



Northwestern
University

Approving University Official: Executive Vice President for Business and Finance; Provost; Vice President for Research; Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer; Vice President for Operations

Responsible Office: Risk, Internal Audit, and Compliance Office

Effective date: June 1, 2020

Next review date: December 15, 2021

COVID-19 RETURN TO CAMPUS POLICY

Purpose

This policy is intended to mitigate the risks of spread of COVID-19 as staff, faculty, and students continue to return to work on campus. All staff and faculty are expected to follow and model compliance with this policy in order to sustain a healthy campus while the community navigates the global pandemic. It is important that we all diligently adhere to these health precautions.

This policy and the relevant underlying guidelines are subject to frequent change with the introduction of additional public health guidelines from local, state, and federal authorities. Any policy amendments or updates will be communicated immediately through the [University Policies website](#) and will take effect as of the date and time of publication. Visit Northwestern's [Coronavirus/COVID-19 website](#) for the latest information about the University's response to COVID-19, including frequently asked questions on work-related topics. It is expected that this policy, or subsequent versions of it, will be in force through at least the Fall Quarter 2021 but may be modified at any time.

Audience

This policy applies to all staff and faculty who work physically on our campuses or are planning to do so. This policy also applies to graduate and undergraduate students who work on campus or research in laboratories. Separate policy guidance will be issued for students pertaining to their classes and academic coursework. The University expects all staff and faculty to familiarize themselves with, and abide by, the terms of this policy while on campus, whether they visit campus regularly or intermittently, in alignment with their school or unit's [Return to Campus plan](#).

Policy Implementation

The following conditions shall apply to all staff, faculty, and students instructed or permitted to return to campus during the phased return to campus and until otherwise deemed not applicable by the Provost and the Executive Vice President for Business and Finance:

Reporting to Campus

- Staff and faculty returning physically should align with their school or unit's [Return to Campus plan](#) and any superseding campus-wide guidelines regarding the presence of faculty and staff on campus during specific periods such as during student move-in at the start of the academic year.
- Leadership is expected to monitor their faculty and staff who return to campus and ensure compliance with the school or unit's return plan.

- As a condition of returning to campus, all staff, faculty, and students returning to campus must be familiar with and adhere to the University's [health and safety guidelines](#).
- Staff and faculty may be required to return to remote work at any time and are required to cooperate if directed to do so. In any such situations, unit and school leadership will take appropriate measures to ensure on-going participation of such staff and faculty in their core professional and teaching activities, respectively.

General Health and Safety Rules

Public health guidance and campus measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 are dynamic and evolve in concert with changes in the pandemic's trajectory. As a condition of returning to campus, faculty and staff must be aware of and follow the University's current health guidance.

Reference the University's COVID-19 [website](#) for the latest guidelines, which may address the following topics, among others:

- [Vaccination](#)
- [Masking](#)
- [Testing](#)
- [Health Monitoring](#)
- Social Distancing
- [Meetings and Events](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Visitors](#)

Additionally, faculty and staff should practice the following community behaviors while on campus:

- All staff and faculty shall refrain from visiting campus or University facilities whenever they are sick or have symptoms of respiratory illness.
- Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, particularly after coming into contact with high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, handrails, and commonly used equipment.
- Cough/sneeze into sleeves, preferably into the elbow. When using a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize hands immediately.
- Avoid touching faces, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth, with hands to prevent infection.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in personal workspaces.
- Keep desk work surfaces clean of paper and other materials every night, to allow for proper cleaning.

COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement

COVID-19 vaccination is required for all faculty and staff. Subject to limited exceptions, faculty and staff who work on campus are expected to be fully vaccinated and [attest to their vaccination status](#).

Any faculty or staff member who seeks an exception to the University's vaccination requirement due to a personal health condition, a sincerely held religious belief or a lack of access to an FDA/WHO-authorized vaccine must submit a formal request.

Unvaccinated staff and faculty who work on campus are required to:

- Complete twice-weekly COVID-19 testing on campus.

- Complete the daily Symptom Tracker application on those days when they are on campus.
- Wear a mask in all shared indoor settings.

Any staff member who is unvaccinated without an approved exception, or who receives an exception but does not comply with the COVID-19 safety protocols outlined above, will be escalated internally within their school or unit leadership and Human Resources for appropriate action. If a staff member remains non-compliant with these requirements, they will be transitioned to an unpaid leave of absence and, ultimately, terminated in alignment with the [Staff Handbook](#).

For all faculty, continued non-compliance will lead to disciplinary actions, up to and including temporary suspension and termination of employment. The sanctioning process will follow the steps outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

Faculty and staff who are not vaccinated do not qualify automatically for remote work under the policy on [Alternative Work Strategies](#).

