

HR Guidance for Return to Work (Nov. 30-Dec. 31)

All units are expected to return to full on-site operations no later than Monday, Nov. 30. Supervisors should determine appropriate plans to transition all employees back to campus for a minimum of 20 hours per week in a safe manner that adheres to current COVID-19 safety protocols. To accomplish this goal, Auburn University Human Resources (AUHR) recommends that supervisors assess their staffing levels and operational needs and use the following guidelines to address potential issues they may encounter. **Note: This guidance does not apply to faculty.**

Addressing Office/Unit Concerns

The expectation is for all offices on campus or at any Auburn University designated worksite to be adequately staffed and fully operational at all times, with all full-time employees working a 40 hour workweek **of which at least 20 hours must be worked on-site.**

To ensure offices can achieve this goal, supervisors may need to **implement modified work arrangements** (following the guidelines below), when necessary to address issues within their units concerning employee safety, childcare and health concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Modified Work Arrangements

Modified work arrangements may include, but are not limited to:

1. Modifying work spaces to create a safer environment with proper physical distancing.
2. Allowing flexible or rotating full-time work schedules to:
 - a. limit the number of employees in the building at one time and/or,
 - b. allow employees to address COVID-related issues while continuing to work a full 40 hour week.
3. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes to reduce traffic in common areas.
4. Implementing a team strategy to include some percentage of time that may need to be worked remotely, rotated between team members in units or teams that cannot maintain proper physical distancing with on-site modified work space or schedule arrangements. If this is the case, **all employees should be required to work a minimum of 50 percent of the workweek (at least 20 hours) on campus or at a designated work site, unless the employee is granted an accommodation that permits them to work less than 20 hours on campus or at a designated work site.**

Modified work arrangement guidelines

1. All units must be sufficiently staffed on-site during their normal operating hours, so that students, parents, faculty, employees and the general public are served in a timely and satisfactory manner.
2. The decision to implement modified work arrangements should originate from the supervisor (*excluding disability accommodations), based on an assessment of the needs of the employee and the department.

** Employees with health conditions that may qualify them for a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should submit appropriate [accommodation request forms](#) to the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity at 844-4794 or via email to Kelley Taylor at taylokg@auburn.edu.*

Addressing Employee-Specific Concerns

The following guidance may be useful in addressing employee-specific concerns such as childcare, healthcare and safety related issues.

Childcare

Potential reasons for concern include, but are not limited to these:

- The child is currently being schooled from home and cannot begin in-person classes until January.
- After-school care is not available due to COVID-related closures.
- The child has been instructed to quarantine due to exposure at their school.

Additional Guidance

1. Modify work schedules to alleviate the employee's specific childcare needs while still allowing 40 hours per week to be worked on campus or an AU designated work site.
2. Approve intermittent periods of temporary remote work to address specific childcare needs. All employees would still be expected to work 40 hours per week with at least 20 hours per week worked on-site to the extent possible.
3. If an employee's child's school or childcare provider is closed due to COVID-19 **and the parent is unable to work (on-site or remotely)**, the parent may qualify for FMLA+ or EPSL during the time they are unable to work because there is no other suitable person available to care for the child.
4. If an employee's child is required to quarantine due to a school (or after-school) closure or a class-specific quarantine, EPSL, FMLA+ or ECAL may be available when:
 - The parent is unable to work on-site or remotely.
 - There is no other suitable person available to care for the child.
5. If the employee **is not** able to complete a full workweek (on-site or remotely), leave options that are available include FMLA+, EPSL, ECAL, sick or annual leave or comp time. Employees who are in leave without pay status the day before a holiday begins are not eligible for holiday pay.

Additional Reminders

As of Jan. 1, the **current** expectation is that everyone who is assigned to work on campus (or an AU designated work site) returns to work, and parents will be expected to make necessary arrangements for education and childcare that do not impact their ability to work on-site. The University will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on our community and reassess directives as deemed necessary should new developments arise. Ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff will always remain the University's top priority.

Bringing children to work is not allowed based on current AU policy and protocols.

<https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonChildrenintheWorkplace.pdf>

Health Concerns

Potential reasons for concern include, but are not limited to these:

- The employee's underlying health conditions place them at high risk for complications from COVID-19.
- The employee lives in a household with others who are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.

Additional Guidance

1. If an employee has a health condition that may qualify them for a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), they should submit appropriate [accommodation request forms](#) to the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity at 844-4794 or via email to Kelley Taylor at taylokg@auburn.edu.
2. If an employee has a family member living in the same household who is at higher risk for complications from COVID-19, they may complete an [Auburn University COVID-19 High Risk Household or Family Member Certification Form](#) (to be completed by the employee and healthcare provider). Their request will be reviewed by AUHR and the employee will be advised of appropriate recommendations.
3. If an employee is asked to self-quarantine because of COVID-19, and they are unable to work remotely, they may use EPSL or ECAL until Dec. 31, 2020.

Safety Protocols

Potential reasons for concern include, but are not limited to these:

- Workplace safety (the ability to properly physical distance, proper air ventilation and additional safety protocols).
- Moral concerns.

Additional Guidance

1. Facilities or Risk Management may be contacted to conduct a check of office space(s), to ensure that [recommended safety protocols](#) are in place and being properly followed.
2. Employees must conduct daily symptom monitoring through the GuideSafe app before reporting to work. Supervisors can ask to see an employee's "green screen" to ensure daily symptom monitoring is occurring.
3. Modified work arrangements as listed above should be considered if and when necessary and feasible. All employees would still be expected to work 40 hours per week with at least 20 hours per week worked on-site.
4. Employees should watch the [COVID-19 safety video](#) that was shared earlier this year.
5. Face masks or face coverings must be worn by all staff working on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., common work spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.).
6. Masks are not required in the following limited circumstances:
 - While alone in a confined room such as an office with the door closed (Note: does not include meeting rooms, break rooms or shared environments, including vehicles).
 - While alone in a vehicle, if the vehicle is not regularly shared with others.
 - Eating or drinking, while following safety guidance.
 - In open outdoor areas where social distancing is easily maintained.
7. Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. Where feasible, meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.).
8. Departments should assess open work environments, cubicles and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other coworkers and customers, such as:
 - Visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line.
 - One-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
9. Use of elevators should be limited where possible to avoid close proximity with others in a confined space. Those using elevators are required to wear a disposable face mask or face covering regardless of traveling alone or with others. Avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator.

Important Reminders

1. Supervisors should make sure that all Auburn University equipment that was removed from the work place to accommodate remote work is returned to campus and accounted for once the employee has returned to the office.
2. Supervisors should work with their IT representative to ensure that any assistance needed by employees to reconnect equipment upon returning to the work place is provided in a timely and efficient manner. This may require staggering reconnection times and dates for IT to have sufficient resources to accommodate the needs of the entire campus.
3. All guidance contained within this document is applicable from Nov. 30 – Dec. 31, 2020.