



## Guidance for Leaders Who Are Directing Staff to Return to On-site Work

### **Senior Leadership (Deans, Institute Directors, Vice Chancellors, Vice Provosts)**

**Determine and communicate the overall strategy for your organization.** As a land grant institution, our decisions must be based on continuing to optimize face-to-face interactions with students while preserving service levels for faculty and staff. At the same time, we must utilize the information we have learned from our remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic to determine ways we can be more flexible in our work arrangements. Are there organization-wide standards you want units to adopt (i.e, fully in-person, fully remote, hybrid, or a combination). Define if remote workers should be present on a set schedule such as once every other week for meetings, or that all meetings need to offer remote options to allow for all to participate whether attendees are in-person or remote.

**Set the expectation that each unit in your organization determine how best to utilize remote work as part of their overall business strategy as of August 1, 2021.**

Each unit should finalize a unit specific workplan no later than June 30, 2021.

**Determine and communicate whether each unit executive officer can fully determine the extent of remote work in carrying out their mission.** Will units need to submit their plans for review or for approval? Do you want a consistent approach from all units or can the approaches vary based on operational need?

### **Unit Leadership**

In order to develop the Unit Workplan (template attached) and use the [Return to Workplace Decision Tree](#) (template attached), a unit needs to determine:

- What is the in-person service level required by the operations and expected by the stakeholders?
- For each staff person in the unit, determine if the person (based on duties and operational need) needs to work fully in-person, fully remote or hybrid ---and if hybrid, what is the schedule?
  - Consult with individuals about their availability to return to on-site work.
  - Ensure employees who express inability to return to on-site due to personal medical conditions are directed to the ADA Division of the Office for Access and Equity.
  - Consult with unit/college Human Resources for assistance on holding conversations with individuals who have non-medical concerns or are unwilling to return to on-site work.

- If an employee disagrees with your direction to return to on-site work, discuss the matter with the employee and attempt to resolve the disagreement informally. Seek the assistance of unit/college Human Resources, as appropriate.
- Any impacts to stakeholders/people served of preliminary decisions

Once the workplan is developed:

- Get the required reviews/approvals within the organizational structure based on your unit/college requirements.
- Communicate to each staff employee their specific plan (fully in-person, fully remote, hybrid or a combination) and the required transition date. Please ensure employees are given a minimum of a two-week notice of transition date.
- Communicate any impacts/schedule changes to stakeholders. Ensure all employees in the unit are aware of schedule changes.

## Guidance for Using the Staff Return to On-Site Work Decision Tree and Approval Process

Units must determine if employees who can continue to perform their day-to-day responsibilities remotely should continue to do so. The unit is obligated to determine the best service delivery model for their operations and should consider if employees who can work remotely should do so on a full-time or hybrid basis. Any employee who works remotely, full-time or hybrid must complete an online Remote Work Agreement prior to August 1, 2021. Consistent with public health guidelines, and the University's plan for in-person instruction, most employees will begin to return to on-site work no later than August 1, 2021. Supervisors should use these guidelines in conjunction with the "Decision Tree" to inform their decision-making.

### Important Considerations

1. **During the stay-at-home order, was the employee required to physically report to onsite work?**
  - a. If yes, the supervisor should generally continue to require work on-site. However, as business needs change, the supervisor may reconsider whether an on-site presence is necessary.
  - b. If no, the supervisor should consider what has changed about the nature of work being completed on-site that would require the employee's physical presence. Convenience or a desire for increased productivity is a sufficient reason to require an employee to return to working on-site. However, the supervisor should discuss and receive approval from their leadership prior to directing an employee to return on-site. Units need to make a determination for each staff position individually and then as part of the overall unit strategy.
2. **During the stay-at-home order, was the employee able to perform the majority of their day-to-day responsibilities from a remote location?**
  - a. If yes, then the supervisor should consider allowing the employee to continue working remotely **if the unit's business needs are best met by such an arrangement**. The supervisor should work with the employee to complete a Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement.

- b. If no, then the supervisor should require the employee to return to onsite work, providing a reasonable time for the employee to adjust to on-site work. The supervisor should document this decision in written format for employee and university records. Employees should be given a minimum of a two-week transition period.

**3. Does the employee have any critical tasks that need to be performed onsite, even though most of their work can be performed remotely?**

- a. If yes, as on-site operations resume, the supervisor can explore alternative ways for the employee to perform the critical functions of the position that allow for maximum flexibility. Options include exploring a hybrid work arrangement in which the employee works onsite in order to perform those critical functions and working remotely other days/times. Another option is considering whether critical tasks that need to be performed on-site can be reassigned. However, this option must be taken only after consultation with IHR as the reassignment has the potential to materially change both the position in which the duties are reassigned from as well as the position to which the duties are being reassigned. These changes could result in changing the classification of the position and could have labor ramifications if either position is represented.
- b. If no, the unit should consider the option to have the employee continue to work remotely. The supervisor should work with the employee to complete a Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement as needed.

**4. Does the employee have a disability accommodation in place through the ADA Division of the Office for Access and Equity?**

- a. If yes, continue to implement the accommodation. If the employee or the supervisor believes that a change to the accommodation is warranted, contact the ADA Division to resume the interactive process. Do not alter or revoke the terms of accommodation without consulting the ADA Division. (CAM policy HR-67.)
- b. If there is no accommodation in place but the employee has concerns about returning to on-site work, ask if the concerns are related to the employee's medical conditions or disabilities. If so, refer them to the ADA Division to begin the interactive process to determine the appropriate accommodation.

## STAFF RETURN TO ON-SITE WORK DECISION TREE

- Has your unit/college leadership defined the culture and approach for remote and hybrid work in your organization?
- Has your unit/college developed a return to on-site operations strategy or plan?
- Has your unit/college communicated its operations strategy or plan to employees?
- Have you confirmed with each of the employees you intend to return to work on-site that they are able to return?
- Have you assessed your choices of individuals to return to onsite work to mitigate any risk of disparate impact (age, gender, ethnicity, race, etc.)?

