

**Office of Research  
Compliance & Ethics**

Tech Accelerator, Suite 2050  
4201 James Ray Drive Stop 7134  
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7134  
Phone: 701.777.4279  
Fax: 701.777.2193

**COVID-19 related research IBC review process**

To: UND researchers  
From: Matthew Nilles, Chair, Institutional Biosafety Committee  
Heather Vinson, Biological Safety Officer  
Terry Wynne, Director of Safety  
John Mihelich, Interim Vice President for Research & Economic Development  
University of North Dakota Institutional Biosafety Committee  
Date: April 13, 2020

In the interest of facilitating expedient and effective IBC review of proposed COVID-19 research, we are contacting investigators who are planning to propose work on COVID-19. Though we want investigators to begin pursuing research as quickly as they can, the IBC has the responsibility to ensure that research is conducted safely to protect our hard-working researchers. Since this is a newly emerged virus that comes with many unknowns, the IBC necessarily needs to proceed with caution. Simple questions about the SARS-CoV-2 virus are still not completely answered, including routes of transmission. The IBC will need to understand and then find guidance on the proposed research to facilitate review of applications. Thus, the IBC will not conduct an expedited review for COVID-19 related work or approve such work as a protocol change. However, if you are planning to propose COVID-19 research, the IBC is committed to helping the review process move quickly and to conducting safe research.

We are requesting that all PIs planning to conduct any research related to COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 provide the following information prior to submitting any IBC application:

1. A description of the materials needed, where the materials will be acquired, and how the materials will be transported to UND.
2. The experimental procedures to be performed and how any samples will be manipulated or handled.
3. A completed UND risk assessment form (a template is available on the IBC website).
4. A listing of everyone in the laboratory who will be working on the COVID-19 project, including:
  - a. Names
  - b. Academic degrees
  - c. Project responsibilities
  - d. Prior experience and/or training directly related to project responsibilities

The IBC will review and begin finding applicable guidance and prepare for review of the applications as a group—perhaps with a special IBC COVID-19 meeting sooner than currently scheduled.

One further note on COVID-19: The Biological Safety Officer or the IBC chair must approve any orders or requests to obtain any COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 related materials, and an IBC approval must be completed before a material transfer agreement (MTA) will be signed.

Please send the information above as soon as possible to Matthew Nilles ([matthew.nilles@und.edu](mailto:matthew.nilles@und.edu)), Heather Vinson ([heather.vinson@und.edu](mailto:heather.vinson@und.edu)), and Michelle Bowles ([michelle.bowles@und.edu](mailto:michelle.bowles@und.edu)) and send any questions related to this process to Matthew Nilles or Heather Vinson.

Thank you, and we look forward to the contributions UND researchers make to understanding COVID-19.