

ROCKY VISTA UNIVERSITY

# MANAGER'S GUIDE



## RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

## Rocky Vista University: Manager's Guide for Returning to the Workplace

### Table of Contents

1. Return to Work Guidance for Managers
2. Manager Checklist
3. Addressing Employee Fears
4. Handling Employee Refusals to Work
5. Maintaining Healthy Environments
6. Phased Staffing
7. Determine Which Positions Can Work Remote
8. Telecommuting Guidance
9. Manager Expectations
10. Appendix
  - a. Determine Remote Positions Form
  - b. References

### Return to Work Guidance for Managers

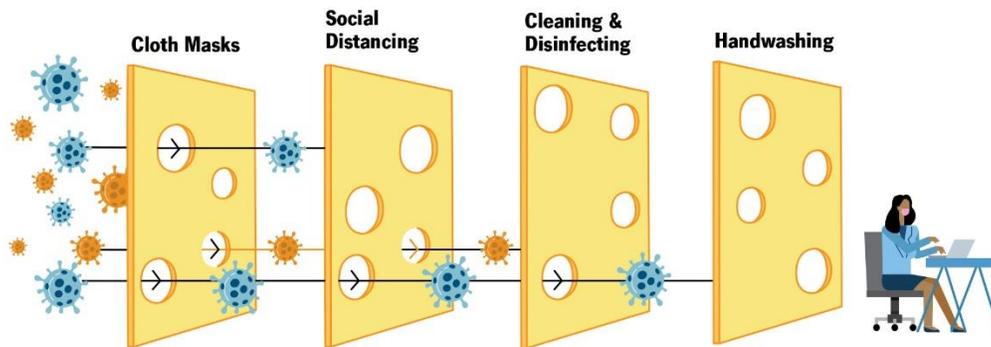
Once a phased reopening plan has been approved by the CRT, managers can use this information for guidance as faculty and staff begin to physically return to the workplace.

Managers play a crucial role in our continued commitment to find creative solutions, remain flexible, and fulfill the University's mission while ensuring the health and well-being of employees. During the phased re-opening of the University, managers' leadership will be vital.

This guidance applies to early stages of the phased re-opening and to additional stages. Refer to this guidance once a phased re-opening plan has been approved for your department. Please note that this guidance may change, based on changing circumstances or new local or federal guidance. Managers are expected to remain informed as changes are made.

Managers should encourage and enforce strict adherence to RVU's safety guidelines as published in our CRT documents. Further, managers are expected to model the behavior of adhering to such guidelines, which include social distancing, frequent handwashing, staying home when sick, and use of cloth face coverings as needed. Remember, you represent RVU at all times and should always lead by example. As we reopen the campuses, be ready to adjust plans based on COVID-19 case data or updated local or federal guidance as needed. This paced and flexible approach supports our vision for the upcoming fall semester and beyond.

In 1990, James Reason, PhD, introduced the “**Swiss Cheese Model**” that has been adopted to improve safety across many industries. In any work setting, there are inherent risks. Most of the time these risks are never realized because safeguards are in place to prevent them. These safeguards are represented in his model as multiple layers of Swiss cheese. However, every process has “holes” that, under the right circumstances, can line up and lead to an error, accident or “hazard” as Reason described it.



The COVID-19 pandemic requires multiple layers of protection to keep the workplace safe. These layers of Swiss cheese serve as safeguards for our organization and our people. When used together consistently, the holes (or weaknesses) in any single layer of protection should be offset by the strengths of another layer of intervention.

## **Manager Checklist**

- Support those in high risk categories of moderate to severe chronic illnesses or over the age of 65 to continue working remotely, when requested. Additional steps should be taken to avoid gatherings of multiple people and all other situations of potential exposures, including travel, as requested by the employee.
- Phased return of employees will depend on the size and needs of the department as well as which positions are identified as effective remote or at home. Numbers of employees are also dependent upon availability of PPE, support for increased environmental cleaning, and availability of employee health care.
- Attempt to stagger shifts to reduce the number of people in the workplace at the same time.
- Gauge employee willingness to volunteer to be the first to return and prioritize those with the greatest ability/desire to return, while paying attention to high risk individuals.

