



COLUMBIA

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IRVING MEDICAL CENTER

# RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

A RESOURCE GUIDE TO RETURNING TO  
CUIMC AFTER COVID-19

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](mailto: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](mailto:covid19questions@cumc.columbia.edu).  
As information evolves, the information below will be updated.*

## Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide staff at Columbia University Irving Medical Center with resources to help 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.

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. Once you have returned to the workplace, CUIMC HR will continue to support and assist you with this transition. Below are resources that will help you 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](https://covid19.columbia.edu)
- [humanresources.columbia.edu/covid19](https://humanresources.columbia.edu/covid19)
- [cuimc.columbia.edu/coronavirus-resource-center](https://cuimc.columbia.edu/coronavirus-resource-center)
- [research.columbia.edu/covid/covidhub](https://research.columbia.edu/covid/covidhub) (uni required)
- [fpo.cuimc.columbia.edu/covid-19-resources](https://fpo.cuimc.columbia.edu/covid-19-resources) (uni required)

## Workplace Safety

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](#)

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.).

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 Procedures**

- 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. (See screenshot below.)



# COVID-19 Symptom Attestation

To the best of your knowledge, select any of the following: \*

- You have experienced any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, sore throat, abdominal pain/diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell)
- You tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- You knowingly have been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID 19 or have traveled to any of the states listed in Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 205-outside of persons clinical research, clinical care or clinical training.
- None of the above

By pressing the submit button, you agree to Columbia's limited use of symptom data.



- 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.

## Workplace Safety Procedures

- **Stay home if you feel ill** and [contact your healthcare provider for assessment](#).
- If you do test positive for COVID-19, you must immediately alert your department HR, [Leave Management](#), and Workforce Health and Safety during regular business hours at [\(212-305-7590\)](#) and/or New York Presbyterian's Workforce Health and Safety hotline at 646-NYP-WHS0 (646-697-9470) from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- 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.

- Consider virtual or remote interface with regular visitors where feasible.
- [Proper handwashing](#) is necessary and hand sanitizer should be utilized as a stopgap before the sink.
- For assistance with how to don and doff your Personal Protective Equipment ([PPE](#)) please see this video: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/400247789> and [this job aid](#). 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.
- Adhere to at [work social distancing guidelines](#). 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.
- 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.
- 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.

### 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-questaccessrequests@columbia.edu](mailto:Ps-mc-questaccessrequests@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

### **Work is likely to change**

There is wide agreement among experts that jobs and the nature of work are likely to change. These changes have begun and are expected to accelerate as a result of CUIMC's responses to COVID-19. They include an increase in remote work, even more use of technology, more effort devoted to process redesign, and skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and interpersonal communication.

Below are CUIMC resources to help you develop these skills as you re-enter your roles:

- [CUIMC Learning and Development Courses](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [Columbia University Professional Development Offerings](#)

Depending on your employment status, you may be eligible for tuition reimbursement and to take classes that are relevant to your work. To learn more visit the Tuition Program Benefits website [here](#). In addition, a large number of free on-demand programs on a wide range of skills are available through sites like [edx](#) and [Coursera](#).

### **Columbia University Benefits**

#### **Backup 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](#).

#### **Leave of Absence and Accommodation Requests**

To learn more about COVID-19 Leaves of Absence and Accommodation requests visit [this website](#) it 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 the State

## Summary

Thank you, again, for your commitment to Columbia University. We hope this guide will provide you with the resources necessary to safely return to the workplace. As discussed in this guide, the way in which we perform our work may change to varying degrees, but we hope that this guide better equips you with the resources needed to adapt, lead, and thrive upon returning to the workplace.

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## **Employee Assistance Program**

The [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) is a network of free or discounted services to support your personal success and help with everyday challenges. Humana is the EAP provider and featured resources include:

- Legal, Mediation and Financial Consultation
- Counseling Services for you and your dependents
- Life Coaching

## **What colleagues can do**

In addition to managers, colleagues can have a significant impact on the return to work of someone who has experienced a traumatic event. Below are some specific things colleagues can do to support each other:

- **Connect:** When a person returns to work, do not be afraid to ask how they are doing. Re-establish rapport by sharing information as appropriate.
- **Be available.** Balance listening with providing support. When providing support, be clear about your motivation, check to make sure the person wants input, and make sure that the advice you give is aimed at helping the other person.
- **Don't take emotions personally.** Individuals have different ways of processing and expressing their personal experience with the crisis. They may behave differently toward you than before the crisis.
- **Be aware that recovery can take a long time.** Although most people are sympathetic toward an employee in the weeks or months following the traumatic event, they may continue to show signs of distress long after. This is something colleagues and managers should be mindful of.
- **Be reassuring.** Communicate that you value your work relationship.

## **Grief and trauma**

COVID has had tragic impacts on many of us personally and many of those we work with. As described in the [CUIMC Coping with Grief – A Resource Guide](#), grief is a natural human adjustment process triggered by loss. The bereavement guide above offers resources for counseling, pastoral care, emotional support, etc. for all CUIMC employees. Additionally, 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.

## **Recognition and remembrance**

There are ways within your department or unit that you can honor your colleagues', family, and friends who passed away as a result of COVID-19.

- Moments of silence in the Department
- A memory wall to record funny and sentimental anecdotes Staff check-ins with affected employees by peers and managers
- Meetings to memorialize the deceased by discussing how much they meant or how they changed you/made you laugh
- Writing letters to your loved ones recording things that you wish you could have said

## Other Resources

- [Well-Being Programs and Services](#) and [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- [Emotional Wellbeing Resources](#)
- [CopeColumbia](#)
- [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 \(audience: all employees\)](#)

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If you have any further questions, please consult with your School, Department Head, Department HR, and/or PI for specific issues and additional details