



COLUMBIA

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IRVING MEDICAL CENTER

RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

A GUIDE TO RETURNING TO CUIMC
AFTER COVID-19 FOR MANAGERS

BY CUIMC Human Resources (Updated August 24, 2020)

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*If, after reading this guide, you have any further questions or requests, please email cumchr@cumc.columbia.edu or your [Senior Human Resources Business Partner](#). If you have any COVID-19 specific questions, please email covid19questions@cumc.columbia.edu.
As information evolves, the information below will be updated.*

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide managers at Columbia University Irving Medical Center with considerations and resources to help employees within their span of control with the transition back to the workplace following the modification of on-site reporting procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

Thank you for your commitment to Columbia University. Returning to onsite work is essential for CUIMC to continue our missions of providing the finest clinical care, cutting edge research, and educating the next generation of leaders in science and medicine. Your role as a manager is essential to a successful transition back to onsite work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created fundamental changes in the workplace. Although we would prefer to go back to business as usual, some of the changes brought on by the crisis may become permanent and require long-term adjustment. As faculty and staff begin to return to work onsite, we will ensure that we continue to support all staff with this transition.

Employees may be impacted differently during this pandemic and as a result, may have different needs as they transition back to the workplace. Some may choose to keep their personal lives private while at work and we may not know the extent an employee is struggling. In some cases, employees may continue to experience personal challenges or exhibit signs of grief or other forms of trauma. It is incumbent upon managers to create a safe space for their staff and help employees with the transition back to work.

Below are resources that will help you and your employees with the transition back to work such as workplace safety and benefits including child care.

CUIMC COVID-19 Resource pages

To keep abreast of COVID-19 University-related updates, please visit the following pages:

- covid19.columbia.edu
- humanresources.columbia.edu/covid19
- cuimc.columbia.edu/coronavirus-resource-center
- research.columbia.edu/covid/covidhub (uni required)
- fpo.cuimc.columbia.edu/covid-19-resources (uni required)

Return to the Workplace Considerations

For all return procedures, please click [here](#).

We must continue to operate subject to a maximum density on campus of 50%, the current threshold set by New York State.

Returning staff will be required to follow [all applicable protocols](#), including COVID testing, training, daily symptom self-check, adherence to [The Columbia Community Health Compact](#) and any other requirements.

All employees must complete the COVID-19 training before returning to campus. There are **two** versions of the training:

- 1) Researchers, including faculty, staff and students, must take [COVID-19 Training: Safe Research at Columbia](#)
- 2) Other Columbia personnel must take [COVID-19 Training: Working Safely at Columbia University](#)

Those faculty and staff who have not consistently worked on campus for an extended period of time must be tested for COVID-19 before returning to campus. Testing can be scheduled by calling 646-317-1999. See mandatory initial [COVID-19 testing](#)

Those who will be required under the plan to come to campus should be given at least three weeks' advance notice, except in limited situations, before they are expected to return. If an administrative staff member is not currently required to come to campus, the earliest the staff member would ordinarily be asked to do so is August 24, three weeks after the preliminary plan date of August 3. In a case where an employee is returning from a state included in the [NY State Travel Advisory](#) or from another country, the employee would be expected to meet the State quarantine requirements during the notice period.

Voluntary Furlough In response to the economic toll the COVID-19 pandemic has taken, Columbia University is offering certain employees the option to take a full or partial unpaid furlough - <https://humanresources.columbia.edu/content/take-leave-absence>.

Return to workplace considerations for managers will be based on University policies and procedures including the following:

Remote Work

- Continue to allow telecommuting where possible and/or staggering shifts to prevent congestion in the elevators and entrances.
 - Governor Cuomo's regional [Guidelines for Re-Opening New York](#) provides details relating to governmental procedures and advice
 - [Guide to Managing Remote Teams](#)

Employee Benefits

- Prepare to answer leave/accommodation requests and questions regarding childcare, [EAP](#), etc. (visit the [Back-up care](#) section below for more information)

Workplace Safety

- To mitigate the further spread and transmission of COVID-19, we want to emphasize strictly adhering to the advice listed below in the section titled "Workplace Safety Procedures." Additionally, we implore you to read the [CUIMC Space and Facilities Guidelines](#) very closely for guidance on keeping all spaces at CUIMC safe (e.g. offices, conference rooms, research labs, etc.).

