CNS Return to Campus Working Guidelines

About Flexible Work Arrangements

In the academic year for 2021-2022, we have an opportunity to enhance how we work together and how we deliver on the College of Natural Sciences mission of excellent teaching, research and public service. We can do this by paying attention to what we know about the value of in-person experiences on our university campus, as well as what we have learned from the past year, when many people worked off of campus.

The resources here are provided with some key assumptions:

1. UT employees have access to COVID-19 vaccines, and public health conditions will allow for being together in person.
2. Supervisors and employees will assess when on- vs. off-campus work is appropriate to best support the mission of the University.
3. This period (summer and fall of 2021) are a trial period of hybrid and flexible work arrangements, and we will continue to learn from and respond to evolving outcomes.

These resources will not provide all of the answers, but they are meant to support the 2021 transition planning even amidst many changing factors. We will continue to adapt our resources and update information as it becomes available.

Who is this space for?

1. You are a CNS supervisor or a CNS employee, and you have been working off campus throughout the pandemic.
2. You want to work with your supervisor or employee to plan for a return to campus and/or plan for regular hybrid or flexible work arrangements.
3. You need resources or guidance on any of the above.

If you intend to work fully in-person, you do *not* need to create a flexible work arrangement, but should work with your supervisor/employee to agree upon expectations, including a timeline, for this transition.

Note: Because most faculty, even prior to COVID-19, had hybrid work locations and schedules, the content here is most relevant for staff. The University has communicated that faculty are strongly encouraged to be on campus for interactions with colleagues and must be for certain job functions linked to teaching, mentoring, research or service that require work on site.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Will parking permits be available to hybrid employees?
  - The Parking and Transportation Department launched a new Occasional Parking Program for Employees as a low-cost alternative for staff and faculty who need occasional access to the university garages. For just $5 per day, staff and faculty can access participating garages with the ability to enter and exit the garage throughout the day at no additional cost. Read more about this program from Parking and Transportation Services and view the email that was sent here.

- Will a hybrid work schedule impact my physical space on campus?
  - At this time, there have been no decisions regarding changes to pre-pandemic assigned office space. We recommend waiting before making significant reassignments or changes to building space.
  - Employees returning to campus should inform their facilities contact if there is a need for additional or more frequent cleaning services prior to fall 2021.

- Will vaccines be required?
  - Vaccination is strongly encouraged but voluntary. Mounting data confirms the efficacy and safety of vaccines against a variety of COVID-19 strains, and those who have been vaccinated are less likely to become infected, seriously ill or transmit the virus to
others. Read more about UT’s vaccination efforts and find information and educational resources about the vaccines at the Protect Texas Together vaccine page.

- **Will I have to wear a mask at work?**
  - Current CDC guidance advises everyone to wear a mask indoors, including people who have been vaccinated. Masks are strongly encouraged but optional. Find more at: https://protect.utexas.edu/

- **What if I had a remote or telework arrangement before the pandemic?**
  - The remote and telework arrangement agreements previously in place are in the process of being revised for use throughout the University. The new form will reflect a more comprehensive overview of terminology and responsibilities for both the worker and manager. It is recommended that once it is released (June-July 2021), all employees should move to the new agreement form.
  - If you need guidance regarding a current telework agreement, please contact: personnel@cns.utexas.edu

- **If I moved outside of Texas during the pandemic, can I continue working where I am?**
  - These cases will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and will be reviewed by your Department Chair and members of the Dean's Office. Please notify your supervisor as soon as possible if you have recently moved beyond a commutable distance from your assigned work location.

- **What about child care and other dependent care? Or what if someone immunocompromised lives with me?**
  - While the presence of dependents in the household doesn’t prevent someone from working remotely, employees shouldn’t be focused on dependent care activities when performing their work duties. If the level of care a dependent needs prevents or significantly disrupts an employee from accomplishing their work, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible about the situation and request approval for the appropriate leave. Supervisors should allow employees flexibility to meet intermittent child-care or dependent-care needs (e.g., illness, unanticipated school closures, quarantine rules of the school, etc.). For people needing an accommodation for themselves, follow the ADA accommodation process. For an accommodation because you live with someone who is immunocompromised, follow these steps from Human Resources.

- **What about events?**
  - The university is resuming events with new guidance in place. Find more at: https://protect.utexas.edu/event-guidelines/
  - If an individual has any COVID-19 symptoms including any respiratory symptoms or is feeling unwell in any way, they should not attend the meeting or event.
  - If individuals become diagnosed with COVID-19 within 10 days of attending an event, they should notify event organizers and cooperate with contract tracing efforts. Attendees who are members of the UT community can report their positive test via the self-report form. If an event organizer learns of a guest who tests positive within 10 days of the event, the host should report it to University Health Services or the Occupational Health Program.
  - If attendance records are not otherwise kept, event managers should create a roster of the meeting or event attendees if possible and remit to UT Health Austin for public health purposes.

- **Will offices need to be open 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday?**
  - Public institutions like ours are expected to be open between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (with a break for lunch), so it’s important to maintain continuity of functions for a given office or unit during that window. While some work can be done remotely or outside of the 8-5 hours, the return of more normal student residential life and full research operations will mean for many offices a need to be open for people seeking support in person. It’s a good idea for units and offices to examine the need for in-office presence across their group as decisions are made about flexible work arrangements. UT continues to allow for flex schedules for individuals when supervisors have reviewed and approved requests, including to ensure one person’s flex hours don’t create added work or expectations for others on the team.

- **Other questions?**
  - Send an email to personnel@cns.utexas.edu