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**Subject:** Initial Process for On-campus Research Ramp Up  
**Date:** May 19, 2020 at 11:01 PM  
**To:** MIT Department Heads department\_heads@mit.edu

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**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

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**Maria T. Zuber**, Vice President for Research

Dear Heads of Departments, Labs, and Centers,

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has begun to open non-essential businesses in the state, assuming health conditions continue to improve. While we are all excited at the prospect of an increased level of research activity on campus in the near term, we have to act deliberately and cautiously to ensure a smooth transition to a new set of conditions in our laboratories and facilities, and we must do our utmost to keep our colleagues safe. Everyone needs to do their part to make the ramp-up of on-campus research work effectively and to reduce the chances of having to scale-back again.

On Monday, May 18, 2020, at 8:00 a.m., at the recommendation of the Research Ramp-up Lightning Committee, we initiated a building access pilot for a few campus buildings (76, E17/18/19/25, 68) used for currently approved research. The pilot includes only those individuals who are currently authorized to work in those buildings. The pilot also includes access through a single entry, check-in, and in the near future, possible health checks. This pilot, which may be extended to other buildings, is an initial step while we work toward plans for the phased ramp-up of campus research activity. Lessons learned will help us improve campus access for the research ramp-up that will soon follow.

To prepare to return research groups to on-campus labs and facilities, **I am asking for your assistance**. The Lightning Committee has developed [guidance](#) regarding the parameters necessary for your faculty and other principal investigators to develop their lab-specific plans. These plans will have to be reviewed by the DLCs, refined where necessary, and integrated into DLC-wide plans. The DLC-level planning is to ensure that central services and core

facilities are not over-burdened during the ramp-up period. This is an excellent time for PIs to determine how their physical research space will be managed and occupied to allow for proper density and spacing of individuals according to CDC and Commonwealth guidelines, as well as MIT policies. Please have PIs in your units develop these plans and submit to you for review. Details about due dates for plans are included in the [guidance](#) document.

I also want to remind you of the following general principles that were developed by the Lightning Committee:

1. At this time, all work that can be done virtually should continue to be done virtually. I expect that many researchers and other staff will not have to return to campus at this point, and others will be able to significantly reduce their on-campus time compared to normal conditions. The evolving health risk will dictate when and how much this practice can be relaxed.
2. All researchers and staff who return to campus must do so voluntarily. There can be no pressure on individuals to resume their on-campus activities. For a variety of reasons, some may choose not to.
3. Due to the possibility that research may have to be scaled back again with little notice, PIs should be careful about what research projects they get underway initially.
4. PIs will have discretion to build their ramp-up plans according to their own priorities, provided that they follow the sets of conditions described in the [guidance](#).

Like all of you, I am excited to be starting the process of revving up MIT's research engine, and I look forward to working with you on this important process.

Warm regards,

Maria T. Zuber

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This email was sent to department\_heads@mit.edu

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