Introduction

Harvard Library Mission
We are expert partners on the pathways to knowledge. We engage with our communities in the creation and sharing of new knowledge, connecting them with vast collections that we curate and steward with collaborators around the world. At its core, our mission is to advance the learning, research and pursuit of truth that are at the heart of Harvard.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed teaching, learning and research at Harvard, and the ways that Harvard Library fulfills its mission. As the campus closed to all but essential functions, the Library was well positioned with robust digital infrastructure and services to sustain many of the activities of virtual classrooms and remote research. Indeed, the Library strives to be embedded in academic programs and research wherever they take place. With students, researchers and our staff working remotely, we increased our efforts to expand and enhance access to digital information and online services. As well as these successes, however, the research enterprise depends on access to our remarkable tangible collections.

The University is beginning the phased re-opening of facilities that are critical for research, in a manner and timeframe that is compatible with our obligation to protect the health of our community and those with whom we come in contact, and with state and local orders and advisories. Harvard Library's Smart Restart for Research is being developed in conjunction with plans for the phased re-opening of research laboratories and museums, and with University guidance regarding health and safety protocols and human resources policies.

This planning is being led by the Harvard Library Local Emergency Management Team (LEMT) in collaboration with the Harvard Library Leadership Team, which includes representatives of each School, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), and shared library services. Consultations include library employees, the Harvard Library Faculty Advisory Council, faculty and committees within FAS and the Schools, and administrative units and committees.

It is important to note that many different kinds of activities occur in physical libraries:
  • borrowing of books and other research materials stored on campus or off campus;
  • use of archives, rare books and special collections in secure reading rooms;
  • use of specialized technologies for information access and production;
  • access to spaces for individual study, group learning, events and exhibitions;
  • processing of new acquisitions or retrospective processing of older collections;
  • digital imaging of tangible collections using specialized equipment;
  • collections preservation activities using specialized equipment;
  • in-person consultations with specialists supporting the discovery, exploration, creation and sharing of research and scholarship.

"Re-opening” does not mean opening the doors of all libraries and resuming this full range of activities. It means a phased restart that takes into account the distinct health and safety considerations of each activity, as well as the current needs of research and course development and delivery.

This document will be continually reviewed and may be revised as new information becomes available.

Scope

As a “one Harvard” initiative, Harvard Library comprises libraries administered by FAS and each other School, as well as the collaborative structure and shared services administered by the unit called Harvard Library. Harvard Library's Smart Restart for Research provides guidance for Harvard Library as a whole. It aims to support School-specific needs while ensuring a consistency of health and safety protocols across our University community.
This document provides a high-level summary of factors relating to on-campus library functions that support research. Details for each function, including staffing plans, workflows and physical facilities arrangements, are in separate documents. There are many other Library services supporting research, teaching and learning that are outside the scope of this document. Further information is available on the Harvard Library website and individual School library sites.

Goals

Our overarching goal is to deliver on our mission while protecting the health and safety of the staff and users of libraries as well as the broader community.

In the immediate term (the focus of this document), we aim to expand on-campus activities beyond essential services while minimizing both the number of people who come to campus and their physical proximity to each other within our facilities.

In the longer term, we aim to return to providing Harvard’s students, faculty, staff, visiting scholars, and in many cases the general public with a full range of rich experiences provided by our physical facilities, tangible collections and in-person interactions.

Principles

The development of this plan is based on the following guiding principles:

- Place health and safety as our highest priority.
- Adhere to University, local, state and federal government regulations.
- Focus on key research, teaching and learning needs across FAS and Schools.
- Allow for variation in employees’ abilities to return to campus.
- Practice fairness, equity and anti-bias.
- Clearly communicate policies and decisions.
- Acknowledge that we are facing considerable uncertainty.

Prerequisites

The University will determine when it is possible to resume activities in physical libraries beyond essential services (security of facilities and collections), based on factors that include:

- Government officials allow such activities to resume and under what conditions.
- Employees have mechanisms to raise personal risk factors and maintain privacy.
- Process to attest to good health is available for all employees assigned to work on campus.
- Completion of safety training by employees assigned to work on campus.
- Adequate University-authorized masks are available and procedures are in place for daily distribution.