COVID-19 Specific Health Reporting Requirements

- All staff and faculty are required to report the following using the University's online reporting [portal](#):
 - Any positive tests for COVID-19 not obtained directly through Northwestern onsite testing
 - Additional information about reporting can be found at <https://www.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/health/health-monitoring/index.html>
- [If diagnosed with COVID-19](#), a faculty or staff member must provide notification immediately by filing an [online report](#). Staff should then contact their manager and the Office of Human Resources to request leave. Faculty should contact their dean or department chair.
- In the event of a positive or suspected COVID-19 diagnosis, staff and faculty are required to cooperate fully with the University's [self-isolation](#), [contact tracing](#), and notification protocols, in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).
- Staff and faculty health information reported pursuant to this policy will be shared only with those who need to know to assist with contact tracing requirements.

Personal Illness and Quarantine

- Staff and faculty may not report or return to campus while they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (or other respiratory illnesses), such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, muscle pain or body aches, headache, or chills. The CDC maintains a current list of symptoms associated with COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.
- Staff or faculty who experience an onset of symptoms while at work must leave campus immediately and update their symptom tracker. Staff should contact their manager and the Office of Human Resources. Faculty should contact their dean or department chair.

- Employees who are unable to work due to personal illness should use available sick time. If an employee's available sick time has already been exhausted, they should contact a Benefits Counselor at benefits@northwestern.edu to discuss available leave options.
- Beginning September 1, 2020, if an employee is asked to quarantine or isolate and the employee is unable to work from home, the employee will be paid for the quarantine or isolation time without having to use vacation or sick time. In order to be eligible for this paid time, (1) the employee's exposure must have been in the workplace, (2) the exposure must have been identified through the University's contact tracing process, and (3) the employee must have followed all of the University's Covid-related policies and processes.

School and Unit Return to Campus Plans and Alternative Work Strategies

- Individuals schools and units have created Return to Campus plans based on department/unit operational needs.
- Staff and faculty should align with their school or unit's [Return to Campus](#) plan, in terms of their on-campus presence, unless those plans are superseded by campus-wide guidelines during defined periods of the academic year, such as student move-in.
- The University has created the [Alternative Work Strategies Policy](#), which establishes a common, ongoing framework and definitions, within which school and unit leadership can implement various Alternative Work Strategies—including but not limited to remote work—in accordance with their operational needs.
- Commuting to campus is the responsibility of employees. Employees not wishing to utilize public transit may evaluate other mechanisms to travel to campus, such as driving and parking, or utilizing ride-share services.

Staff and faculty knowingly violating any of the requirements of this policy may be removed from campus and required to work remotely and be subject to discipline as may be appropriate. In such cases, building access by their Wildcard may be restricted or suspended.

Definitions

The definitions contained herein would apply in the event that the University were to shift to primarily remote operations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. As this policy is tied directly to a specific set of conditions, in the event of inconsistency between the terms and/or definitions of any institutional policy and this policy, the terms and definitions of this policy shall prevail in connection with any COVID-19 situations wherein the University shifts to primarily remote operations.

Essential On-site Staff (“EOS”): positions that are deemed essential to be physically present at one or more locations within the perimeters of the University’s campuses or physically present, on a continuous or intermittent basis, at other University owned or leased facilities during a campus emergency or crisis, including a closure or a partial or total shift to virtual operations, pursuant to the policy on [Employees in Essential Functions and Positions](#). Essential On-site Staff preserve and protect the security, safety, and integrity of members of the community, the physical infrastructure, and the integrity of the University Critical Infrastructure. Essential On-site Staff include staff who are required to work in any location designated as an Emergency Operations Center.

University Critical Infrastructure (“UCI”): systems and assets, whether of a physical or digital nature, that ensure the viability and continuity of the University’s operations.

Critical Staff (“CS”): individuals in positions other than those of Essential On-site Staff, who by reason of subject matter expertise or functional responsibilities, **are required to be physically present to complete, support, and/or oversee completion of activities that support important, but not essential,** campus operations. Critical Staff may be expected to be on-site on an intermittent basis to provide onsite support for campus facilities, research, or core financial and human resources operations.

Non-Remote Staff (“NRS”): individuals in positions other than EOS whose core duties require in-person interaction or service delivery at University facilities, and which cannot be carried out (in whole or in substantial part) through remote or virtual means.

All Other Staff and Faculty (“AOSF”): individuals other than EOS, CS, or NRS, who can perform their duties in whole or in substantial part (i.e., at least 75% of core duties) through remote or virtual means. AOSF include positions at all pay grades and levels of authority. As such, these may include, without limitation, individual contributors, temporary or contingent workers, supervisors, managers, directors, faculty, administrators, and executives.

Contractor(s): person(s) or company(ies) that are not University employees who undertake(s) the provision of materials, labor, or services pursuant to a purchase order or service agreement with the University. Depending upon the nature of the goods or services they provide, Contractor(s) may be classified by the University’s Chief Risk and Compliance Officer or the relevant Vice President (or their designee) as EOS, CS, NRS, or AOSF for purposes of the application of this policy.

Related Information

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Northwestern Coronavirus/COVID-19 Updates: <https://www.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>

Contacts

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History

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<https://www.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/docs/returntocampuspolicy.pdf>