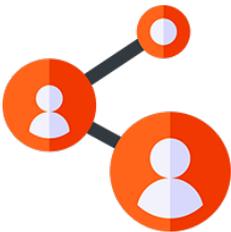


COVID-19: Remote Work Guidelines for Departments and Managers



Cornell Employees Working Remotely

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More Information

[University's Operating Status](#)

[University Coronavirus Updates](#)

Remote work can be helpful in urgent situations, allowing for continuity of operations. This guide outlines key considerations, best practices, and university guidance specific to COVID-19 workforce planning, including information that

may be different from the [Flexibility In the Workplace Policy](#).

Review the [COVID-19 Employee Guidance](#) for information regarding working during quarantine or isolation, illnesses in the workplace, and workers at higher risk.

Advanced planning for integrating remote work into a business continuity plan is key to a successful implementation. Suddenly switching employees to remote work with no clear communication, tools, or processes in place can be challenging for both managers and employees. During and after remote work implementation, consider what was learned and whether remote work can be leveraged on an ongoing basis in new and creative ways.

REMOTE WORK TIP SHEETS:

[For Everyone](#) | [For Managers](#) | [For Managers with New Team Members](#) | [For Families](#) | [For Technology](#)

Key Considerations Checklist



Priorities & Essential Work

Evaluate department/team priorities, considering customer/collaborator impact and feasibility of completing some or all of it remotely (with or without adjustments).



Ownership of Remote Work Plan

Managers and supervisors, in partnership with their college/unit leadership and HR, are responsible for the remote work plan for each department/team.



Timing & Preparation

The university will announce status changes, though departments and individuals may opt to leverage remote work sooner. Review the [Guidance for Employees](#) and "[Working During COVID-19 Guide for Employees](#)" to assist with your decision.

Creative ideas we've heard from university colleagues who are experimenting with staff coverage that reduces the number of individuals who are required to work on campus any given day while supporting operations:

- Consider alternating or rotating schedules for your team where possible and reevaluate this approach on a weekly basis. The idea is that, in general, team members could share on-site responsibilities but not all members would need to be on-site every day.
- Experiment with different schedules. If you try something one week that does not work for your team, adjust the following week.
- Practice remote work drills. Have boxes ready near desks and ask a couple people on the team to go remote without advance notice.



Remote Work Scope & Candidates

Determine who, based on job responsibilities, is able to work remotely. Can positions that do not traditionally lend themselves to remote work be temporarily modified to allow for its use (by focusing on other work elements such as online training, documentation, etc.)? The university encourages supervisors to afford maximum flexibility during this time to help minimize the spread of the illness.



Technology & Internet Connectivity

Identify who has a Cornell-issued laptop. For employees who do not, find out if a back-up laptop is available. If their only option is to use a personally-owned computer, laptop, or other device, they are still responsible for following all university

practices and policies to maintain security on their device. Verify internet connectivity at home - does the employee have wifi or ethernet? See *Technology* tab below for more tips.

- [Tools for Working Remotely](#)
- [CIT Laptop Information](#)

Contact Information

To the extent possible, compile cell phone and/or home phone numbers for all employees you supervise. Discuss how and with whom this information will be shared. Note: emergency contact information within Workday is visible to HR Representatives and administrative managers.

Remote Agreements & Expectations

Due to the fast pace of evolving health regulations and the anticipated wide use of remote work, employees and managers are not required to complete the university's [Flexible Work Agreement Form](#). Supervisors and managers are encouraged to discuss the agreement with the employee and confirm it in writing. At a minimum, the manager should send an email to the employee and the local HR rep with duration, agreed upon schedule, work deliverables, communication approach and expectations.

Schedule

Determine how schedules and availability will be known and communicated to colleagues, customers, and others.

Meetings

Determine what tools you will use will you hold meetings virtually. Identify which upcoming meetings can/should be rescheduled if necessary. Practice holding meetings remotely before increasing remote work use. See *Virtual Meetings* tab below for more tips.

- [Work Remotely with Zoom](#)

Collaboration/Communication

Determine what the preferred group communication and collaboration tools will be and ensure all team members have access. Determine how frequently you as a supervisor/manager will connect with your team members.

- [Tools for Working Remotely](#)

Time & Performance

Discuss with employees how time and performance will be managed. Once remote work begins, in general, focus on the output and the completion of deliverables when evaluating performance. Review the [Covid-19 Guidelines for Pay Practices](#) and discuss with employees relevant to their particular situation.

[tabs]

Agreements

Home Office Set-up

Cornell is not responsible for setting up home offices. While the university is striving to help employees work remotely, it may not be feasible if equipment and systems needed to conduct work are unavailable.