For particular Library services to resume, the following will be required:

- Safe service workflows and collections-handling protocols have been developed.
- Workspaces have been configured according to safety guidelines.
- Appropriate levels of cleaning and disinfection are scheduled.
- COVID-19 safety monitors are assigned, and reporting mechanisms are in place.
- Timely Human Resources consultation mechanisms are in place for managers and employees.
Safety guidelines

The following guidelines are informed by Harvard's Research Laboratory Re-Entry Plan, which was developed by a committee including medical expertise and reviewed by the University’s COVID-19 medical advisory group. Those guidelines have been augmented with special considerations for the Library, including extensive handling of print materials and other objects, service point interactions, workplace configurations involving specialized equipment such as large-scale scanners, and high-capacity spaces for individual and group learning. Guidelines will be updated as new information emerges. See also Harvard Environmental Health & Safety.

1. Occupational health services (in development)
   o Individuals working on campus must comply with the program overseen by University Health Services, which will direct individuals to testing and monitor data for possible infections in campus buildings.
   o Any instances of symptoms, exposure or a positive test must be disclosed, and University Health Services will provide further guidance.
   o Individuals will comply with isolation and quarantine policies established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the University.
   o Viral and serological tests will be determined by existing resources and public health guidance.

2. Required self-evaluation for COVID-19 symptoms and attestation as symptom-free for entry
   o Individuals will follow a symptom screening protocol defined by University leadership.
   o Any individual who uses their ID card to enter a building is making an attestation that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms. In addition, an affirmative daily declaration will be submitted, ideally electronically.
   o Any individual who has had a COVID-19 diagnosis will follow public health guidelines for return to work.

3. Mandatory use of University-approved protective face coverings
   o University-approved face masks will be worn at all times while in campus buildings except when eating or drinking. Face coverings will also be worn outdoors on campus.
   o Mask usage (i.e. donning, doffing and storage) will follow the EH&S protocols described in a required training module.
   o Any exceptions to the described mask usage policy require approval at the School or Harvard Library LEMT level.
   o A process will be developed and implemented for the daily distribution of masks at a designated location.

4. Density and distance requirements
   o Work that can successfully be done remotely should continue to be done remotely.
   o Access to library facilities will be limited to library employees, in order to minimize facility density and proximity between individuals. Library stacks, studies, reading rooms and common areas present numerous challenges for physical distancing logistics and monitoring.
   o Employee workstations will be distanced from one another. CDC recommendations and Commonwealth safety standards are that individuals maintain a minimal distance of 6 feet from one another, but we will try to achieve a distance of 9 feet or greater between workstations where feasible.
   o Wherever possible, a single employee should be assigned to a particular workstation. For workstations that must be used by more than one employee, there should be disinfection of equipment and surfaces between uses and shifts.
   o Use of shared offices is discouraged and efforts should be made to maximize space capacity (e.g. offices and reading rooms not in use).
   o Typical group and 1:1 meetings will continue to be held remotely, whether or not employees have on-campus work assignments.

5. Constraint of social contacts through shift work
   o Fixed shift teams limit the size of any given person’s potential interactions over time, and also limit the number of people who may need to be quarantined should an infection emerge.
   o Shift models may vary, depending on the requirements of particular service areas.
6. **Enhanced facilities design and cleaning**
   - For each facility, there will be an entry/exit and common space management plan.
   - HVAC performance will be optimized to maximize air exchange and enhancement of filtration where feasible.
   - Protocols will be established and communicated for use of restrooms, elevators and other common areas to minimize shared occupancy and increase opportunities for surface decontamination.
   - University-approved building and workplace signage will be posted.
   - Cleaning supplies for surface decontamination and hand sanitizers will be available for employee use.
   - Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of workspaces and common areas will be provided between shifts.
   - Where necessary, additional modifications may be made to minimize surface contact and to establish appropriate physical distancing.

7. **Collections handling and service points**
   - Harvard Library Preservation Services is monitoring research on how the virus survives on different types of library materials and how they can be handled to mitigate exposure. Based on early research, a quarantine period of at least 72 hours is recommended for books returned by users.
   - Retrieval, re-shelving, digitization and other collections workflows will be reviewed with an eye to minimizing proximity between employees and minimizing contact with common surfaces.
   - For services involving employee interactions with users, workflows will be designed to minimize the use of common surfaces and the duration of the interaction.

8. **Work breaks**
   - The Library will identify places for individuals to eat and drink separately from each other. People with individual offices will be encouraged to eat alone in their offices with the door closed.
   - If sharing a space for eating and drinking is unavoidable, seats will be separated by a minimal distance of 6 feet and ideally 9 feet or greater.

9. **Individuals’ preventative measures**
   - Individuals have responsibility for mitigating their personal risk of infection and the risk of infecting others, and will be required to take COVID-19 Safety Awareness Training before resuming work on campus.
   - In addition to complying with health monitoring policies, staying at home when ill, and using protective face coverings, employees should know when and how to wash hands or use hand sanitizer and avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, and will be trained on hygiene protocol.
   - Patrons will be expected to comply with all policies and guidelines, including wearing face coverings.

