



Guidelines for Supervisors: Increasing On-Campus Operations for the Fall 2021 Semester

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Introduction

These guidelines were developed by the Division of Administration (Administration) Increasing Operations Working Group based on feedback from Administration managers and employees and they were endorsed by the divisional senior leadership team.

This document includes guidelines for the transition to on-campus work, telework and flexible schedules. The guidelines provide leeway for departments and units to tailor their plans for increasing on-campus operations based on their specific needs and circumstances.

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Transition to On-Campus Work

- **Expectation for In-Person Operations:** The university and the division are expected to resume full or nearly full in-person operations on campus in the fall. Details on the [guidelines and phased plan](#) for fall were issued by the provost in April. The phases and anticipated start dates are listed below:
 - Phase 0 – Minimum Density – March 2020 to April 5, 2021
 - Phase 1 – Low Density – April 5
 - Phase 2 – Medium Density – July 5
 - Phase 3 – Near 100% Density – August 2

The transition to increasing in-person/on-campus operations should occur from the end of the spring semester until the start of Phase 3 (currently anticipated to be August 2). These dates are subject to change based on evolving public health guidance.

- **Office Hours:** At the resumption of full in-person operations in Phase 3, all units should establish normal hours of operation and communicate them to stakeholders and customers as needed. (See Attachment A for clarification of office hours and core hours.)
- **Transition for Employees Working Remotely:** You should plan for all employees to return to campus by the start of Phase 3. For employees who have been working predominantly remotely, you should discuss the transition to on-campus work with each employee and determine a transition plan based on the unit's needs for in-person staff and what would help ease the employee's transition. When unit and job responsibilities allow, a gradual transition could include occasional days working on campus (e.g. one or two days per week). Consider the following when determining which staff members to bring back and when:
 - Unit's needs to accomplish required work and meet customer service expectations
 - Employees' needs
 - Employee requests to return to work prior to Phase 3
 - Equitable treatment of employees
- **Flexibility:** You should be flexible and understanding of difficulties that employees may face as a result of the continuing pandemic. For example, employees may need to use leave on short notice to care for a family member if the family member is sick or if their school or care program is unavailable. Telework and flexible schedules (discussed below) can also provide needed flexibility for employees.
- **Communication:** During and after the transition period, you should communicate frequently with your employees. You should regularly ask employees for feedback on what's going well and what could be enhanced. This could include a combination of group and one-on-one meetings. It's important for you to follow-up on the feedback that you receive and consult your supervisor when needed in determining how to address concerns.
- **Continuation of Best Practices:** Continue practices that have worked well for your unit during the pandemic that could enhance productivity and customer service in the future. Examples include electronic signatures, Zoom meetings, and more extensive use of Google Suite for document collaboration.
- **Leadership:** One of our values is that leaders set the example for their organizations. You should demonstrate the behaviors you expect from your team members. For example, if a supervisor requires staff to be present on campus, the supervisor should work on campus some or all of the time as well.

- **Considerations for Supervisors:** Attachment A includes considerations for supervisors for the return to full on-campus operations.

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Telework and Flexible Schedules

It is anticipated that after resumption of full in-person operations (Phase 3), telework and flexible schedules will continue to be needed to help employees manage difficulties posed by the continuing pandemic. K-12 schools, childcare and eldercare are not expected to be as reliable as in pre-pandemic times. Furthermore, children under the age of 12 may not have access to vaccines and older children may not be vaccinated and therefore, COVID infections should be expected to continue to occur. In addition, supervisors can allow telework and flexible schedules for eligible positions/employees as an alternative method of meeting the needs of the department, to provide greater work efficiency and productivity, and to benefit employees.

Telework

Telework is the practice of working from home or another location on an intermittent or regular basis. The University of Maryland supports telework as an option for employees in situations where it is requested by the employee or the supervisor, benefits the department and business operations, and where the employee's position is suitable for a telework arrangement. The flexibility telework offers can help with attracting and retaining employees.

