# Plan for In-person Research - Varani

Consult Office of Research Checklist for Developing a Return to In-person Research Plan for help with filling the template

**Locations covered (list building and room numbers):** **Bagley 442, 442b, 441, 441a, 63b, 63c, 63d**

## COVID-19 Supervisor

**Name:** Gabriele Varani **Contact Info:** 206-387-3707

A member of the group that can assume the COVID-19 Supervisor role in the PI's absence:

**Name:** Tom Pavelitz **Contact Info:** 206-850-1153

Names of people conducting in-person research:

[redacted]

The health and safety of our researchers is of primary importance. No one approved to return to research will be compelled to work in-person or onsite for any reason. All in-person and onsite research must be completely voluntary, and all activities that may be conducted remotely must be conducted remotely.

## Social and Physical Distancing

1. Attach lab floor plan. Label all the room(s)/work area(s) and for each room/work area indicate the maximum occupancy:

   Floor plans are attached for the 4th floor and ground floor of Bagley. Rooms assigned to Varani are 442, the 441 cold room suite and the Bagley 63 office suite.

   Maximum capacity for the laboratory space has been assigned based on the following floor sizes: Bagley 442 2,086 sqf, of which 2/3 are assigned to GV; 442B (Hot lab/tissue culture): 290 sqf; 441 and 441A (incubator/freezer space and cold room): 225 and 216 sqf. For Bagley 442, maximum occupancy is 3 people; for 442B: 1 person; 441 and 441A: 1 person

   The maximum capacity of the office space in Begey 63 suite assigned based on the following floor sizes: 63B, 284 sqf; one in Varani office 63C, 203 sqf and the smaller enclosed office 63D, 102 sqf. For the Bagley 63 suite, maximum occupancy is 3 people.

Whenever you are in the Bagley 63 suite, open the windows; they have bars for safety and would increase air circulation in the office suite.

2. Describe a lab usage scheduling plan that will minimize the number of people in the lab at any given time and how it will be implemented:
   a. The maximum capacity of our main lab spaces (Bagley 442) **is 3 people** working at benches or other stations, **plus one** "temporary" person passing through the lab or just fetching a reagent from a cabinet/fridge/freezer (i.e. will be in the lab for <5 min. and is not stationed at a bench during that time). You must maintain a 6 ft. distance from all other occupants at all times and wear a mask at all times while working in the 442 space.
   b. The maximum capacity of small rooms, such as the cold rooms (441 and 441A), and the Hot lab/Tissue Culture (442B), is **1 person**; **no temporary people**. You must take turns using these spaces, as needed. **No exceptions** for "just needing to grab one thing."
   c. Maximum capacity for the laboratory space has been assigned based on the following floor sizes: Bagley 442 2,086 sqf, of which 2/3 are assigned to GV; 442B (Hot lab/tissue culture): 290 sqf; 441 and 441A (incubator/freezer space and cold room): 225 and 216 sqf.
   d. The maximum capacity of the office is 3 people; one in the large desk area (63B, 284 sqf); one in Gab's office (63C, 203 sqf) and one in the smaller enclosed office (63D, 102 sqf).

e. Before entering any of these rooms, you must ensure that occupancy limits are not exceeded. Before entering a lab or office space, you must verbally announce your entry. Wait for any occupants to respond to you. If the room is already at capacity, you must wait until someone else leaves before you enter the room. Coordinate with the people inside. Wait if necessary.
f. Before the start of each week, please write down your plans for work to be conducted in the lab (e.g. RNA synthesis; protein purification; NMR etc), and post it in our group calendar. That way we will all have a sense of who has a greater need to be in the lab in that particular week and Tom and I can plan ahead to assign lab slots to each of you.
g. Before coming to the lab, you must mark down your schedule on the calendar, at least a day in advance (i.e. by the night before); mark clearly at which times you are expected to be in the lab and make sure that capacity of the room is not exceeded.
h. Should you need to come to the laboratory for an unforeseen reason and capacity has already been exceeded, contact the person(s) by e.mail to rearrange the schedule, so that there is no plan to have more than 3 people in Beg 442 or Beg 63 at any one time.
i. Do not ever come to the lab to do work that can be done from home on your laptop/PC. All writing, data analysis, etc must be done from home

