

Leaders and Managers Guide to Resumption of In-Person Activities

Updated June 24, 2020

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Prepared by the Workplace Planning Group for
the University of Chicago.

*This is a working document that will continue to
change as additional information is known and
policies are finalized. Changes will be noted in
the Document Update Log in Section V.*



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I. Introduction

This document is meant to provide guidance and assistance to support safety and health in the workplace as the State of Illinois and City of Chicago begin an expected staged reopening and the University of Chicago begins the gradual resumption of in-person work. The University of Chicago is committed to developing and implementing a complementary reopening plan that will maintain safety, manage resources, and allow us to embrace our culture of collaboration and community.

Some of the guidance below is specific to Chicago locations and University-owned buildings. If your operations are outside Chicago or in buildings not owned by the University, different local policies and guidance may apply to you. These include not only COVID-specific policies but also permanent laws, such as employment laws. While many of the practices below should be generally useful, they do not supersede local (non-University landlords or government) policies. Implementing more restrictive reopening than required by the University or other authorities is at the discretion of unit leaders. Please reach out to COVIDstaffup@uchicago.edu to facilitate additional support.

While this document focuses on staff and offices, the guidance is relevant to other members of the community returning to in-person work, including faculty, other academic appointees, and graduate students. It does not address a number of topics specific to research or education and other planning involving classes and students in campus housing. Separate guidance is available for research ramp up and is being developed for education programs.

The pandemic environment can evolve very rapidly and result in quick changes to management of in-person activities. Please review the [UChicago Forward](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) website (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>) regularly for updated information and watch for related communications from the University and unit leaders. See also the end of this guide for a log of updates to the document.

II. Personal Health & Safety Guidance

In general, the University recommends following the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the UChicago Medicine Infection Control Team, outlined below and reflected throughout this document. Additional specific health information and campus updates are available on the University's [UChicago Forward](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) website (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>).

Anyone returning to campus (faculty, other academic appointees, staff and students) will be required to complete a [short training program](http://ehsa.uchicago.edu/training) in advance (<http://ehsa.uchicago.edu/training>). Individuals will also be required to [sign an electronic form](https://covid19attestation.uchicago.edu/) (<https://covid19attestation.uchicago.edu/>) affirming that they will comply with safety precautions, including reporting of positive cases, and that they will self-monitor for symptoms related to COVID-19.

A. Personal Protection for All Individuals

Distancing Protocols

According to the CDC, [social distancing](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>) is one of the best tools we have to slow the spread of the virus. This means maintaining physical distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others.

Face Coverings

The University requires face coverings (i.e. disposable mask or cloth face covering) for all personnel on campus at all times. Additionally, the CDC recommends the ongoing use of [cloth face coverings](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Cloth face coverings are intended to slow the spread of the virus, particularly from people who may be unaware they have the virus and could transmit it to others. If an individual has the virus, but is unaware or asymptomatic, a face covering helps to prevent him or her from spreading the virus to others around them.

The University will supply two cloth face masks to those returning to campus. These centrally funded masks will be provided to COVID-19 Unit Leads, who in turn will distribute them within

their units as appropriate. The number of masks provided to each unit and distribution timing will be based on the information unit leaders provided to the University's return-to-campus planning leaders about the number of people from their units who need to return to on-site work starting in June 2020. Additional masks will be provided to Unit Leads as on-campus operations increase over the following months.

In addition, face mask (as well as other COVID-related supplies) are available for units to purchase via the "General Use C-19 Supplies" BuySite catalogue.

B. Guidance on Self-Monitoring and When to Self-Quarantine or Self-Isolate

Self-Monitoring for Symptoms

According to the CDC, people should [monitor themselves for symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html). In the effort to prevent spread of the coronavirus, *anyone coming to campus is expected to self-monitor for symptoms and stay home if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 or have had any symptoms, including:*

- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Body aches
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

Any employee or student who is experiencing symptoms must not come to work and can contact the UChicago Medicine COVID-19 triage hotline for screening at 773.702.2800.

When to Self-Quarantine and Self-Isolate

The CDC advises people who feel healthy but have recently been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 or recently traveled internationally to *self-quarantine*.^{*} This means checking their temperature twice a day and watching for symptoms. They should also stay home for 14 days from the date of last exposure, and if possible, avoid people who may be higher-risk^{**} for severe illness associated with COVID-19.

Anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is awaiting COVID-19 test results, or has symptoms such as cough, fever, or difficulty breathing, should *self-isolate*.^{*} This means staying in a specific “sick room” or area away from other people, and if possible, using a separate bathroom.

Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19, are suspected to have COVID-19, or are symptomatic are required to stay home until both of the following criteria have been met:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared;
- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery-defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)

The 3 days fever-free may occur within the 10 days from first appearance of symptoms, so this stay-at-home period will be minimally 10 days and possibly longer.

