

Spring 2021 Report for Fall Re-Entry

Future of Work Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Committee Chairs

Carl Lejuez, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Chris Delello, Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Kristi Henderson, Chief of Staff to the Provost and Assistant Vice Provost for Strategic Communications

Development of the Future of Work Committee

The Future of Work committee was convened in the Spring 2021 semester to engage faculty, staff, and graduate students broadly across the University to consider recommendations for professional staff re-entry at UConn from the COVID-19 pandemic for the Fall semester 2021, as well as consider more broadly if and how the nature of work at UConn will be changed following more than a year of primarily remote operations in the future. The committee included over 45 representatives from faculty, administrators, staff, and graduate students, from Storrs and the Regional Campuses. Each of UConn's bargaining units was represented among the committee membership, which can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

Areas of Focus and Development of Recommendations to Guide Re-entry decisions

The committee included five Working Groups in the following domains:

Work Needs and Arrangements

- Developing recommendation on guidance for divisions and supervisors to determine work modality for offices and staff for fall semester, considering a combination of business need and personal needs.

Re-Entry Rollout

- Reviewing communications channels and strategy, with particular focus on UConn's communications about fall semester plans. Includes email, websites, supervisor-employee notifications.

Public Health in the Workforce

- Reviewing current sick leave policies that vary by categories of regular and special payroll employees and providing recommendations to Human Resources and the Provost's Office on how to make sure each variation of policies/contracts and practice encourage all categories of employees to stay home when feeling unwell.

Infrastructure and Facilities

- Developing recommendations to Human Resources and the Provost's Office to provide managers and offices guidance on best practices for managing flexible/ rotational/ shared work spaces and schedules in university offices for reentry in the fall.

Employee Development and Support

- Reviewing availability of support resources available to UConn employees preparing for re-entry, as well as advising Human Resources and the Provost's Office on opportunities to augment current resources.

Individual reports for each of these domains can be viewed in the following pages. Each report was presented to the President's Senior Leadership Team earlier this summer and has been instrumental in informing the re-entry decisions that are currently guiding our return to in-person operations this fall.

Work of the Committee and the Working Groups

To begin the committee's work, the chairs asked committee members to complete a brief survey to share topics of greatest interest to them individually as well as to colleagues they represented. Those topics were then refined into five focus areas that constituted the working groups for the committee.

The full committee met three times in the spring semester: March 25, April 29, and May 27. At the March 25 meeting, the chairs summarized the results of the topics survey and reviewed the working group structure, and committee members were assigned to breakout groups to consider the following questions: 1) What has worked well in our COVID planning and execution?, 2) What hasn't worked well in our COVID planning and execution?, 3) What is already happening in your areas?, 4) What considerations are needed to support marginalized groups?, 5) How will our efforts vary across campuses? Unique needs across campuses?, and 6) What resources, systems, tracking or data need to be in place?

Committee members were assigned to working groups following the March 25 meeting. The working groups met a number of times from March 25 through May 27, typically on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The working group co-chairs were provided a charge and a set of framing questions to focus their work in the spring semester. The committee chairs provided the following framing questions for the working group co-chairs:

- What has UConn already done in this area over the past year?
- What are other universities and institutions doing in this area that UConn should consider?
- Are there policies that should be reviewed or revised?
- What recommendations are realistic for implementation by August 1? What recommendations may be longer-term considerations?
- Are there additional resources (equipment, funding, software programs and/or online tools, templates, documentation) that are necessary or helpful in making these recommendations possible?

At the April 29 full committee meeting, the working group co-chairs shared a mid-term report of their groups' discussions so far. At the May 27 meeting, the working group co-chairs shared a summary of their groups' final reports.

Each working group was asked to submit its recommendations by May 21. Those reports are appended to this summary, as well as the final membership list for each working group.

The committee's recommendations were shared with UConn leadership throughout Summer 2021 to incorporate the committee's suggestions where feasible into planning and logistics for the Fall 2021 in-person re-entry.

Next steps for the Future of Work Committee

The Future of Work committee will reconvene in Fall 2021 to continue its work. This will include a review of re-entry for areas of continued refinement and to consider longer-term strategic and operational opportunities beyond the pandemic, including greater cross-unit collaboration among similar job functions, the potential impact of an expected uptick in retirements expected over the next 5-7 years, and the needs and expectations of future generations of UConn employees.

Committee members demonstrated a significant commitment to their charges and in representing the interests and needs of the constituents they represent. The committee chairs look forward to continued partnership with members in future phases of committee work.

Future of Work

Employee Development and Support Working Group Report

Submitted by Vicki Fry and Milagros Marrero-Johnson, Co-Chairs

May 14, 2021

Group Members: Michael Bradford, Kristen Brierley, Karen DeMeola, Nicole Gelston, Kathleen Holgerson, Khara Leon, Whitney Losapio and Rachel Rubin

Summary Overview and Identification of Top Issues for Fall 2021:

We understand that for employees to return to campus and feel supported, there are a number of critical areas that require attention for Fall 2021. The Employee Development and Support working group recognizes how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of higher education. Additionally, in order to remain competitive while upholding the University's mission and values, we will have to pivot our business operations to accommodate a "new normal" or we may risk losing talented employees, as well as have difficulty recruiting new talent. ([What's Next for the Higher Ed Workforce?](#) (CUPA-HR) and [At Some Colleges, Remote Work Could Be Here to Stay](#) (The Chronicle of Higher Education)).

The various meetings held by this working group were productive, engaging, and elicited perspectives of all members. Keeping in mind the charge of the committee and the various populations to consider (i.e., regular - classified, unclassified & non-union employees, special payroll - adjuncts & temporary employees and graduate assistants), many of the recommendations apply to all groups, with few exceptions. Additionally, recommendations for guidance and support were considered for union managers and those outside of the bargaining units as they relate to these proposed recommendations.

The various thematic areas identified that were consistent throughout the several discussions were:

- Employee/manger well-being within the changing workplace,
- Offering re-entry resources to assist with the transition of returning to in person work,
- Offering flexible work arrangements including hybrid work options,
- Rebuilding campus belonging and a shared sense of connectedness,
- Offering guidance on telecommuting guidelines,
- Conducting technology assessments and providing technology support, and
- Establishing clear procurement guidelines

Providing support and having fair and equitable practices during this transitional period is critical to retention efforts, hiring of new employees, and the work productivity of all employees. While 2020-2021 is considered a transitional year, it is essential that as a University we evaluate our ongoing efforts by soliciting feedback from the various stakeholders of our community and work to refine practices as deemed appropriate.

As part of our process, research was conducted on several of our peers and aspirants. Like our peers and aspirants, committees have been formed to determine operational details for the upcoming academic year that will allow institutions to provide the optimal experience as

anticipated when the students, staff and faculty chose that institution – with many of them returning to in person work and teaching. However, there is a degree of flexibility being considered to accommodate the workforce needs and other areas such as space utilization, operations, research, business practices, IT and HR. Although an anonymous, non-scientific survey was conducted, it is evident from the feedback of the respondents that the majority of them are not comfortable returning to work for a variety of reasons (['My Gut Response Is Fear and Dread': Thoughts on Returning to Campus This Fall \(chronicle.com\)](#)). Considering there are various comfort levels of returning to in person work, the group's recommendations reflect a balance of effectively and efficiently conducting UConn operations, including supporting our students, while affording a degree of flexibility to employees. We recognize that employees had different experiences and reactions to the pandemic and remote work, while balancing several other life stressors. Supporting employees in this way, and respecting the diversity and intersectionality of individuals, can assist with their transition to working in the office and feeling valued, respected, and engaged.

Committee Work Output:

Audience	Output/Product	Recommendation/Examples/Best Practice	Where/When	Responsible Party
Employees (Reg/Spec/GA's)	Dedicated and Centralized Website of well-being and fall re-entry transition resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Navigation of website should be user friendly, understandable and clear -Toolkits, Training, Safety, Well-being, Space and Workforce Assessment information included -Speaks to our guiding principles, values, statement of work/life flexibility -Include a comprehensive and searchable FAQ section -Include specific contact information for additional questions based on topic <p>Examples: https://hr.iu.edu/relations/coronavirus.html (Guidance and FAQ section)</p> <p>https://covid.cornell.edu/reactivation/principles/</p>	<p>Reopen.uconn.edu site</p> <p>By End of July</p>	<p>University Communications</p> <p>SME's</p>
	Well-Being Resource Guide	<p>Examples:</p> <p>Cornell - Employee Wellbeing at Cornell</p> <p>Rutgers - https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/425/2020/09/WellBeingResourcesAugust2020Staff.pdf</p> <p>Duke - https://www.hsq.dukehealth.org/files/2019/12/WellBeingToolkit_FINAL122019.pdf</p>	<p>Centralized Re-Entry Website</p> <p>Work/Life Wellness webpage</p>	<p>HR EERaW (Employee Engagement Recognition and Wellness)</p>
	Expansion of EAP Program	<p>Deer Oaks EAP Contract in Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provides EAP, Wellness, Financial, Legal, Work/Life programming, support, resources and Personal/Professional Development training and webinars <p>Run a Fall Series to support re-entry to the campus</p>	<p>Include in Well-Being Resource Guide</p> <p>Comprehensive EAP webpage</p> <p>Virtual programming</p>	<p>HR EERaW</p>

