

## Restarting Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities in the Arts, Social Sciences Humanities, Libraries and Law

More than most other UB research endeavors, the ability to fully restart research and scholarly activities in the Arts, Humanities Social Sciences and Law is closely tied to the phased reopening of the Western New York economy and the economies of the US and other nations. One reason for this is that much of the work in these areas either is directly involved with or requires participation of the general public and groups of students. Another reason for this is that scholarly activity in these areas often involves travel of individuals to Buffalo or travel of UB faculty to archives, field sites, or to colleagues at national or international locations. Finally constraints on the size of both public gatherings as well as the size of classes, due to requirements for social distancing also will limit the type of research and creative activities that can occur.

Problems that uniquely affect the scholarship and research of faculty and students in creative arts and humanities include:

- Interactions with the public are intrinsic to activities. Many of the pursuits are public facing.
- Group work is fundamental to activity
- Scholarship relies on coordinated access to UB Libraries collections
- Travel to and research at archives/collections is a main element of research and scholarly activity in these areas.

New York's opening plan presents particular challenges to research and scholarly activities in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences since it prioritizes activities that are considered to have a large economic impact, but also have a low inherent risk of infection for participants:

	Greater Economic Impact	Lower Economic Impact
Low Infection Rate	Industry greater economic impact, <b>low risk</b> of workplace or customer infection spread	Industry less economic impact, <b>low risk</b> of workplace or customer infection spread
High Infection Rate	Industry greater economic impact, <b>higher risk</b> of workplace or customer infection spread	Industry less economic impact, <b>higher risk</b> of workplace or customer infection spread

- Phase 1: Construction; manufacturing and wholesale supply chain; select retail with curbside pickup (tentative date ~~June 1~~ May 19)
  - Phase 2: Professional services; finance and insurance; retail; administrative support; real estate, rental leasing (tentative date June 15)
  - Phase 3: Restaurants, food services; hotels, accommodations (tentative date June 29)
  - Phase 4: Arts, entertainment, recreation, education (tentative date July 13)
- (Note tentative dates assume Erie County reopens on June 1 and no rollbacks occur)*

Therefore New York's phased reopening plan de-prioritizes restarting activities/opening venues that are intrinsic to research and scholarly activities in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and does not recommend them to begin in earnest until Phase 4, which at its earliest would occur in mid July.

In addition to the dependence of activities on external economic factors and government regulations, economic factors internal to UB, other regulations will also limit the range of scholarly activities that can take place. Specifically, restrictions on travel imposed both by spending constraints and state mandates will impact the ability of scholars to travel to both present their work and to perform research at archival locations.

Therefore it is difficult to envision how a full program of creative and scholarly activities in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences or Law can be undertaken until Phase 4 of New York state's plan. Moreover it is nearly impossible to predict how requirements for social distancing and budgetary constraints will affect the ability of faculty to resume their research and creative activities in these areas. Nonetheless, it is essential that we begin the process of identifying what can be done and when. This timeline for beginning work must be designed with an eye towards the internal and external factors outlined above.

Priorities for ramping up research in the Arts, Humanities Social Sciences and Law:

- Scholarly activities in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences are often not funded externally. Therefore, a funding stream for underwriting the costs of providing appropriate amounts of PPE (here masks) and sanitization materials for creative and public spaces must be identified and spending prioritized regardless of the current budget climate.
- Access to museum, gallery, and library resources
  - Requires imposition of university mandates on behavior
  - Requires a commitment by the university to provide adequate cleaning staff and supplies to maintain a sanitized environment.
  - Requires reconfiguration to protect museum, gallery and library staff
- Ability to work in groups
  - Requires UB allow in-person classes in fall 2020
  - Requires recognition that creative ensembles (music, theater, dance) cannot take place if masks prevent individuals from playing instruments, singing and/or restricts breathing.
  - Requires recognition that social distancing requirements may be challenging for instruction/practice for ensembles.
- Ability to interact with the public (including in schools, mental health settings, community centers, courts and other legal spaces and other public forums).
  - Requires a commitment by the university to provide adequate cleaning staff and supplies to maintain a sanitized environment.
- Ability to travel

It is with this in mind that we propose the specific timelines for beginning research and creative activities in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Please note that the phases proposed are developed with those proposed by NY State in the "[New York Forward](#)" reopening guidance document in mind, the proposed phases are aligned with phases proposed in UB's Lab and Research Facility Ramp-up Plan. The initial two phases are guided by the idea that every activity that can be done remotely must be done remotely. Activity ramp-up in the second two phases are based on the idea that hybrid/remote operations should be used as much as possible to maintain minimal density.