^{*}[CDC self-quarantine vs. self-isolation guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html).

^{**}[CDC guidance on people who may be higher risk](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html).

III. Preparing for and Returning to On-Campus Work

A. Guiding Principles

The following material has been developed as a practical guide for leaders and managers with policies, tools, and advice for ramping up work in your offices and other workspaces. This guide is a living document and will be updated as the COVID-19 situation evolves. Please visit the [UChicago Forward](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) website (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>) for the most up-to-date information.

The University's workplace reentry plan is based on the guiding principles outlined below. While many policies and guidance apply campus-wide, each unit must additionally make decisions on the best practices that will allow for a safe work environment for their employees, space(s), and type(s) of work. Following the guiding principles below is information on what decisions are set by the University and where Deans and Officers and their teams should make decisions to address their unique requirements and needs. Leaders will receive information from central administration (President, Provost, or their COVID response leads) on phases of reopening. Related questions can be addressed to: COVIDstaffup@uchicago.edu.

University Guiding Principles

1. **The health and safety of our community is the highest priority.** Guidance on personal wellness, policies and benefits, and COVID-related campus news are available here:

[UChicago COVID-19 Updates Website](https://coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu) (<https://coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu>)

[UChicago Forward Website](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>)

[UChicago Benefits Website](https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits) (<https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits>)

[Staff and Faculty Assistance Program](https://www.perspectivesltd.com) (<https://www.perspectivesltd.com>)

[COVID-19 UChicago News](https://news.uchicago.edu/coronavirus) (<https://news.uchicago.edu/coronavirus>)

Additional materials for employees are being developed and will be available on the UChicago Forward website.

2. **We expect all individuals to adopt precautions designed to mitigate the risk of viral transmission as we gradually return to campus through a phased approach.** Though specifics will vary among work environments, these typically include: staying home

when sick, wearing masks at all times in the office, and physical distancing from others by at least 6 feet, as detailed in Section II.

3. **If work can be performed remotely effectively, it should be.** Until late stages of reopening informed by the five phases of the State of Illinois and City of Chicago reopening plans, policies and guidance in this document pertain to employees who *must* be on campus to do their work. Starting mid-June, we aim to gradually ramp-up research activities on campus as well as other functions that need to occur on campus to support the research enterprise. Similarly, as planning progresses for summer and fall education activities (in person and/or remote), non-academic functions that support education will be activated as necessary.
4. **Limiting density of and contact among people is critical.** As campus ramps up operations, limiting the occupant density of campus buildings and rooms and preventing unnecessary person-to-person contact within our facilities is one of the most effective ways of protecting our community.
5. **We are in an evolving COVID-19 environment where levels of restrictions on activities will change.** These materials focus on early stages of returning to on-campus work with minimal and limited operations (with an eye toward the broader reopening), while also considering the possibility of ramp down if the situation changes.
6. **Continuously improving our processes and practices is crucial.** We aim for ongoing assessment and refinement of processes and practices for working on campus safely. Your ongoing feedback will be important to this. We will also collect and provide data that can help you further improve your operations. Please provide suggestions to coronavirusupdates@uchicago.edu.
7. **The University community will be supported at every stage by an Operations Integration Team.** A University support team is available to provide expertise, help solve problems, and provide feedback on your reopening plans. They will be able to address some questions or connect you with other experts on campus. This can be facilitated through COVIDstaffup@uchicago.edu. FAQs for managers/leaders will be developed from the questions that arise and posted on the [UChicago Forward](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) website (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>).

Phases of On-Campus Work Ramp Up

In-person University work will resume gradually. The timing and process will be responsive to data on health and safety, as well as State and city regulations. The University's Operations Integration planning group will partner with units to support planning and ramp up and to address needs and concerns. Research activities and essential operations will resume in June 2020, in accordance with state and city regulations and the University's ability to resume work safely.

The starting point for the on-campus ramp up is the remote work stage that took place during Spring Quarter 2020, with minimal essential employees in University workplaces. Some in-person started to resume in June 2020, particularly in support of research and education. Later in the summer there will be continued reopening of more offices for work that needs to be performed in person. The final stage will be "adapted normal," with in-person work in most University workplaces expected even as some remote work continues.

Important notes:

- The campus must be prepared to return to fully remote work, should local COVID-19 conditions worsen.
- At early stages of re-opening, the need for social distancing may limit in-person work and/or require staggered shifts. Prioritizing remote work and keeping dual-modality* options is essential.
- Adapted normal operations will be developed with the experience of early ramp up and broad campus input.

**Dual-modality: on-campus and remote work are both options for an individual (when remote work is possible for their job function).*

Note that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Executive Order (EO) 20-10 identify Educational Institutions as Essential Businesses and Operations. ***This does not include in-person classes or other in-person student engagement.*** It includes research and basic operations. Requirements for work, including numbers of people gathering, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), etc. continue to be updated by the State of Illinois. As of 6/11/20, the most recent updated orders can be found on the [State of Illinois website](https://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/Executive-Orders/ExecutiveOrder2020-38.aspx) (<https://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/Executive-Orders/ExecutiveOrder2020-38.aspx>).

