

From: Graduate Studies <graduate@ku.edu>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 3:42 PM
To: Graduate Students - DL <grad_lawrence@ku.edu>
Cc: Graduate Studies <graduate@ku.edu>
Subject: Graduate Education and COVID-19

This message is being sent to Graduate Students on the Lawrence and Edwards campuses.

Dear Students,

I want to provide additional details regarding how you may be affected by Wednesday night's announcement that the University of Kansas will be extending Spring Break, with in-person courses resuming online March 23. I care deeply for your well-being as a cornerstone of the teaching and learning community at KU. My goal is to offer guidance in a few key areas that impact you as students, employees, and researchers. Should you require additional assistance please contact your department staff or faculty supervisor to clarify the details of your particular situation.

Student Employees

As students, you will resume your in-person courses online beginning March 23. **There will be no schedule change to courses *already* online.**

If you are a student employee, please work closely with your supervisors on a case-by-case basis to determine how you should continue work functions next week (March 16-20). Supervisors are being asked to provide clear expectations for maintaining on-campus duties or assigning remote work as most appropriate for each individual situation.

As instructors, GTAs will be involved in the shift of all courses to online instruction as of March 23. We have advised supervisors to work closely with GTAs to give clear guidance, as soon as possible, about the plan for online instruction and the responsibilities of GTAs. Ensuring that you have the tools and access needed to conduct your expected duties is essential. As plans develop, supervisors should communicate with you and, as soon as possible, translate into writing any guidance or instructions they have offered verbally. Although additional tasks may be required to move instruction online, GTA work should still be limited to an average of no more than 20 hours per week during the semester (for students appointed at 0.5 FTE). KU provides substantial resources to support instructors in shifting to online learning. These resources are available to GTAs as well as faculty, and the best place to start is at remote.ku.edu.

Please stay home if you experience any symptoms including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. We also encourage limiting physical contact with others, such as hand-shaking (substitute elbow bumps or bows) and sharing of food. Finally, the most effective prevention measure is frequent, thorough hand-washing. The World Health Organization has produced [this poster](#) detailing the most effective manner in which to wash your hands.

Research

Campus remains open, and therefore you can continue to use your office spaces, work in research laboratories, and access the libraries. We recommend that you work with your departments and

supervisors to determine how you can best continue your research either on or off campus. We recommend the following basic principles:

Shared spaces: We strongly encourage all researchers to think carefully about what work must be conducted on-site in a shared space and what tasks can be completed as effectively from a more isolated office or home. Individuals working in shared spaces are encouraged to disinfect work surfaces regularly. Supervisors are encouraged to allow, without prejudice, for remote work whenever possible.

Communications: Establish clear modes of communication with research group members. Also crosscheck your contacts lists to ensure no one who ought to be included is left out of your communications.

Remote access: All students, post-docs, staff, and faculty involved in research projects should ensure they have access to the information and tools they need to carry out work remotely. This might include, for example, access to literature, access to existing datasets and research-related files (while maintaining security over any data accessed remotely), and access to meeting software (such as Zoom).

Master's and Doctoral Exams

We recognize that remote work will necessarily change our approach to master's and doctoral exams. Existing rules requiring in-person attendance at milestone exams are being temporarily suspended. You and/or your committee members may participate using mediated means (video-conferencing) through May 14, 2020. Please work with your committee and use your discretion in evaluating whether some or all individuals should participate remotely. In cases where you prefer for all committee members to be physically present, your preference shall be honored. However, this preference may require rescheduling and therefore delay progress to degree.

All participants in an exam involving remote participation must be fully aware of what is transpiring and fully able to participate in all components of the discussion with the student and each other. Any material presented during the examination, orally or in writing, shall be seen and heard by all members. Oral examinations that do not meet these participation requirements are not valid. A student's milestone outcome will not be influenced by any proceedings that take place without full engagement of all participants. If a committee member has not arrived, the exam may not begin; if a committee member leaves, the exam may not proceed.

Student Organizations and Events

As circumstances surrounding COVID-19 evolve, university officials are monitoring the spread of the disease and taking steps to keep our community healthy. Student organizations and student leaders across campus should monitor the regular updates provided at coronavirus.ku.edu and plan to abide by campus plans and decisions. Student organizations should consider online or skype meetings for the foreseeable future to reduce exposure and ensure all members' safe and healthy participation.

Student Travel

The University of Kansas has discontinued all university-sponsored, business-related travel and attendance at meetings, conferences, etc., effective immediately. If you were previously planning to

travel outside of Kansas and Missouri for academic reasons, please make every effort to rearrange travel plans and pursue refunds, change-fee waivers, and other cost-saving measures when possible. Priceline is coordinating a hub webpage with information about change fees and procedures at many major airlines: <https://www.priceline.com/partner/airlines/newflexibility>.

The application portal for the Graduate Scholarly Presentation Travel Fund will remain open, but no new funding will be approved for travel that takes place between 12 March 2020 and 10 May 2020. Applications from students experiencing hardships due to these travel restrictions will be considered (e.g., non-refundable costs already incurred).

Student Wellness

The COVID-19 outbreak is a source of anxiety for many. If you are experiencing heightened levels of stress or anxiety, please contact the counseling services available through [KU Counseling and Psychological Services](#).

The Office of Graduate Studies will do our utmost to assist you by providing guidance as this unique situation evolves. Please reach out with any questions to graduate@ku.edu.

Best,

Jennifer A. Roberts, Ph.D.
she / her / hers
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