

University of Minnesota Return to Work Sunrise Plan

A banner image showing a sunrise over a body of water with the text "SUNRISE PLAN" centered in large, bold, black letters.

SUNRISE PLAN

Last updated November 13, 2020

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The University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all members of our community. Our faculty, staff, and students are our most important assets. Our priority is to enable all to work in the safest place possible, knowing that may vary depending on each employee's responsibilities and situation. We recognize that the threat from COVID-19 is not over, and it continues to affect our community in different ways, including how, when, and where many of us are able to work.

The University is asking all employees who can work from home to continue doing so through June 30, 2021, please [review this Nov. 11, 2020 message from President Joan Gabel](#).

The Return to Work Sunrise Plan (the Plan) process for returning to work has been updated and University leadership and supervisors continue to review the work that needs to be done onsite. The responsibility for requesting a return to campus moves from the individual to the unit level.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The unit-wide request for return process will run in parallel with existing processes that will continue to be required for individuals if their return is specific to [clinical functions](#), [on-site reopening of labs](#) (including fieldwork, labs, and core facilities), consideration for return of [work that can be performed remotely](#), and the [process for engaged learning that occurs off campus](#).

All University employees share responsibility for implementing the Plan by following its requirements. The goal is to reduce the potential for transmission of COVID-19 on University campuses and in other University-owned or managed facilities, and that requires full cooperation among everyone—leaders, managers and supervisors, and faculty and staff. Only through a cooperative effort can we work to maintain the safety and health of our University community.

The Plan will:

- Assist you in understanding the updates to the Sunrise Plan process and how it impacts those whose work must be conducted in-person to support the fall semester. Continue working from home until instructed otherwise.
- Inform you about accommodations that are available along with support resources for faculty, staff, and graduate students..
- Assist you by outlining the health and hygiene requirements you must follow if you are approved to work on site.

Who currently qualifies for consideration under this Plan?

Until further notice, the University expects that any faculty or staff who can work from home will continue to do so. The need to limit the number of people on campuses or other work locations to meet physical distancing requirements will continue for some time. Administrative units that can effectively work remotely will likely continue to do so until Governor Walz and public health officials ease restrictions on larger gatherings. Their current guidance includes no gatherings that exceed 10 people, with smaller gatherings involving physical distancing and other safety precautions.

This Plan (revised August 24, 2020), anticipates that some faculty, staff and student workers may need to return to their respective campus or another University work location (either regularly or intermittently), not because of personal preference, but to effectively support the fall semester. This may include:

- Faculty whose work requires their physical presence to complete;
- Extension educators who may require access to offices or other equipment to accomplish their duties;

- Administrative functions that are not otherwise possible if working from home; or
- Undergraduate student workers or researchers, in coordination with their supervisor, on all campuses and facilities whose work requires their physical presence.

In particular, returning employees should only include:

- Those who are performing services or functions that are determined-by units or departments-to require on-site support;
- Those who can work without permitting others into their work space or can maintain at least six feet of physical distance between themselves and others;
- Those who can demonstrate an ability to maintain physical distancing, which could include staggered shifts by time or day, relocating some staff, or other solutions;
- Those who may not fit neatly into these categories, but have developed a personalized “sunrise safety plan” unique to their work environment, which is subject to approval by University Health and Safety.

Units will develop and request return to campus for those who may need to perform on-site work. Onsite work could involve less than a full-time on campus schedule, which would allow for the balance of the work to be remote. There will also continue to be a significant number of employees who do not need to be present on campus and should continue their work remotely. With this update, returning to campus for most employees shifts from being voluntary to being based on whether work must be accomplished in-person to support the fall semester.

Any employee who is uncomfortable with the request to return to campus should discuss their concerns with their unit leader, department head, director or supervisor. Whenever possible, individuals should be offered flexibility regarding how they work, subject to compliance with Governor Walz’s executive order. If any individual feels uncomfortable about being on campus, they should reach out to their supervisors. Supervisors should be as flexible as possible regarding requests for remote work.

The [Disability Resource Center](#) can determine any appropriate accommodation(s) for individuals whose job functions need to be performed on campus. Additionally, the [Office of Human Resources](#) has information to support faculty and staff during

the pandemic. The [Graduate School](#) is an additional resource for graduate assistants and postdoctoral students.