- Continually check Environmental Health & Safety (first link below) and other applicable University resources as guidelines may change:
 - [Environmental Health & Safety Covid-19 Guidance](#)
 - [Latest Updates](#)
 - [Health Guidance](#)
 - [Facilities Management](#)
- [Additional information and guidelines](#) for outpatient practices are available from the Faculty Practice Organization.
- Provide Personal Protective Equipment ([PPE](#)), disinfectant spray or wipes, and hand sanitizer to employees and encourage employees to use the disinfectant for any surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, the mouse, counters, copiers, etc.).
- Upon arrival in a Columbia building, you should remove face covering and replace it with the University-provided disposable mask. This mask must cover both your nose and mouth and you can secure it under your chin. It should fit snugly on the sides of your face. Ensure that you are able to breathe easily and do not put it around your neck or uncover your nose. Additionally, you should wash your hands upon arrival.
- For assistance with how to don and doff Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) please see [this video](#) and [this job aid](#). Make sure staff familiarize themselves with this.
- When removing face coverings, do not touch eyes, nose or mouth or the front of the mask. Wash hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer.
- Promote proper [handwashing techniques](#), enforce workspace cleaning procedures (consider [signage](#) that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act) as a reminder of these practices as well as revised occupancy maximums for shared spaces. Make sure employees have information in case they are exposed e.g. employees should [contact their health care provider for assessment](#).
- Consistently wipe down all surfaces with disinfectant spray or wipes (e.g. the mouse, keyboard, doorknobs, counters, conference room tables, copiers, etc.). Additionally, only [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) should be used and you must follow the directions on the label as well as reference the product's contact time. You can also decrease your odds of contracting COVID-19 NOT touching one's own eyes, nose or mouth, especially after touching surfaces. Communicate that employees are to stay home if they feel ill. If they have been exposed, follow the exposure-response plan
 - If an employee confirms they have tested positive for COVID-19, handle the situation with sensitivity and confidentiality. Immediately alert your department HR contact (or your [Sr. HR Business Partner](#)) for guidance on how to comply with University procedures and relevant regulations (i.e. [CDC](#), HIPAA, etc.).
- Adhere to at [work social distancing guidelines](#) / rethink or reconfigure workspace and workstations. The CDC suggests:
 - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people
 - Do not gather in groups (if you must have a meeting, keep it small)
 - Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings
 - Social distancing is a proven and important preventative measure in battling the continued spread of COVID-19. If you cannot abide by the social distancing guidelines listed above and stay at full capacity, do not push the limits of your physical space. The safety and social distancing of employees is the first priority.

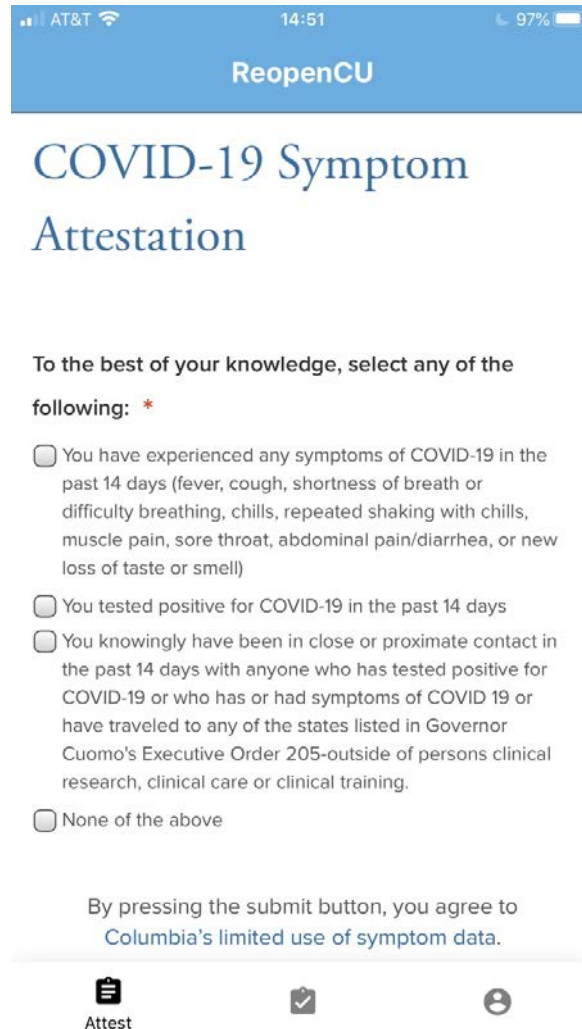
- Evaluate existing furniture layouts and configurations in medium to low-risk areas such as around office workstations to encourage physical distancing during working hours.
- Before you leave work, clean/disinfect workspaces, remove disposable mask in the trash, wash hands, and put your face covering on from home for your commute.
- If you have additional questions, please refer to [OSHA's guidance to returning to work.](#)

Transportation

- Due to the high demand for and limited supply of on-site parking, the CUIMC Parking Office cannot fill guest requests at this time. The CUIMC Parking Committee will only approve guest parking for Columbia University Irving Medical Center non-affiliates with a valid chart string. For more information see: [CUIMC Parking](#). **Personal Travel will not be reimbursed.**
- There are [various private parking facilities](#) located in the vicinity of the Medical Center that offer both daily and monthly parking that may better suit your commuting needs. Please note these parking lots are not affiliated with Columbia.
- The Fort Lee Shuttle will allow for departures from CUIMC and Ft. Lee about every 20 minutes instead of the every 40 minute effective 6/22/20. Please visit the [Columbia Transportation website](#) for information on the latest schedules and operational changes, including the safety measures implemented in response to COVID-19.

