



RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

Workplace Expectations and Guidelines

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WEST LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GREINER



Since the closing of campus due to the arrival COVID-19, West Liberty University began implementing guidelines in its Emergency Response Manual that includes a "Response to Pandemic Event" with the guidance of the WLU Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). The following Return to the Workplace Guidelines are aligned with current recommendations from the Governor's Office, the CDC, Ohio County health officials, WLU CIRT Team, and the President's Cabinet.

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve, our plans and guidelines will evolve accordingly. The following Return to the Workplace Guidelines document is intended to serve as guidelines for WLU office operations.



WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS & GUIDELINES

All employees are expected to fully comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of WLU's Workplace Expectations and Guidelines. **Failure to do so may result in corrective action.**

Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, and our policies and plans will be updated as appropriate as more information becomes available.



SYMPTOM MONITORING

Employees who have been instructed to return to the workplace **must conduct symptom monitoring every day before reporting to work.** People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported—ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus.** People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

Employees demonstrating the following conditions **must stay at home:**

- A fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater) using an oral thermometer
- And/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (i.e. dry cough, shortness of breath)
- Lack of taste and or smell

If symptoms continue or progress, they should contact their health care provider for medical advice.

Additionally, do not report to campus if:

- Currently being tested for COVID-19. Self-isolation is required.
- You are sick (with any illness).
- Received notification from public health officials (state or local) that you are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19. **14-day self-isolation is required.**
- Are caring for or live with someone who has been notified of potential exposure and/or are in quarantine. **14-day self-isolation is required.**

Self-Isolation

Individuals who have been sick with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 symptoms who have self-isolated and **have not been tested for COVID by their medical provider** should utilize the following criteria in determining when to return to class or work.

- **At least 3 days** (72 hours) with no fever, **AND**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **AND**
- **At least 10 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared

Employees **who have been tested for COVID-19 by their medical provider** may return when the employee retests negative on two separate tests at least 24 hours apart.

If individual has never tested for COVID-19 but has an alternate diagnosis (e.g., tested positive for influenza), criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.



PHASED STAFFING

Cabinet Members will begin to phase staffing levels appropriate for their department throughout June and July, with the intent to have everyone back on campus by mid-July.

Employees who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 may continue to telecommute, with advance approval from their supervisors. Requests to telecommute beyond July may invoke the interactive process under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), may require physician documentation, and may be assessed for a reasonable accommodation and/or undue hardship on the department or the university.

According to CDC, individuals who might be at a higher risk for severe illness from Covid-19 are those who are:

- 65 years of age and older
- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

For more information please refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

STAFFING OPTIONS

Once employees have been instructed to return to work on site, there are several options departments should consider to maintain required physical distancing measures and reduce population density within buildings and work spaces.

Remote Work: Those who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities may continue to do so in the early phases to reduce the number of individuals on campus and the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. These arrangements, which must be approved by the immediate supervisor, may be done on a full or partial day/week schedule, as appropriate.

Alternating Days: In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments should consider scheduling partial staffing on alternating days. Such schedules will help enable physical distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.

Staggered Reporting/Departing: The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet physical distancing requirements.

HEALTH AND SAFETY OPTIONS

Personal Safety Practices

Stay at Home if you are Sick. Monitor your symptoms daily.



Wash Hands. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout university buildings. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.



Social Distance. Avoid close contact with people who are sick and put distance between yourself and others. Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.

- Avoid shaking hands.
- Do not enter other employees' personal workspaces.
- Reduce high-touch exposures by propping open interior doors where feasible.
- Do not gather in groups.



Wear Face Masks. Always wear a face covering in any work situation where you cannot adequately physically distance yourself from others. Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing. Wear a face covering when you go out of your personal workspace. The face covering is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. You could spread COVID-19 even if you do not feel sick.

- The university will provide every employee with one cloth face mask. Employees may also bring their own face coverings from home, if desired. The CDC currently recommends that cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering.



Cover Coughs and Sneezes. If you are in a private setting and do not have on your face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Clean and Disinfect. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

- Minimize the sharing of office equipment to the greatest extent possible. Office common spaces, including countertops, conference tables and chairs, light switches, drawer handles, phones and copiers should be wiped down frequently.
- Employees should frequently clean their personal workspaces, including wiping down their desks, tables, phones, keyboards, light switches, etc.



HEALTH AND SAFETY OPTIONS

Work Environment

Office.

- If you work in an open environment, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from co-workers. If social distancing is not possible, masks/face coverings must be worn at all times.
- If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained. If more than one person is in a room, masks/face coverings must be worn at all times. A mask or face covering is not required if you are working alone in a confined office space (does not include partitioned work areas in a large open environment).
- Masks/face coverings must be worn by any employee in a reception/receiving area. Masks/face coverings should be used when inside any facility where others are present, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel, and in break rooms, conference rooms and other meeting locations.

