



## **Human Resources – COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

The safety and wellbeing of all community members remains UVM’s highest priority. The University is closely monitoring the rapidly evolving situation with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and is actively working to plan and prepare for the potential impact of COVID-19. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) below are intended to provide easily accessible guidance for employees and supervisors on a range of human resource topics related specifically to COVID-19.

*The language used in this document should not be construed as creating a contract between UVM and any employee. At any time, the University reserves the right to modify, change, suspend, or cancel all or any part of the policies, procedures, and programs described herein. When the University develops new or modifies existing policies, procedures and programs, it will notify members of the University Community as soon as possible.*

This page will be regularly updated as more information becomes available. Last updated March 12, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. Please note that the evolving nature of this situation requires our flexibility; this is a working document and it may be edited as needed.

### **General Questions**

**Q1: Where can I find information about the University’s response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)?**

**A1:** All campus communication related to COVID-19 can be found [here](#) on the Office of Emergency Management’s website. This includes general information about COVID-19 and answers to questions about health, wellness and prevention.

**Q2: When can I return to work if I had COVID-19, Influenza or another contagious-illness?**

**A2: If you are feeling unwell and/or showing signs of illness, you should not come to work.** Employees should follow the recommended guidelines issued by the CDC and the Vermont Department of Health. Currently, the CDC recommends that employees not return to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F / 37.8° C), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants).

**Q3: I meet with people frequently as part of my job responsibilities. What should I do if I suspect someone is showing symptoms of illness?**

**A3:** You should encourage all individuals to practice cough and sneeze etiquette (cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve), to wash hands often with soap and water and to regularly use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

If you observe a co-worker showing symptoms of illness, you can encourage them to talk to their supervisor about going home if they are ill and/or you can talk to your own supervisor about your observations. Please be cautious about making assumptions and avoid words and actions that could be viewed as stigmatizing or discriminating.

### **Health Care Coverage**

**Q4: Will my UVM-sponsored healthcare plan cover a test for COVID-19?**

**A4:** The University's health care plan will cover COVID-19 testing performed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), or a laboratory approved by CDC or VDH, with no co-payment, coinsurance, or deductible requirements. This coverage includes in-network provider office or urgent care visits and emergency services visits to test for COVID-19. If in-network providers are unavailable to conduct testing for COVID-19, the health care plan will cover out-of-network testing on the terms outlined above. For more detailed information on the terms of coverage of the University's health plan, please visit this [page](#).

**Q5: What assistance is available to me to help cope with the emotional impact of a COVID-19 outbreak?**

**A5:** The University provides employee assistance counseling through InvestEAP. Counselors can be reached 24 hours a day/7 days a week at 802-864-3270 and through their website at <https://www.investeap.org> (password: UVM). Their services are available to all UVM employees and their family members. InvestEAP will remain available even in a Vermont-declared state of emergency.

### **Telework, Leaves, Sick Time, and Time Off**

**Q6: If I need to self-quarantine for 14 days, will I need to use my accrued leave time?**

**A6:** Yes, if you need to self-quarantine, and your job does not lend itself to working remotely, you will be required to use accrued leave to cover the time away from work. If you have exhausted all forms of accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time), UVM will allow you to go into a sick time deficit of up to ten additional days for purposes of a self-quarantine. If you go into a sick time deficit, you will not accrue any further sick time until the deficit is paid back. UVM reserves the right to recoup any remaining sick time deficits from the final paycheck of employees who terminate before they regain a positive sick time balance. Alternatively, UVM will grant unpaid time to an employee who has no accrued leave time but needs time off to self-quarantine.

**Q7: If daycare providers or PK-12 schools in the area are closed and I need to care for my children so I cannot report to work, what are my options?**

**A7:** Speak with your supervisor to determine if your job responsibilities are compatible with working from home. If they are, and if your situation at home enables you to telecommute effectively, your supervisor may allow temporary telecommuting arrangements to be put in place. For employees who cannot work from home, you may request to use accrued paid time off, such as accrued sick or vacation time. Alternatively, please speak to your supervisor about the possibility of using unpaid leave. Your supervisor may contact Human Resource Services (HRS) for assistance. You may not bring your children to work with you.

