



## **Guidelines for Using the Cell Imaging Center during the COVID-19 Pandemic (June 4, 2020)**

### **OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

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The goal is to open the Cell Imaging Center (CIC) to researchers while minimizing risk to staff and users. To do this, we must limit physical contact and proximity among people and follow disinfection procedures recommended by the CDC and Drexel Environmental Health and Safety.

All staff and prospective users must maintain open communications and reporting of concerns, including protocol breaches and illnesses. Please remember that you are not alone and that your actions or inactions can be a source for the spread of an infectious disease.

### **General**

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All users are required to follow the Drexel's Department of Environmental Health and Safety issued protocols related to social distancing, personal protective equipment and proper cleaning/sanitizing: COVID-19 Prevention – [Social Distancing and Controls for Essential Personnel \[PDF\]](#). In addition to the Drexel EHS guidelines, **all CIC users must follow the specific guidelines of this document.**

All prospective users must be approved to return to research. Faculty members from each lab group are required to develop a ramp-up plan using the “REQUEST FOR RETURN TO RESEARCH” Form as directed in the [University Research Ramp-Up Guidance](#)

Prospective users must be approved for research activity and required to provide a copy of the approved “Return to Research Form” with their request for usage. To streamline the process, we recommend that the PI submits the approved form for the entire lab noting all previously trained CIC users that can resume imaging activities in the CIC.

Prospective users must be previously trained and experienced with the instruments. All users will be approved by the CIC Manager. **Training of new users or in-person assistance is not permitted now, and it will not be available until further notification.**

Per University regulations if you have ANY symptoms of symptoms of COVID-19 (including, but not limited to, fever, cough, shortness of breath, headache, sore throat, chills or muscle pain),

cancel your reservations and stay home. Please follow the guidelines in [COVID-19 Protocols for Essential Employees](#)

## **Facility Access**

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Requests for access to the CIC should be made in writing to the CIC manager and CIC Director with or approved “Return to Research Form” and copy of essential personnel letter. Users must complete Drexel’s COVID19 specific safety training and a “CIC guidelines during COVID” zoom training session with CIC manager, Dr. Sreenivasappa before getting access to CIC. Continuing Access is at the discretion of the Director of CIC.

Failure to follow University Research Work Controls and any specific instructions provided by the CIC manager may result in an immediate revocation of access to the facility.

Only trained, fully independent operators who had 24-hour access prior to the COVID-19 shutdown who have Essential Personnel status or Return to Research approval will be granted access at this time.

As per university recommendation undergraduates will not be allowed to use the CIC during Phase 1.

## **PPE requirements**

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Face masks are required for entry. Masks must be worn at all times while inside the core facilities in accordance with the COVID-19 Prevention Strategy: Research Work Controls from Drexel Environmental Health and Safety.

User who don’t wear glasses are required to use lab safety glasses while looking through the oculars to prevent virus transmission through the eyes

A hand sanitizer station will be set up at the entrance of CIC. Users should enter the lab, need to clean hands with the hand sanitizer and then don fresh gloves provided by the CIC. Then users should proceed directly to the instrument work area.

## **Social distancing**

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Only 1 person at a time is allowed to work on an instrument. Accompanying persons, collaborators, or observers are prohibited. Remote options such as Zoom or FaceTime should be used for observation and collaboration.

In PISB 408 and PISB 308, only 2 users can work at a time but only on different microscopes and users must maintain the minimum 6’ apart at all times.

