

Employee FAQs (updated 4/1/2021)

Q1: Where can I find information about the University's response to COVID-19?

A1: All UVM communication related to COVID-19 can be found on the University of Vermont's [Return to Campus website](#). This includes general information about COVID-19 and answers to questions about health, wellness, and prevention for students, faculty, and staff. Human Resource-specific COVID-19 information for employees can be found on the [COVID-19 Employee Information website](#) maintained by Human Resource Services.

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 an illness that may be contagious, you should not come in to work. Employees must follow the recommended guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Vermont Department of Health. Currently, the CDC recommends that employees not return to work until at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery. Recovery is defined as the resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); additionally, at least 7 days must have passed since symptoms first appeared. Note to supervisors: To avoid unnecessary medical visits and additional strain on Vermont's healthcare system, employees should NOT be asked to produce a physician's certificate before returning to work.

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 coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve), to wash hands often with soap and water, and to regularly use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If you observe a coworker 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.

Q4: One of my supervisees reported that they have tested positive for Covid-19. What do I need to do?

A4: Please adhere to the following guidance:

1. Instruct them to remain home, isolate according to https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-chart-observation-isolation-quarantine_final.pdf, and follow guidance from their health care provider and contact tracers.

2. Consult: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID-19-What-employers-should-do-if-their-employee-tests-positive.pdf> for latest information from Vermont Department of Health (VDH).
3. If they tested through the Center for Health and Wellbeing (CHWB) or the UVM testing center, CHWB will be in contact with them to do contact tracing and determine if any location on campus needs to be cleaned. CHWB will pass this information on as needed. Please do not attempt to do contact tracing or cleaning on your own.
4. If they did not test through the CHWB, please have them fill out the [employee reporting form](#). This will notify CHWB to notify the appropriate teams for additional cleaning or to take other action. VDH will initiate contact tracing independent of UVM – this may take a few days.
5. Contact Labor & Employee Relations (uvmler@uvm.edu) to discuss leave options, etc. Recognize that employees have a certain expectation of privacy related to their health. Information should only be shared on a strict need-to-know basis.
6. For general COVID-19 employee related questions, please refer to the [Employee Guide for Returning to Campus](#). Contact uvm.strong@uvm.edu or (802) 656-1010 if you have questions.

Q5: Will my UVM-sponsored healthcare plan cover a test for COVID-19?

A5: The University’s healthcare 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 copayment, 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 the [Benefits page on the Human Resource Services website](#).

The University is pleased to offer optional on-campus testing for COVID-19 to UVM employees (faculty and staff) who will be working on site at a UVM facility. Testing will be done without charge to those using it. For more information, see the memo issued to employees, “[On Campus COVID-19 Testing for Employees](#).” For the most up-to-date hours for on campus COVID testing, visit the [COVID-19 Information and Service Center website](#).

Q6: What assistance is available to me to help cope with the emotional impact of COVID-19?

A6: 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 www.investeap.org (password: UVM). InvestEAP’s services are available to all UVM employees and their family members. InvestEAP will remain available even in a Vermont-declared state of emergency.

Q7: If I need to quarantine, will I need to use my accrued leave time?

A7: If you need to quarantine, and your job does not lend itself to working remotely, you may use any form of accrued leave time available (e.g., sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time) to cover the time away from work. However, if the quarantine period is due to leisure travel, you may not use sick time. In addition, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides up to ten days of paid sick leave (up to a maximum of \$511/day) for full-time employees who are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. (For more information about the FFCRA, see the Answer to Question 10.) **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

If you have exhausted all forms of accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time), as well as paid leave under the FFCRA, UVM will allow you to go into a sick time deficit of up to 10 additional days for purposes of a self-quarantine for COVID-19 related illness, care, or testing. If you go into a sick time deficit, that deficit must be paid back through future accruals. 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.

No matter what form of paid or unpaid leave you elect, please speak with your supervisor to make them aware of your situation, and get information on how to report your leave use.