10. **Compliance**
    - Responsibility for compliance is at the level of the School, the Harvard College Library or the Harvard Library.
    - Deficiencies should be brought to the attention of department/library heads or directors, or EH&S.
    - The LEMT or the appropriate body within a School will work with the appropriate department/library to establish corrective action in case of infractions. First responses may include education, retraining, or reconsideration/modification of the restart plan.
    - Repeated infractions or willful non-compliance by an individual may result in disciplinary action.
Phases

Once the prerequisites listed on page 2 of this document are met, the re-opening of physical libraries will proceed in phases. The details of each phase will depend on many factors, including the particular needs of each School, but in general they are envisioned in the priority order indicated below. Phase 1 and phase 2 may blend, depending on the logistics of preparing a variety of different workspaces for re-entry; both are priorities for Stage 1 of the University’s re-opening plan. Phase 3 details will be further developed based on the trajectory of the pandemic, University and government guidance, and emerging information and experience gained in the earlier phases.

Phase 1: Focus on expanding online access to information, enhancing services for virtual teaching, learning and research, and establishing safe workflows for print collections

- Some employees would be assigned to fixed shift teams in physical libraries to retrieve, digitize, lend and conserve high-demand collections; all others are expected to work remotely.
- The scan and deliver service would fulfill on-demand research requests and curriculum needs. In this initial phase, as safe workflows are being established, the service would be limited to items in Widener, Lamont and Harvard Depository.
- The request pick-up service would provide a single pick-up location at Lamont Library. In this initial phase, as safe workflows are being tested, requests would be limited to items in Widener, Lamont and Harvard Depository.
- Collection development would continue to focus on ordering e-books rather than print whenever possible.
- Records management services may need occasional scheduled access to the Harvard Depository to address needs of the Office of General Counsel and Schools.
- There would be no faculty, student or public access to physical libraries other than the book pick-up service point at Lamont. Rare exceptions may be made for limited-time access to Widener Library spaces managed by FAS (faculty studies, departmental collections) through a request to the Dean of Arts and Humanities.

Phase 2: Continue and expand activities of phase 1, and resume additional activities supporting access to physical collections

- More employees would return to campus while still maintaining the required degree of physical distancing.
- The scan and deliver service would expand to other general collections and archives, rare books and special collections, within the bounds of copyright.
- The request pick-up service would expand to other circulating collections, still with a single pick-up location at Lamont Library.
- The resumption of the BorrowDirect service would depend on both our readiness and on activities at partner libraries.
- Activities would include ordering and receipt of print collections, processing of new acquisitions, retrospective processing of older collections, additional digital imaging of tangible collections, and additional preservation activities.
- Physical libraries would remain closed as in Phase 1. In exceptional cases, arrangements may be made for individual Harvard faculty and graduate students to use archives, rare books, special collections or other non-circulating materials in a supervised reading room by scheduled appointment. Class visits are not anticipated in this phase.

Phase 3: When circumstances allow for greater density, resume user access to physical libraries

- Flexible work arrangements would remain in place for many employees.
- Safety guidelines would need to be applied to all offices, service points and common areas and appropriate preparations undertaken. User access may be limited to a capacity level to be determined and reading room access may be restricted to use of collections by scheduled appointment.
- Consideration would need to be given to when and how services expand beyond Harvard users to visiting researchers and in some areas the general public.
Staffing guidelines

Employees may have a combination of remote work and on-campus assignments. Work assignments will be as fair and equitable as possible. See also Harvard Human Resources.

On-campus Staffing Selection Process

In consultation with Human Resources, selection processes will be determined based on needs and may vary by School or Department. They are likely to include:

- Existing job responsibilities
- Job-specific skills and experience
- Hours of availability based on work from home capabilities and commitment
- Member of most relevant work group
- Implementation of opt-out and/or alternative scheduling process to include (but not limited to):
  - underlying health conditions
  - member of high-risk group
  - dependent care responsibilities
  - transportation limitations

If a sufficient number of employees are not identified to accomplish necessary work, the job description will be distributed more broadly until adequate staffing is confirmed.

New Job Responsibilities

In some cases, employees may need to take on work tasks that are typically completed by students or other employees who are unable to return to campus. In these cases, new, temporary, job descriptions will be developed. These roles will be filled according to the On-campus Staffing Selection Process described above.