**Q8: I am afraid of getting infected and do not want to come to work. What are my options?**

**A8:** Generally, if you are not sick, you should report to work and practice respiratory, cough, and sneeze etiquette, wash your hands often with soap and water and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Employees requesting telecommuting as a disability accommodation must follow the procedures set out in the Disability Accommodation Policy for Employees and Applicants for Employment.

**Q9: I do not have any accumulated leave balances, I am unable to telecommute, and I need to stay home due to illness, self-isolation or quarantine requirements, or active care of others due to COVID-19. What should I do?**

**A9:** Because we are in the midst of a declared pandemic, if you have exhausted all forms of accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time), UVM will allow you to go into a sick time deficit of up to ten additional days for illness, to meet self-isolation or quarantine requirements, or for the active care of others because of disruptions related to COVID-19. If you go into a sick time deficit, you will not accrue any further sick time until the deficit is paid back. UVM reserves the right to recoup any remaining sick time deficit from the final paycheck of employees who terminate before they regain a positive sick time balance. Alternatively, you may request unpaid time off.

**Q10: Does my supervisor need to approve my request to telework if there is a COVID-19 outbreak?**

**A10:** Employees cannot unilaterally decide to telework. Employees must work with their supervisors to determine if telecommuting is compatible with the employee's job responsibilities, and if so, to put in place a temporary teleworking arrangement.

### **Information for Supervisors**

**Q11: What is the University's policy regarding allowing employees to temporarily telework at this time?**

**A11:** If an employee cannot report to work for reasons related to COVID-19, supervisors must determine whether or not telecommuting is compatible with the employee's job

responsibilities. The University's policy regarding [Telecommuting](#) includes helpful information about when telework is appropriate, with the understanding that during this time of uncertainty, supervisors may be more flexible about approving a temporary telework arrangement. For example, telework arrangements may be approved for non-exempt employees as long as supervisors ensure that employees adhere to laws related to tracking hours worked and the payment of overtime. Supervisors should complete a [Teleworking Agreement](#). Supervisors retain the ability to terminate the Teleworking Agreement at any time.

If telecommuting is requested as a reasonable accommodation for reasons related to the employee's disability, the employee must follow the procedures to request an accommodation set out in the Disability Accommodation Policy for Employees and Applicants for Employment.

**Q12: One of my employees has asked to wear a facemask when meeting with other people. How do I respond?**

**A12:** The CDC has not recommended the use of facemasks for healthy individuals trying to protect against COVID-19. However, if an employee would like to wear a facemask when meeting with other people it is their choice to do so.

**Q13: One of my employees called out sick, but does not have any available paid leave time. What should I do?**

**A13:** Employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or who are subject to a self-quarantine based on CDC or Vermont Department of Health guidance, must not report to work. If an employee has exhausted all forms of accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time), UVM will allow them to go into a sick time deficit of up to ten additional days of paid sick time for purposes of a self-quarantine or because the employee is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Alternatively, UVM will grant unpaid time to an employee who has no accrued leave time but needs time off to self-quarantine or because the employee is experiencing signs of COVID-19.

### **Active Search Processes/Recruitments**

**Q14: I am helping my unit with an active search process. What should I do to mitigate the impact of the outbreak on this process?**

**A14:** Talk with the search committee chair and/or hiring manager about conducting interviews via the university's "Microsoft Teams" platform to limit unnecessary air travel and visits to campus. If a final campus visit is necessary and COVID-19 is widespread, you should also talk with the chair/hiring manager about whether it is possible to delay the visit until incidents subside.

**Q15: My unit is actively recruiting for open positions. Should we continue to actively recruit during this time or put these processes off until things begin to return to**

**normal?**

**A15:** This depends on the business needs of your unit and evolving circumstances. At the present time, the university is open and operating.