Local units may allow employees to take home computer peripherals such as monitors, keyboards, mice, and webcams as well as small furnishings that can be safely moved such as office chairs, footstools, etc. The local unit may also opt to purchase MyFi service for an employee. However, they are not required to do any of these things (unless connected to a disability accommodation).

Local units can decide what items they will pay for and/or allow to be taken home from the workplace as long as they are being consistent in the decision-making process and prioritizing necessary items for positions that are dependent upon them.

- [Ergonomics Tips for the Home Office - Creating Effective Work Spaces](#)(vide0)
- [Ergonomics Tips for Working at Home](#) (pdf)

Disability Accommodations

In general, [disability accommodations](#) made in the workplace may also be made for the home work environment. Due to the possible sudden and short-term nature of some remote work arrangements, the university may not be able to offer certain accommodations – for example, specific furnishings. When feasible, safe, and granted permission, an individual may transport small lightweight equipment home for the duration of their remote work arrangement (e.g. ergonomic keyboard, footstool, etc.). For guidance, contact Medical Leaves Administration at 607-255-1177 or wcds@cornell.edu

Schedule & Workload

Managers and employees should have realistic conversations about how much work can be conducted remotely. This may be about the amount of work available for the employee to do, or there may be limitations the employee is facing due to their home environment (e.g. children require care). When possible, consider reduced work options (part-time), or allowing for greater schedule flexibility (weekends, early mornings, and late evenings).

Documenting Agreements

Due to the fast pace of evolving health regulations and the anticipated wide use of remote work, employees and managers do not need to complete the university's [Flexible Work Agreement Form](#). However, managers are encouraged to discuss the agreement with the employee and confirm it in writing (e.g. email to the employee and the local HR rep), including:

- Approval to work remotely and duration of agreement
- Hours of work agreed upon and any flexibility with those hours
- Work responsibilities/areas of focus during remote work
- Communication expectations (with manager, team, and/or customers)
- If internet service (or other systems) become unavailable, how will the employee work or will they need to then use their paid time away

Remote Work Outside USA

Cornell is a U.S.-based employer and working remotely from a primary residence outside the United States is generally not permitted. Only for limited reasons (required on-site research, etc.) and for short durations does Cornell permit employees to work in another country. [Global Cornell](#) oversees such arrangements to assure compliance with the considerable legal, tax, and other employment-related obligations for both the individual employee and Cornell. If an employee changes work location, such change may also draw a need for different personal health care coverage, foreign worker's compensation insurance, and other licensing and registrations.

With consideration to the extraordinary circumstances our international students, faculty, and academic staff are facing with the pandemic, Cornell has put together a framework of conditions that if met will allow an individual to temporarily continue an appointment from his or her home country. Currently, Cornell is only able to support the exception for appointments which are critical to meeting our academic and research missions and for those individuals who meet all the criteria as outlined in the following guidelines. Supervisors should contact their local HR departments to determine eligibility for any of their workers who are impacted by travel restrictions, government-mandated stay-at-home orders, and or other government-imposed orders related to COVID-19.

- [Faculty and Academic Staff Appointments](#) (*NetID required*)
- [Graduate Student Assistantships](#) (*NetID required*)
- [Undergraduate Student Academic Support and Professional Degree Student Appointments](#) (*NetID required*)

For related immigration questions, please contact International Services via [email](#) or by [phone](#). Information can also be found on the [COVID-19 Immigration FAQ's](#) webpage.

Managing Teams

Trust is the foundation of a successful remote team, and remote work typically leads to increased productivity. However, remote work during a stressful time is not the same as long-term self-selected remote work. Managers need to manage expectations about productivity and start by trusting that every team member is working to the best of their ability during this time.

Managers should also schedule synchronous conversations with their teams, and one-on-ones as needed, to discuss these expectations and provide opportunities for team members to share their concerns.

Communicate News & Decisions

When changes are made to how, when, and where work is getting done, it can be challenging to ensure everyone is kept properly aware of news and any decisions that have been made. Consider how information will flow and what steps may be needed to limit gaps.

Evaluate Productivity

Managers shifting from seeing everyone at their desks working to not seeing anyone at all is a mindset change. A manager should clearly outline what the output expectations are from each team member and have routine check-ins (by email, phone, Zoom, etc.) to understand progress and challenges.

Managers Working Remotely

There may be situations where a manager is working remotely and managing fully remote staff or blended on-site and remote staff. The same principles of communication, performance management, etc. apply but will likely require added effort.

Health & Wellbeing

Speak to employees about managing their health and wellbeing, as outlined further in this document.

Technology/Data

See Tools for Working Remotely from Cornell IT

Equipment

Employees should follow the technology guidelines issued by their department. In general, employees are strongly urged to use a Cornell-owned computer, laptop, or other device when working remotely whenever possible. If their only option is to use a personally owned computer, laptop, or other device, they are still responsible for following all university practices and policies to maintain security on their device. Personally owned devices are not insured by Cornell. Employees are required to have their own internet and phone access established.