		Stress Management Series, Emotional Intelligence at Work, Managing the Stress of Change, Overcoming Burnout, How to Become a Resilient Person, Building a Culture of Respect		
	Virtual or Hybrid Fall Kick-Off Event to Reconnect and Rebuild as a Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stream to all campuses for all major announcements, then regionals hold event unique to their campus -Re-onboard our employees to on campus life - discuss our flexibility philosophy (share statement on work/life flexibility), Values and principles that guide us, guidance for fall re-open and the future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2021 is a transitional year as we continue to refine what our FOW looks like for the near and far future -Working Committee's will continue -Work with University Communications to do a virtual/drone tour of campus to show/discuss what has changed/is new over the past year (Gant renovations, Athletics complex, Northwest Science Quad, Supplemental Utility Plant. Offices that have moved (OneCard to Student Union for example) -Campus Tours and Dairy Bar/social event for COVID period new hires -In person outdoor and virtual small events by school/college/departments spread out over the first weeks of re-opening to re-establish relationships and connectedness in departments 	August Virtual/Great Lawn	HR/Provost/ President offices
	Technology/ Procurement	<p>Extend ITS Tech Checks to Staff and GA's https://its.uconn.edu/2021/01/24/new-tech-check-support-service-for-instructors/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide access to laptops for all employees who need one with access to the software and programs they need to be successful wherever they work - Clear process for who pays for and how to obtain/pay for/be reimbursed for technology and office supplies 	Summer	Management/IT/ Procurement

		VA Tech - https://www.hr.vt.edu/content/dam/hr_vt_edu/fall-2020-ready-documents/Telework_Remote_Work_Suitability_Guide.pdf (includes training for managers and employees)		
	Guidance on Work Space Assessments	Space Planning – Consider Graduate Assistant space in academic areas (many GA's in one office) Workforce/Staffing Assessments Air Quality	Reopen.uconn.edu site By End of June	Facilities HR EH&S
	Technology	Add streaming capabilities and virtual access in conference rooms and meeting spaces to be able to effectively communicate with all employees - wherever they are working	August/On-going	ITS
	Assess Business needs and process pre/post covid	Determine what business practices were improved as a result of Covid-19 and maintain them. Don't automatically revert to "the way things were done" Examples: -working outside of core business hours of 8am-5pm can benefit some student facing departments by offering student services in the evening that otherwise would not be available -Program information session attendance at the SSW has increased dramatically by offering virtual sessions vs in-person -Provide process analysis tools and guidance to assist	On-going	Utilize Business School Faculty/other experts
	Managing Time off Requests	Provide guidance on how to manage employee requests to take time off, particularly since some departments have limited employees and significant time has been accrued and will need to be used -Recommend that unused vacation/comp time (as applicable based on employee status) above limits or expiring should be rolled over; with rollover effective retroactively -Encourage use of Vacation for well-being https://hr.ucdavis.edu/news/take-vacation-especially-if-youre-maxed-out	Reopen.uconn.edu site Email to Managers/Employees By End of July	HR/LR

Audience	Output/Product	Recommendation/Examples/Best Practice	Where/When	Responsible Party
Institutional	Policies	FOIA/Record Retention – when using personal computers FERPA – Guidance on student privacy during virtual meetings Out of State workers – Legal/Tax implications Winter weather policy FAQ's - clarification on impacts when working remote	Summer/Fall	Policy Owner
	Survey to measure success of Fall Re-entry	To know if we provided adequate support to our employees and managers in respect to job efficacy, productivity, work/life integration, and measure engagement	End of Fall Semester	HR/Provost Office
	Communications	Need to be consistent, but adaptable and accessible to different audiences (regional campus, Adjuncts, Classified employees for example)	On-going	HR/Provost University Communications

Ideas to Hold for Academic Year 2021-2022 and Beyond:

With the primary focus of the committee meetings on recommendations for our Fall Re-entry, we did not have a lot of time to dedicate to discussions of recommendations for the future, however, below are a few ideas. We look forward to further meetings and discussions as we continue our work in this area.

Increase focus on Work/Life integration resources

- Childcare Reimbursement Policy expansion to additional employee groups and expand reimbursement eligibility to include back-up care (childcare and eldercare)
- Implement additional Affinity/Employee Resource Group at the University in coordination with the Work/Life Committee – Parenting, Eldercare, BIPOC, Disability

Fall Vaccinations and Testing

- Provide on campus vaccinations and/or boosters and testing dependent on the status of the pandemic, federal and state guidance in July/August

Technology

- Given the improvements that must occur in order to accommodate in-person and conducting a degree of business operations remotely, the financial cost may be considerable to upgrade technology for conference rooms and other designated meeting spaces and supporting employees who work hybrid.
 - A concern was raised as to whether or not departments would incur these costs.

Future of Work: Working Needs and Arrangements Working Group Report

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Summary of Group Discussion and Identification of Top Issues for Fall 2021

Working Group Recommendation Summary for Fall 2021

- The working group has provided business need criteria, which incorporates consideration of departmental work modalities in line with business operations and needs of the unit, analysis of positions and staffing plans, analysis of individual proposals, and proposal of a final departmental makeup with consideration of impacts.
- It is recommended that supervisors consider business need criteria guidelines when assessing alternate work arrangements for employees in the scope of the fall 2021 semester. These guidelines should be subject to revision as they are put into practice and evaluated for effectiveness, and as the University considers further policy and procedure implications for fall 2021 and beyond.
- The working group has proposed an implementation structure that rests initial decision making with the unit supervisor, with additional layers of review and consideration by the unit head (Dean, AVP, Director, etc.). It is recommended that the unit head consider a localized implementation committee (department heads, executive leaders, staff representatives, business office and HR staff) to ensure consistency and fairness is maintained across the review process.
- For the 2021-2022 Academic Year, alternate work arrangements should be established durationally, not to exceed 6 months, and evaluated regularly. Throughout the duration of an alternate working arrangement and prior to the end date, the supervisor should evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangements under their purview and assess if it is appropriate to revise or continue the terms of the arrangement.

Values Statement

As the state's flagship land and sea grant public research institution, the University of Connecticut will maintain a thriving and engaging academic community, both on its physical campuses and virtually, prioritizing the quality of work and service, while cultivating a workplace that meets the needs of our employees, students, and other members of the community. Consideration of alternate work arrangements must incorporate fair and equitable practices for all employee groups, consider flexibility to the unique needs of units across the university and the groups they serve, and prioritize an on-site and virtual presence that reflects the mission and values of UConn.

Primarily, decisions should:

- Preserve and build on core values of excellence, learning, community, diversity, integrity, respect, and responsibility.
- Ensure equitable, transparent, and fair processes; and
- Empower local decisions that prioritize business needs while considering employee preferences

Summary of Analysis and Discussion

The Working Needs and Arrangement's working group was charged with developing business need criteria to guide decisions on employee alternate work arrangements. The group's primary discussion points were on defining alternate working arrangements, employee groups in scope, and necessary authority and responsibility; determining best practices established by peers and aspirants, internal benchmarks, and state of CT guidelines; and developing criteria grounded in a values statement that promote equity, fairness, compliance, and flexibility to guide both local and University-level decisions.

The committee discussed the need for tact and balance between off-site and hybrid work as a privilege, balanced with an assessment of where we can do our best work. Assessment of alternate work arrangements should first consider the needs of the unit's business operations and the requirements of the position before individual performance or disciplinary action are considered. There is a need for employees to work arrangements that are most productive for them, but for managers to balance the needs of their departments and management styles.

Collective Bargaining and Employee Groups

Review of state of Connecticut guidelines and UConn's current telework policy identified collective bargaining constraints on employees in classified bargaining units. These employees may be limited in their ability to work alternate work arrangements or to telecommute. Further, the working group considered the flexibility already afforded to faculty members based on their workloads and course modalities. Committee outputs were developed with flexibility such that they may be applied to the wide array of positions and nature of work conducted at UConn.

Process and Authority

While the working group's recommendations do not include required forms or workflows, through benchmarking and group discussion, the working group has identified areas of consideration for the implementation and approval of long-term alternate work arrangements. To ensure consistency and fairness at the University level, while ensuring flexibility to the position and the individual at the supervisor level, departmental staffing proposals at the position analysis stage should incorporate sign off by the next level unit head (i.e., for academic departments, the dean's office). This additional level of hierarchy ensures that unit heads are aware of arrangements in their scope and protects employees from managers who may make unilateral decisions.

Peer and Aspirant Best Practices

Appendix A: Peer and Aspirant Benchmarking Summary

Internal Benchmarking

Appendix B: Internal Benchmarking Summary

Tax Liability for Out-of-State and International Employees

The Controller is monitoring the tax liability of state employees working outside of CT. Presently, it has not been determined whether employees who live outside of CT will be permitted to work greater than 50% of their time in an off-site modality. Requests for remote work locations outside the state of CT may require additional approvals. If the employee does not live in Connecticut, supervisors should direct employees considering alternate work arrangements should contact Tax & Compliance.