B. Ramp-Up Overview Table of University and Unit Guidance

Available on UChicago Box is the [COVID-19 Resumption of Operations Delegation of Guidance](https://uchicago.box.com/s/rvgu3viuqcid7jmqd2qs5ju5x80652ii) (https://uchicago.box.com/s/rvgu3viuqcid7jmqd2qs5ju5x80652ii). This is a working document as that will continue to change as additional information is known and policies are finalized.

C. Return-to-Work Guidelines and Principles

Remote and Modified Work

Remote work will be encouraged and supported as much as possible. Leaders should plan for lower levels of on-site occupancy and for dual-modality work until the University is much closer to resuming normal operations. Managers are encouraged to assess work deliverables and ability to work remotely for each member of their teams, and to evaluate employees consistently within each team. During a dual-modality state, managers are encouraged to support employees' requests to perform work remotely and to make decisions regarding such requests consistently. The assessment process should be performed in collaboration with other managers within a unit or department and a comprehensive assessment should be documented for reference.

Guiding principles for employees when returning to work

- Know the [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).
- If you are ill, contact your healthcare provider and your supervisor, and **do not** come to work. Any employee who is experiencing symptoms can contact the UChicago Medicine COVID-19 triage hotline for screening at 773.702.2800.
- Understand that there will be new safety precautions before and during your time on campus that are designed to help keep you and your coworkers safe.
- If you become ill at work, limit your exposure to others immediately. Contact your healthcare provider and your supervisor and return home.
- Follow basic preventative measures prescribed by your location and public health officials, such as the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html) and [CDPH](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/protect-yourself-and-your-family) (https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/protect-yourself-and-your-family).

- Please report a confirmed or presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis to C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu.
- Attend to your mental health. The University's Staff and Faculty Assistance Program, [Perspectives](https://www.perspectivesltd.com) (<https://www.perspectivesltd.com>), offers phone counseling, resources to help manage stress and anxiety, and more. Contact them at 800.456.6327.

Specific considerations for employees working onsite

When it is necessary for employees to be physically present on campus to perform their responsibilities, managers may consider staggering on-campus work hours, shifts, or days to accommodate the safety of employees who must be on campus. Requests to perform work on campus must be treated with consistency and should be reviewed in accordance with building safety standards. If an employee who is required to work on campus due to their assigned responsibilities and cannot perform work remotely requests not to return to campus for personal reasons, they may use accrued time (e.g., vacation time) in accordance with University policy or request a leave of absence. A unit's HR Partner can assist in clarifying options and submitting requests.

Specific considerations for employees working remotely

As operations expand and more work returns to campus, employees whose job responsibilities enable them to work remotely and who wish to continue doing so should discuss options with their supervisor. Managers and employees should document their remote work agreements with each employee and plan to update them regularly as circumstances change. Suggestions of what to document include: work responsibilities, hours of work, communication expectations, areas of focus, and reporting.

Collective bargaining agreements and contracts must be reviewed carefully. For union-represented employees, any proposed changes to work should be reviewed by Employee and Labor Relations (elrelations@uchicago.edu), who will work with the relevant union.

Consistency across employees in dual-modality or modified work

For all employees, careful consideration must be given to job descriptions and consistency among employees within a unit. Human Resources can assist units in planning for dual-modality work (blended remote and on-campus work) among employees and related issues, such as implementing modified work schedules to stagger building occupancy. HR Partners should review and determine whether ideas for modifying schedules (either mandatorily or voluntarily) are acceptable through Employee and Labor Relations (elrelations@uchicago.edu).

Leading by example

Employees will be looking to their unit leaders for clear communication and direction about returning to work. They will also be observing unit leaders' decisions, attitudes and behaviors as those observations can influence their own choices. This is an important time to lead by example, demonstrating the behaviors you want your team members to adopt. This includes balancing your time working remotely and in the office in the same way employees are asked to do, as well as modeling behaviors related to social distancing, cleaning, etc. This is also an opportunity for unit leaders to lead by maintaining a positive attitude, acting with empathy and respect, and focusing on the team's collective effort to work together in a safe and healthy manner.

Prior to Returning to Work

Health assurances

- Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19, are suspected to have COVID-19, or are symptomatic are required to stay home until:
 - a. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared **and**;
 - b. At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery- defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
- Employees who have been exposed to COVID-19 or recently traveled internationally but are not symptomatic and do not develop symptoms are required to self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure or of return from travel (whichever is later).