#### Considerations for UB's response to pandemic reoccurrence.

In response to the institution of stay-at-home orders in the initial phase of this pandemic, UB halted "non-essential" research and scholarly activities while allowing "essential" research to continue. UB defined essential research as that which, if halted, would endanger human life. This order was interpreted as meaning only research into medical interventions to fight the pandemic could continue.

This interpretation runs counter to the recognition that most effective 'treatments' for limiting the immediate and lasting impacts of the pandemic are dramatic change to social and economic activities. It also ignores the now widely known fact that those most affected by the pandemic are those in vulnerable populations, which include persons of color, recent immigrants and others in underserved communities. UB's research expertise in the study of society, economics and cultures lies within its Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences departments. Therefore research in these areas should be recognized as essential to limiting the loss of human life. We are painfully aware that a recurrence of the virus in New York later this year may result in the reinstatement of stay-at-home orders. If this prediction comes to pass, and as UB moves to reinstitute the attendant restrictions on UB's research and scholarly activities, we urge the administration to acknowledge the essentiality of continuing the life-saving research that goes on in our non-STEM programs. Maintenance of these aspects of the enterprise would require faculty have continued office access and access to library collections

**Other considerations/preconditions:**

- Resources and commitment to cleaning, as well as changes to infrastructure to add plexiglass barriers at help desks and other public facing areas are of great concern for departments, art galleries, museum and collections, and libraries. Construction of this safety equipment must be prioritized centrally and funding for this must be identified and spending prioritized regardless of the current budget climate.
- The role of student/faculty choice in opting not to participate in activities they feel are a threat to their health must be clarified.
- The line of communication for reporting conditions which a student or faculty feels are a threat to their health must be delineated.
- Prioritization plans must be sensitive to the needs of parents and family caretakers who do not have access to child care / schooling for children.

# Phased Plan for Restart of Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities

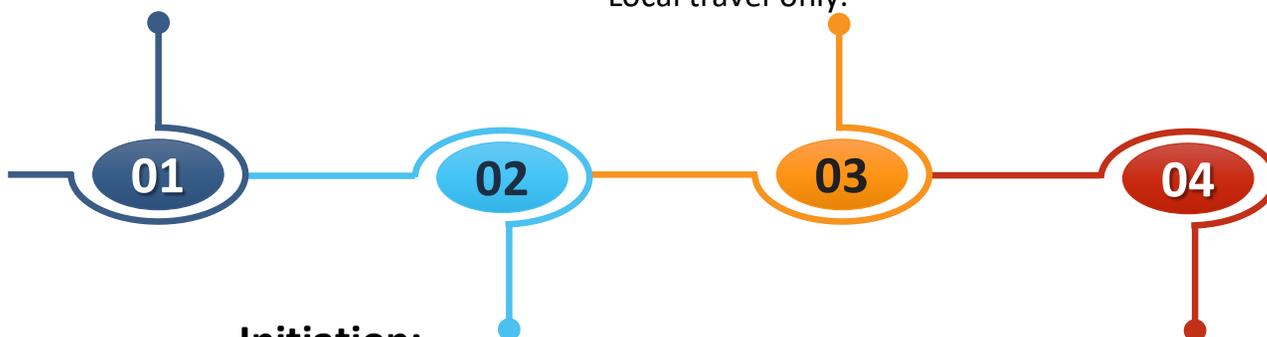
## Preparation:

- Build plans for restarting research & creative activities.
- Evaluate facilities; establish safety guidelines, social distancing protocols.
- Submit plans for approval.

## Expansion:

- Expand activities to those that can be carried out while maintaining safety guidelines.
- Small in-person seminars held while maintaining maximum social distance/safety guidelines.
- Small ensemble work permitted.
- No public performance. Limited gallery/museum access; by appointment.
- Local travel only.

PHASE



## Initiation:

- Access to offices/facilities allowed.
- Begin low risk, low density activities, maximizing social distance, minimizing contact. 1:1 interactions allowed; no large ensembles or groups.
- Rely, as much as possible, on video interactions/conferences, coaching and evaluation.
- Availability of small in person grad seminars recommended but subject to University decisions.
- Library facilities available by appointment. No public stack access.

## Normalization:

- All types of in-person research/creative activities are allowed.
- Public access to galleries museums unrestricted
- Public performances allowed.
- All travel allowed, subject to budgetary constraints and local conditions/restrictions..