- **UHR Guidelines:** You should follow UHR guidelines when considering employee requests to telework. The guidelines and resources are available at uhr.umd.edu/telework. (UHR recently made minor updates to the guidance to make it more user friendly and additional resource documents were added.)
- **Agreement:** All employees teleworking after August 2, 2021 must have a new telework agreement no later than August 2. The updated telework agreement template is available at uhr.umd.edu/telework.
- **Availability during Telework:** It is expected that when employees are teleworking, they are available in the same way they would be if they were physically present on campus (e.g., by phone, email or Zoom). Supervisors should recognize that even in the office, employees may be unavailable for a variety of reasons including attending meetings and taking scheduled breaks (such as a lunch break) and brief unscheduled breaks.
- **Occasional Unplanned Telework:** As job functions and resources permit, you are encouraged to allow occasional unplanned telework to allow employees to accomplish some work when away from campus. This practice can reduce lost productivity. Unplanned telework can be partial or full days, as approved by you. Example cases include:

- Illness: An employee may not be able to work in person because they have a very mild illness that may be contagious or temporarily have limited mobility. The intent of this guideline is to discourage sick employees from coming to campus; not to pressure employees to work when they are sick.
- Illness of a Family Member: An employee may need to stay home to care for a sick family member, but have availability to perform some work by teleworking.
- Childcare or Eldercare Need: An employee may need to stay home if there is a disruption in childcare or eldercare, but they are able to perform some work by teleworking.

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Flexible or Alternate Work Schedules

Flexible schedules, or alternate work schedules, are work schedules that are different from the standard 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 5-day, 40-hour work week.

- **Use:** You should consider flexible schedules to meet business needs and employee needs.
- **Examples:** Flexible work schedules can include the following:
 - Alternating on-campus and telework days
 - Staggered reporting/departing
 - Staggered breaks and lunches
- Consult with the Office of Staff Relations in UHR for questions about flexible work schedules for bargaining unit employees.

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Attachment A

Considerations for Supervisors in Returning to Full On-Campus Operations

Below is a list of considerations for supervisors as they plan to return to full on-campus operations.

Communication

- **Plan:** Develop a plan to regularly communicate with employees. Methods for communicating include virtual or in-person group meetings, one-on-one meetings, standup meetings (very short daily check ins) and email updates. It is recommended to establish a regular schedule for the meetings or other communications.
- **Office Calendar:** Consider a shared office Google Calendar or other system to know who is teleworking, on campus or on leave on any given day.

Employee Requirements

- **Requirements:** Confirm that all employees returning to campus are aware of and follow the current [return to campus requirements](#) including the daily symptom check, vaccination and testing.

Employee Onboarding/New Employees

- **Onboarding:** For employees who joined the university during the pandemic and have been working remotely, consider their onboarding needs (e.g., make sure they have a university ID card, know where to park, how to get around the building and campus, and are introduced to coworkers).

Office Space

- **Space Access:** Confirm swipe cards are active and employees have any needed keys.
- **Shared Space/Hoteling:** For employees who telework two or more days per week, consider shared work spaces or hoteling spaces. Using less space can be a benefit of employee telework. Consult with staff from the Office of Staff Relations in UHR if you will be shifting a bargaining unit employee to hoteling space.

Telework

- **Expectations:** Establish clear expectations of employees for telework days whether they are regular telework days or unplanned telework days. Work with the employee to develop a plan for the work they will accomplish while teleworking.

- **Unplanned Telework:** For unplanned telework, you should have an understanding of what the employee can accomplish while teleworking and the hours they will work; the employee should record leave for hours not worked.

Training

- **Departmental Return to Campus Training:** Ensure all employees have completed any required department-specific return to campus training.
- **Job Training:** Determine whether any job training or retraining is required for on-campus work that may have been discontinued or missed during the pandemic (for positions that require periodic training).

Work Hours and Schedules

- **Office Hours:** Review and update, if needed, your unit's office hours. Office hours are the hours during which your unit is staffed.
- **Consideration of Customer Needs in Determining Work Hours:** In determining work schedules, consider the schedules of key customers and stakeholders. For example, some units in Procurement and Business Services have aligned their work schedules with their customers' schedules to provide better customer service.
- **Core Hours:** Consider whether your unit should have core hours during which all or most employees are expected to be working, to facilitate communication, collaboration and customer service.
- **Core Days:** If there are staff in your unit that telework, consider whether there should be core days when everyone is required to be in the office to facilitate in-person meetings.
- **Flexible Schedules:** Though flexible schedules are an important tool for de-densification and flexibility, consider that using many different schedules can be burdensome to manage. Consider implementing only one or two types of flexible schedules (e.g., staggered reporting and departing only) in your unit.

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