Vulnerable populations and health decisions

If employees are unable to perform their work remotely and express concerns about returning to work due to factors such as age or an underlying health condition (their own or of someone they live with), a manager should first explore whether any duties can be performed remotely. *Under no circumstances should a manager evaluate the health of an employee or make a determination about the health of an employee.* Employees are encouraged to speak with their HR Partner to explore leave under FMLA or other leave of absence options.

Transportation to campus

The need to use public transportation is of significant concern to many employees. The University encourages employees to adopt the safest possible mode of transportation.

Employees and managers should discuss these concerns and how work might be adjusted or employees otherwise accommodated, e.g. shifting hours to prevent travel during peak commuting periods.

Travel and Visitors

Travel

The University is continuing the suspension of university-sponsored international and domestic travel until further notice. The U.S. State Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are continuing to advise avoiding all nonessential international travel due to widespread ongoing transmission. Travelers returning from international travel should not come to campus for 14 days from the date of return.

Visitors to campus

No uninvited or non-essential visitors are allowed in campus buildings. To help prevent this, exterior building doors will remain locked and access-controlled until later phases. At later stages of ramp up, additional guidance will be provided for visitors not currently deemed essential. These may include vendors, academic visitors, and others.

Essential visitors must follow the same policies for PPE, quarantining, etc., as members of the University community. Additional details are provided below:

Unit leaders and managers should discuss with those who want to host a visitor whether there are remote options for the meeting or other ways to prevent the need for visitors to campus. For instance, instead of having someone come to campus to repair a piece of equipment, consider whether the equipment can be shipped for repair.

Visitors approved by unit leaders (Deans and Officers or their delegates), such as critical outside vendors (e.g. contracted services, delivery staff, those repairing or installing equipment), are expected to adopt precautions designed to mitigate the risk of viral transmission. The University of Chicago has outlined safety precautions that can be found on goforward.uchicago.edu. Except in emergencies (e.g. urgent equipment or facility maintenance), all vendor and delivery activities must be coordinated with the individuals responsible for these activities (e.g., heads of building, shipping/delivery, etc.) to ensure that proper safety arrangements are in place.

For visitors who might typically be on campus to participate in studies, separate guidance is forthcoming and additional steps, including IRB approval, may be required.

Service providers (pest control, large package delivery, instrument calibration, elevator and HVAC maintenance, etc.) may need additional access to buildings and must coordinate with Facilities or building management in advance.

Approved visitors' hosts must record visitors' presence in buildings (name, company, date, times, areas of building) and report the information to their unit's COVID-19 Leads (see information about COVID-19 Leads in Section E).

D. Using Space Safely on Campus

General Guidance for Returning to University Workspaces

In order to return safely to an office environment, employees are expected to adhere to the recommended social distancing guidelines and stay at least 6 feet from each other during the course of the workday. Though all workspaces are unique, general best practices should be followed, such as: staggering start and end times; moving chairs or desks to achieve safe distancing; wearing a face covering at all times while in a shared workspace/room; using only your own computer, phone, headset, and equipment; washing hands frequently, etc.

COVID-19 Leads

Each unit should have one or more designated COVID-19 Leads who are available to field questions, concerns, and ideas. Possible Leads could be a unit's Human Resources professional, a person with significant operations responsibilities, or a long-term employee with deep knowledge of the unit and University. Contact information for these Leads should be posted and provided to unit employees, security desks, and University administration. When there is more than one unit in a building, the COVID-19 Leads in the building are expected to coordinate their work.

Compliance

By following PPE policies and other guidance, we are all working together to keep our workplace and each other safe. We will be learning from our experience and continuing to improve over time. If anyone in the University community has concerns about safety practices

in the workplace, they can reach out to support teams through the [UCAIR](https://ehs-prd-01.uchicago.edu/ehsa-ucair/InjuryIllnessIndexUOFC-IT.html) (https://ehs-prd-01.uchicago.edu/ehsa-ucair/InjuryIllnessIndexUOFC-IT.html) accident/incident reporting system and experts will work with offices to address concerns.

Assessing workspaces

Unit leaders and departments should assess their work environments and consider measures to increase distance between people and reduce the risk of high-touch surfaces, such as:

- Post signage to facilitate social distancing. For example, place one-way directional signage on walls and floors for large open workspaces with multiple through-ways. For areas where people might congregate or stand in line, place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate where people should stand while waiting. It is important that such modifications are maintained and do not create slip hazards. For narrow areas, it may be helpful to designate one-way walkways around floors.
- Remove shared resources (e.g., community pen holder/pens, magazines in sitting areas, etc.).
- Develop “clean desk” requirements/recommendations to ensure easy cleaning. (e.g. all desk surfaces should be empty at the end of the day).
- Provide information to employees on cleaning schedules and protocols.

Additional guidance follows that should be applied and, as necessary, adapted for individual workspaces.

