

Some Office of Graduate Education advice to Graduate Programs during COVID-19 emergency

Graduate students: reproduced here for your information is part of a document that was sent to your graduate programs in the last weeks with advice we offered them to enable you to continue appropriate progress in your program during the COVID-19 emergency. If you are in the research phase of your studies and are not currently allowed into the lab. our hope is that you will be engaged in some subset of the below activities.

Outside of those students who are enrolled in courses and will continue to be busy with work and assignments associated with their courses, or those deemed research-essential and who are continuing critical work in the lab, we offer here a list of potential ways to productively engage with those students who are currently not able to work in laboratories or fulfill their other assignments.

Please share these suggestions with your Graduate Faculty ASAP

1. working on data analysis and design of experiments
2. reading scientific literature
3. attending and presenting at journal clubs by Zoom or another platform
4. attending lab meetings by Zoom or another platform
5. listening to webinars and having subsequent lab discussions by Zoom/WebEx (e.g. webinars put out by Science Magazine, see <https://www.sciencemag.org/custom-publishing/webinars>)
6. writing drafts of manuscripts
7. preparing grant/fellowship applications
8. starting dissertation chapters, i.e., literature review for those not at that stage, or completing dissertations by those more advanced
9. contact journals to determine if they are open to publishing an unsolicited review
10. preparing research seminars, and/or posters for meetings
11. taking online courses to enhance skillsets for experimental work (e.g., bioinformatics, bioengineering techniques, Python, as examples)
12. get a head start on rigor and reproducibility training using NIH online resources found at <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/pages/clearinghouse-for-training-modules-to-enhance-data-reproducibility.aspx>. (e.g. take the iBiology course or review and discuss the other training modules).
13. perform computational modeling
14. review SOP techniques
15. search sequence data
16. secondary analysis
17. work collaboratively to outline an experimental plan for a study
18. work on figures for a collaborative manuscript-typically one member of the team is better at plotting or figure representation and the whole team could share authorship
19. enhancing career development through NIH OITE, for instance

In addition:

Ensure students have an adequate computer with working webcam and microphone, a good internet connection and are prepared for VPN access. Ensure that data are accessible to lab members. Access to specialized software should be considered.

Thesis advisory committee meetings, qualifying exams and dissertation defenses should continue through a combination of in-person, and on-line approaches.

Mentors should be asked to check in with their mentees every other day. They should work with their mentees to help them develop a list and time-table of activities to be performed each week.

Mentors should reassure their mentees about continued financial support and remind them of their obligation to strive for continued scientific productivity in return for that support.