

# *Returning to Carolina*

A Guide for Faculty and Staff



HUMAN RESOURCES AND  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMPLIANCE



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# OVERVIEW

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is phasing in the return of our workforce to campus, and we are doing so in a manner that prioritizes the health and safety of our community. We are employing a coordinated process that provides for adequate physical distancing and ensures sufficient community protective equipment (CPE).

This guide presents protocols to help our faculty and staff make a safe and smooth transition back to campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. These protocols were developed based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the state of North Carolina, and the Carolina Together Roadmap.

As scientific information about COVID-19 continues to evolve, and government and public-health officials issue new guidance, the University will update relevant procedures and plans as needed. Carolina will continue to follow all state and federal orders, directives of the University of North Carolina System, and relevant health guidelines to help ensure our campus is safe.

As we navigate the return to campus operations, we will work to balance individual needs for accommodations and flexible work arrangements with the broader needs of the campus unit/department and the overall University mission. We will do so with a strong sense of community and a compassion for one another. Ultimately, where a faculty or staff member works and when they return to campus is not an individual decision, but rather the result of consultation between individual employees and their supervisor, together with leadership and resources such as those provided by the offices of Equal Opportunity and Compliance and Human Resources.

This document is subject to updates. Please visit [carolinatogether.unc.edu](http://carolinatogether.unc.edu) for COVID-19 updates and [hr.unc.edu/covid-19](http://hr.unc.edu/covid-19) for HR-related COVID-19 information and resources for faculty and staff.

*Updated February 2021*



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The well-being of our campus community is and will remain paramount in our decision-making process. All other considerations are subordinate to the health and safety of those who learn, teach, work and live on our campus.
- We will continue to rely on our world-renowned infectious disease and public health experts to guide our decision-making for our return to on-campus operations. We will use evidence and science to monitor our strategies and develop interventions as needed.
- We remain committed to our primary mission to serve as a leading global public research university as we teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate and professional students to become the next generation of leaders and to solve the grand challenges of our time.
- We are focused on providing world-class in-person, hybrid and remote instruction and student support that will provide the most flexibility and choice for our students while also promoting the safety and health of our students, faculty and staff.
- Carolina Together is the primary resource for information regarding the COVID-19 Community Standards and the Carolina Together Testing Program. Please visit **[carolinatogther.unc.edu](http://carolinatogther.unc.edu)** for regular updates.
- We will communicate with our student and their families, our faculty and our staff on a regular basis and will share decisions and rationales as new information and guidance becomes available.

# TIMELINES AND TRANSITIONS

We began phasing in the return of our workforce during summer 2020, prioritizing the health and safety of our community. Some units continue to work remotely, and we employed a coordinated process that provides for adequate physical distancing and ensures sufficient CPE, testing capabilities and contact tracing for those who are back working on campus.

Because faculty, as well as the staff and graduate students who support the teaching and research missions of the University are key to our instructional and research efforts, they were among the first to report back to campus. Additional groups who work in support of teaching, research and on-campus student support followed, though some faculty, staff and units were asked to continue to work remotely to aid with social and spatial distancing until further notice.

Decisions about who returns to campus, and when, were managed centrally, and supervisors worked with their team members about work arrangements.

Those who were required to return to campus should follow the Community Standards closely. Visit [carolinatoggether.unc.edu/\*\*community-standards\*\*](http://carolinatogether.unc.edu/community-standards) for information.

Those who are back at work on campus should also self-check for symptoms before leaving home. Use this symptom list available at [campushealth.unc.edu/services/covid-19-services](http://campushealth.unc.edu/services/covid-19-services), and if you feel sick, contact Campus Health or your primary care provider and follow their instructions.

Members of the UNC community are expected to participate in the Carolina Together Testing Program. Learn more at [carolinatoggether.unc.edu/\*\*carolina-together-testing-program\*\*](http://carolinatoggether.unc.edu/carolina-together-testing-program).

