



Graduate Studies and Research  
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[www.nmu.edu/graduatestudies/](http://www.nmu.edu/graduatestudies/)

Dear Campus Community,

Graduate Studies, McNair, and Grants and Contracts are virtually open with staff telecommuting to conduct business during regular office hours; we are available via email, phone, and zoom. I'm including general information updates below. Expect more information to follow, we will also update the Graduate web page with an FAQ page as questions arise.

### **Course Grading**

The S/U option does not apply to graduate courses that require letter grades; this includes undergraduate courses taken for graduate credit. However, faculty should discuss the option to take an Incomplete with students who are concerned their grade may be adversely affected by the change to online course delivery, limitations in access to required clinical experiences, and/or modifications to research protocols (see below) that may have been made necessary by the COVID 19 emergency.

The drop date has been moved to April 3 and the thesis due date to April 17 to provide flexibility for students and faculty. Thesis signature pages can be scanned and sent via email to [hbicigo@nmu.edu](mailto:hbicigo@nmu.edu); please put SIGNATURE PAGE in the subject line and retain the hard copies. As always, I will work with faculty advisors and graduate instructors to accommodate students in unique situations.

### **IRB Research**

Due to the evolving situation with COVID-19 infections, the recent national restrictions placed on face-to-face meetings, and the Institutional Review Boards' role in human subject protection, NMU's IRB is temporarily banning all human-to-human data collection methods in previously approved protocols until all federal COVID-19 interaction restrictions have been lifted. This includes, but is not limited to, in-person

surveys, interviews, and group discussions. If you are assisting a student with their research project or are reviewing students' pending research projects, please keep these new restrictions in mind and guide them appropriately.

No new projects listing face-to-face interactions submitted to the IRB will be approved until the CDC lifts national interaction restrictions; projects must utilize alternative methods for data collection via distance technologies (phone, video, internet-based surveys, etc.)

PIs currently engaged in human-to-human research with previous IRB approval must make modifications to replace human-to-human data collection with distance technologies. Depending on the specific requirements of the project, the NMU IRB can approve administratively, via expedited review, or a convened meeting will be held via Zoom. To expedite requests, faculty PIs should review student protocols and determine the modifications necessary for those students who need them. Faculty must then consult with Dr. Derek Anderson, IRB Chair, ([DEREANDE@nmu.edu](mailto:DEREANDE@nmu.edu)) to confirm the level of review any such modifications may require.

Join me in thanking Dr. Derek Anderson, IRB Chair, for his dedication to ensuring that the interests of NMU faculty researchers, student researchers, and research subjects are addressed during this unprecedented time. I also thank all members of the IRB who continue to give their time and expertise in support of research with human subjects at NMU.

Thanks also to graduate program directors, advisors, and faculty as we navigate through these uncertain times to do our best for students in all stages of their graduate work. We are dedicated to serving you all and working together to ensure student success as they pursue their academic and professional goals.

Take care and be well,

Dr. Lisa Eckert, Dean

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