



The University of Vermont

Date: November 18, 2020
To: UVM Community
From: Jes Kraus, Chief Officer for Human Resource Services
RE: Guidelines for Return to Work/Telework after Thanksgiving and for Spring 2021

This year, many employees (both faculty and staff) moved from working onsite at UVM facilities to temporary remote work arrangements due to COVID-19. Allowing reasonable flexibility for employees to adjust to temporary telework arrangements and other work-related modifications proved to be a crucial part of our success this semester.

As we approach the holidays, we have received some questions from employees about what to expect once the students leave for Thanksgiving break, especially since classes will not resume on campus until February. As a follow-up to Vice President Gary Derr's recent [communication](#) to faculty and staff, UVM will continue to be open for business; however, the number of students, faculty, and staff on campus will be greatly reduced and remote work is highly encouraged wherever possible. With the recent rise of COVID cases in the state, we are now encouraging units to shift operations to remote work starting Saturday, November 28 rather than December 12. Of course, there are some jobs that are simply not conducive to remote work, and the business needs of each college or business unit will ultimately determine whether and to what extent remote work is permitted.

Supervisors and employees engaged in remote work should review the guidelines below, which remain in place and pertain to all University employees:

- **Remote work requires supervisor and dean/department head approval.** Employees do not need to submit updated or new telecommuting plans, but they must obtain written approval from their supervisor before making any changes to their schedule or work location. Any employee transitioning to working entirely remotely should submit [a telecommuting plan \(pdf\)](#) through their supervisor to their dean or vice president for approval. For additional information or questions, contact HRSINFO@uvm.edu. As noted above, some jobs at UVM are not suitable for remote work.
- **The University's paid-time-off policies continue to apply to employees who are unavailable to work while working remotely.** Employees must continue to report time in PeopleSoft (or Krono as appropriate), and supervisors should continue to review exception time for their direct reports as applicable. Detailed information and forms related to leaves and time-off can be found on the COVID-19 Employee Information [web page](#).
- **Establish parameters and expectations for work.** All employees must still work their

“normal” (37.5 or 40 hours, as applicable) work week; however, supervisors should allow reasonable flexibility with respect to when employees get their work done. Supervisors should continue to set deadlines and work schedules for their employees. They should specify clear expectations about communication during remote work, including the use of particular software (such as Microsoft teams), and identify any necessary equipment and supplies needed.

- Establish “core” hours when employees must complete work. Employees who are able to do so should maintain their normal hours, e.g., 8:00-4:30. However, supervisors can and should have flexibility with respect to when employees get their work done, as long as it is consistent with University business needs. For example, a supervisor may require that all work be completed between 6:00 AM and 6:00 PM, but with flexibility as to the actual hours worked during that time.
 - Establish clear expectations of times when employees must be immediately responsive to calls and emails.
 - Non-exempt employees may not work more hours than their normal daily (7.5 or 8 hour) schedule. Except in extreme circumstances, as directed by a supervisor in advance, non-exempt employees who are teleworking are not eligible for overtime.
 - Non-exempt employees must track their specific hours worked on a daily basis and report them weekly, and supervisors should carefully review hours worked before approving. Exempt employees must report any exception time. Standard procedures for requesting time-off should continue to apply.
- **Supervisors must continue to engage and communicate regularly with the people who report to them.**
 - Establish a regular check-in schedule with direct reports.
 - Continue regularly-scheduled meetings over the phone, or through Microsoft Teams.
 - Articulate clear procedures regarding check-in times and hours of availability.
 - **Needs will change as the situation evolves.** Supervisors and their direct reports will need to remain in close communication while working remotely. Teleworking arrangements established under COVID-19 are expected to be temporary, and a general communication to campus will direct all teleworking employees to return to their normal worksites at some point in the future. However, the University reserves the right to rescind approval for an employee to telework at any time.

Additional information and guidance about teleworking, leaves of absence, time reporting, and more, is available on Human Resource Services’ COVID-19 Employee Information web page: <https://www.uvm.edu/hrs/covid-19-employee-information>.