3. Describe specific rules and policies that will be implemented in your group to ensure social and physical distancing measures:

**Before coming to the UW**

a. All lab members must minimize trips to lab and avoid coming to the UW for anything that can be done from home. This cannot be said enough. Even with protections in place there is still risk of spreading COVID-19. Everything that can be done at home, must be done at home (data analysis, writing, etc). Do not come to the lab to work in the office; continue doing it from home.
b. Spend as little time as necessary in the Bagley 63 office suite; working there between experiments is fine, but plan your experiments in such a way to minimize your time at the UW
c. Mark the Varani Lab COVID-19 Schedule Calendar with the time and date when you will be in lab and which rooms you will be in and which time of the day you plan to be in. Since we have about twice as many people as spots, it should not be too challenging to schedule lab time in such a way that everyone can be in the lab safely, as long as we all plan ahead and communicate.

Include any lab spaces that you will spend prolonged periods of time in. You do not need to include spaces you will only pass through briefly or enter only to fetch a reagent.

If you will only be in lab for part of the day, please sign up for/list the hours you'll be in. Give yourself plenty of time (including time to clean up!) so that you don't feel rushed if things take longer than expected.

Please sign up as early as possible so other folks can plan around you.

**While in the lab or office space:**

**a. All occupants must stay ≥6 feet apart at all times**.

- This may result in awkward situations or having to wait for someone to finish using equipment, but this rule **must be** followed at all times. If you are uncertain as to what 6 ft looks like, each floor tile = 1 ft square approximately.

**b. No more than one person may work in any lab bay at any time**

- We have been assigned a bench and must strictly make sure that each person only uses his/her bench
- If two people whose benches are in the same bay need to be in lab on the same day, one person must move to a designated extra bench set up in each lab for this purpose. Please disinfect this bench at the beginning and end of the day.
- Bring your own pipettes, tips, tubes, stock bottles, and any other materials you will need for the day to any common bench to minimize the number of trips you will need to make back to your usual bay.

**c.** Please wipe down each microcentrifuge and set of pipettes down at the beginning and end of day and do not share them during the day. There is some equipment that we do not have multiples of (e.g. gel power supplies). These will need to be shared and must be wiped down before and after each use before someone else uses them.

**d.** The one person per bay rule applies in bays containing shared equipment, chemical cabinets, or cabinets/drawers containing bottles, beakers, consumables, etc. If someone is in a bay and you need to get access to equipment or a cabinet/drawer in that bay, please coordinate with each other and take turns. Be prepared to wait longer than usual to

use equipment or grab an item. Try to plan ahead and minimize trips to common spaces to minimize any opportunity for casual contact.

**e.** You may use the balances and pH meters while someone is at their bench in those bays as long as you are only there temporarily and are 6 ft. away from the other person at all times. This will require coordination with the person in the bay, so tell them what you are doing and how long you will be using the balance/pH meter.

**f.** Wipe down the bench you are working on at the beginning and end of each day. Wipe down any shared benches that you use before and after you use them.

**g.** Do not wear headphones/earbuds in both ears while in lab. You must be able to hear anyone trying to get your attention.

**h.** The best way to make these distancing restrictions work smoothly, is to talk to your labmates constantly and to be accommodating. Keeping yourself and your labmates safe is more important than finishing your day's work quickly. Give your labmates space (6 ft) and communicate as needed to maintain a safe distance and follow any other safety guideline.

4. Describe the tasks and activities that can be safely performed in the lab:

   All normal laboratory activities associated with the group's research can be performed in the lab, as long as safety protocols are strictly and conscientiously adhered to. RNA synthesis, protein purification, preparation of NMR samples, etc.
   Activities that can be done from home (e.g. most computer-based work, writing, data analysis etc) cannot be done in the lab or office space and should instead be done from home; the only exception is time between experiments.

