Supervisor Guidance for Returning Employees

Consistent with applicable public health guidance, Cornell policies, and EHS building and space protocols, we are planning for the gradual return of our staff to their on-site workspaces beginning this summer, with the goal of providing a fully in-person fall semester for our students. Consistent with Cornell’s Flexible in the Workplace policy, flexible work arrangements are permitted with decisions being made by the leadership within each college or unit.

Notifying employees of a change in status

It is recommended that supervisors provide at least one month notice to employees prior to a required change in their on-campus status or frequency.

Frame the conversation with an employee:

- The university is planning for a fully in-person fall campus.
- Colleges and units are making decisions for their own areas first and foremost based upon their organizational needs assessment.
- Employee’s position has been identified as one for which in-person presence and/or collaboration is essential to the successful achievement of unit priorities and outcomes.
- Equitable application of decisions is being considered; however, it’s important to note that similar positions may require different application based upon organizational needs of the college/unit.
- Share the target date for the change in on-campus status or frequency.
- Discuss with the employee questions/concerns about the change in status.

If variance is requested by an employee:

- What is the basis for their request?
- Is their performance at a level that would support such consideration?
- What thoughts, feelings, and concerns do they have?
- Acknowledge and provide resources:
  - Child & Adult Caregiving: WorkLife in Human Resources, worklife@cornell.edu, 255-1917
  - Medical & Disability Accommodations: Medical Leaves Administration, benefits@cornell.edu, 607-255-1177
  - Mental Health: Faculty and Staff Assistance Program, fsap@cornell.edu, 607-255-2673 and Eni Confidential Counseling Services, 1-800-327-2255

If variance is considered or approved:

- If offering continued flexibility to staff, will there be an end date to that flexibility?

Requesting on-campus permission for employees

As we repopulate the campus, it is important that employees be assigned (or reassigned) to a campus status that accurately represents their time on campus. If they are not previously approved to be on campus, this will activate Daily Check and place them in surveillance testing (unless they have submitted proof of being fully vaccinated through the university tool).

Individual or one-off changes may be requested by the employee through the Daily Check portal under “request to change your campus frequency”. Changes to college and unit populations impacting groups of employees should be coordinated.
through your college or unit local HR team.

Requirements of on-campus employees

Supervisors should familiarize themselves with these resources and also share the on-campus expectations and requirements with employees after they are notified of their change in on-campus status.

Guidance around employees’ wellbeing

Employees continue to experience a spectrum of thoughts, feelings, and concerns about COVID-19 and return to in-person work for variety of reasons.

In your communications:

- Acknowledge this spectrum
- Detail what’s been done/will be done to make things safer at work (using photos and descriptions of spaces and practices)
- Set expectations regarding health and safety
- Indicate who will serve as a point person for employees with safety concerns/questions

Consider a phased approach by encouraging employees to:

- Visit the workplace to experience the safety changes and bring in work materials.
- Work half days or 1-2 days a week onsite initially, gradually increasing over time.

Guidance for handling accommodations

All employees are expected to be available to perform the essential functions of their roles. Consistent with current policies and to the extent possible, the university, and its representatives, will provide assistance to those who have medical or personal concerns.

- Requests for medical, religious accommodations should be directed to the appropriate university office.
- Requests for accommodations that are not for medical or religious reasons should follow the traditional flexible workplace procedures.

Guidance around health and safety

EHS 2019 - Return to Campus Health and Safety Training COVID-19 covers most if not all health and safety requirements of working on campus.

Other resources include:

- Prevention & Care on the Cornell COVID-19 website
- Face Coverings & PPE on the Cornell COVID-19 website
- Enhanced Cleaning on the Cornell COVID-19 website

Arrival / Departure Control

Departments and building coordinators should identify usable building access points and coordinate arrival and departure times, as well as meal and break periods, of staff to reduce congestion during typical “rush hours” of the business day. Appropriately, staggering arrival and departures, and meal and break periods, will reduce personal interactions at building access points, hallways, stairs/elevators, kitchens, break rooms, etc. In the event a unit needs to adjust schedules, meal or break periods for employees represented by a union, please consult with Workforce Policy and Labor Relations prior to
Cornell Healthy Campus Signs

As buildings come back online, it is important that adequate and consistent signage is in place to ensure employees are aware of the health requirements associated with working and researching on-campus.

Signage is available to print.

If existing signage does not meet your unit’s specific needs, please contact askehs@cornell.edu who can work with you to develop a suitable sign.