New Space Use Practices

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and disinfecting

Use of face coverings in common areas is required at all times:

- Reusable cloth masks are preferred, but single-use masks are an option as backup.
- Cloth masks should be washed at home between uses. See [CDC mask guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)

Gloves are not recommended as PPE or a safety precaution unless they would have normally been used in a work environment. Gloves can give a false sense of security since, once contaminated, they can transfer the virus between surfaces. Frequent handwashing and cleaning surfaces are preferred practices.

Employees should be asked to eliminate as many personal effects as possible from workspaces to reduce the number of surfaces that require disinfecting. Employees should be conscious of the surfaces they touch to reduce the risk of transmission and need for disinfecting.

Planning schedules and distancing

Employees should maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from each other within workstations, meeting rooms, and other areas. Exceptions can be made for brief, unavoidable passing (for example, moving opposite directions in corridors).

Plan the work of cohorts of employees to increase distancing and minimize overlap in use of office space. Consider staggered start times and shifts. Managers are encouraged to discuss proposed changes and options with Employee and Labor Relations and Human Resources by contacting elrelations@uchicago.edu or your unit's HR Partner.

Unit leaders should engage employees in the planning process when possible and make sure they understand how their schedules and building use fit into the whole context of work. This should help employees comply with the guidance and understand how to troubleshoot unexpected changes.

Building access and arrival/departure procedures

Buildings will remain locked and access-controlled until later phases of reopening. Additional guidance will be provided by the University at that time. During the early phases of ramp up, Deans and Officers must provide names of employees who may enter buildings to COVIDstaffup@uchicago.edu. Deans and Officers may also choose to limit access to specific hours. Additional specifics are below:

- UChicago IDs should be used wherever available for tap access into buildings and internal spaces, such as office suites, both for access control and for potential contact tracing.
- Staggered arrival and departure times should be coordinated across all units/departments in the building.
- Consider developing entrance and exit plans for your building(s):
 - Designating doors as either an entrance or an exit with entrances monitored throughout the day can help decrease congestion.
 - Coordinate with Health and Safety (safety@uchicago.edu) to ensure building egress requirements are met.

- Employees who leave the building during the day must go through the same entrance protocols upon return.
- Consider how to make use of both stairs and elevators to decrease concentrated use of one.
- Consider posting signage to encourage social distancing at building entrances.
- Develop contingencies for circumstances including late arrivals and arrival without a face covering.
- Encourage employees to wash their hands upon arrival.

Tools and resources

The Appendices include federal guidance and other practical documents that you may find useful as work moves back to campus. Additional signage examples and templates and simple instructional one-pagers will be provided on the [UChicago Forward](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) website (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>) once complete.

Modifying Workspaces

Modifications to physical space are generally not required but may be necessary to support social distancing, particularly in situations where staggering work schedules or shifting desk locations will not suffice. There are a wide variety of workspace layouts across the University and space modification needs may depend on a unit's exact floorplan and the number of employees returning to campus.

For possible physical modifications of space, such as desk separators, unit leaders should work with Facilities Services to understand options and costs and issue a [service request](https://facilities.uchicago.edu/services/service-request) (<https://facilities.uchicago.edu/services/service-request>). Please note, Facilities Services is reviewing options to increase airflow/ventilation in buildings. Delays in such modifications are expected as related materials are in short supply.

HVAC Systems

Prior to re-opening buildings, Facilities Services is checking and adjusting HVAC systems, which vary by building. Unit leaders should contact their building manager/facilities lead to discuss the HVAC system at their building.

Professional custodial services

The University is working with contracted custodial services to enhance building cleaning schedules and processes on campus. If you have particular concerns about cleaning high-traffic areas in your spaces or if you learn of potential contamination in your spaces, contact your building manager.

Unit leaders should understand the following from their custodial services contact:

- Schedules for cleaning office spaces and extent of cleaning (e.g. what surfaces are not cleaned).
- Frequency/schedule for cleaning of building common spaces.

Cleaning supplies

Employees are encouraged to perform spot cleaning as they use spaces and equipment; see below for more information.

Cleaning supplies and other COVID-related items are available for units to purchase via two internal [BuySite](https://buysite.uchicago.edu/) (<https://buysite.uchicago.edu/>) catalogs. The first, “General Use C-19 Supplies,” includes items such as hand sanitizer, and surface cleaning supplies, as well as face masks. The second catalog, “Research Resumption-Lab Use Only,” contains the same COVID-19 general use supplies as well as a few products currently in short supply that are needed for lab-based researchers.

Once the order is fully approved, it will be routed to the Facilities Services Inventory Team for delivery, likely in 1-2 business days of the unit placing the order, subject to demand.

Recommendations for Individual Workspaces

Reception and security desks

- Mark the floor in front of the desk to clarify appropriate distancing from the reception seat. Floor markings need to be designed and maintained so as not create slip or trip hazards (slick surfaces, peeling tape).
- Look for alternatives to sign-in procedures that require the use of pen and paper.
- Make disposable masks, hand sanitizer, and cleaning supplies available.
- Make reception information and directions available on signage or in other written form, since people with hearing loss may have a particularly difficult time understanding instructions through face coverings.

