

Guidelines for graduate student progress to degree in the context of re-entry to research laboratories

Preamble

The provincial government has authorized a gradual resumption of on-campus research activities. The government has targeted for re-opening research laboratories in the fields of Health, Natural Sciences, Agriculture, Forestry, Engineering, and where research activities depend on seasonal growth.

Re-opening will be slow and progressive and will not involve the simultaneous opening of all buildings and all research groups. Anyone who can conduct research or work from home must continue to do so. On-campus research will be authorized only for research that cannot be performed from home. **On-campus research phase-in directives can be consulted [here](#)**. Research activities must also comply with the University's [overall directives for on-campus activities](#). No laboratory re-opening is permitted without explicit authorization from the University. Professors will apply for re-opening of their research laboratories according to [established guidelines](#).

The health and safety of community members remains the priority. In this context, researchers who will be authorized to work on campus will be required to observe safe distancing from colleagues, proper hygiene protocols and to implement an enhanced cleaning and disinfection process for their workspaces. This process will include cleaning workspaces at the beginning and end of each shift, and disinfecting high-touch areas. Authorized laboratory staff, including graduate students and postdocs, must comply with the [directives on Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 at McGill](#).

Return to research laboratories

- Graduate students should resume on-campus activities only where these activities will support their progress toward their degree.
- All work that can be done remotely must continue to be done remotely.
- Graduate students will be made aware, in advance of their return to campus, of the approved laboratory health and safety plan relevant to their research environment so that they understand they are returning to a safe work environment.

Decision to return

- As set out in the [directives on Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 at McGill](#), graduate students who have health issues that render them highly susceptible to COVID-19, or who have family members who are highly susceptible should work from home.
- Graduate students who have family responsibilities which make a return to the lab impossible, may elect to continue to work remotely. This decision must be discussed with the supervisor and the Graduate Program Director.
- Coercion or intimidation of students to return to the lab is not permitted. The decision to return to the laboratory should remain the prerogative of the graduate student.

Assessment of progress during remote work

- Graduate students who decide to delay their return to the lab must communicate with their supervisor and have a detailed plan showing how they will advance their research program without coming to the

lab. Students may work remotely to complete any remaining course work and work on publications, reports, reviews, literature reviews, plan experiments and write portions of their thesis until such time as a return is possible. The supervisor and student must agree on the tasks the student is able to complete remotely, and how successful completion of the tasks will be communicated to the supervisor. This discussion must be supported by a written document that is signed by both the student and the supervisor, and forwarded to the Graduate Program Director.

- Stipends must be maintained.
- If no progress can be made in the research program, students should request a leave of absence by e-mailing associatedeans.gps@mcgill.ca. The request should provide details on why they cannot progress, include a supporting letter from their supervisor and have a research plan for a later start to their research.