Flexible Schedules and Business Hours of Operation

The University of Connecticut's standard hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. There should be sufficient on-site coverage of most university offices during regular business hours. The pandemic has revealed to some units that there is a demand for their services outside of regular hours. Where a manager has identified a clear service need, flexible schedules may allow for greater accessibility of services. Flexible schedules may be combined with remote work arrangements where the combination of both is appropriate for the work being done and the business needs of the unit.

Vaccines

As the University develops further guidance on this topic, issues front-of-mind for employees and supervisors are safety in the workplace and consideration of employee concerns around shared spaces and unvaccinated coworkers.

Authority and Responsibility

Responsibility of the Employee

Employees are responsible for their performance wherever they work, and supervisors retain the right to make changes as needed to support unit operations and the university's goals. Unless clearly stipulated, employees will be expected to be able to report to their on-campus work location for meetings, training, or other work requirements at short notice.

Employees are responsible for maintaining availability, appropriate levels of production and quality of work while working off-site. Employees are responsible for maintaining a workspace with the necessary environment, internet service, and furnishings (for example desk, chair, and telephone) to enable the employee to accomplish their assigned duties.

The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state, and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

Responsibility of the Supervisor

Supervisors should consider carefully the guiding questions provided below when reviewing the work modality for employees in their units and develop a mutually agreed upon plan with the employee to cover essential business needs and job responsibilities.

Before executing alternate work, arrangement agreements supervisors shall conduct a thorough position analysis and proposal review and develop a proposal for departmental makeup, coordinating with their department head or director and dean or unit head to obtain approval. Units may establish a localized implementation committee comprised of department heads, executive leaders, staff representatives, business office and HR staff, and other stakeholders to ensure consistency and fairness is maintained across the review process.

Supervisors should notify the employee in writing to confirm the terms of an alternate working arrangement as has been discussed and mutually agreed upon by appropriate parties.

Supervisors shall establish methods and standards for measuring the work performance of employees on alternate work arrangements.

Responsibility of the Unit Head

Unit heads (Deans, VPs, AVPs, Directors, etc.) should oversee the review and evaluation of alternate work arrangement considerations for all departments in their report. Unit heads may establish an implementation committee comprised of stakeholders within their units to ensure consistency and fairness is applied across the process.

Unit heads will determine the appropriate department levels within their unit to consider the business needs criteria guiding questions for their unit and report back to the unit head or implementation committee on plans for fall 2021. The unit head has the ultimate authority to set alternate work

arrangements at the recommendation of the supervisor, with consideration for the employee's situation.

Committee Work Output

Definitions

Alternate Work Arrangements	Any adjustment to where and when an employee conducts their assigned work for the University. This includes flexible schedules and work location/modality (off-site, on-site, hybrid).
Off-Site Work	Primary work is performed at a defined off-campus (remote) work site such as the home, with the approval of the employee's manager. The employee may not have a defined workspace on-campus. The employee may be required to work on-site for ad-hoc work responsibilities i.e., workshops, events, etc. with limited notice.
On-Site Work	Primary work is performed at a defined work site, which is the place where the employee would normally work absent an alternate work arrangement. Travel to offsite locations (i.e., high school visits, affiliated research organizations, etc.) required for the fulfillment of assigned duties (i.e., admissions, extension, other outreach) may be considered on-site work.
Hybrid Employee	Primary work is performed at both on-site and off-site (remote) locations according to a schedule approved by the manager. The employee has a defined workspace on-campus and an off-campus work site.
Fully Off-Site Employee	Employee works majority of assigned duties at an off-site work location (remote). May be required to work on-site for ad-hoc work responsibilities i.e., workshops, events, etc. with limited notice in consultation with their supervisor.
Fully On-Site Employee	Employee works majority of assigned duties at an on-site work location. May be permitted to work off-site for ad-hoc work responsibilities in consultation with their supervisor.
Flexible Schedule	A flexible schedule allows an employee to vary the span of the workday, deviating from the University's business hours of operation, while ensuring that the standard workweek hours are completed.

Recommended Implementation

May 2021 - Familiarization	Review provided guidelines from Future of Work committees and familiarize with expectations and standards for fall 2021 re-entry. Unit heads or deans assess fall 2021 plans and advise appropriate reporting departments to consider business need criteria guiding questions. Unit heads or deans may establish implementation committees to oversee this process.
June 2021 - Planning	Supervisors and unit heads develop staffing plans based on the positions in their respective units in line with provided guidance. Staffing plans are reviewed by the unit head or implementation committee for consistency.

July 2021 – Review	Supervisors share proposed staffing plans with employees. Employees proposed to work hybrid or off-site modalities will discuss with supervisors in line with “Analyze Individual Proposals” guidance. Employees not eligible for hybrid or off-site modalities may appeal, but the final decision rests with the dean or unit head.
August 2021 – Implementation	Fall 2021 work modalities are finalized and documented in final department makeup plans. Supervisors consider “Propose Your Departmental Makeup and Consider Impacts” guidance when assessing operational impacts. Alternate work arrangements are established with a 12/31/21 review date.
Fall 2021 – Evaluation	Evaluate feedback and implementation issues, consider establishment of procedures and documentation for spring 2022.

[Criteria for Alternate Work Arrangements](#)

Appendix C: Business Need Criteria Worksheet

[Feedback from Pilot Groups](#)

The working group piloted the business need criteria worksheet with a small group of managers who can serve as a cross-section of different units across UConn to evaluate if the questions we have drafted are appropriate and cover all the issues they think they will need to address.

Feedback from representative managers include:

- Appreciate the structure of first, understanding the goals of the department in general within the first section and then paring it down to the core functional areas or specific roles, and then finally, to the individual.
- Process – What is the recommended level to answer the business need criteria questions as they cover a mix of unit head (Dean, AVP, Director, etc.) decisions, as well as local (supervisors, managers, sub-units) considerations? What is the approval process? Is this an HR process or a guidance document?
- Training and resources – business needs criteria references compliance, confidentiality, and security considerations which many employees and managers lack a strong understanding of.

Ideas to Hold for AY 21-22 and Beyond

[Tools and Training](#)

Beyond the business need criteria, University stakeholders and pilot groups expressed a need for tools and training for supervisors to manage remote workers productively and effectively, as well as the development of new compliance training to bolster remote work culture and strengthen the remote workforce. Business need criteria references compliance, confidentiality, and security considerations, which pilot groups exposed that many employees and managers lack a strong understanding of. The Working Group attempted to link out to some of these resources, but comprehensive reference material related to these considerations may be valuable in addition to other training for managers. Peer and aspirant institutions had dedicated future of work sites with comprehensive elements from each committee in one place, including forms, training, etc.

Central Business Office Processes

Many units are dependent on continued flexibility from central business units for remote processing. For example, Payroll is accepting I-9 forms and documentation via an interim digital submission process. There may be other central business processes that may be more accommodating to remain virtual.

New Positions and Job Postings

Business need criteria guidelines established for fall 2021 assume individuals are currently working in the positions being evaluated. As the hiring freeze is lifted and units are recruiting for new positions, consider work modality impacts to hiring administration. Should newly hired employees undergo the same individual proposal review, or should positions be advertised and required to conform to the modality designated at time of posting?

Revision to the Telework Policy

If the University is shifting towards a permanent culture that establishes alternate work arrangements as a norm, the existing telework policy may require revision if current business need criteria are deemed successful, to expand the applicability of forms and approvals to interim practice.

Documentation of Alternate Work Arrangements

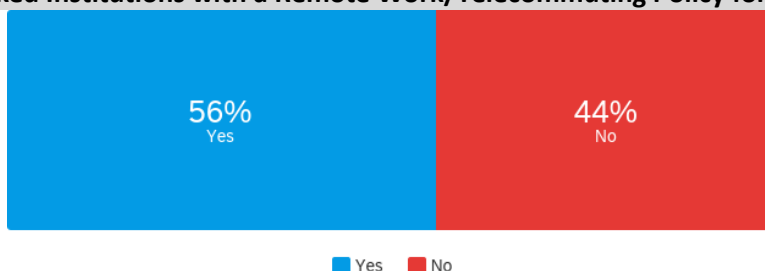
If there is a desire to formalize a process around the business need criteria, request forms for individual proposal approvals and departmental makeup/staffing plan may be necessary. Further, if formalized, a workflow for unit level approvals, notification to Labor Relations and Human Resources of where employees will work in fall 2021 and beyond, and development of guidance for employees to update their work location/duty stations in Core-CT may be considered.