Cornell does not provide, or cover the cost of, personal internet/cellular services ([policy](#)) unless required to do so by the

applicable local labor law for employees who work outside of NYS. Employees should review their usage/data plan and speak with their provider to ensure they won't experience increased fees. See *Agreements* tab for more details on home equipment and furnishings.

Log-In Capabilities

What systems and accounts do onsite employees use and how will they access them remotely? E.g. Dual-Authentication Log-in if they typically use an office phone to authenticate. Some Cornell systems can only be accessed when employees are connected to the university campus network. When working remotely, employees can access these systems through a [CU VPN connection](#). Note that some departments also have departmental VPNs.

Collaboration Tools

Many tools are available and employees are encouraged to use those endorsed by Cornell IT. Commonly used ones include Zoom, Skype, OneNote, and Cornell Box. Visit [Cornell IT – Tools for working remotely](#) for more information.

Service Interruptions

Service (internet, phone, systems) may be interrupted due to weather or system demand. Some employees may be dependent on the internet for their cellular connection, depending on the cellular coverage where they live. Ensure you have established multiple ways of contacting employees and proactively discuss with the employee what they can work on if there are service disruptions – or if they will be required to not work.

See [Options for Poor Wi-Fi or Cellular Service](#)

Cornell Phone Lines

Employees can check voicemail left on their university phone numbers using AUDIX ([instructions](#)).

Phone forwarding service ([My Extension Everywhere](#)) is available from CIT. This service allows calls made to a Cornell phone number to be received by a personal cell or home phone number. This service must be requested in advance and has nominal fees. Once set-up, the employee may turn on/off the service as needed. Personal phone numbers remain private when using this service.

Confidential & Sensitive Data

Employees must adhere to the [sensitive and confidential data standards](#) issued by Cornell University regarding transporting or transferring/sending written or digital confidential data. Access to [CU VPN](#) may be required for the work of some employees. Cornell's [Secure File Transfer](#) service should be used to exchange sensitive and confidential information. Employees who do not have a Cornell-issued laptop and do not have home access to the VPN may upload necessary files (without sensitive or confidential data) to [Cornell Box](#) – and access those files from their home computer to conduct work.

See [Security Practices When Working from Home](#)

Zoombombing

We are all learning about [Zoombombing](#) and receiving guidance on how to prevent it (link below).

It's important to note the emotional impact these situations can have. Imagery of any kind that shows the violation of basic human rights (of adults or children) or targets a community is deeply troubling and can be traumatizing. Re-traumatization of victims of sexual violence, assault, and/or discrimination is also possible.

There is also a risk of inappropriate exposure to children who are in the home environment of the remote worker. If an event is intended a child audience, consider recording the program instead of having it live.

If a serious situation does occur (regardless of audience), do not pretend that it didn't and power through the meeting - or even advise participants to simply to look away. Rather, end the meeting swiftly. Report the incident to Cornell Zoom Security at zoomsecurity@cornell.edu.

Then, follow up with the participants to:

1. apologize for the abrupt ending;
2. indicate what steps are being taken to prevent reoccurrence;
3. express care and concern for the participants; and
4. offer mental health resources that are available.

(See [mental health resources for employees](#) and [mental health resources for students](#))

Of greatest importance - reduce the likelihood of it occurring again by committing to (and holding your team accountable for) complying with [security settings](#).

Meetings

Use Meetings Strategically

When a team is dispersed in many locations, the dept./manager typically cannot call a meeting at a moment's notice. Think through the meetings that are upcoming, what can be postponed, cancelled, or done virtually. Plan your meetings ahead of time and plan them carefully. While sharing information is important, don't let this be the sole purpose of your meetings. Organize strategic meetings to focus time together on activities that move the team forward, such as decision making, collaboration, and connection.

It is possible that leader, manager, and/or employee availability will be more limited than usual due to COVID-19 workforce planning, so keep this in mind when evaluating the necessity and urgency of meetings.

Consider practicing remote meetings, particularly with employees who do not generally work remotely. Urge patience of attendees, as employees unfamiliar with the platform and audio/video settings may have questions.

Arranging, Facilitating, & Participating in Meetings

Fully remote meetings tend to be easier to manage than blended on-site and virtual meetings. Consider which approach makes the most sense when designing a meeting.

If multiple people are required to be in attendance in one location, practice social distancing of at least 6 feet between each person.