Retaliation in response to anyone expressing safety concerns will not be tolerated. If you feel you have experienced retaliation, you should contact OHR's [Employee Relations Consultants](#).

Employees who were already designated as "Essential On-Campus" employees or those who have been approved to conduct essential research and have been working on site already, can continue to do so.

University staff and faculty, must follow all relevant personal hygiene requirements as appropriate for their work environment.

It is important to note that this Plan will continue to evolve in response to the public health conditions in Minnesota and guidance from Governor Walz, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Over time, the Plan will allow additional faculty and staff to return to campuses and other University facilities until we achieve full, in-person operations at a date in the future. University leaders will continue to revise this Plan and communicate updates to all faculty and staff systemwide as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

It is also important to note that if transmission of the COVID-19 virus becomes significant on our campuses or at other worksites, the University may determine that employees who have received approval must return to a work-from-home scenario.

Request for Return

In addition to individual faculty, staff, or student workers who requested and received approval to return under the Sunrise Plan, units may request a return to their worksite under this Plan using the updates to the process announced on August 25, 2020. Unit leaders will submit requests through the [Fall 2020 return form](#) and will require approval, which will be managed through the following routing process:

1. Teaching and Outreach: needs approvals by unit head and Dean or similar official as communicated by your leader.

2. Administrative Activities: Vice President / Vice Chancellor or senior leader who oversees your unit or similar official as communicated by your leader.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The unit-wide request for return process will run in parallel with existing processes that will continue to be required for individuals if their return is specific to [clinical functions](#), [on-site reopening of labs](#) (including fieldwork, labs, and core facilities), consideration for return of [work that can be performed remotely](#), and the [process for engaged learning that occurs off campus](#).

No member of the University community may return to work on site until they have received the appropriate approval(s) from one of these three processes, and they have acknowledged their personal responsibility to comply with this Plan. Failure to receive approval will result in immediate on site work stoppage.

Considerations and Expectations for Employees

Consistent with our longstanding compliance with HIPAA and patient privacy, the University protects the privacy of faculty and staff health status and health information. Managers and supervisors are [reminded that they have an obligation to protect the privacy of employee health information](#).

The University has leave policies that encourage faculty and staff to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when they are required by a healthcare provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. These policies include:

- University [Emergency Leave for COVID-19](#)
- [Pay Provisions During Emergency Closings or Reduced Operations](#)
- [Family Medical Leave Act](#)
- [Family First Coronavirus Response Act Emergency Paid Sick Leave](#) (federal)
- Sick Leave: [Civil Service](#) -- [Labor Represented](#) -- [P&A](#)
- Vacation Leave: [Civil Service](#) -- [Labor Represented](#) -- [P&A](#) -- [Vacation Donation](#) for Civil Service and Labor Represented employees
- Comp Time: [Civil Service](#) -- [Labor Represented](#)
- [Short-Term Disability](#) (if applicable, employee-elected benefit)
- [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 FAQ](#)

For faculty and staff with underlying medical conditions, or who have household

members with underlying health conditions, the following policies, resources, and supports are available:

- Board of Regents Policy: [Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action](#).
- Employees should contact their unit HR Lead, who is available to consult with the campus disability resource/service office and/or [UReturn](#) to initiate the University's process. This process considers accommodation(s) that can be put in place. (It is important to note that telework may no longer fall under the "undue burden" category.)

The University will work with MDH to inform workers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 in the workplace, and MDH will require them to self-quarantine for the recommended amount of time.

Individual Circumstances

The University acknowledges that it is a community of individuals with different abilities and circumstances. If an individual who has been instructed to return to work on site has concerns about doing so due to a medical condition or other factors that place them at a higher risk, or if individuals wish to seek ADA reasonable accommodations related to returning to the workplace, they should contact their HR representative to initiate a review by the campus disability services office, which will work with them to determine any appropriate accommodation(s).

Safety in the Workplace

The University has implemented a number of enhancements to reduce opportunities for transmission in areas of our workplaces that we can control. In addition, all employees returning to work on site are expected to comply with the following standards and conduct self-screening daily.

Modifications to individual offices or workstations are not permitted unless an assessment from University Health and Safety deems health habits and other measures described in this Plan are insufficient to promote a safe work environment. As with other expectations in this Plan, individual preference is not a sufficient justification for approval. Approved modifications will be completed by

facilities management departments or vendors under University-wide contracts.

