

This email is intended for anyone who undertakes, manages or supports research across our campus.



Research & Innovation COVID-19 Edition

Issue 3 | 23 April 2020

Despite the challenges that our community has faced, I am incredibly proud of the determination and resilience that you all have shown. The current circumstances are enough to make us question our work, our priorities and our future. Yet day-in, day-out, I have (virtually) witnessed staff making the best of this most difficult situation. Whether contributing to the national COVID-19 response, supporting our ECRs and HDR candidates, or maintaining the critical infrastructure on campus, I thank you for adapting so diligently to supporting the decisions of the University.

The health of our community has been the priority consideration during this challenging time. However, I am sure you know that the situation around us is beginning to change for the better. Our sacrifices as a university have made a significant contribution to the continued health of the ANU and Canberra communities. We have so far managed to avoid 'worst-case scenarios' – and we have each sacrificed a great deal for that. I hope that we can find solace in the transition to a 'new' normal, one where we practice social distancing, meet for virtual coffees with colleagues and find diversity in our days, evidenced by the move between Zoom and Teams!

It is also important that we continue to celebrate the positives – with our teams, our supervisors and colleagues. On that note, I am delighted to announce that Professor Ann Evans has been appointed as Dean, Higher Degree Research at ANU. Ann has already made a remarkable impact in this role, successfully redefining the ANU PhD, and most recently, managing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on HDR candidates. I hope that you will all join me in congratulating Ann.

Keep well,
Professor Keith Nugent
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

1. HDR COVID-19 Extension Scholarship

Candidates and their supervisors should be meeting regularly and working on strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Changes to the research program may be needed to ensure progress towards completion of the thesis within 3.5 years.

We are making available an additional extension scholarship in recognition of the extreme disruption that COVID-19 is likely to have for some candidates. You will be able to apply for this extension scholarship when you are between 3 and 3.5 years. You will need to document the disruption and its impact through your annual milestones. The scholarship will be open for applications until 31 Dec 2021.

Extreme disruption can be demonstrated by indicating the impact on field work, experimentation and data collection that cannot be mitigated or where alternative work cannot continue while restrictions to campus access and travel continue. Extreme disruption would not include the need to re-locate activities off campus where the activities themselves are able to continue remotely.

Further details, including the application form, can be found [here](#).

2. Research restart on campus

This has been a challenging time for us all, and particularly for those in our research community who rely on access to research facilities on campus or who are managing progressing work with partners and funders. A process has been established to review the definition of critical on campus research activities given that some important external milestones are approaching, and some major research infrastructure is required to be operational.

At this stage, additional activities will be limited to a small number of research projects and infrastructure support. The intention is that this will not result in a significant increase in the number of staff on campus. We are working on further plans for a return to campus that will need to be in keeping with the health advice, and allows us to

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continue our work in the safest way possible. We will approach this carefully to be sure that we minimise the risk of a stop/start scenario. I want to thank you for playing your part in keeping the ANU and the Canberra community safe, despite the extraordinary disruption.

The process for considering the re-start of some research activities on campus has been communicated to College Deans; I invite you to speak with your College Dean about this. Proposals are due for submission by 5pm Friday 24 April 2020 through your College Dean.

3. Ethics committee update

Whilst research activity on campus has been reduced, regulatory requirements must still be met in regards to ethics protocols. As part of your research planning and re-scoping, consideration must be given to the overall ethics position, regardless of whether the activity is continuing – remotely or on campus – or has been paused. Of course, the ethics team can provide advice if you have any uncertainty around the ethics requirements of your project.

All of the Committees are functioning remotely and seek to remain fully operational. However, it can be challenging to maintain the same level of responsiveness during these remote working arrangements. Please remember that the Committees are all serving the institution as volunteers, including non-technical or specialist members who form an integral part of the committees, in line with regulations. The issues that these Committees normally consider are currently compounded by the present challenges, and often require more deliberation. Research Services Division is working tirelessly to support the committees, and maintain operations. Please be mindful that a lack of consideration and preparedness when interacting with the team can cause unreasonable pressure on all involved.

More detailed information on the specific ethics committees is available on the [COVID-19 Advice](#) page, under '[Funding & Ethics Protocols](#)'.

4. Indigenous research update

Following further consultation, the University has clarified the information relating to research with Indigenous participants.

In many cases, Indigenous communities are likely to be feeling the effects of the current crisis to a higher degree. To limit the spread of COVID-19, the University is advising researchers who are conducting engagement or approved research on-country and in remote communities to ensure that these communities are still willing to participate. From an ethical perspective the immediate needs of participants is paramount, and you must ensure that your participants are informed of the changing circumstances, and consent to the research/engagement continuing under the new circumstances as might apply in their own jurisdictions.

In terms of ongoing engagement or research that can be conducted remotely, the present situation may make research less of a priority for most participants and the University needs to anticipate, acknowledge and respect this. If participants remain willing, then the University is supportive of research activities conducted remotely, particularly research determined as beneficial by the communities themselves.

Researchers should consider a range of risk management processes for all research applications that have direct contact with Indigenous peoples, such as interviews and fieldwork. People living in rural and remote areas generally may not have conference call facilities of a similar capacity to those in urban areas to support 'remote' research arrangements. Further, we must respect the sensitivity and agency of these communities to determine how, when and to what extent they wish to engage with ANU, while we simultaneously ensure we mitigate risk of transmission. ANU staff and researchers must ensure that they are complying with all relevant laws and policies as they apply in the various States and Territories in which research is conducted, particularly as we, as a nation, manage the complex issues arising from the current pandemic.

5. Library access

The ANU Library continues to support research at the University with the provision of materials to researchers, including Honours students. We have a wealth of online resources including digitised copies of ANU theses from the Library's collection. Some materials are easier to access than others, and some require digitisation which needs to be arranged with the publisher.

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If you urgently require access to collection material, such as foreign language material, in order to maintain critical research activity, please email the University Librarian, Roxanne Missingham (Roxanne.missingham@anu.edu.au). The Library will then seek to make the material available, within 5 working days, and will inform the requester by email of the arrangements for provision.

You can visit the ANU Library website [here](#), which provides access to remote resources and easy '[how to](#)' [guides](#) for finding your way around remotely.

6. COVID-19 National Leadership Communications & Engagement

The University has developed a National Leadership strategy to promote the work of ANU researchers who are contributing their expertise to the COVID-19 response.

If you'd like to know more about the strategy, or have your work highlighted, contact the ANU Media team: media@anu.edu.au.

7. Useful links and resources

- [ANU COVID-19 Advice](#)
- [ANU Community Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Working from home](#)
- [Looking after your wellbeing when working from home](#)
- [Australian Department of Health](#)
- [ACT Health](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [Coronavirus Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Ten misconceptions about coronavirus](#)

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Contact eo.dvcr@anu.edu.au