Parking and Facilities

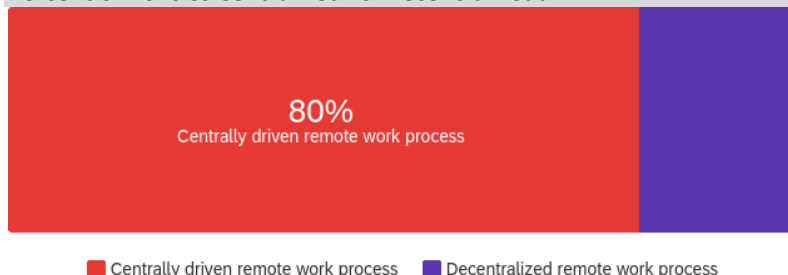
With modality changes, staff are thinking about parking arrangements when they will not be on campus full-time, as well as considerations for facilities and shared spaces if full offices will not be on campus full-time. There may also be increased demand for facilities services for surplus, office renovations, etc. and consideration of a “clean-up period” in the summer for units to drop off surplus items or shop surplus items from other units.

Remote Work/Telecommuting Policy

Percentage of Benchmarked Institutions with a Remote Work/Telecommuting Policy for Fall 2021



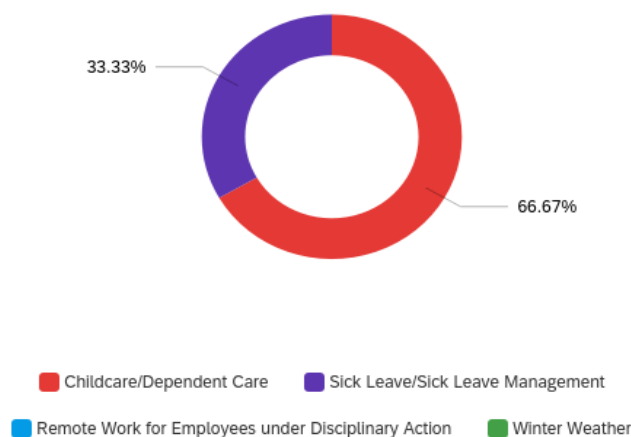
Percent of Policies Centralized vs. Decentralized?



Links to online fall remote work policy:

- <https://hr.osu.edu/coronavirus/>
- <https://policy.ku.edu/human-resources/telework-alternate-work-location>
- <https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/institutional-recovery-and-covid-19-return-to-workplace/>
- <https://sites.psu.edu/returntowork/>
- <https://campusready.ucdavis.edu/fall2021/workplace-reimagined>

Special policies regarding fall operations plans



Childcare/Dependent Care Policy Observations

- Flexible schedule allows for the ability to work around childcare needs
- Employees with childcare issues/concerns should report these to their HR Liaison.
- Management may only consider strategies to deal with these childcare needs through COVID-related leave provided through CARES Act while available if appropriate for the job/role/eligibility.

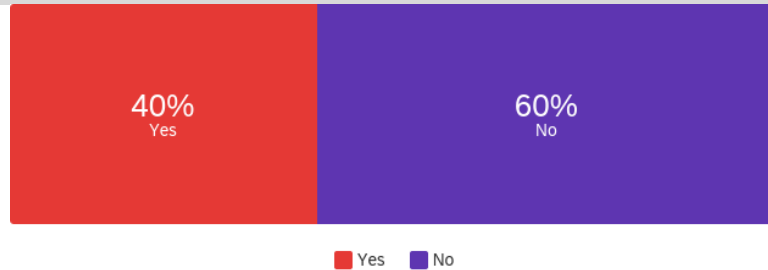
Sick leave/sick leave management Policy Observations

- Employees who are feeling unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose, should stay home until they recover. Individuals placed in quarantine but are feeling well may work remotely if they are able to complete their duties and their supervisor approves their working remotely. Those unable to work remotely or who are not feeling well may use emergency medical leave or sick leave.

Winter Weather Policy Observations

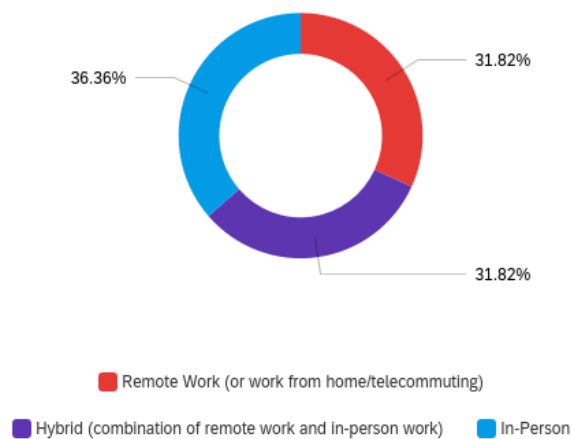
- Anyone working remotely doesn't get a snow day

Percent with Special Considerations for Remote Work as it Relates to Unions

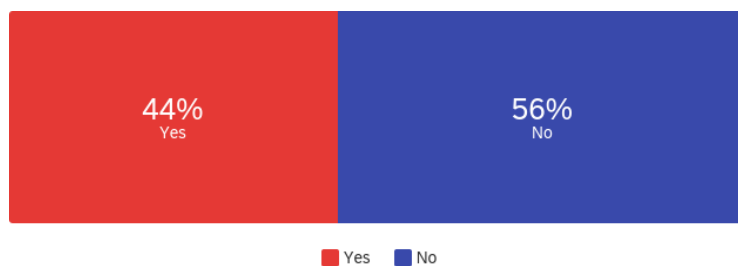


Modality Options for Returning to Work

What options does the institution have for modality of working this fall?



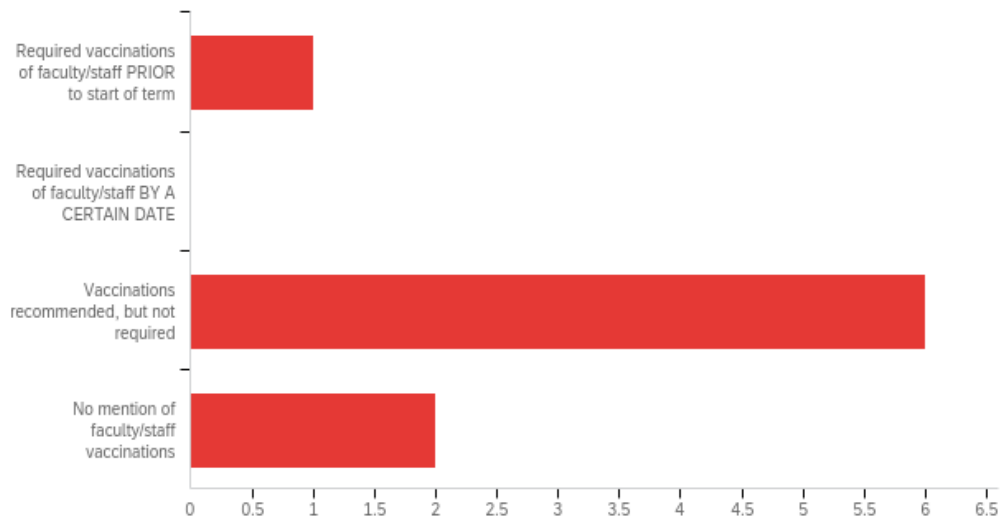
Shared Office Spaces



Shared Office Space Policy Observations

- Some campuses are in the process of developing guidance through a similar workgroup
- Guiding questions include, "how much work from home can our unit blend with in-office work and get the job done as well or better than before?" and "if it's consistent with the effective operation of our unit what mix of home and office would be best for me and my family" with consideration for shared space and hoteling "where appropriate"
- Part-time employees and part-time faculty (e.g., adjunct faculty, graduate students, part-time OPS, and student workers) should be provided shared workspace. No mention of full-time staff members.
- Coordination with their Facilities and Environmental Health & Safety office required