Only one person is permitted in room Bossone 625C and the door must be closed during use

### **Cleaning and disinfection requirements**

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- User will enter the CIC with their samples, facemask and safety goggles. Users who wear glasses are not required to wear safety goggles.
- Once inside CIC, the user will
  - thoroughly disinfect their hands with hand sanitizer
  - don fresh gloves provided by the CIC
  - proceed directly to the scheduled microscope and close the curtain/ door
- User is required to disinfectant their work area and microscope at the beginning AND end of their session. Saturate kimwipe with 70% ethanol until its wet but not dripping and wipe down the workspace including:
  - desk area around keyboard and mouse
  - keyboard and mouse
  - eye pieces
  - the region around the eye pieces
  - joystick/ translation knobs
  - touchpad (if there is one)
  - microscope stage and inserts
  - focus knobs
  - NOTE: Cleaning supplies will be available at each instrument.
- **DO NOT SPRAY, DOUSE or POUR ON ANY PART OF THE MICROSCOPE 70% ETHANOL OR OTHER LIQUID.** Excess ethanol is a fire hazard and dried ethanol droplets can also mess up the optics in a microscope
- **DO NOT WIPE THE OBJECTIVES WITH KIMWIPES OR ETHANOL!** Use only lens paper as you normally do.
- User needs to log on to the iLabs kiosk to start their session and continue with their imaging session following all the CIC rules
- Plan extra time for disinfecting the microscope.
- It is critical to finish your session on time and not overlap with the next user to ensure social distancing.
- **USERS ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A MASK THROUGHOUT THEIR IMAGING SESSION**  
Goggles are required when using oculars. It is highly encouraged to use camera over eyepieces to locate your sample when possible.
- Avoid touching anything in CIC that is not necessary for your work. If you are coming to CIC make sure not to wander into other lab spaces within PISB or Bossone without permission
- Keep your cell phone in your pocket and use it ONLY if absolutely necessary (for example, if you need to contact core staff for help or if you need to call security). If you

do use your phone during your session, spray your gloves with 70% ethanol after you put your phone away

- Change gloves if you happen to contaminate your gloves with your sample. Do not touch the microscope with contaminated gloves. Report any spills to Dr. Harini Sreenivasappa immediately. Be economical with your gloves usage due to shortage of PPEs at this time
- Users should minimize the number of items (besides samples) that are brought into the room. Avoid bringing bags and coats into CIC
- After finishing work and wiping down the workspace with 70% ethanol as described before, remove gloves before leaving the microscope room, dispose in the gloves trash, and disinfect your hands with the hand sanitizer
- Please see COVID-19 Prevention Strategy: Research Work Controls from Drexel Environmental Health and Safety for more information about cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

As Phase I progresses, some of our policies and procedures may evolve as we work to streamline our workflow. All updates will be sent to the CIC listserv.

### **Scheduling use of instruments**

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All work must be scheduled 48 hour in advance using iLab.

A new iLab General Calendar is used to limit occupancy to 2 users in PISB 408. The calendar is linked to the instrument calendars. When you make a reservation on an instrument you will be asked to reserve time on a linked schedule. Please make sure only one slot is selected. Once you confirm your instrument reservation, the reservation will automatically be made on the General Calendar. There is no charge associated with this calendar.

Please allow 15min time between adjacent reservations on the instruments to allow time to clean and disinfect and to allow multiple air changes to occur to remove aerosolized contaminate.

Please, use the CIC email server (cic-users-l@lists.drexel.edu) to immediately notify any cancelations, rescheduling or any other issues to all users of the CIC.

### **Hands-on Training and Assistance**

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Regrettably, to maintain adequate social distancing, we cannot offer training to new users or in-person assistance at this time. Users can arrange assistance over Zoom or telephone. Users who need critical work completed should seek collaborations with trained users in your research areas. Due to social distancing requirements, any technical assistance with microscope issues should be reported to Harini Sreenivasappa by email (hs324@drexel.edu) or phone call (215-

571-4053), and all efforts will be made to provide some assistance while maintaining at least a 6 feet distance at all times between users in the CIC. Users may also attempt to find Harini Sreenivasappa at her desk location (PISB 401 Bench number 1) but should maintain proper social distancing and wear a mask while walking through the PISB 401 shared lab space. Any additional needs or services will be provided upon request on a limited as-needed-basis pending approval by the Office of Research and the CIC Director.

## Contacts

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- Dr. Harini Sreenivasappa, Manager [hs324@drexel.edu](mailto:hs324@drexel.edu) 215.571.4053
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