In addition to providing community protective equipment and applying the measures mentioned above, we also asked units to consider and employ the following:

- Staggered work schedules, such that faculty or staff members start and end at different times during the day, limiting the number of people in a workspace at any one time;

- Alternating schedules, such that workspaces have only partial onsite staffing at any one time, and the remaining staff are working remotely. Supervisors and unit leaders are charged with ensuring appropriate coverage and managing office density;
- Reconfiguring workstations to provide for spatial separation, and making arrangements to move workspaces or add barriers to allow for physical distancing;
- Placing visual cues to indicate to customers or others where to queue (such as floor decals, signage, colored tape, etc.);
- Using directional signage to help with traffic flows in hallways, large meeting spaces, or other stairwells;
- Limiting in-person meetings and gatherings as much as possible. The risk of viral transmission increases with density, so where possible, meetings should be held using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, other available electronic resources, or by phone;
- Encouraging those who are working on site to communicate with colleagues and supervisors by phone or email. If meetings must take place in-person, attendees should wear face masks and maintain physical distancing requirements. In-person gatherings should be limited to a maximum of 25 attendees.

## **I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

If you need accommodations because you have a health condition that puts you at increased risk of contracting COVID-19, puts you at increased risk of developing more severe complications from COVID-19, or otherwise makes you unable to work as assigned due to COVID-19, you should engage in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance office (EOC) accommodations process. Forms and information are available at [eoc.unc.edu/covid-19accommodations](http://eoc.unc.edu/covid-19accommodations). Contact Elizabeth Hall, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Equal Opportunity and Compliance/ADA Coordinator at [elizabeth.hall@unc.edu](mailto:elizabeth.hall@unc.edu) with questions.

If you need workplace flexibility for reasons other than your own health condition (e.g., child or elder care matters, age, caretaking responsibilities or cohabitating with an increased-risk individual), you should work with your manager, supervisor, or department chair to discuss possible flexible options. The Academic Personnel Office, HR and EOC offices are available to assist you and your manager, supervisor, or department chair if you have questions or concerns.

## COMMUNITY STANDARDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

With health and safety as our first priority, our ability to offer a residential, in-person educational experience hinges on the willingness of our campus community to come together in support of our collective health and safety. Each of us has a responsibility to know and act on these standards and policies in a way that maximizes a safe and healthy environment for us to teach, work, learn and live.

To this end, we have developed a set of community standards and policies for our students, faculty, staff and visitors. We are all in this together, and we believe that together, we can face the challenges presented by COVID-19 with resilience, determination and great support for our community.

### PREVENT AND PROTECT



**Understand how the COVID-19 virus spreads.** The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to someone with the virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the primary way the virus spreads is through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Research studies have demonstrated that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. COVID-19 can sometimes be spread by airborne transmission.



**Wash your hands often.** Everyone should practice regular hand hygiene as advised by the CDC. Research continues to support that washing your hands with soap and water is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others. Always wash your hands after you touch highly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, elevator buttons and photo copiers, and avoid touching your face, especially after coming into contact with these highly touched surfaces. Hand hygiene is especially critical after sneezing or coughing, after using the bathroom, before and after eating and throughout the day. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% to 90% alcohol as hand sanitizers are also effective at preventing the spread of germs. Also, wash your hands before and after handling a face mask.

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**Practice physical distancing.** Research has shown that transmission of COVID-19 can occur even when individuals are asymptomatic. Physical distancing is a key way we can help limit the spread of the virus. The University guideline on physical distancing asks students, staff, faculty and visitors to stay at least 6 feet away from other people whenever possible in all indoor and outdoor settings. Additionally, individuals should avoid gathering in large groups and avoid crowded areas. When indoors, all individuals must wear a face mask and maintain 6 feet of physical distance or observe facility specific requirements. When outdoors, individuals must wear a face mask when appropriate physical distancing is not possible.

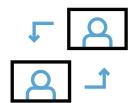


**Wear a face mask.** According to the University's Community Standards, face masks must be worn in all classroom settings by students, faculty, staff, and visitors from entering the building to leaving the building and in indoor common spaces such as common building spaces and hallways. In dining halls, masks must be worn except when eating or drinking. Face masks do not have to be worn inside a faculty or staff member's own private office when alone with the door shut. The University provides masks for those who do not have their own. If the mask becomes damaged or visibly soiled, we will provide a new face mask. Individuals may wear their own cloth masks if they prefer. Cloth masks should be washed daily, and the fabric design or pattern should be appropriate for the workplace. Please remember that face shields alone are not an acceptable substitute for cloth face coverings.