5. Describe the changes to the workspace(s) that have been made to ensure social and physical distancing and hygiene requirements:

   New procedures designed to ensure physical distances are described above and throughout this document. In addition, please follow the following rules with regards to restocking to make sure the lab runs as smoothly as possible and therefore to avoid unnecessary trips, delays, overlaps in the lab.

   a. Please be prepared to restock reagents and buffers, wash your own bottles & beakers, and box up your own trash, as needed. If it can wait, you may put it on the board for Thomas to do, but keep in mind that it may be a few days before they can restock it.

   b. Lab stocks will eventually run low. If you see this situation, please take responsibility for replenishing the stock. DO NOT JUST LEAVE THIS FOR THE NEXT PERSON. Instructions for preparation are in the lab helper binder. Most stocks are simple to make, but if it is complex or not urgent, you may put it on the board for Thomas to do. If stocks run out though, please make more (don't leave it for someone else to find).

   c. Lab trash must be bagged in a trash bag and then boxed up in a cardboard box. Boxes must be taped up with "lab glass" tape, labelled with "Varani Lab Trash, Room 442" in large letters, and left in the hallway outside the door for Facilities to pick up.

   d. More boxes can be found near the cold room in Bagley 441. Make sure to carefully wash your hands afterward!

   e. Use shipping tape to tape up the box, then put a single piece of lab glass tape on it. If we run out of lab glass tape, label the box "LAB GLASS" in permanent marker.

   f. If supplies of a chemical or consumable start to run low, **please let Tom know by email**. Coordinating deliveries will be tricky, so please let them know early!

   g. When Biohazard is full **please let Tom know.**

6. Describe how policies and measures have been communicated to group members (signage posted, e-mails, group meetings, etc):

   These lab policies have been shared with the group during their preparation and discussed at group meetings; they will be shared with all group members by e.mail, once finalized; before returning to work, each lab member must confirm that he/she has read and fully agree to these policies by sending an e.mail to Gab and Tom (who is our safety officer).

   Signs will be posted at each door (per attached documents) to remind group members and visitors of their responsibilities whenever they enter the lab or office space.

   Before you come to the UW you must have prior approval from Gabriele and the Chem. Department and have received an approval letter from the Department designating you "critical personnel."

7. Describe how new members of your group will be trained. Please specify any training that can and should be done remotely, such as training for specific instruments, equipment, or software.

- Whenever possible, the training in common experimental techniques will be performed through video recordings and live video conferences.
    - A library of training videos available online (on sites like Youtube) for general laboratory techniques (vacuum traps, pipette use, fume hood use, solvent system, etc) will be made available to incoming students/post-docs.
    - If videos are not available online, senior students will record an instructional video. These will be recorded by the senior student alone, through desk-mounted video recording tools (like smartphones) or a head-held camera (GoPro) that will be treated as a group resource/instrument, available to everybody in the group through cloud storage (google drive). Alternatively, the incoming student will observe the demonstration in real time through a virtual meeting.
- Training for lab instruments (centrifuges, laminar flow hood, HPLC, gel electrophoresis, etc,) will be done online through pre-recorded training videos and/or live virtual meetings.
- Even after online training sessions, specific in-person training will be necessary at times. These training sessions will be performed observing Covid guidelines provided by the university: the two persons will always be required to keep a 6 ft distance, and will wear standard safety PPE, including protective face masks.
- Before performing new experiments independently, the new group members will discuss a detailed plan and a risk assessment with a senior member of the lab (Pavelitz and/or the PI) in a virtual meeting.
- When new students are doing experiments, there will always be a senior researcher present in the nearby lab or office space.
- In the case of emergency, the second researcher will approach wearing standard PPE equipment, including face mask (personal or provided by the department).
- Incoming students will not perform highly hazardous experiments that would normally necessitate the presence of a second researcher in the immediate vicinity. The hazardous part of such experiments will be performed by a senior researcher instead until the new student/post-doc is fully trained and experienced with the lab and the department
- Interpretation of the experimental results and troubleshooting will be performed online with help of senior students and/or the PI whenever possible.