Handwashing

Faculty and staff are instructed to [wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water](#) frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their time on-site, prior to any mealtimes, and after using the toilet. Hand sanitizer dispensers are also available and can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water if hands are not visibly soiled.

- [The MDH “Clean Your Hands!” poster, located in all restrooms, provides proper hand washing methods.](#)
- [In occupied areas, custodial staff are checking and replenishing soap dispensers, paper towels, and hand sanitizer stations at a minimum of once per day, and more often in heavily trafficked public spaces.](#)

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

[Everyone is asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue](#) when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face—in particular their mouth, nose, and eyes—with their hands. Tissues should be disposed of in the trash and individuals should wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette reminders appear on posters and tissues and trash receptacles are readily available.

- The [Stop the Spread of COVID-19 initiative](#) is our shared commitment to protect one another with daily individual health monitoring, proper handwashing, physical distancing, and wearing face coverings.
- The [CDC “Stop the Spread of Germs” poster](#) has been posted in all building lobbies and other common areas. The poster is also displayed on digital boards across our campuses where available.
- Individual departments are responsible for providing tissues in common areas, including reception areas and conference rooms. Tissues are ordered through [U Market Services](#).
- Employees are required to wear cloth face coverings (masks) indoors, as well

as outdoors where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Individuals may bring their own mask, or campuses/units may order them at no cost from [U Market Services](#) (masks are limited to two per employee at no cost).

- [University Health and Safety](#) staff are available to provide training on respiratory etiquette for units or individuals who are at a heightened risk of exposure.

Physical distancing

[Physical distancing](#) has been implemented across University campuses and facilities:

- Faculty, staff, and visitors will avoid gathering in groups and in confined areas, including elevators.
- Faculty, staff, and visitors will avoid using anyone else's personal protective equipment, phones, computer equipment, desks, cubicles, workstations, offices, or other personal work tools and equipment. There are some situations where work tools must be shared. In those situations, employees should take precautions to sanitize them between use, as well as wash their hands before and after use.
- In areas where hoteling workspace is in use, sanitizing wipes will be made available by the individual unit (wipes can be ordered from [U Market Services](#) when the supply chain recovers). Employees are expected to wipe down a hoteling workspace prior to using it and dispose of the wipe in the trash.
- Where workstations do not permit at least six feet between employees, employees will wear cloth masks at all times.
- Common spaces such as break rooms, study spaces, and conference rooms will have furniture rearranged or restacked to promote social distancing. As noted above, break rooms / lunchrooms will be limited to food preparation only. When possible, employees are encouraged to bring meals that do not require refrigeration or heating.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being enhanced by the University, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools, and machinery, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms,

lunchrooms, and meeting rooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, etc.

- All custodial staff and their supervisors have been provided refresher training on proper cleaning techniques, as well as background information on COVID-19.
- All cleaning products meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements.
- If there is a confirmed positive case reported to the [University, Environmental Health and Safety](#) will coordinate cleaning and disinfecting of that individual's work space.
- Facilities management teams will clean public spaces such as building lobbies, restrooms, door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons at least once daily, and more frequently if deemed necessary. Twin Cities [Facilities Management \(FM\)](#) has listed additional details. Contact your campus FM for guidance at your location.
- Departmentally owned spaces such as labs will continue to be primarily serviced by the lab occupants, as they had been doing prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. [MDH guidelines](#) should inform cleaning frequencies.
- For shared departmental equipment, such as phones, keyboards, and copiers, individual users will be responsible to clean these surfaces prior to individual use. Units can order the necessary cleaning supplies from U Market Services or can call their campus facilities contact.

Communication

The most up-to-date version of this Plan will be posted at the [Safe Campus/Public Health Alert webpage](#). The original and updated versions of the Plan are communicated via systemwide emails from the President, on MyU, in Brief, and through direct communication to campus leaders, HR Leads, and managers/supervisors. Additional communication will be ongoing as circumstances surrounding the pandemic require. Managers and supervisors are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by reporting observations and concerns to their unit HR Lead. This Plan has been adopted by the President's Emergency Management Policy Committee and was first distributed to all University faculty and staff systemwide on May 1, 2020 with a primary focus on returning some researchers and faculty. The unit-level version was updated on August 24, 2020, and continues to broaden the plan to other faculty, staff, and student workers

and researchers as appropriate. It will be updated, as necessary.