Vaccinations

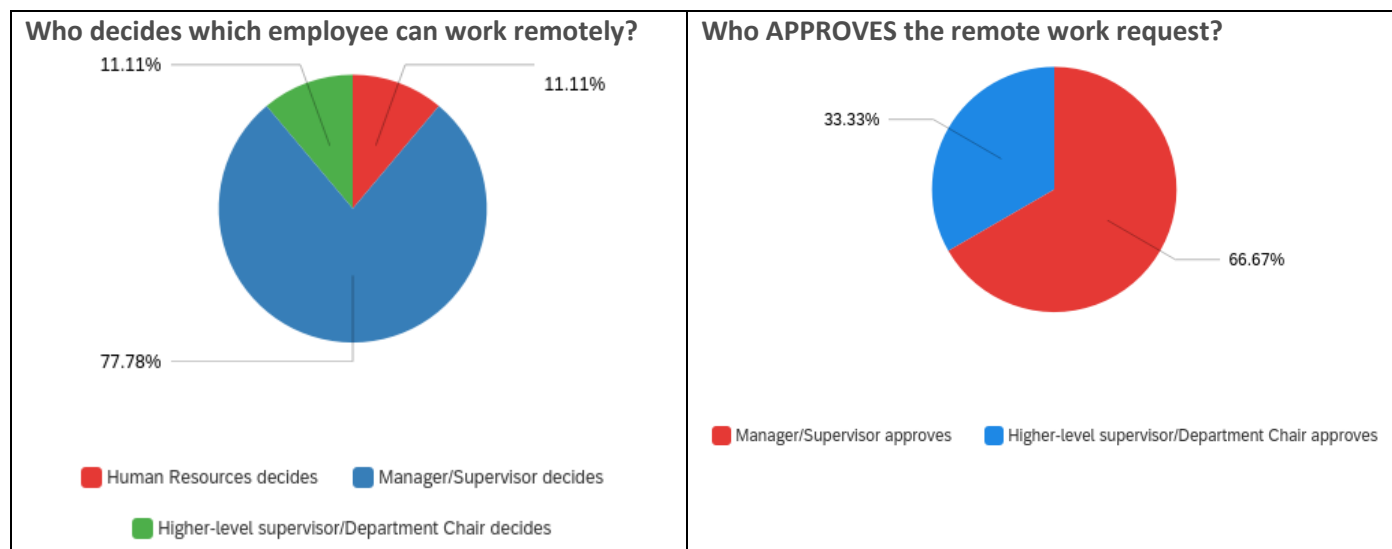


Definitions, Approvals, & Training

Definitions

Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone who has a primary location assignment off-site Routinely working one or more days per week at a location that is not the regularly assigned place of employment Jobs that are completely virtual or mobile to arrangements that enable an employee to work from home a few days per week or per month Alternative work location employee with an executed agreement Anyone working other than 8AM-5PM on campus is considered remote
Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific definition, but flexibility seemingly allowed
In-Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary location assignment on-site Employee not working from an alternative work location classification
Additional Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flex-time: varying an employee's schedule on a regular or non-regular basis while still completing the required 40 hours per week Compressed work week: working more hours on some days of the week to complete the required 40 hours/week in fewer than five 8-hour days Some campuses included information regarding a phased return from fully remote to in-person or hybrid work
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the terms on one campus was tied to whether the arrangement was short- or long-term Some campuses included information regarding a phased return from fully remote to in-person or hybrid work

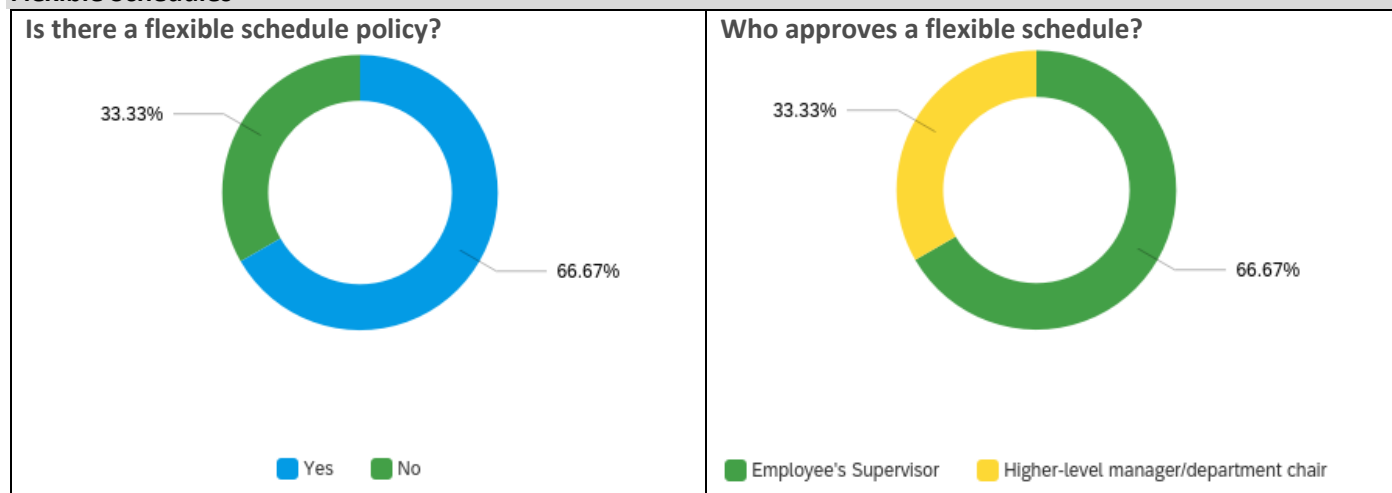
Remote Work Requests & Approvals



Guidance on Requesting and/or Approving Remote/Hybrid/In-Person Work

- 100% of institutions reviewed provided guidance on how to request and/or approve work modalities.
- description of the guidance for requesting/approving remote/hybrid/in-person work:
 - Decision Matrix
 - Standard guidance on websites and/or in employee manual/brochure
 - Prior approval required before returning to campus
 - Flexible work schedule guidance: flowchart to decide if there is a "business case" for a flexible work schedule. If request does not impact other employees, employee can complete request. Request is routed to the supervisor, then to the dean/director/dept. chair for final approval.
 - Request forms includes analysis of home workspace and length of remote work request
 - Supervisor makes decision based on unit needs
 - HR not an approver in the process, just supervisor and higher-level supervisor(s)

Flexible Schedules

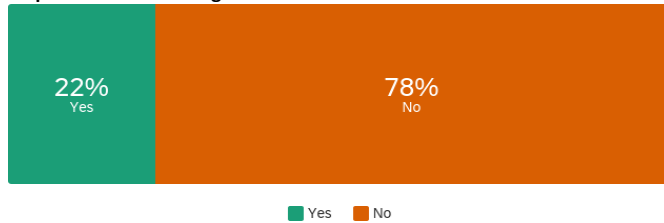


Additional notes regarding flexible schedules

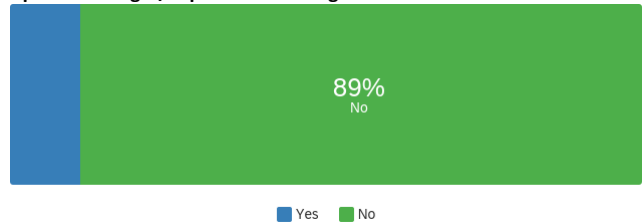
- Formalized agreement between staff member and supervisor
- Employee must show that they can meet their work responsibilities.
- The request must fit the work needs of the unit.
- Approval workflow (supervisor > higher-level manager > HR)
- Must work their full schedule (i.e. 40 hours) when working a flex schedule

Training

Required STAFF Trainings?



Required Manager/Supervisor Trainings?



Notes from Benchmarking

- Some institutions observed have a task force similar to ours.
- Flexible schedules are a method to reduce congestion on campus, save energy, and save space.
- Training and information shared with staff that is similar to UConn Promise
- COVID-19 screenings may be required, but not vaccinations
- One institution is requiring full face-to-face in-person for fall and will not consider family members at-risk for COVID as rationale for alternative modality for work. Those with approved flexibility are subject to their manager inspecting their home arrangements.

Links & Resources from Benchmarking

- Ohio State: <https://hr.osu.edu/coronavirus/>
- Penn State: <https://sites.psu.edu/returntowork/>
- University of Florida: <https://hr.ufl.edu/covid-19/additional-information-for-leaders/return-to-workplace-matrix/> (Matrix); <https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/alternate-work-location/> (Manager questions)
- UC-Davis: <https://campusready.ucdavis.edu/fall2021/workplace-reimagined>
- UTA (Job Considerations document uploaded to Qualtrics)
- KU (Telework policy uploaded to Qualtrics)
- Penn State (Return to campus booklet uploaded to Qualtrics)

Future of Work: Working Needs and Arrangements Working Group
Internal Benchmarking Summary

Members of the Working Needs and Arrangements Working Group met with stakeholders from regional campuses, student-facing units, and academic units to gain further insight into current practices and norms around the approval and evaluation of alternate work arrangements.

Seven open-ended discussions were held with managers in a variety of positions at Storrs, covering a wide range of functions related to the academic mission of the university and with student- and faculty-facing components. There was a shared perception that not enough support was provided for managers through the pandemic and that many decisions were left to their discretion without any structure on how this discretion was to be operated, leading to differences across units. Several key issues emerged from these interviews that managers wanted to see addressed going forward:

- Clear guidance and training for managers that covers:
 - How to make decisions about which jobs have a requirement that employees need to be on campus to perform their job successfully.
 - How to deal with disputes or anxieties expressed by employees related to their return to work alongside unvaccinated colleagues and/or students.
- Policies that were fair to the needs of parents/caregivers (particularly women) in the year ahead and that continued to support some of the flexibility that parents/caregivers have found to be helpful to their work/life balance during the period of pandemic-related remote work.
- Addressing that there cannot be a single return-to-work day, but that a staggered return is needed. This likely needs to begin well ahead of mid-August to facilitate a successful start to the academic year.
- Some structure to think about space and facilities, including how many employees they can accommodate in current physical office setups in the year ahead, and how employees will be able to use equipment in a hybrid work arrangement.
- Communications and policies that demonstrate a concept of “fairness” and equity in decisions on who will be able to work remotely going forward.
- Expectations for employees about the fact that they may be required to be physically present on campus at short notice for work-related needs and/or that initial hybrid or remote work arrangements may change to address business needs over time.