- *Away from campus, Orange County requires face masks in restaurants, grocery and retail stores, in public transportation vehicles and in any indoor or outdoor situation even when you can maintain a 6-foot physical distance.*



**Maintain clean, safe spaces.** Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces you interact with and touch with CDC approved disinfectants. Cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided in each workplace, classroom, residence hall, dining facility and other campus facilities.



**Engage in smaller group and virtual settings.** Individuals and groups, including student and community organizations, should limit in-person programs, events and social gatherings to the number of individuals specified by national, state and local guidance. On-campus space reservations will be limited to those individuals and groups that abide by this guidance.



**Follow immunization recommendations.** Individuals are encouraged (and may be required) to remain current on their recommended immunizations that are covered by most health plans, including the annual flu shot. This fall, Campus Health and University Employee Occupational Health Clinic will have flu shot clinics conveniently located across campus for students, faculty and staff. By getting an annual flu shot individuals are less likely to get sick from influenza thereby reducing the burden on the UNC Health Care System.



**Protect the community.** Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms or knowledge of exposure should contact their medical provider and not report to work sites, classes or come to campus (unless your primary residence is on-campus).



**Provide medical return clearance.** Individuals who receive a positive COVID-19 test should provide a statement from their physician to their supervisor that they are clear to return before returning to work or classes.

## CARE



**Self-check for symptoms daily.** Before leaving home for work or study each day, all individuals should check for symptoms using the COVID-19 screening checklist at [campushealth.unc.edu/services/covid-19-services/covid-19-monitoring-checklist](http://campushealth.unc.edu/services/covid-19-services/covid-19-monitoring-checklist). Anyone who is experiencing any symptom(s) indicated on the screening checklist must not go to class or work and should contact their health care provider.



**Seek medical care.** Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms or knowledge of exposure should contact a health care professional.

- *Anyone who is experiencing any symptom(s) indicated on the screening checklist must not come to campus. Instead, individuals with COVID-19*

*symptoms should contact the UNC Health Respiratory Diagnostic Center or the University Employee Occupational Health Clinic and act on the instructions received.*



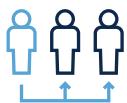
**Testing.** The University has implemented a robust testing program for the Spring 2021 semester that will help us limit the spread of COVID-19 on our campus. Testing is one important part of a comprehensive approach to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a mask, maintaining six feet physical distance and following other COVID-19 Community Standards are also key to prevention.

For faculty and staff, our tracking and testing approach has different requirements depending on your access to campus:

- **Accessing Campus Regularly:** If you are a member of the faculty or staff who is accessing campus, you are required to conduct a daily symptom check before coming to campus. You will also have access to asymptomatic testing at the Carolina Together Testing Centers once a week for your personal wellbeing and the safety of those around you, and we highly encourage you to use this service. You will be able to utilize HallPass, a mobile friendly, web-based application, to reserve your testing time, conduct track your test and review your testing history. More information on the locations and hours of the testing centers can be found on the Carolina Together website at [carolinatogther.unc.edu](http://carolinatogther.unc.edu). As a reminder, these sites are for asymptomatic tests. If you are experiencing symptoms or believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19, immediately self-isolate and contact your medical provider.
- **Not Accessing Campus Regularly:** If you are a member of the faculty or staff who is working remotely and not accessing campus, you are not required to conduct the daily symptom check and should not need to access the Carolina Together Testing Centers. The Carolina Together Testing Centers are intended to support the campus-based personnel. If you require asymptomatic testing, you can find other testing sites in the area on the Orange County Health Department website and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services website. If you are experiencing symptoms or believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19, immediately self-isolate and contact your primary care provider for further instructions.
- **Graduate, Professional and Post-Doc Students:** In addition, if you are a graduate or professional student or post-doctoral fellow accessing campus to teach, attend in-person classes or are living in a home with 10 or more people, you are required to participate in asymptomatic

testing once a week. Graduate or professional students and post-doctoral fellows living in Chapel Hill or Carrboro for the semester but who do not fit the criteria outlined above, can participate in voluntary asymptomatic testing at the Carolina Together Testing Centers.