Responsibilities checklist

**Employer**

- Develop and communicate clear policies and guidelines
- Develop clear methods for monitoring compliance with safety guidelines and corrective actions
- Prepare facilities for re-entry consistent with University and Library COVID-19 facilities standards and plan
- Comply with control plan, compliance certification and public notice requirements under State’s re-opening plan
- Ensure confidentiality of health information
- Provide training

**Employee**

- Complete required training
- Comply with all policies and guidelines, including:
  - University-wide testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine protocols
  - Monitor personal health/symptoms
  - Agree that each and every access of buildings represents an attestation – that you declare yourself symptom-free and agree to comply with all safety measures, both inside and outside buildings
- Report concerns

**Manager**

- Lead by example
- Monitor compliance
- Take notice of state of facilities and staff health symptoms
- Report and resolve concerns

**Patron**

- Comply with all policies and guidelines, including wearing face coverings
Appendix 1: Summaries of On-Campus Functions

The following functions pertain to providing access to tangible collections, as outlined in Phase 1 and 2. Details for each function, including staffing plans, workflows and physical facilities arrangements, are in separate documents. School libraries may have School-specific plans (see Appendix 2).

Access Services

The following services will ramp up gradually in Phase 1 as conditions permit. Services are focused on Harvard students, faculty and staff.

- Clean up returns and transfers: emphasis in Widener/Lamont and HD to sort what was left when the facilities were quickly emptied and ready these locations for resuming service deliveries.
- Scan and Deliver: resume scanning services with small teams of staff in Widener/Lamont and at HD; priority for course reserves.
- Circulation: open Lamont exclusively for pick-up of requested physical items. Initially, requests will be limited to items located in Widener, Lamont, and HD. As conditions permit, add retrieval of items at other locations (for continued pick-up in Lamont).
- No other onsite services provided.

Archives and Special Collections

Overall focus will be on local digitization for teaching and research, with staff reassigned to assist with increased volume and need for quick turnaround, in addition to what Imaging Services can provide. Rotating staff with a handful coming in and remainder continuing to work from home. Research by staff for others will be necessary from sources not yet digitized, staff rotating to fulfill this need. Some onsite processing may be necessary. Eventual shift to welcoming researchers will need a longer lead time with decisions needed about who can enter, when they can enter, how they enter, and rules about social distancing and PPE supported and widely shared. In exceptional cases, arrangements may be made for individual Harvard faculty and graduate students to use archives, rare books, special collections or other non-circulating materials in a supervised reading room via a scheduled appointment. Staff at the University Archives and the special collections and archives at the HBS and the HMS will continue to collect materials virtually and via mail documenting the Harvard community response to the COVID-19 episode.

Collection Development

A "digital first" approach will be used to support immediate teaching and research needs wherever possible. Print/tangible collection development will resume with intensified emphasis on collaborative collections.

Facilities

Building Operations is working closely with EH&S and groups across the University to develop guidelines and best practices for facilities managers to ensure the building systems and physical environments are safe to reoccupy. Building Operations will follow the essential steps for the buildings and work with the libraries and departments on all workflow specific needs to ensure a safe environment for all staff and users. School libraries will also work with their facilities departments on these matters.
Imaging Services

A phased approach will gradually introduce services as conditions permit.

- Curriculum support digitization will be given first priority to bolster the Library’s ability to support remote teaching in the fall. New and modified workflows will be required if Imaging Services is enlisted to support Access Services and increased demand for e-reserves and possibly scan-and-deliver scanning. A reallocation of staffing resources may be necessary.
- On-demand digitization services (these include rush services) will be given additional resources as needed, to fulfill requests from external researchers that can only access collections remotely.
- Collections digitization (fixed-scope projects, and ongoing programmatic digitization) will resume but at a reduced overall allocation for repositories.
- Object scanning (creation of 3D models to support teaching with objects, remotely) will be introduced to support object-based learning experiences online.

Information and Technical Services

In this period, support for acquiring library materials and making them discoverable will focus on:

- Adjusting/developing workflows that support a hybrid workforce (on-site/remote).
- Adding support for an increase in digital collecting.
- Considering options and priorities for how to address processing backlog.

Preservation

Some preservation work, particularly in AV and digital preservation, has continued remotely while staff work from home. With a modified return to campus, Preservation Services will be able to quickly ramp up preparing general and special collections for digitization, for use in research and online instruction. Basic monitoring and attention to the collections will help safeguard the University’s valuable assets.

Records Management

Priorities for Records Management Services are to prepare for urgent records retrievals; prepare for requests to move records into storage; manage destruction of high-risk records; complete the Legacy project; move all instruction from in-person workshops for University staff to recorded, virtual instruction; and begin planning in earnest for e-only records in 2026 or before.