Individual conversations with UConn regional campus units at Stamford, Waterbury, Hartford and Avery Point resulted in the following recommendations for the future of work. These focus on a vision of the workplace that ensures the continued success of the smaller, student customer service-focused, regional campuses:

- Hybrid/rotational work arrangement positions were preferred for most employees at regional campuses.
- Fully on-campus positions were recommended for just a few employees, based on their on-campus functions, at regional campuses. (Facilities, Operations, etc.)
- Fully remote positions were not recommended for employees at regional campuses.
- Employee work arrangement decisions should be based on the position and its functions, not the individual in the position.
- Employee work arrangements should be communicated by Human Resources, not by supervisors, to avoid the perception of individual judgement or bias.

- A phased re-entry to the regional campuses is preferred, as regional campuses have had some employees who have not been physically inside the workplace for over one year.

Future of Work Committee: Working Needs and Arrangements Working Group

Business Need Criteria for Assessment of Alternate Work Arrangements Worksheet
Fall 2021 semester

Unit information and hierarchy:

Unit completing worksheet: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of supervisor completing worksheet: Click or tap here to enter text.

Next level reporting unit: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of next level unit head: Click or tap here to enter text.

Next level reporting unit (where applicable): Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of next level unit head (where applicable): Click or tap here to enter text.

Executive division: Choose an item.

Step 1: Analyze Business Operations and Needs

Consider the guidelines developed by the Facilities and Infrastructure Working Group in evaluating what your unit does and the resources needed to accomplish essential business processes. **Answer the following guiding questions:**

1. What are the essential functions that your department delivers? What are your department's primary activities?
Click or tap here to enter text.
2. What is the process by which the department does the work to deliver essential functions? Is it primarily collaborative, independent, or a combination of both?
Click or tap here to enter text.
3. How does the department execute its process or processes? What resources does the department need to execute the work process?
Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Who are the constituents the department interfaces with (i.e. other UConn departments, students, faculty, external consultants and contractors) and how frequent are these interactions?
Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Based on the factors above, what are your interim fall 2021 return to work plans for maintaining business operations for the department? Do you plan to operate fully on-site, part time on-site, or full time off-site?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 2: Analyze Positions and Develop a Staffing Plan

Develop a staffing plan for your department, based on the needs of your unit, by analyzing each position in your unit, work norms, and required resources and access. Consider the nature of the assigned work, needs, and expectations of each position before considering individual proposals. Review your staffing plan with your dean or unit level to ensure consistency across units. **Answer the following guiding questions:**

1. Examine your unit's organizational chart – what positions do similar or interdependent work? List out logical groupings based on function or title. (i.e. 2 program coordinators, 4 functional area directors, etc.)

Click or tap here to enter text.

2. What are the roles of staff who execute essential business processes? Do they work together or alone?

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Do staff who execute the work need to be together full-time, part-time, or not at all? Can all or some of the work be done remotely?

Click or tap here to enter text.

4. For similar positions (functional responsibilities, title), assess:

- a. What degree of in-person/face-to-face interaction is required (0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%)? Is virtual interaction effective?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- b. Can the work be effectively evaluated by the supervisor from an off-site location? Are the work products specific and measurable?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- c. Are the materials and equipment that the employee requires accessible from an off-site location?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- d. Are there any security and privacy concerns that need to be addressed if in an alternate work arrangement (IT, FOI, FERPA, HIPPA, etc.)? Click or tap here to enter text.

- e. Does the employee require additional resources to work effectively if in an alternate work arrangement (i.e. facilities, materials, specialized equipment, confidential materials)? Consider the recommendations of the Infrastructure and Facilities Working Group.

Click or tap here to enter text.

- f. Does the proposed arrangement enable the employee to perform the full range of their assigned duties?

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. What are staff concerns that may be taken into consideration?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 3: Analyze Individual Proposals

Based on the staffing analysis, employees designated to work in alternate arrangements, or those who wish to appeal their position's defined modality in the staffing plan, should **discuss and document the below guiding questions and document an agreement of the arrangement.**

Supervisors should assess how the employee works most effectively, what resources they need, and how their request intersects with the needs of the department. If the employee does not live in Connecticut, supervisors should direct employees considering alternate work arrangements should contact Tax & Compliance.

1. Does the proposed arrangement enable the employee to perform the full range of their assigned duties, including supervisory responsibilities?

Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Would an alternate work arrangement improve or remain constant standards of efficiency and productivity? Is the employee's work style suited to autonomous work?

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Has the employee's work history demonstrated the ability to prioritize assignments, meet deadlines, accomplish job duties with minimal supervision, communicate effectively with the team and customers, and manage time efficiently? Have the employee's performance reviews reflected these competencies?

Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Would an alternate work arrangement improve or remain constant the efficiency and productivity of the work group?

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. Can the supervisor effectively evaluate the employee's work if in an alternate work arrangement?

Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Does the employee have access to sufficient computer equipment and software if working at an off-site location?

Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Does the employee have reliable telephone and internet access if working at an off-site work location?

Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Can the employee's off-site work location meet required compliance regulations ([refer to OIE resources](#))?
Click or tap here to enter text.
9. Does the employee have access to an appropriate, safe, and confidential off-site work location?
Click or tap here to enter text.
10. Can the supervisor and unit provide appropriate onboarding and training to new or probationary employees in alternate work arrangements?
Click or tap here to enter text.

Step 4: Propose Your Departmental Makeup and Consider Impacts

Analyze the department, its position in the University ecosystem, and its impact on other departments. Consider how individual requests and assessments impact balance, equity, and fairness across your unit and the University. **Document your consideration of the below factors:**

1. List the proposed modality for each position in your unit. If all similar positions will work in the same modality, they may be grouped by functional group or other category. (i.e. Program Assistants – Hybrid, 3 days on-site, 2 days remote, etc.)
Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Consider the **employee and their employment terms and conditions** – does their employment classification impact their eligibility to work off-site? Does the alternate work arrangement impact the employee's established duties and the nature of their assigned role?
Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Consider the **employee-supervisor relationship** – how will an alternate work arrangement impact the supervisor's ability to evaluate and supervise the employee's work?
Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Consider the **impact on the work group** – how will the mix of work modalities within the unit affect its ability to effectively conduct necessary business operations? Are employees in similar roles treated fairly with regard to their proposed modality and schedule? How will the proposed departmental makeup impact the culture of the unit and the university?
Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Consider the **impact on the department** – are there other units/programs within your department that are interdependent? What are their proposed departmental makeup? Consider how you will continue to work effectively cross-departmentally.
Click or tap here to enter text.

6. Consider the **impact on the school/college or unit** – upon review at the dean and unit head level, is there consistency and fairness in the mix of proposed departmental makeups under your report?

Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Consider the **impact on other units in your building** – how will the proposal of your departmental makeup impact other departments in your building? Will shared responsibilities shift? Will building security and operations procedures need to be revised?

Click or tap here to enter text.

8. Consider the **impact on shared audiences** – Does your unit have shared audiences (students, faculty, staff, others)? How will your proposed departmental makeup impact their ability to access your services and the services of similar units?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Future of Work Committee

Re-Entry Rollout Working Group / Spring 2021 report

1.) SUMMARY OF THE GROUP'S DISCUSSION AND IDENTIFICATION OF TOP ISSUES FOR FALL 2021:

1. **Email communication:** The working group's discussions as well as inquiry with colleagues found that community emails from administrators have been an effective and direct form of communication with faculty and staff on updates. Recommendations in this area focus on making emails as short and easily navigable as possible.
 - a. **Recommendations**
 - i. Keep emails concise
 - ii. Use headings and bullets to make emails easy to scan
 - iii. Link out to information with further detail on a webpage as quickly as possible rather than providing full narrative in the email itself
2. **Reopen website:** This has been a regularly accessed site by many faculty and staff to access information on UConn's plans and resources as they pertain to reopening. We did discover that awareness of this resource is not as widespread as expected, as some even within our Working Group were unaware of it until our group discussions. Recommendations in this area focus on maximizing the site's utility as a one-stop shop to find information pertinent to a variety of stakeholders.
 - a. **Recommendations**
 - i. Update current Reopen site or build new site for Fall re-entry
 1. Publicize Reopen site early and often
 2. Include sections for:
 - a. Faculty and Staff
 - b. Students, Undergrad, Graduate and International
 - c. Community
 3. Topics to include – see Section 2 – Committee Work Output
 4. Include key dates (ex. Move-in, first day of classes, etc.)
 5. Use graphs and charts to share information efficiently
 - b. References
 - i. Models at [Northwestern](#), [Duke](#), and [UC-Berkeley](#), University of Maryland (<https://umd.edu/4Maryland>)
3. **Town halls:** The group's consensus is that these have been a valuable outlet for administration to share updates and seek questions from the community.
 - a. **Recommendations**

- i. Administration should continue to host town hall-style events to engage with various audiences of the University
- 4. **Messaging tone:** What we communicate is as important as how we communicate it. The group offered recommendations on context to be mindful of in updates to the community.
 - a. **Recommendations**
 - i. Messaging tone should keep in mind that many employees have not been on campuses in more than a year. Returning to campuses will be a stark shift for many – keep that perspective in mind.
 - ii. Messages should also keep in mind, where relevant, any contrast between state guidance and UConn guidance to provide clarity to employees on what pertains to them
- 5. **Message timing:** The working group discussed how much notice particular groups of employees will need in advance of any expected return to campuses. Managers will also need communication to help guide them in preparing for employees to return. Recommendations in this area focus on setting expectations on when decisions will be shared and resources that could be offered to help managers in their communications.
 - a. **Recommendations:**
 - i. Develop a timeline of deadlines by which certain decisions will be shared
 - 1. Absolute minimum for notification should be two weeks before re-entry, but recommend much earlier wherever possible
 - b. Managers need information to make decisions by end of May
 - c. Staff need information on fall expectations for their roles (in terms of hybrid, remote, in-person) by middle of June
 - ii. Develop communications template for managers that HR can share with information on how they can prepare for re-entry
 - iii. Develop communications template for managers' use to communicate re-entry plans and assignments with their staff
 - iv. Identify some communications that would be best delivered in a tiered manner – first to managers for awareness and preparation, then to full community

2.) COMMITTEE WORK OUTPUT:

- a. See attachment, Communications Topics for Re-Entry Site
- b. Communications templates will be made available to managers via HR

3.) IDEAS TO HOLD FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022 AND BEYOND:

This section summarizes issues the group discussed that may not be feasible for implementation by fall but are valuable to hold in reserve for conversations and consideration next academic year. These initiatives may be ones where they require significant financial commitment, significant staffing commitment, or a more involved project rollout, for example.

