



March 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

We would like to further clarify the recently posted UMB guidelines for designation of laboratory graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Post graduate fellows are employees of the university and may be designated as Level 1 Essential Employees. They should be included in the Principal Investigator's plan for maintaining laboratory function and resources, but they should not be unduly burdened with these responsibilities when compared to other employees in the laboratory. Personnel safety is of critical importance and it would therefore be best to perform needed tasks by creating a staggered schedule for staff to minimize the number of people in the laboratory workspace and maximize the degree of social distancing.

Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are students first and foremost and therefore every effort must be taken to keep them safe, consistent with the University's efforts to protect other students on campus. Accordingly, GRAs should not be designated as essential and every reasonable effort should be made to have them engage with and continue their research activities remotely. We will re-evaluate this requirement in two weeks when we have more information about the impact and trajectory of this pandemic.

GRAs may not be assigned employee categories such as Level 1 Essential Employee.

Exceptions: Although it is possible for a GRA to be granted access to the lab for an extraordinary and exceptional reason, the bar is very high. Any proposed request must be approved by the dean of the appropriate school and the UMB President.

Sincerely,

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