (Jon Ellman, jonathan.ellman@yale.edu), Chemistry Department Chair (Kurt Zilm, kurt.zilm@yale.edu), or Chemistry Chair of Climate and Diversity (Pat Holland, patrick.holland@yale.edu). Alternatively, you may anonymously report any incident to the [Yale University Hotline](#).

Q: Am I allowed to access break rooms and common spaces?

A: Activity in break rooms and common spaces should be limited as much as possible. Common refrigerators should not be used. Microwave ovens can be used, but only if they are designated to a single group and use proper sanitization.

The Chemistry Department is in active communication with facilities to manage the use of public spaces. Additionally, all cafeterias on campus will be closed.

Q: How will the Chemistry Department stockroom operate?

A: The Chemistry Department stockroom is operating with normal business hours. Most orders will be by email, and items will be picked up outside the stockroom. The exact protocols and contacts will be forthcoming.

Q: What conditions would demand re-closing the Chemistry Department?

A: The Chemistry Department will adhere to all guidelines set by the State of Connecticut and Yale University Public Health.

Q: Will I be tested for COVID-19?

A: A pilot COVID-19 testing program is currently operational. Anyone returning to campus as part of research reactivation is strongly encouraged to be tested. For more information, see <https://covid19.yale.edu/screening>.

Q: How long will the [phased re-opening](#) of research last?

A: Unfortunately, this is unpredictable, as it depends on health guidelines issued by the State of Connecticut and Yale. The Chemistry Department understands the difficulties a phased re-opening poses for research activities. Thank you for your patience and adherence to all safety protocols during this time.