Cubicles/open-plan offices

- Employees in cubicles should be spaced as far apart as feasible, but at least 6 feet apart.
- Employees should not stand and talk over cubicles to adjacent neighbors or enter a cubicle that is designated for another employee.
- Employees in open spaces should wear face coverings at all times.
- If possible, in open-plan workspaces, assign dedicated workspaces to specific employees.
- Limit use of shared tables/desks. If possible, remove such seating and tables.

Shared offices

- Face coverings must be worn at all times. In spaces where individuals may not have their face covering on (e.g., when eating) social distancing of 8 feet (4 feet bubble around each person) is required.
- Ensure that safe distancing guidelines can be achieved.
- Develop space plans and schedules; post schedule in the shared space.
- Provide cleaning supplies and ask employees to clean the shared space before and after each use.

Private offices

- In private offices, no more than one person should be in the office unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained.
- If more than one person is in a room, face coverings should be worn at all times. If only one person is in the room, face coverings can be removed if the door is closed.
- Special care should be taken to avoid multiple people touching office door handles and to clean handles regularly.

A note about eating: Many individuals may find it necessary to eat at their desks or workspaces or in their offices. Individuals should wear their masks until right before they eat and replace it immediately afterward. They should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds before and after eating and should put papers and other work materials that others may touch away before eating. Disinfect the surface after eating. Stay at least 8 feet away from others while eating, and avoid facing another person while eating.

Planning for Use of Classrooms and other Teaching Spaces

As we plan for scenarios that include in-person instruction, classroom seating will be adjusted to conform to the distance separation guidelines. You can see [further guidance and spatial configuration illustrations \(https://rb.gy/rgvam0\)](https://rb.gy/rgvam0). In rooms with fixed seating, this means many seats will be unavailable for seating. In rooms with moveable seating, chairs will be removed or stacked, and just as many chairs will be out in the classroom as is compatible with the distancing guidelines. You may rearrange these chairs as long as each chair is the center of a circle with a diameter of 6 feet and the resulting circles do not overlap. Please do not bring additional chairs into the rooms or unstack stacked chairs.

Recommendations for Common Spaces

Restrooms

Safety as it relates to shared restrooms has been raised as a top concern among the public in external surveys. Unit leaders and managers may want to take particular care in explaining restroom safety precautions to employees. Restroom protocols may be challenging to implement and maintain, but we encourage unit leaders and managers to discuss with their teams the importance of collective attention to safe practices in these common spaces, including:

- Restroom usage should follow social distancing protocols. This may require the use of signage to indicate when a restroom is occupied.
- Continue wearing a face mask while in the restroom.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before leaving restroom.
- Do not place phone or other personal items on counters.
- Cleaning supplies (e.g., alcohol-based cleaning spray and napkins) may be provided and used to clean and disinfect countertops and touch doors/handles. However, flushing disinfecting wipes will cause toilet clogging and must be avoided. Signage to this effect is recommended, as is providing easy access to trash cans.

Conference and meeting rooms

Where feasible, meetings should be held using online collaboration tools (e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc.) rather than in-person, even if employees are on campus.

If a meeting must happen in person, the following guidelines apply:

- In-person meetings must adhere to state/city limits on the number of people allowed to gather, and individuals must maintain 6 feet of separation from one another.
- Use of face coverings in all in-person meetings is mandatory.
- Consider removing or rearranging chairs and tables to encourage safe distancing.
- Post signs outside meeting rooms to indicate capacity limits.
- Where possible, use signage to designate entrances and exits to conference rooms.
- Create a cleaning protocol (including resetting furniture, disinfecting high-touch surfaces, etc.) for those who use meeting space.
- Implement and follow a scheduling process for use of meeting rooms.

Elevators

- Elevator usage should adhere to social distancing guidelines. This means keeping at least 6 feet apart while in the elevator cab or waiting for the next cab, and keeping at least 6 feet apart while waiting in line for the elevator. Consider signs and floor markings to encourage this.
- Encourage use of stairs instead of elevators, when possible, to distribute traffic.
- Recognize that people with health conditions who are most vulnerable to COVID-19 may most need to use elevators and be most concerned about distancing and sharing elevators. Consider ways to accommodate such concerns. For example, at certain times of day elevators could be designated as single use, or workspace for such employees could be moved to the first floor.

Stairways

- If stairs are used extensively to move between floors, additional cleaning of rails and door handles should be discussed.
- It is not recommended that stairs be designated as one-directional, but face coverings should be worn at all times, including in stairways, to lower the risk created by unavoidable passing.
- Stairways are still considered fire egress pathways and doors may not be propped open for any reason. Stairway doors are required to positively latch when closed.

Hallways and corridors

- Encourage employees to avoid stopping to talk with passersby in hallways and corridors.
- Consider using signage to designate hallways and corridors as one-way.

