Manager Considerations for Workspace and Work Options

April 2021

Overview
The overall aim of campus reactivation planning is to offer safe and more robust in-person experiences to faculty, staff, students, patients and visitors. The below questions and guidance will assist leaders and managers in recommending, determining, and communicating how, when and where individuals and/or teams will function within their designated workspaces. These considerations should be used in conjunction with the flexible work policy and decision-making criteria.

Pre-Planning: Building Recommendations

- Confirm if there are workspace and work options expectations from college/unit deans or senior leaders or their designee.
- Begin conversations early with your Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) or Human Resources Consultant (HRC) including obtaining guidance and sharing final plans for tracking and consistency purposes.
- Review Safe and Healthy Website Guidance including physical distancing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and hygiene requirements and best practices.
- Assess area’s workspace, workflow, constituent flow, and work priorities to determine if there is adequate spacing (minimum 6’) to maintain the required physical distancing and ultimately the number of employees able to return.
  - Inventory available workspaces and determine if re-engineering is required to ensure adequate distancing.
  - Assess common areas including break rooms, storage spaces, and common workspaces to ensure adequate distancing between employees can be maintained.
  - Consider meal break location needs for employees in shared office spaces. Units are required to designate specific meal areas which meet Safe and Healthy Guidance.
  - Review available inventory of PPE, cleaning and hygiene resources and ensure employees will have access to adequate supplies when onsite as well as adequate signage encouraging safe and health habits and practices.
  - Ensure the population of facilities reduces traffic and density where possible.
  - Review guidance for meeting options under the Safe and Healthy meeting protocols; units should first consider if in-person meetings are necessary.
- Assess the appropriateness of workplace options based on college/unit leadership expectations and in collaboration with employees.
  - Assess Key administrative services (e.g., customer service, counselors, people leaders, IT) and determine which of those services need to have an in-person, onsite presence.
  - Refer to Manager Guidelines and Policy 6.12 Flexible Work documents to assist with evaluating individual and/or team-based workplace options (e.g., on campus, remote, hybrid)
Decide work options that may be temporary based on the considerations outlined in this document. Re-evaluate as Safe and Healthy guidance evolves.

For individuals and teams whose work is desired to be in-person or onsite but other flexible work options need to be considered (e.g., renting additional space or working remotely on campus in other space), make those decisions in accordance with the Manager Guidance in the Flexible Work Policy.

Consider all Information Technology (IT) needs for employees. Take note of IT needs both within existing spaces, proposed shared workspaces, and remote workspaces.

- Establish IT expectations for transport of equipment between onsite and off-site work locations and/or returning equipment to campus workspaces.
- Discuss IT expectations when employees are sharing workspaces.

**Pre-Planning: Making Determinations**

- Have the appropriate college/unit Senior Leaders and HRBPs/HRCs been engaged in this conversation? If not, please share recommendations with appropriate leaders.
- Based on the 6 feet all around guidelines from the Safe and Healthy Guidance consider the following questions as you plan your workspace and facilities:
  - Do your current workspaces align with the 6 feet all around guidance?
  - Are you able to provide a designated eating area that aligns with the guidance?
  - Have you identified supplies such as PPE materials and kits?

  If you answered ‘no’ to any of the above:
  - What would need to be done to reengineer the workspace layout? Who would need to be involved in coordinating a workspace redesign (e.g., senior leader, building/facility coordinator, etc.)?
  - Is there an option to utilize current or create swing space and/or for team members to rotate days in the office that would align with established guidelines?
  - Who should be assigned to ensure needed PPE materials and kits are provided?

- Do the recommendations consider both individual and team-based plans and workplace options?
- Have the recommendations included both short-term (Autumn 2021) and long-term (beyond Autumn 2021) plans?
- Has a transition and communication timeline been established (for individuals and teams)?

**Implementation: Communication**

- Communicate with employees 60-90 days prior to intended transition date (even if workplace option remains the same). Ensure they understand expectations and new workplace options.
- Discuss space options and limitations with employees prior to their return so they may plan their work accordingly. Establish team meeting expectations for those both on-site and off-site as well as those working hybrid options.
- Establish a timeline and process for ongoing assessment of workplace options.
- Be available to your employees to answer any questions about the workspace, workflow or work options.
- Continue to engage with the individuals and/or teams to evaluate the work as on-site campus work evolves.
- Prepare early to either renew or end Flexible Work Arrangement agreements either at six, nine or 12 months after implementation as defined in the agreement and your unit’s plan.
- Prepare early for agreements that will not be renewed due to long term operational needs as Safe and Healthy guidance changes. Allow no less than 30 days’ notice to employees to prepare to transition back to onsite work or another workplace option.
- Ensure ongoing connection with employees by conducting regular check-ins to discuss their challenges, concerns, or questions. Offer support during this transition and contact your HRBP or HR Consultant for any additional assistance needed addressing concerns or answering questions.
Continue to allow employees to utilize leave time to consult with their health care provider, monitor symptoms, self-quarantine or self-isolate during a possible or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure.

- When possible, discuss and implement short-term workplace options.
- Implement a communication plan to remind employees of expectations and to convey any updates or changes.

Resources
Flexible work policy 6.12
Flexible work definitions
Sample communication message template
Safe and Healthy website
Flexible work agreement
Flexible work manager guidelines and timeline
Flexible work employee guidelines