

## Tips for Managers: When Employees Have Concerns About Returning to Campus

### Acknowledge that your employee may have legitimate concerns.

1. Fear of getting sick- Employees may not feel safe coming back to campus if they could be exposed to the coronavirus. Please consider the following:
  - a. Implement and communicate to the staff your plans for the following:
    - Use of healthy hygiene practices
    - Intensified cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation
    - Social distancing
    - Telework or alternate work locations/schedules
    - Cancellation of non-essential travel
    - Seating distance of at least 6 feet and staggered gathering (starting/closing) times
    - Restricted use of any shared items or spaces
    - Training all staff in all of the safety actions
    - Provide and require Face Masks
  - b. Communicate your plans for protective measures for employees who may be at higher risk (e.g., teleworking, tasks that minimize contact, etc.).
    - Meet separately with any employee who communicates the need for a work accommodation due to a medical condition.
    - Do not discuss ask about or discuss an employee's medical information.
    - Ask what kind of accommodation they are considering and then contact HR Employee Relations to discuss details and to initiate the ADA process.
    - Please **DO NOT** create any **accommodation** plan without the involvement of HR.

### Communicate to employees why you are requiring some or all of them to come back to the on-site work space instead of continuing to work virtually.

Effective communication can help to alleviate a lot of the fear employees have about returning to the workplace environment. All managers should communicate return to work plans that are specific to their teams and work areas. Allow time for questions and meet with employees individually, as needed, to discuss concerns related to their individual situations. Consider addressing the following:

1. Which employees should return to campus first? *Before deciding that all employees should return to the on-campus/site workspace at once, remember that de-densifying the workspace helps to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.*
2. Make decisions based on business needs, compliance with campus restrictions or work from home recommendations, and compliance with health precautions such as social distancing and masks. *Document these legitimate business reasons to provide evidence of non-discriminatory selection criteria if challenged later.*

3. When making decisions about employees returning to campus or being able to work remotely, also consider employee morale and productivity. Is it possible to allow flexible schedules, partial days on campus, etc.? Assess the work product of each employee and determine individually if an employee is approved to continue working remotely based on work needs, their job duties and performance, as well as other specific circumstances.
4. Set clear Goals and Expectations: Discuss and set clear expectations of what work is to be done. Measure (require written documentation of work that has been completed each week). Evaluate the work and provide feedback. Meet regularly with each team member. Re-evaluate the work situation- individually, as needed.
5. Essential Employees: Who are they? Do they still need to be in the office every day? Essential employees may be able to work remotely and be available by phone, or if necessary, to report to campus. Assess if you need everyone in the office every day or if you can consider other options like flex schedules, scheduled days in the office/working remote, new processes, etc.
6. Be sure work scheduling decisions are fair. Employees without children should not be expected to bear the brunt of on-site working. If you are requiring employees to return to campus don't base that decision on whether they have children. Consult with HR for employees who request leave using the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act (EFMLA).

### ADA- Reasonable Accommodation

1. Anticipate that employees may request to continue working remotely. Consider in advance how you will handle such requests, taking into account the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) reasonable accommodation requirements for individuals with disabilities.
2. When an employee indicates they want or need an accommodation due to a medical reason, please contact HR- Employee Relations for assistance. [EmployeeRelations@unmc.edu](mailto:EmployeeRelations@unmc.edu)
3. Avoid asking the employee to disclose personal health information or to provide medical documentation. Please do not discuss any medical information about the employee with others.
4. ADA Accommodation is a **formal process** that must include the assistance of UNMC HR. Employees may also initiate the process by contacting HR directly.

### Additional policies to consider as employees return to campus.

1. [FFCRA –Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)
2. [Emergency Administrative Leave](#)
3. [Crisis Leave](#)
4. [Additional Resources](#) [Coronavirus Resources](#)
5. Follow policies on what to do when an employee becomes symptomatic, tests positive or is potentially exposed to COVID-19. [COVID-19 Notification Report Form](#) [COVID-19 Toolkit](#)

### Additional Manager Resources

1. [COVID-19 Has My Teams Working Remotely: A Guide for Leaders](#)
2. [How to Keep Working & Stay Safe](#)