- Consider posting a floor map indicating flow preferences.

Break rooms, kitchens, and coffee stations

- In spaces where individuals may not have their face covering on (e.g., when eating) social distancing of 8 feet (4 feet bubble around each person) is required. Individuals should avoid facing another person while eating.
- Post signage reminding people to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds before and after eating.
- Consider closing these spaces until later phases of reopening.
- If they remain open, consider removing and storing tables and chairs to encourage social distancing.
- Post signs reminding users of social distancing requirements.
- Post signage and provide cleaning supplies to encourage users to disinfect handles and buttons on shared appliances (microwaves, refrigerators, coffee makers) before and after each use.
- Consider removing shared utensils, dishes, etc.
- Recognize that people have limited places to remove face coverings and eat, and accommodate with work schedules.
- Consider signups to schedule use of common eating areas and limit occupancy.

Lounge areas

- Strictly limit access until later phases of reopening.
- Post signage to reinforce social distancing.
- Limit seating by removing or distancing chairs and tables.
- Consider marking floors to indicate where chairs and tables should be, taking care not to create slip or trip hazards with tape or decals.
- Consider reconfiguring placement and limiting use of equipment such as public computers, scanners, printers, etc.
- Provide cleaning supplies for cleaning before and after use.

Copier, storage, and file rooms

- Provide cleaning supplies so users can clean copiers and equipment before and after use.
- Reinforce social distancing guidelines based on size of the room.

- Consider moving frequently-used equipment to an open area to prevent congregation in a small space.
- Encourage scanning and emailing documents via mobile apps rather than printing, faxing, and copying, when possible.

Mail rooms and package delivery areas

- Consider changes to how mail and packages are received and delivered at your building to ensure safe spacing and reduce the risk of delivery staff's exposure to others.
- Although there is low risk of transmission on the surface of mail if everyone is following basic precautions such as wearing face coverings and washing hands regularly, if mail is not urgent or perishable, consider quarantining it for a week.
- If possible and safe for the contents, consider cleaning the surface of packaging with disinfectant prior to opening.

Water fountains and water dispensers

- If available, touchless water bottle filling stations are more sanitary than traditional drinking fountains.
- Consider disabling water fountains until a later stage of reopening.
- For water dispensers with buttons or levers, keep cleaning supplies at hand. Any touched surface should be cleaned before and after use.

Outdoor, lawn, and patio spaces

- Provide signage to reinforce social distancing.
- Remove or space furniture to discourage overcrowding and encourage distancing.
- Designate benches as single-user or remove entirely.
- Smoking areas may need additional outdoor ashtrays to ensure distancing.

E. Monitoring and Information to Support Reopening Approaches

Throughout the stages of reopening campus, the University aims to give managers and leaders information to support decisions about occupancy and practices in workspaces.

Employee Privacy

The University will continue to evaluate effective ways of identifying and addressing workplace density issues. However, any technology that tracks the location and movement of people can raise privacy concerns. Units cannot implement their own apps and other tools of this type without express authorization of the Offices of Legal Counsel and Information Security (security@uchicago.edu), and notification of employees and others in the unit.

Data collected and used from existing sources (see below) is only used by the University for studying and managing traffic and workplace density, contact tracing, and other internal University functions.

UChicago ID Cards and Building Access Data

Information from ID card readers on the numbers of people entering building and spaces and the timing of those arrivals can help to identify where densities are too high or where arrival timing creates traffic. It is important to be mindful of privacy concerns and thus, except for when needed for contact tracing, only deidentified data will be provided for this purpose.

Buildings with card readers will have doors locked and scanners enabled around the clock. Card readers are connected to the CBORD access control system managed by the Department of Safety and Security. Safety and Security can provide deidentified scan data to unit leaders assessing space use in these buildings. ID scan reports reflect the time and date of all ID cards read by a given scanner within a period of time and can typically be provided within one business day. Email Michael Kwiatkowski (kwiatkmb@uchicago.edu), Executive Director for Campus Safety, to request such data.

IV. Well-Being & Resources

Leaders are encouraged to refer employees to the following University resources and services for support with personal and family well-being.

A. Staff and Faculty Assistance Program

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations that require changes in location or behavior.

As social distancing continues and employees begin to return to work, please keep in mind that the Staff and Faculty Assistance Program (SFAP) is available for employees and their loved ones and has telehealth appointments with counselors available through Zoom conferencing, by phone, and through the service's instant message feature. See [more about the SFAP from HR](https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits/EAP_Flyer_COVID-19_Support.pdf) ([https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits/EAP Flyer -COVID-19 Support.pdf](https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits/EAP_Flyer_COVID-19_Support.pdf)).

Visit [Perspectives](https://www.perspectivesltd.com) (<https://www.perspectivesltd.com>) to find additional resources (username: UNI500 / password: perspectives). Select the News Alert at the top of the home page. You can also call 800.456.6327 if you would like to speak with a trained counselor.