1. The group's conversations have been focused significantly on preparations for Fall 2021, and the recommendations as such have been designed to be reasonable for implementation over Summer 2021.

Topics of interest for re-entry communications

Teaching Modality

- What is teaching modality and when will that be finalized? Is fall modality set?
 - May 24 is date at which professors think they can choose their modality
- Can faculty seek exemptions? How?
- Can graduate students seek exemptions? How?

Work Modality

- Are we going to have to come back to work, when, what are the rules, who decides what?

Resources

- Making sure EAP and Ombuds are staffed up and ready for influx of cases/demands
- Guidance on how to refamiliarize to being among people again

Facilities

- People want to know where they're teaching and who to contact if problems with facilities
- Information on upgrades to campus facilities
 - Airflow
 - CDC guidelines on cleaning etc.
- Guidance on shared office spaces

Vaccines / Testing

- Are the protocols the same whether you're vaccinated or not? And be really clear on that
- Will UConn require students (and faculty and staff) to be vaccinated?
- Will testing be required or available in the fall?

Social distancing

- In classrooms, how will this work?
- What about close settings, like singers or musicians?
- With the governor eliminating social distancing requirements on May 19th, will classes be held at full capacity? When will this be announced?

General health and well-being

- Exemptions possible for certain circumstances?
 - Parents with children under 1 year old as particularly vulnerable
- Staying home when sick
 - Encouraging employees and supervisors to do this
 - Trainings and guidance?
 - Review of sick leave policy

- Encouraging students and faculty to support this
 - Can be particularly challenging for faculty with large classes to manage large volume of accommodations

International students

- Will they be able to get a vaccine?
- Can they travel here?
- Will they have quarantine accommodations at UConn?

Travel

- Will travel to conferences be allowed? Or When can we begin to request travel authorizations to conferences?
- Will UConn continue the use of the pre-travel information form for personal and professional travel?
- Current CDC guidance [Domestic Travel During COVID-19 | CDC](#)

Future of Work: Public Health in the Workplace Working Group Report

1.) The Working Group discussed the following issues related to employee leaves for Fall 2021 re-entry:

- a. **COVID-19 Leave:** Status of state-sanctioned COVID leave for employees working on campus who are unable to telecommute and become ill or are exposed to COVID or must address COVID related issues, such as childcare, eldercare, or transportation.
 - i. **Continue to follow the state's lead:** The Group recommends that the University maintain COVID Leave until the entitlement ceases at the state-level. At that time, the Working Group recommends that the University return to its standard employee leave practices. Once the state ends COVID Leave, employees who test positive for COVID-19 or are identified as a close contact should remain home at the instruction of the University following consultation with a medical provider, such as the UConn Health COVID Call Center. Where possible, such employees should telecommute with manager approval until cleared to return to campus. Employees unable to telecommute should use sick time until cleared to return to campus.
- b. **Telecommuting and Flexible Scheduling:** Telecommuting among many employees has been well received.
 - i. **Promote Hybrid Telecommuting and Flexible Schedules:** For Fall 2021, in an effort to minimize employee COVID leaves, both paid and unpaid, the Working Group recommends that the University promote telecommuting and flexible schedules as primary considerations after an employee illness or quarantine following contact tracing. Of note, employees should prioritize their health and disengage from work when ill. During Fall 2021, hybrid or rotational telecommuting schedules may help limit on-campus outbreaks, provide employees with flexibility, and allow for space-sharing on campus.
- c. **Employees Without Paid Time Off (PTO):** The University does not currently offer any PTO benefits to temporary employees. There was no consistent approach to offering leave benefits to this population among our peers and aspirants.
 - i. The Working Group recommends that the University maintain its current practices while encouraging telecommuting and flexible schedules, where possible, for temporary employees when ill or under quarantine orders.
- d. **Existing Policies and Websites:** A review of current University policy and websites will help determine short- and long-term needs for potential revisions or collective bargaining.

- i. [Alternate Work Arrangements](#) (i.e., Telecommuting) Policy (Consideration given to whether the current policy allows for wide-spread hybrid work schedules without diminishing an individual employee or organization's output. It is important to consider the value of in-person interactions for both employees and managers).
- ii. Workers' Compensation Policies/Practices (Considerations given to injuries sustained while working remotely).
- iii. Human Resources and University COVID websites (Accuracy and reflective of current leave practices).

2.) Short-Term Recommendations:

- a. **Pre-Existing Underlying Health Conditions and Telecommuting:** The Working Group recommends that HR identify a narrow list of underlying medical conditions that, upon review, would permit a vaccinated employee to extend full-time telecommuting during the fall 2021 semester. This recommendation only applies to employees who are able to perform their primary job duties via telecommuting. An employee's decision on whether or not to receive the vaccine is a personal choice. However, such an individual choice will not be sufficient reason for an employee to not return to work on campus.
- b. **Manager Guidance in Telecommuting Approvals:** The Working Group recommends that the University provide managers with guidance on arranging telecommuting schedules more generally, regardless of employee leave implications. The Working Group recommends that guidance promote equity, consistency, transparency, and employee input. Again, the Working Group acknowledges that the primary duties of some employees, such as those in Public Safety or Facilities Operations, prevent employees from telecommuting.
- c. **Classified Employee Telecommuting:** The Working Group recommends extending telecommuting to clerical classified employees, as appropriate, during the Fall 2021 Semester, with manager approval.
- d. **Employees who do not earn PTO:** The Working Group recommends encouraging employees who are ill and do not have available sick-time balances to remain home and, if possible, telecommute.
- e. **Leave for Contact Tracing:** Unvaccinated employees identified as close contacts via contact tracing should be instructed to telecommute or remain home using earned time (sick or vacation) if unable to work. Vaccinated employees should follow the guidance of their medical provider and undergo a test for COVID. For cases where the exposure occurred in the workplace, the University will cover any costs related to COVID testing.
- f. **Preparing for a Return to Campus:** As the University begins to return to greater on-campus work amongst telecommuting employees, it is important to prepare employees for this return and temper anxiety. The Working Group recommends that the University offer managers and employees steps to prepare for a return to

campus; this could be done through employee and manager guides ([see University of Maryland Return to Work – Employee Guidebook](#)). Such steps could include:

- i. Re-developing morning and evening routines, including preparing lunch the night before or the morning of work and getting professionally dressed for work while at home;
- ii. Preparing arrangements for children and family members, as needed;
- iii. Visiting campus, with manager approval, to assess workstation;
- iv. Encouraging vaccination.

3.) Long-Term Recommendations:

The Working Group maintained a primary focus on the short-term and, as such, all recommendations are achievable for Fall 2021. The Working Group intends to consider long-term recommendations over the ensuing months. Potential topics include the future of hybrid schedules that combine telecommuting (where possible) with on-campus work and the future of sick time usage (i.e., will employees have the opportunity to work from home when ill rather than use sick time?).

UConn
Future of Work
Infrastructure and Facilities Work Group
May 30, 2021

Charge:

The Infrastructure and Facilities Working Group will provide recommendations to Human Resources and the Provost's Office on best practices for managing flexible/rotational/shared work spaces in university offices for reentry in the fall. The group will focus on both individual office spaces as well as shared spaces that build community and connection across all employees in a unit and with those served by that unit working remotely as well as all technology needs, budget implications, and office support during these transitions.

Guiding principles:

The University shall furnish a workplace safe of hazards and employees shall comply with University standards set forth to establish a safe workplace. The University shall, where deemed appropriate, provide adequate resources for employees working remotely.

Focus:

The Infrastructure and Facilities Work Group focused our discussions in four main areas - Physical Space Planning, Technology, Training and Communication with the goal of providing guidance to both employees and managers. Recommendations and budget considerations (if appropriate) are provided below. The following assumptions were used in our group discussions – PPE will be available and used; social distancing is to be maintained; units will operate spaces as assigned, although how that space is utilized will be determined at the discretion of the unit managers based on service and program requirements. Not all employees will be returning to work all at once; therefore, remote work for some will still be required.