Additional details can be found at [carolinatogther.unc.edu/carolina-together-testing-program](http://carolinatogther.unc.edu/carolina-together-testing-program).



**Participate in medical monitoring and/or contact tracing.** Individuals may be required to participate in self-monitoring of symptoms if identified as a potential close contact of a COVID-19 positive individual or if determined to be an asymptomatic COVID-19 positive person. Campus Health, with guidance from the local Health Department, conducts close contact tracing when students and post-doctoral fellows test positive for COVID-19. EHS/UEOHC initiates contact tracing of close contacts that occurred in the workplace/on-campus only. The county where the employee resides is responsible for contacting close contacts outside of the workplace/campus. EHS/UEOHC works closely with county health departments to identify these close contacts at the workplace/campus.



**Promote diversity, equity and inclusion.** Create and sustain community and a sense of belonging where everyone feels welcomed and respected. If you or someone you know has experienced expressions of discrimination or harassment, contact the Equal Opportunity and Compliance office for support, reporting options and additional resources. For consultation or training on promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace or the classroom, contact the University Office of Diversity and Inclusion.



**Care for your physical and mental well-being.** Get outside, exercise and take breaks regularly, and connect appropriately with family or friends. You should reach out for support if you or someone you know needs help coping or navigating concerns around mental health and well-being.

- *Contact the Employee Assistance Program offered by ComPsych at 877-314-5841, available 24 hours per day, seven days a week.*



**Connect across campus.** Physical distancing should not mean social isolation. Seek opportunities to connect appropriately with small groups and take advantage of the virtual programs and services that can keep you engaged as a Tar Heel.

- *Faculty or staff with non-medical questions regarding their employment or benefits should contact their school, department or unit Human Resources Officer or email [hr@unc.edu](mailto:hr@unc.edu).*



## COMMUNICATE

These community standards have been established to promote the health of our students, faculty, staff and visitors. We fully expect that everyone on campus will understand and appreciate the critical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and follow these standards. Our first and preferred approach to assure compliance with these standards will be through public health education and communication. If necessary, however, the University and other governmental authorities will institute applicable enforcement measures (including disciplinary, legal or other appropriate actions) to address certain violations.

As we prioritize safety, we will need your help to return to normal on-campus operations. We all have a role to play in this process and we need your help to make this phased reentry as safe and successful as possible.



# **QUICK STEPS TO ASSURE SAFETY**

To protect your safety, as well as our community's, remember to follow these quick six steps during the phased return, and encourage others to follow them:



1. If you feel sick, stay home.



2. Wash your hands often (or use hand sanitizer).



3. Stay at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible.



4. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.



5. Wear a face mask indoors and outdoors even when you can maintain 6 feet distance from someone else.



6. Disinfect surfaces often, especially shared items and touch points.

# **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES**

This guide, while intended to aid in the return of faculty and staff to Carolina, is not comprehensive, nor does it fully address the emotional and mental well-being needs of each individual. More information about the transition back to campus, as well as the latest updates and guidance from state and federal agencies, are available at [hr.unc.edu/covid-19](http://hr.unc.edu/covid-19).

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

These are uncertain and difficult times for us all. If you need help or support, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) remains available to faculty, staff and their families, and provides a range of emotional support services and resources, as well as connections to other sources of support.

## **OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Office of Human Resources is available to assist with personnel matters, benefits questions, or employee and management relations issues. Contact OHR at [hr@unc.edu](mailto:hr@unc.edu).

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND COMPLIANCE**

The Equal Opportunity and Compliance office can assist with workplace accommodations for those faculty and staff who may need them, and also serves as the University's source for managing issues of discrimination and harassment. Contact EOC at [eoc@unc.edu](mailto:eoc@unc.edu).

## **RESOURCE WEBSITES**

- [carolinatogether.unc.edu](http://carolinatogether.unc.edu)
- [hr.unc.edu/covid-19](http://hr.unc.edu/covid-19)
- [campushealth.unc.edu/services/covid-19-services/covid-19-monitoring-checklist](http://campushealth.unc.edu/services/covid-19-services/covid-19-monitoring-checklist)



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