Return Procedures

- Phase employee return and if possible, take into account issues facing employees including childcare or eldercare needs and needs for medical accommodations. If possible, return those staff at a later date, consider alternate shifts, compressed workweek, etc.. Additionally, please adhere to [New York State guidelines](#) for a phased reopening.
- Staff may ask for a leave of absence or an accommodation. To learn more about COVID-19 Leaves of Absence and Accommodation requests visit [this website](#) which covers the following topics:
 - Sick leave/Medical leave
 - Absence to care for a sick family member
 - Absence to care for a child
 - Medical accommodation
 - Quarantine order from state or local health authority
- All staff are required to complete a symptom self-check every day before entering the work premises. This self-check is done through an app called "[ReOpenCU](#)" and can be downloaded through your phone's app store.
- Log into the app by using your uni and password. The Attest tab provides the daily symptom check. The questions come from the New York State Interim Guidance For Higher Education Research During the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency and can be read by clicking on the link at the bottom of the symptom check form. Please see the questions below that employees will be required to answer and submit.



- Your daily pass is available at all times on the Pass tab. Once you complete the symptom attestation you will receive a green pass to enter the building. If you do not receive the green pass, public safety officers will assess whether you can enter the building or not.
- On the Profile tab, the About button brings up a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about ReopenCU, including how your data is used and stored. The FAQ is also available at <https://reopencu.covid19.columbia.edu/faq>.

For staff who are unable to complete the attestation prior to coming to campus, kiosks are available in the lobbies of the following CUIMC buildings:

Allan Rosenfield Building
722 West 168th Street
New York, NY 10032

William Black Building
650 West 168th Street
New York, NY 10032

Effective Communication

- Keep employees abreast of [New York City guidelines](#) and ensure they are aware of their respective return to the workplace plan.
- Ensure directives are clear and simple so that employees understand them.

Guests and Deliveries

- Access for non-employees to any CUIMC space will be strictly limited.
 - Establish a notifications protocol for greeting outside guests.
 - Avoid bringing guests into any shared or common spaces.
- All guests and delivery vendors should be approved and notified in advanced that they must wear appropriate PPE when entering any CUIMC building.
 - All guests and vendors should be registered by emailing Ps-mc-guestaccessrequests@columbia.edu at least 24 hours in advance.
 - Include the date/time and building/floor the visitor/vendor will be visiting as well who should be notified when they arrive, including a phone number.
 - All guests/vendors must have a valid government ID and be wearing proper PPE in order to enter any CUIMC building

Any questions or conceners related space quidelines contact Faciities Management.

Back-up Care

As of July 1, the regular [Bright Horizons Back-up Care program](#) will again be in place. For eligible employees, back-up care pool of hours resets to 150 hours with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1 (plus 50 additional hours for infants up to one year old). If you want to learn more visit the [Adult and Elder Care website](#) from the Office of Work/Life or contact your [Sr. HR Business Partner](#).

Common Signs of Stress in Employees

The following *may* be indicators that an employee is struggling with their efforts to adjust to the workplace. Be alert to these potential signs:

- Isolation
- Comments suggesting the presence of suicidal ideation
- An exaggerated expression of shame or guilt
- Persistent lack of trust.
- Hypersensitivity to criticism
- Irritability or anger: verbalized or expressed through gestures.
- Difficulty establishing boundaries with others
- A tendency towards victimization
- Absenteeism or presenteeism
- Somatization: nausea, insomnia, headaches, loss of appetite or fatigue
- Decreased performance at work

Common signs of bereavement, grief, and loss

As described in the [CUIMC Coping with Grief – A Resource Guide](#), grief is a natural human adjustment process. If any employees display one or several of these signs below, we must communicate the availability of resources and benefits.

Physical Reactions

- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Upset Stomach
- Loss of appetite

Cognitive Reactions

- Confusion
- Lack of concentration
- Recurrent thoughts
- Intrusive memory (*re-experienced parts of the original trauma*)
- Hyper-vigilance

Emotional Reactions

- Anger and irritability
- Grief and sadness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Apprehension

Behavioral Reactions

- Emotional outbursts
- Avoidance of others
- Impaired work performance
- Increased alcohol consumption (or other substances)
- Decreased interested in usual activities

The Coping with Grief Resource Guide linked above offers several Columbia, New York Presbyterian (and other) resources for counseling, pastoral care, emotional support, etc. for all CUIMC employees. All individuals grieve and respond to trauma in different ways and on different timelines. The best thing to do is to communicate that you are available to your staff if/when they are ready and willing to discuss their emotions and experiences as well as provide them with the [necessary resources](#).