Physical Space Planning:

Areas of focus:

The Physical Space subgroup focused on following:

- Defining a process for managers to review office space in relation to service and program delivery in a socially distanced environment based on current State guidelines for offices;
- Confirming access to brand standard signage through University Communications;
- Reviewing recommended processes for managers' review of physical space in advance of employees returning to campus;
- Reviewing the University approach to monitoring building ventilation.

Recommendations/resources:

1. In order to identify a Back to Work plan that meets departmental needs, departments by mid-June should engage in a process outlined by University Planning, Design and Construction (UPDC) that aligns office workflow, traffic and process needs with currently assigned space in order to be physically distant. Information to be posted to the centralized reopening website is at the end of

the document. We recommend for public facing spaces, if appropriate, PPE continue to be available at departmental expense.

2. Space configuration examples are available through the updated UPDC guidebook located at: [COVID-19 GUIDEBOOKS for DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES](#). If managers have the need in the short term to convert common office spaces, like a conference room, to workspace for staff, they should first consult the guidebooks for examples of workstation configurations. Should managers have questions about workstations and want assistance in how to outfit a workspace, please contact the Office of Space Planning and Management at Space@UConn.edu for consultation.
3. Appropriate COVID-19 signage for offices, and common spaces can be found at the University Communications brand website: [COVID 19 and Reopening Templates](#)
4. In-Person Physical Review Space
We strongly recommend that managers (or designee) that are approved to be on campus should return to their campus work location as soon as is reasonable to physically review their office space and determine if any facilities issues need to be reported to Facilities Operations in advance of staff returning in August. Facilities-related issues should be reported through our Operations Center at 860-486-3113, through the myUConn app, or on the FacOps website at [Facilities Operations](#).
5. Statement about Ventilation (could be on EHS or FacOps website)
The Departments of Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities Operations are monitoring guidance from the state, the Center for Disease Control, and other public health and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) standard setting organizations with regards to COVID-19 mitigation strategies for HVAC systems. Currently, the view is that HVAC systems in most non-medical buildings play only a small role in infectious disease transmission, including COVID-19, however they provide the greater benefit of supplying filtered air to allow dilution and lower potential airborne concentration in a space. The current guidance from the State on reopening offices, is to “increase ventilation rates and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system where possible.” The focus is on leveraging dilution ventilation to help mitigate virus transmission, which Facilities is actively doing.
Ventilations statement regarding Classrooms:
Although not required, out of an abundance of caution and to provide an elevated level of comfort, Facilities Operations will be supplying stand-alone filtration units for all classrooms and teaching labs that do not have the mechanical means to bring in outside fresh air via the building ventilation system. A list of those rooms is available at the link: (once posted, we’ll provide the link).

Budget Considerations:

- If guidance calls for it, PPE and appropriate signage should continue to be provided from centralized resources.
- Redesign of space and purchases related to occupancy of spaces are the financial responsibility of individual departments.

Technology:

Areas of focus:

The Technology subgroup focused on what technology employees need to work effectively both on- and off-campus. The University has the systems and services in place to give our employees the flexibility to work effectively from many locations. Cloud-hosted email and file storage, web conferencing, a learning management system, and other online services only require a device with an Internet connection and

modern browser. The University should evolve some services to extend support and enable more seamless collaboration among on-site and remote employees. Other factors need to be considered and addressed, such as bandwidth and devices, which influence individuals' experiences and their engagement and collaboration with colleagues.

Recommendations/Resources:

1. University Departments should consult with ITS to discuss their specific IT needs to serve their populations. To allow for proper planning it is the recommendation of this group to have a phased in return to campus.
2. Employees need an adequate device and network connectivity to fully use university IT resources and services. We recommend:
 - Adoption of devices standards to ensure access and full use of university IT resources - [Device Requirements for Instructors and Staff](#)
 - Minimum network connectivity standards for remote workers
3. Employees should use university-provided systems and services for institutional activities for secure access and flexible access to files. These services include:
 - Utilization of University available web conferencing platforms – Webex and Microsoft Teams
 - Standardized file storage - [OneDrive](#)
4. Employees and departments should follow security best practices to protect individual and university data and assets. This involves:
 - Mandatory updates for University owned devices - [Security Best Practices for Telecommuting](#)
 - Departmental diligence with tracking inventory through Asset Panda – [Inventory Control](#)

Budget Considerations:

Departments should utilize the biannual workstation lifecycle program to maximize purchasing power and pricing for departmental device purchases. [Purchase Workstations through Lifecycle Program](#)

5. Voice over IP (VOIP) would enable departments to deploy technology that allows employees to initiate and answer phone calls from their published phone number from any location. This evolution requires an investment in infrastructure and the widespread adoption of VOIP technology.

Training:

Areas of focus – The Training subgroup focused on training and cleaning procedures needed to create a safe working environment for all employees. Through a review of existing resources and discussion with staff of Environmental Health and Safety it was determined that the University has provided adequate resources in this area.

Recommendations/Resources – it is recommended that the University guidelines for training and cleaning be updated to reflect current CDC and State guidelines and Return to Campus training continue to be required by University employees. Signage and Communications should be updated to reflect changes in process an educational tool for employees who may have been previously approved to Return to Campus or Return to Research.

Managers and employees should familiarize themselves with the vast resources available through EHS including information on tutorials on home ergonomics. [EHS COVID Resources](#)

Budget Considerations –

If updated guidance calls for it, cleaning supplies should continue to be centrally provided for work and classroom spaces.

Communication:

Area of focus: Topics listed below are for consideration for broader communication regarding the review and preparation of space and technology needs to 1) managers to help them understand their role in preparing for returning to campus, and 2) information for all employees.

1. Recommendations of topics to share with Managers:

- Process and timing of when and how to determine who should return based on program/service needs and space considerations.
- Information to Managers about how to evaluate space given physical distance parameters. Using UPDC guidance, review unit process, determine staff who need to return to campus and align those needs with current space limitations. Adjust staffing presence to meet process needs and the corresponding space availability. Decision regarding those who can work remotely is up to Manager versus those that are required to work remotely/hybrid based on space limitations.
- Ask managers to review space in person as soon as possible to determine if any issues need to be reported to Facilities Operations in advance of staff returning in August.
- How best to engage staff regarding expectation setting of returning to work vs hybrid work.
- Cleaning requirements of office spaces – clarify Facility Operations’ responsibility vs office staff responsibility
- Information on technology requirements for those continuing to work remotely and what is required for hybrid work (see technology section for specifics).
- Consideration of lead times necessary for purchasing appropriate IT equipment.

2. Recommendations of topics to share with all employees:

- Communication to all staff about expectations regarding returning to work this summer (what the process will look like for determining how/when staff will return to campus).
- EHS Training requirements for returning to campus – including what is personal responsibility for maintaining a safe environment.
- Communication to all employees regarding University technology standards so everyone is clear about what software/hardware and internet access needs are required to work remotely and to connect to others working on-site.

Ideas to Hold for Academic Year 2021-2022 and Beyond:

Over the next academic year, the Infrastructure and Technology sub group plans to focus their discussions on the long term needs of University technology and physical space planning. With a goal to provide guidance along with budget implications.

Discussion regarding technology will include a review of remote desktop connectivity and license agreements in support of remote work. Additionally, the group will consider the need for a consistent IT supported configuration for conference rooms and the possibility of centralized scheduling for this type of space.

The group plans to provide guidance for physical space planning. This guidance should include a process for how and when a unit should engage staff in the review of long-term office space and use and for determining the benefit and cost to working on-site and remotely.

Additional Resources

Information available on Reopening Website or UPDC on how to review space:

- a What is the end product that each department delivers? What does the department produce that is of value to the University? What is the business need to produce it?
- b What is the process by which the department does the work to deliver the end product?
- c How does the department execute its process or processes?
- d What are the roles of staff who execute the process? Do they work together or alone? .
- e What are the department's needs for execution of the work process?
- f Do staff who execute the work need to be together full time, part time, or not at all? Can all or some of the work be done remotely?
- g What are staff concerns that may be taken into consideration?
- h Is there a space consequence for the Back to Work plan?
 - (a) Physical attributes of the space must be considered:
 - (b) What is the current office set up (individual and group space, i.e., cubicles)?
 - (c) How are common spaces utilized (conference rooms, copiers/printer locations, kitchens, breakrooms, reception/waiting areas)?
 - (d) Using distancing guidelines, how many employees can occupy any one space? (see UPDC guidebooks for common configurations at [COVID-19 GUIDEBOOKS for DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES](#))
 - (e) What are the total number of employees that can be in the office at any one time?
 - (f) Keep in mind there is no temporary storage for furniture available
- a After the above analysis, formulate an initial projection for a Back to Work plan that considers who should be on-site full time, who should be work in a hybrid model (part time on-site/part time remote), or full time remote. Is the projection different for multiple units within a department?
- b Periodic Review - the interim Back to Work plan will need to be evaluated on an ongoing basis