B. Telemedicine

BCBSIL Telehealth Expansion for BCBSIL Members

This expanded telehealth benefit is for BCBSIL PPO and HMO members and is separate from the telehealth services currently offered to eligible members by MDLIVE®.

- For PPO members, this is for medically necessary services with an in-network PPO provider who offers telehealth services. If a PPO member sees an in-network provider who offers telehealth services, those telehealth services will now be covered as a regular office visit.
- For HMO members, this is for medically necessary services from providers in their medical group who offer telehealth services. If an HMO member sees a provider within their medical group who offers telehealth services, those telehealth services will now be covered as a regular office visit.

Telehealth visits currently include 2-way, live interactive telephone communication and digital video consultations, which can allow concerned members to connect with their physicians while reducing the risk of exposure to contagious viruses or further illness.

This expansion is meant to offer flexible options to members and reduce the spread of COVID-19, influenza, etc.

View the [telehealth expansion announcement](https://www.bcbsil.com/provider/education/2020/2020_03_16.html) (https://www.bcbsil.com/provider/education/2020/2020_03_16.html).

UHP (Aetna) Telemedicine Visits

UHP (Aetna) members will have zero copays for telemedicine visits for any reason for 90 days. UHP (Aetna) members are encouraged to use telemedicine as their first line of defense in order to limit potential exposure within physician offices. Cost sharing will be waived for all video visits through the CVS MinuteClinic app.

Video Visits at CVS Pharmacy MinuteClinics

Anyone can use a MinuteClinic. MinuteClinics offer patients the opportunity to request a Video Visit in 40 states and Washington, D.C. Remote care options, such as, video visits can be an effective way to evaluate and treat viruses from the comfort of one's home, while minimizing exposure to other potentially contagious viruses.

Cost is waived if you are covered by CVS for Rx benefits.

C. Additional Benefits Information

Additional information can be found in the [Benefits Information-COVID-19 flyer](https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits/Benefits%20Information-COVID-19.pdf) ([https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits/Benefits Information - COVID-19.pdf](https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits/Benefits%20Information-COVID-19.pdf)). You can also find more information on the [UChicago Benefits website](https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits) (<https://humanresources.uchicago.edu/benefits>).

V. Appendices

A. Tools and Resources

Additional tools and resources, including University signage examples and templates, checklists, and simple instructional one-pagers will continue to be completed and provided on the [UChicago Forward](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) website (<https://goforward.uchicago.edu>).

General Information

[UChicago Coronavirus Updates Website](https://coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu) (https://coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu)

[UChicago Forward Website](https://goforward.uchicago.edu) (https://goforward.uchicago.edu)

[OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces](https://uchicago.box.com/s/cnh95a95j24ev0xu05lu194wa132tw1e)

(https://uchicago.box.com/s/cnh95a95j24ev0xu05lu194wa132tw1e)

[CDC Disinfecting Your Home Guide](https://uchicago.box.com/s/xfpe8804l0y2y5n1wvnoj2v9itj8mi0t)

(https://uchicago.box.com/s/xfpe8804l0y2y5n1wvnoj2v9itj8mi0t)

Travel Guidance

[U.S. Travel Advisories](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html)

(https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html)

[CDC Travel Guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html)

[UChicago Travel Toolkit](https://www.traveltoolkit.uchicago.edu) (https://www.traveltoolkit.uchicago.edu)

Signage and Factsheets

All pre-made signage is available on the [UChicago Forward Signage page](https://goforward.uchicago.edu/signage/) (https://goforward.uchicago.edu/signage/). This includes signage for:

- Health & Safety Protocols
- Use of Space/Social Distancing
- Entrance/Space Closures
- Cleaning Protocols/Guidance
- Lab-Specific Signage

Identity guidelines and additional fillable templates for creating your own unit-specific signage and documents are available on the [UChicago Forward Additional Resources page](https://goforward.uchicago.edu/additional-resources/) (https://goforward.uchicago.edu/additional-resources/).

Communications

[UChicago Communications Guidance for Leaders](#)

(<https://uchicago.box.com/s/3buu1m17ikxa0anv91cujbpo3ogchxvj>)

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C. Document Update Log

DATE	UPDATES
May 28, 2020	Published original version
June 11, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised guidance on quarantine • Revised guidance for restrooms • Added information about HVAC systems • Updated guidance on wearing face masks in private offices • Added information for units about ordering cleaning supplies • Added information about centrally led distribution of face masks to units • Reformatted guide in UChicago Forward template
June 15, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified information on 14-day quarantine • Clarified information on card readers • Replaced ramp up graphic with text for improved accessibility • Updated appendix toolkit links
June 24, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added section on classroom spaces • Updated information on visitors • Updated organization and table of contents to clarify location of travel and visitor information