Employees who worked on campus within 14 days of first exhibiting symptoms and are known or presumed to have COVID-19 because they are sick with COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or have been directed by their doctor or the health department to stay home, should also complete [UVM's COVID-19 tracking form](#).

Employees working remotely for 14 calendar days or more before exhibiting symptoms do not need to complete UVM's COVID-19 tracking form, but they still need to follow Human Resources' policies for reporting exception time when they are unable to work for COVID-19 related reasons.

Q8: My children's daycare provider and/or PK-12 school is closed and I need to care for my children so I cannot report to work. What are my options?

A8: 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 telework effectively, your supervisor may allow temporary teleworking arrangements to be put in place, and you should complete a [Teleworking Agreement](#).

Employees who cannot work from home may request to use any form of accrued paid leave (i.e., sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time). NOTE: Employees may use up to 40 hours of sick time per calendar year to care for a family member because a school or business where that individual is normally located during the employee's workday is closed for public health or safety reasons.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides full-time employees up to twelve weeks of paid leave at 67% of their salary (up to a maximum of \$200/day) to care for children whose schools or daycare facilities have closed due to COVID-19. For the first two weeks (10 days) of this leave, the employee must first use any form of accrued paid leave, {V0030488.1}

Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) under the FFCRA, or take 10 days of unpaid leave. **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

Employees who either have or will exhaust all forms of paid leave and FFCRA leave should speak to their supervisor about the possibility of using unpaid leave. Supervisors should contact Human Resource Services for assistance.

Employees may not bring their children to work.

No matter what form of paid or unpaid leave you choose to use, speak with your supervisor to make them aware of your situation, and either request a leave of absence or discuss a flexible working arrangement.

Q9: I am an essential employee and have been directed to come to work on campus. I am afraid of being infected and do not want to come to work. What are my options?

A9: Employees who prefer to not work should contact their supervisor to request to use their own leave accruals, or to request unpaid leave. Essential employees are needed to report to work; in the absence of sufficient backup, leave requests under these circumstances may be denied.

Q10: 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?

A10: From April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides eligible employees the following benefits:

Emergency Paid Sick Leave

An employee is eligible for Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) if the employee is unable to work or to telework because the employee:

- is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- has been advised by a healthcare provider to quarantine due to COVID-19 symptoms;
- needs to obtain a medical diagnosis or receive care related to COVID-19 symptoms;
- has to care for or assist an individual who is under quarantine or is subject to a quarantine order for COVID-19; or
- must care for a child if their school or place of care is closed or unavailable due to COVID- 19.

UPDATE: Effective April 1, 2021, the following have been added as reasons for taking EPSL:

- The employee is obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination;
- The employee is recovering from any illness related to receiving the vaccine; or
- The employee is seeking or waiting for test results or a medical diagnosis for COVID-19.

Beginning April 1, 2021, full-time employees may receive up to 80 hours of EPSL, regardless of whether they used any or all of their previous EPSL entitlement. Part-time employees are eligible for a number of hours equal to the number of hours they work, on average, over a two-week period. Subject to certain maximums, EPSL is paid at the employee's regular rate of pay.

Public Health Emergency Leave

An employee who has worked for at least 30 days is eligible for up to 12 weeks of job-protected Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL) if the employee is unable to work (or telework) due to a need to care for a child under 18 years of age, if the child's school or place of care has been closed, or the childcare provider is unavailable, due to a public health emergency.

The first 10 days of PHEL are unpaid, although an employee may elect to substitute another form of available paid leave for those days. The remaining 10 weeks of PHEL will be paid at two-thirds of the employee's usual pay based on the employee's regular work schedule, up to \$200 per day.