Best practices:

- Add a [Zoom](#) option to all meetings proactively.
- Add a secondary host that can start the meeting in the event the host is running late or their availability has changed.
- Determine what information should be shared with participants in advance of the meeting, provide an agenda, and determine how decisions and follow-up will be communicate to those absent.
- Encourage participants to log in early and test their audio/video settings.
- Encourage participants to use their webcam to increase interpersonal communication and support those who rely on lipreading.
- Encourage participants to mute themselves to reduce background noise when they are not speaking. The host(s) can also mute participants.
- Announce who is in the room (if an on-site option is also available) and be clear about when the meeting has ended. Make sure to continuously check in with those who are remote to make sure they are included (e.g., "Does anyone online have any questions/comments?").
- For meetings where participation is essential, consider using the "raise hand" feature to help manage who will speak when. It can be difficult even with video to tell when someone is about to finish speaking, or is waiting to speak.

Using Video

When using video, be thoughtful about where you are participating from and the setup. For instance, what can individuals can see behind you, what noises might they hear from household members and pets, is ample lighting available, etc. If your

background isn't something you want people to see, you can use [Zoom's feature to choose a standard photo to use as your background](#) instead. Consider these [Cornell Zoom backgrounds](#).

Wellbeing

Encourage all employees, both remote and on-site, to care for their wellbeing. Remote employees should factor their wellbeing into their home office set-up by maintaining good posture, working in comfortable lighting, etc. Encourage employees to leave their workstation for 5 minutes of every hour – this helps circulation, eyesight, and other elements of wellbeing.

Employees who do not typically work remotely may experience challenges adjusting to a different environment, especially if they are accustomed to working very physically. Loneliness is also a common concern. Physical isolation at home combined with a feeling of work loneliness can be challenging for an employee. Use phone calls and video chats to increase interpersonal interaction.

Unplugging from work can be more challenging for remote workers. Encourage employees to unplug when their work is done and to focus on their self and family care.

Children and Other Dependents

The Cornell Flexibility In the Workplace Policy states that remote work cannot be a substitute for ongoing child care needs. In light of COVID-19, employees may use HAP time to care for healthy children during school or child care closures (an exception to existing policy). And, remote work may occur while dependents are present if their school or child care is closed and alternative care is unavailable, under the following guidelines:

- Cornell is not responsible or liable for the health and safety of your dependents while you are working remotely, or for your health and safety while you are delivering care to your dependents. It is up to the employee to determine whether work can be conducted safely.
- If a dependent is ill and requires ongoing attention, employees may need to use Health and Personal (HAP) time away from work, as needed. In light of COVID-19, HAP rules are being relaxed to allow for care of healthy children at home due to school or childcare closures. Nonacademic employees may also be covered for NY Paid Family leave, which provides paid leave to care for a covered family member's illness. Please visit <https://hr.cornell.edu/new-york-state-paid-family-leave> for more information.
- Employees are expected to determine what they can reasonably accomplish while dependents are under their care (whether healthy or ill), and the amount of time they expect to be able to work.

More Resources

Cornell Flexible Work Arrangements Consultations

- Cornell Work/Life in Human Resources – worklife@cornell.edu, 607-255-5298

Online Learning

eCornell's new on-demand offerings for staff include several lessons that will help you build and support a remote team. Working remotely is also a great time for your employees to participate in online learning for job skills, leadership skills, etc.

- *NEW* [eCornell On-Demand Lessons](#) – free for NetID-holding Cornell employees.
 - [View the lesson catalogue](#)
 - [Watch a YouTube video about On-Demand lessons](#)

If staff experience trouble when accessing this new service through eCornell, please contact the **Cornell Help Desk**

at helpdesk@cornell.com or by phone 1-800-801-0287 (from inside the US) or 1-607-330-3200 (from outside US).

- [LinkedIn Learning](#) – free for Cornell employees
- [SkillSoft](#) – free for Cornell employees
- [CULearn – Supervising@Cornell](#) – free for Cornell employees
- [eCornell Certificate Classes](#) - \$100 per class for Cornell employees

Technology & Collaboration Tools

- [Cornell IT – Tools for working remotely](#)
- [Cornell IT – Work remotely with Zoom](#)
- [Cornell Computer Purchasing](#)

Thriving Remotely

- [ProHabits](#): Sign up for free daily micro-actions to support working in remote and disconnected teams.

Remote Teaching

- [Cornell Center for Teaching Excellence](#)

Policies & Guidelines

- [Flexibility In the Workplace](#)
- [Remote Work Outside New York State](#)
- [Data Privacy, Security, and Handling of Sensitive/Confidential Data](#)

Working at Cornell Zoom Backgrounds

Level up your Zoom meetings with one of these Working at Cornell virtual backgrounds!

Note: *the text will appear in reverse on your screen image of yourself, but rest assured, it reads properly on everyone else's monitors!*

- [Learn how to use Zoom virtual backgrounds.](#)



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[Evening](#)

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