## Responding to Illness

1. Describer how the University of Washington requirements for symptom assessment and attestation will be fulfilled:

If you are sick, you must stay home. Stay home even if you have mild symptoms of illness. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 infection are fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Symptoms of COVID-19 infection include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Other respiratory symptoms (e.g., sore throat, runny nose, sneezing)
- Chills
- Loss of taste or smell
- Other symptoms

In addition to staying home, if you experience symptoms of COVID-19 infection, follow the steps below.

FIRST: Contact your health-care provider. Please do not show up at a clinic, urgent care or other health facility without contacting it first. Your provider will need to take special measures to protect other people in the clinic. Telemedicine may also be available, enabling you to consult a provider from home. If you are at higher risk for serious illness, your healthcare provider may arrange a test for COVID-19.

- Group Researchers must complete the daily attestation to any COVID-19 symptoms on Workday prior to coming to work. https://wd5.myworkday.com/uw/login.htmld

2. Describe the plan in case someone in the group develops COVID-19 symptoms. The plan was developed to be consistent with the university developed recommendations found at **https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/faq/**

   In the interest of individual privacy, it's important to not share information about particular cases unless instructed to do so. When a UW community member is diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, the relevant local health department and the UW initiate appropriate protocols to protect the health of anyone deemed to be at risk.

   If you have a person within your department who is symptomatic and/or believes they have been exposed to COVID-19, please do the following:

   - Direct the impacted individual to call their doctor (or Hall Health if a student) for appropriate medical treatment and/or testing
   - If at work, immediately go home and contact healthcare provider. If at home, contact health provider. Consult **https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/faq/** for the course of action recommended by the University of Washington in the case of the suspected case of COVID-19.
   - Direct the individual to contact Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) for appropriate support and screening. (Note that it's important for EH&S to speak with the individual directly). emphlth@uw.edu or 206.685.1026
   - If comfortable with sharing the information, contact GV (206 387-3707; varani@uw.edu)and/or Paul Miller (paulmil@uw.edu (206) 543-1612).
   - EH&S will perform a risk assessment and follow-up with appropriate guidance. If an individual is determined to be medium or high risk for COVID-19 or if the individual is determined presumed positive, EH&S will coordinate with the UW on appropriate operations and communication guidance and next steps. Units/departments should not send broad communications about individual cases until they have this guidance.
   - The University will not send all-campus or unit messages for every case. As testing increases and more individuals are identified, localized mitigation responses will likely increase in frequency, as will the number of individuals who test negative. Positive cases will be posted at uw.edu/coronavirus for full transparency.
   - Many departments maintain various list serves to communicate with faculty, staff, and students. In the interest of privacy, we encourage all departments to use discretion and moderate messages about presumed or confirmed cases of COVID-19 as they may contain sensitive personal information. As noted above, faculty, staff and students in departments should not send broad communications unless they have guidance from EH&S.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Workplace

1. Describe cleaning and disinfection protocols for high-touch surfaces, shared equipment, and common areas in the lab, including who is responsible:
   - Door handles and light switches should be cleaned with 70% EtOH before and after use.
     - Cleaning supplies will be made available for these purposes.
   - Normal PPE rules still apply with regards to gloves. Do not touch door handles with a gloved hand. You risk contaminating the door handle with chemicals/biohazards and your glove will be contaminated with germs from the door handle. All lab coats must be stored at your lab bench not at a communal lab coat storage area.
   - Shared areas and equipment must be disinfected before and after use with 70% EtOH or 10% bleach.
     - This includes: shared bench areas/shared equipment (AKTAs, shakers, thermocyclers, centrifuges, etc.), lab phones, keyboards, chairs and shared stations.
     - Computer keyboards must be covered in Saran wrap. The Saran wrap should be discarded after a single use.
   - Cloth-covered chairs cannot be easily disinfected and **must not be shared**. Foam or metal chairs can be wiped down and so will be placed at common stations first and then distributed to bays around the lab. These should be cleaned before and after use at common stations and at the beginning and end of day at benches.
     - Label your chair with your name on lab tape. **Do not use anyone else's chair**.
   - To safely access shared lab stocks, such as shared bottles of reagents or aliquots from the -20C, we ask that you only wear clean gloves and spray your gloves with 70% ethanol prior to using/accessing the reagent. Aliquots should also be sprayed/wiped with 70% ethanol, and shared bottles of reagents should be wiped down with 70% ethanol as well.