Because we are in the midst of a declared pandemic, the University also is offering our employees who have exhausted all forms of accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time) and entitlements under the FFCRA, the ability to go into a sick time deficit of up to 10 additional days for illness, to meet self-isolation or quarantine requirements (unless due to leisure travel), or for the active care of others because of disruptions related to COVID-19. If you go into a sick time deficit, that deficit must be paid back through future accruals. 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.

No matter what form of paid or unpaid leave you elect, please speak with your supervisor to make them aware of your situation, and either request a leave of absence or discuss a flexible working arrangement.

Q.11: Can I use leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) intermittently?

A.11: With a supervisor's permission and consistent with business needs, expanded FMLA leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to care for children whose schools or daycares have closed may be used intermittently in increments of no less than one day. Example: employee will telework on Tuesdays and Thursdays while their spouse cares for children, but would like to use leave on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

Q12: Does my supervisor need to approve my request to telework due to the Governor's Emergency Declaration(s)?

A12: 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. At this time, all employees who can do so and who do not perform essential on-campus work should telework, consistent with the Governor's Emergency Declaration(s).

Q13: I exhausted all of my EPSL time prior to April 1, 2021. Am I entitled to additional EPSL time going forward?

A13: Full time employees may be approved to use up to an additional 80 hours of EPSL between April 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021, regardless of the number of EPSL hours they used prior to April 1, 2021. As with previous EPSL entitlements, part-time employees are eligible for a number of hours equal to the number of hours worked, on average, over a two-week period. No employee will be allowed to “carry over” any EPSL hours not used prior to April 1, 2021. **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

Q14: I exhausted my PHEL time prior to April 1, 2021. Will there be additional PHEL hours available to employees?

A14: PHEL is tracked similarly to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). An employee is entitled to up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave in a rolling calendar year, using a 12 month look back. For an employee who has exhausted their PHEL, the time will be earned back at the same rate it was used during the previous year. (e.g., If an employee used PHEL on May 1, 2020, they will earn back a day of PHEL on May 1, 2021). **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

Q15: Can I take EPSL or PHEL in partial day increments?

A15: EPSL benefits may be taken in partial day increments. PHEL benefits may not; employees must use full days of PHEL because it is paid at two-thirds the rate of the employee’s normal wage. **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

Q16: One of my employees disclosed that they are in quarantine due to COVID-19, and/or they are being tested. What should I do?

A16: If the employee has worked on campus in the 14 calendar days before their symptoms began, e-mail them a link to the [COVID-19 tracking form](#) and ask them to complete the form and keep it updated. You should also reach out regularly to the employee to check on them.

If the employee is sick and not able to telework, they may use any form of accrued leave to cover their absence (sick, vacation, personal, cultural holidays, compensatory time), and, if they have it available, they may also take up to two weeks (10 work days) of EPSL paid time under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

Information about how to use the time reporting codes in PeopleSoft is available on the Division of Finance’s online [User Guides](#) page (scroll down to the Time Entry & Approval section). If the employee is a presumptive positive case or if they test positive for COVID-19, please contact your Labor and Employee Relations professional at uvmler@uvm.edu for assistance and further instructions. There may be a need to notify other employees with whom they may have had contact.

Q17: Can I send someone I supervise home if they appear to be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?

A17: If an employee is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, fatigue) you should first and foremost ask them if they are okay, and encourage them to go home and contact their healthcare provider if they are sick. Remind them that in addition to their regular leave accruals, they may use up to 10 days of paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for time off related to COVID-19 symptoms. **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)** If the employee refuses to go home but you believe that their symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, please contact your Labor and Employee Relations professional for assistance at uvmler@uvm.edu or by calling 802-656-3150. Generally, a supervisor can require an ill employee to go home and use sick leave, or in this case, paid sick leave under the FFCRA, if they believe the employee is not well enough to remain in the workplace.

If the employee has worked on campus in the 14 days before their symptoms began, e-mail them a link to the [COVID-19 tracking form](#) and ask that they complete it and keep it updated. You should also reach out regularly to the employee to check on them.