What managers can do

Managers play a key role in helping their team members successfully reintegrate into their roles. Below are actions managers can take to achieve this goal:

- **Contact employees before their return to work.** An employer may avoid contacting a worker who has experienced a traumatic event, believing that it is more respectful to stay out of their private life.
- **Meet with the employees on during their first day back at work.** This meeting should be private and confidential. It is important not to avoid employees, nor underestimate the impact the crisis may have had on them.
- **Be attentive to employees' *personal* needs.** Experiencing a traumatic event can harm an individual's sense of competence and security. Being empathetic, transparent, and genuine can help employees' safely address these concerns
- **Have a reintegration plan.** Hold a "reorientation" session to reconfirm roles and responsibilities and set a flexible plan for what can be accomplished based on what they believe they can achieve in the weeks ahead and work unit needs. Revisit the plan regularly and make adjustments where needed.

What managers should avoid

- **Do not try to force information from your employees.** This could result in anger, distrust, and emotional distance. Waiting until someone is ready to handle the situation will allow for more open and honest communication.
- **If your employee tells you that they do not want to talk about their circumstance, be respectful of their wishes.** When your employee is ready to seek support and talk with co-workers, Let the employee do this based on their own timeline and readiness.
- **Do not make the employee's grief about you.** It is natural to want to empathize with a co-worker especially if you have experienced similar trauma. However, your offering of unsolicited advice may not be what the employee needs in the moment.
- **Do not assume there is one universal way to grieve or respond to trauma.** At CUIMC we are proud of our cultural diversity and celebrating it through our [Employee Resource Groups](#). It is important to respect how each employee chooses to grieve.

What to do if an employee's performance is impacted

Policies related to respecting an employee's privacy and offering resources related to grief, trauma, or the EAP are required regardless of the situation. If an employee's performance begins to suffer and continues to decline, gently start a dialogue about their performance and ask what you can do as a manager to assist them. As the situation progresses, follow the normal guidelines related to privacy until the employee is ready to seek help, request an accommodation, or their performance begins to improve. If the pattern of poor performance continues and you reach a decision that action must be taken, contact your [Senior HR Business Partner](#) for next steps.

Recognition and remembrance

As President Lee Bollinger succinctly wrote, "We have lost family members, neighbors, and now at Columbia, we have lost valued employees and one of our own students. Of course, the mortality rate nationally and globally is staggering, but the shock is always greater when the losses occur within your own home and community." You can honor your colleagues, family, and friends who passed away as a result of COVID-19 by:

- Moments of silence in the Department
- A memory wall to record funny and sentimental anecdotes that remind you of the deceased
- Staff check-ins with affected employees by peers and managers
- Meetings to memorialize the deceased by discussing how much they meant

If your staff asks for your support resources

- [Well-Being Programs and Services](#) and [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Emotional Wellbeing Resources](#)
- [CopeColumbia](#) (to request a group, email Aaron Vieira at av2548@cumc.columbia.edu)
- [CUIMC Coping with Grief – A Resource Guide](#)
- [Discover Your Benefits](#) (offers many coping resources offered by Columbia)
- [Mental Health Support New Yorkers](#) (facilitated by the New York City Mayor's office)
- [Employee Resource Groups at CUIMC](#)
- [Mental Health/Emotional Support Resources for Co-workers – Articles and Tip Sheets](#)
- [COVID-19 Training Working Safely at Columbia University](#) (audience: all employees)

- CUIMC webinars:
 - [Key Principles of Leading in a Crisis](#) (uni required)
 - [Maintaining the Mission and Morale During a Crisis](#) (uni required)
 - [Communicating During a Crisis](#) (uni required)
 - [Crisis Decision-making](#) (uni required)
 - [Moving Forward: The Leadership Challenge Ahead](#) (uni required)

Summary

Returning to onsite work is essential for CUIMC to continue our missions of providing the finest clinical care, cutting edge research, and educating the next generation of leaders in science and medicine. We must ensure that a return to the workplace is both a physically and emotionally safe endeavor for all employees. This guide should equip you with a tailored approach to handle employees who may be grieving, coping with trauma, or in need of benefits information and other resources. The information provided above should help you plan for transitioning back into office life successfully. If you have questions please contact your Department Administrator, Departmental HR representative, or the CUIMC HR [Senior HR Business Partner](#).