# Encouraging Good Hygiene

1. Describe measures in your group that will promote and enable uniformly good hygiene practices:

   Wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 20 sec) after touching door handles, light switches, or other high-touch surfaces (phones, white boards, etc.).

   Wash your hand repeatedly in the course of the day, and whenever you leave and enter the lab or office space.

   a. Please keep the areas around the sinks clear so that they are easily accessible for hand washing!

2. Describe the lab policy for wearing a mask and other protective equipment:

   Wear a mask at all times while in the lab or office. You can use a mask or bring a (clean) reusable cloth mask from home.

   a. To put on the mask: Wash your hands before putting the mask on. Make sure the wire (nose clip), if present, is on top and properly fitted to your nose/cheeks. Wash your hands again after adjusting the mask.
   b. After putting on the mask, it is important not to touch the front of the mask again. Assume it is contaminated.
   c. When removing the mask: Remove by touching only the earloops. Wash your hands before and after removing the mask.
   d. If possible, we encourage using your own (clean) reusable masks. That being said, do not risk exposure and use masks as necessary.
   e. If using a reusable cloth mask, they must not be reused until after they have been laundered. Treat it as contaminated until then

# General

1. Provide a plan for training group members in COVID-19-related policies and procedures described in this document, including how the training will be documented:

   We will discuss these protocols in group meeting and document your participation in the course of the training session. This will be repeated monthly to keep the precautions fresh in the mind of all group members.

2. Describe the plan for visitors. The plan should address symptom monitoring, attestation, and visitor log maintenance for all the visitors. (Visitors are defined as those who do not normally use these spaces, including both UW and non-UW personnel):

   Visitors should be discouraged from entering the lab or office space under most circumstances and will only be allowed if necessary. If entrance of a visitor into our lab space is necessary, Tom and Gab must be notified.

   Visitors must receive copy of lab policies by e.mail; visitor must confirm that he/she has read and fully agree to these policies.

   The Department of Chemistry visitor log and attestation forms will be placed at the entrance of Bagley 442 and 63 and will be maintained by researchers and made available to all visitors to the lab or office space.

   All visitors must have prior approval from Gabriele or Tom Pavelitz before entering our space; no exceptions. If you need to exchange reagents or protocols, please do so at the door, always keeping the 6 feet safe distance rule.

   This information regarding visitor policy will also be posted on the entrance(s) to 442 and the 63 suite.

3. Describe how group members will be informed of COVID-19-related policies for shared facilities and common spaces in the department:

Policies for departmental shared facilities and shared spaces will be discussed at group meetings and will be shared with all group members by email; before returning to work, each lab member must confirm that he/she has read and fully agree to these policies and will follow them to the letter.

4. Describe any other COVID-19 related policies implemented in your group:

**SHUTDOWN CHECKLIST**

- Clean your bench, pipettes, and benchtop equipment with 70% EtOH or 10% bleach. Clean your chair, unless it is a cloth-covered chair assigned only to you.
- Any shared equipment or spaces you worked in should also have been cleaned after use.

- Perform the usual shutdown checklist (turning off equipment, checking fridges/freezers, etc.), but also clean the door handles and light switches in each room you're shutting down.
- Remove and dispose of your PPE (except reusable masks).
- Wash your hands thoroughly before leaving!

A final note: The better we keep our distance now, the more we can continue working under semi-normal operations. The most powerful tools at our disposal are **distance, PPE, and disinfection.** When in doubt, pause to consider how you can use these strategies to protect yourself and others and use your best judgment. We will need to update these guidelines as we see how they work in practice and as we learn more about the virus, so please send us suggestions or any problems you run into!