Q18: What is the University's policy regarding allowing employees to temporarily telework at this time?

A18: Consistent with the Governor's Emergency Declaration(s), employees whose job responsibilities are compatible with teleworking should be permitted to do so if the nature of their work does not require them to be on campus. This means that supervisors should be flexible about approving a temporary telework arrangement. 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 also be flexible and creative in assigning work. If there are assignments that can be shifted from one individual to another whose job normally is not conducive to telework, please do that. Similarly, if there are projects, professional development opportunities, trainings, etc., that have been on hold given the press of other business, please resurface those and assign them to employees with capacity to work on them. Examples include:

- Research
- Data entry
- Cleaning up/organizing electronic files and databases
- Working on websites or improving content for websites
- Creating plans and schedules for regular activities like professional development, departmental meetings, etc.
- Improving or creating trainings
- Tracking and reporting on issues and best practices important to your college or division

Work can also be assigned across departments where appropriate. Supervisors should ensure that all of their employees complete a [Teleworking Agreement](#). Supervisors retain the ability to terminate the Teleworking Agreement at any time.

Q19: One of my employees has asked to not wear a face covering when meeting with other people. How do I respond?

A19: For the health and safety of our community, all employees and students are required to wear face coverings whenever they are on campus and are outside of their private workspaces or residence hall rooms. If an employee requires an accommodation related to a condition, they should work with their supervisor to develop a workable solution if possible, and/or contact the ADA Coordinator for guidance. Employees who willfully refuse to wear face covering(s) may be disciplined. Supervisors should contact uvmler@uvm.edu if this is an issue.

Q20: One of my employees called out sick, but does not have any available paid leave time. What should I do?

A20: 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.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides up to two weeks of paid sick leave (see Answer 10 above). **(FFCRA benefits expire September 30, 2021.)**

If an employee has exhausted all forms of accrued paid leave (sick, personal, vacation, cultural holiday, and compensatory time), as well as sick leave entitlements under the FFCRA, UVM will allow them to go into a sick time deficit of up to 10 additional days of paid sick time (see Answer 9 above). Alternatively, UVM will grant unpaid time to an employee who has no accrued leave time but is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or needs to quarantine.

If the employee has worked on campus in the 14 days before symptoms began, e-mail them a link to the [COVID-19 tracking form](#) and ask that they complete it and keep it updated. You should also reach out regularly to the employee to check on them.

Q21: My college or business unit would like to recruit for open positions. Should we continue to actively recruit during this time or put these processes off until things begin to return to normal?

A21: All searches must have the President's or Provost's approval before proceeding. Deans or Vice Presidents who believe that a vacant staff position in their College or Division is essential, or who wish to proceed with a faculty recruitment, should contact the President or Provost as appropriate for permission prior to conducting a search.

For searches that have been approved by the President or Provost, talk with the search committee chair and/or hiring manager about conducting interviews via the university's "Microsoft Teams" platform to limit unnecessary travel and visits to campus, given the Governor's Emergency Declaration(s).

Q22: I am scheduled to return to work soon and wonder if there is anything I need to do before I come back?

A22: All employees must take the COVID-19 Health and Safety Training (VOSHA training) prior to coming back onto campus. This training is mandatory. More information and access to the training can be found on the UVM Emergency Management [website](#). Once you complete the training module, you must undergo a brief learning assessment that will show your supervisor that you have successfully completed training. Retain a copy of your completion {V0030488.1}

certificate and provide a copy to your supervisor. Employees who have not done so already should complete the [Green and Gold Employee Promise](#), and review the [Employee Guide for Returning to Campus](#).

Q23: My work location or job responsibilities involve COVID-19 related treatment/research, putting me in proximity to COVID-19 patients and/or specimens. Am I eligible for Vermont's Hazard Pay program?

A23: Unfortunately, the University of Vermont is not a covered employer, so UVM employees are not eligible to receive hazard pay for their UVM work.