Restrooms. Use of restrooms should be limited based on size to ensure at least 6 feet of distance between individuals. Employees must wash their hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

Elevators. No more than 1-2 people should be in an elevator at a time, so please use the stairs whenever possible. If you are using the elevator, wear your mask or face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator.

Meetings. Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. Meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, telephone, etc.).

- In-person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal orders and should not exceed 50 percent of a room's capacity, assuming individuals can still maintain 6 feet of separation for physical distancing requirements. Departments should

remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support physical distancing practices between attendees. All attendees should wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room. During your time on site, you are encouraged to communicate with your co-workers as needed by e-mail, instant message, telephone or other available technology, rather than face-to-face.

Meals. Employees are encouraged to take food back to their office area or eat outside, if this is reasonable for your situation.

- Office kitchens and breakrooms may not be used for communal gathering or dining in.
- Wash or sanitize your hands before and after using shared appliances like refrigerators and microwaves. After use, wipe appliances down and immediately wash your hands.
- Use of communal coffee pots and water fountains is discouraged.

Building Access. All buildings will continue to be secured to limit entry to employees only until further notice. Your WLU employee ID card may be required for entry.

- **Do not hold or prop open exterior doors for any other person.**
- **No visitors or guests will be permitted in university buildings.**
- Once you have been instructed to return to the workplace, you should contact your supervisor for coordination of access to your building if you do not have a key.

Travel. University travel will be limited and prior approval by respective Cabinet Member will be required.

Mental Health. Optum, part of UnitedHealth Group, operates an Emotional-Support Help Line. Professionally trained, mental health staff are there to support people who may be suffering from fear or stress created by COVID-19. Optum's Emotional-Support Help Line number is 866-342-6892 and will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is free of charge and open to all PEIA members.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How do employees know when they are to return to work on site?

A. Each Cabinet Member will contact you via e-mail and/or phone at least one week before your expected return.

Q. Why can't I continue to telecommute indefinitely? My job can be done remotely, so I don't really need to be on site.

A. WLU's business model is a bricks-and-mortar university that offers a full campus experience. This personal interaction is at the heart of what we do. Our students and our community expect us to be here to provide educational and other services in person.

Q. What if an employee becomes ill with fever, cough or other concerning symptoms?

A. Employees who are sick must stay at home and seek medical assistance as appropriate. **Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 should immediately inform their supervisor and Human Resources.** Personal information will be kept confidential.

Q. What if an employee believes he/she has been exposed to COVID-19?

A. If an employee is in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and/or develops symptoms of the virus, they should call their healthcare provider and tell them about the symptoms. The healthcare provider will decide whether or not the employee needs to be tested. Stay home if COVID-19 symptoms develop and go home immediately if symptoms occur at work.

Q. Will all employees be tested for COVID-19 before returning to work on site?

A. No. Current public health guidelines do not call for testing unless an employee has symptoms.

Q. Will there be daily health checks/temperature screenings for employees?

A. At this time, employees **must conduct symptom monitoring every day** before reporting to work. The CDC considers screening employees an optional strategy, and the university is considering the possibility.

Q. Can the university prohibit an employee from coming to work on site if the employee is known to have contracted COVID-19 or to have had close contact with someone who has?

A. Yes. The university is obligated to provide a safe workplace and may take necessary and reasonable steps to minimize health risks for its employees, including requiring that employees not come to work on site if they have been diagnosed with, or have been exposed to, COVID-19.

Q. What if an employee must stay at home due to illness or self-isolation?

A. Telecommuting should be considered and used where feasible. If telecommuting is not feasible for the impacted employee, the employee will use sick leave and/or vacation time, when available.

Additionally, employees who meet the requirements may be eligible for Emergency Paid Sick Leave. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. A Fact Sheet regarding Employee Rights for FFCRA can be found at: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf

An employee that wishes to utilize Federal Emergency Sick Leave or Expanded FMLA Leave should submit their request through the following form: [**FFCRA Leave Request**](#)

Submission of the form does not preclude the requirement for you to contact your supervisor in advance of your absence. The application will be distributed to your supervisor, Payroll, and Human Resources.



RESOURCES

If you have **questions or comments about returning to work on site**, please e-mail your supervisor.

For **details about the university's overall response** to the COVID-19 pandemic, visit westliberty.edu/coronavirus.

For **information about the State of West Virginia's response**, visit the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources website at www.dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19 or call their information hotline at 1-800-887-4304.

For **federal guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV.

If you are experiencing **fear or stress created by COVID-19**, contact Optum's Emotional Support Help Line at 866-342-6892. The service is free of charge and open to all PEIA members.

For **directions for making, wearing and cleaning cloth face coverings**, see the CDC's "Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19"