- Allow those who can work effectively from home to be the last to return and/or delay their return to the campus as much as possible.
- Promote and role model prevention strategies:
  - Wash hands frequently.
  - Maintain physical distance: stay 6 feet apart at all times.
  - Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if symptomatic
  - Wear a mask
- Conduct meetings electronically, even when working on campus to ensure safety. If meetings cannot be conducted virtually, keep participation to a level supportive of appropriate social distancing and wearing of masks or face coverings.
- Encourage single occupancy in work rooms and offices.
- Work with the Facilities team to procure sufficient disinfectant products and cleaning supplies for people in your department so employees can frequently clean their own workspaces.

## **Addressing Employee Fears**

Some employees may be reluctant to come back to campus and risk potential exposure to the virus. This is understandable, and their concerns should be taken seriously.

Before bringing employees back to campus, RVU will send out communications and provide training informing employees about the safety protocols we have implemented and the precautions we have taken. Employees should also be encouraged to work interactively with their manager in the event they need a reasonable accommodation due to a disability or pregnancy, to enable them to return to work. If an employee requests a reasonable accommodation, due to their disability or pregnancy, managers are expected to inform HR immediately. This not only assuages fears and addresses various legal obligations and liabilities, it shows that the University is sensitive to employee concerns, and cares about their health and safety.

In addition, to help employees feel comfortable and safe, consider taking these steps:

- Explain the Departmental/Program Re-Integration Plan that you've developed.
- Identify sources to answer COVID-19 related questions.
- Maintain an open "virtual" door policy to hear employee concerns, and work collaboratively with your employees to address these issues.

## **Handling Employee Refusals**

Some employees may refuse to return to campus. Before considering any adverse employment action for insubordination, you should take time to understand why they are refusing to return, and to potentially provide solutions. Contact your campus HR Representative to discuss further before taking any action.

### *Reason: Health conditions*

Employees with health conditions that are disabilities may be eligible for reasonable accommodation, including a leave of absence, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), or state laws. For example, an employee concerned about their own health condition due to a disability may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation; such as telework or a leave of absence, under the ADA or state law.

### *Reason: Caring for someone with COVID-19*

Under emergency paid sick leave (EPSLA) provisions of the FFCRA, paid sick leave may be available to eligible employees caring for family members under certain COVID-19-related circumstances. The employee may also be entitled to leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other state or local family leave laws.

### *Reason: No childcare due to school/daycare closures*

Under the FFCRA, EPSLA and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act (EFMLA), leave may be available to eligible employees who cannot work because they must care for their child due to COVID-19 school or childcare closings. Affected employees may also be eligible for leave under various state or local laws.

### *Reason: Worried about their safety*

Reassure employees that RVU is making their best effort to ensure our campus is safe. We are following federal health and safety guidelines as well as guidance from our state and local governments. RVU has implemented practices such as employee health screenings, social distancing practices, and increased cleaning and disinfecting practices to keep our campus healthy. If an employee continues to refuse to return to work, contact HR immediately.

## **Maintaining Healthy Environments**

As managers, it is important to understand the health-related guidance related to COVID-19, both for yourself and for employees. Help educate the members of your department.

- **Be aware of COVID-19 symptoms**

At this time, these [symptoms](#) include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Runny nose or new sinus congestion
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- New gastrointestinal symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell

Employees who develop symptoms should stay home and limit contact with others. CO employees with symptoms should utilize the [CO Department of Public Health & Environment Symptom Checker](#) website and UT employees should contact the COVID-19 hotline at 800-456-7707 or visit the [UT Coronavirus website](#).



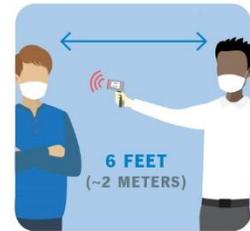
Confirming their **temperature is less than 100.4°F (38.0°C)**.



Confirming they are **NOT coughing or experiencing shortness of breath**.



**Looking for signs of illness**, which could include flushed cheeks and/or fatigue.



**Maintaining at least 6 feet distance** between the person taking the temperature and the employee.

- **Employees to Self-Isolate**

Employees in the following categories, per CDC guidelines, should self-isolate for at least 14 days:

- Anyone with symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection or known to be positive for COVID-19 infection.

- Anyone who has had close contact with someone known to be diagnosed with COVID-19. Close contact means being within about six feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (approximately 10 minutes, according to the CDC). Close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with someone who has COVID-19. Close contact also means having direct contact with secretions (typically coughs and sneezes) from a person with COVID-19.
- Anyone arriving back in the US after traveling in another country.
- Anyone arriving from a cruise ship (ocean or river).

Employees who have been in contact with someone who is self-isolating but not known to be infected with COVID-19 are **not** required to self-isolate but are encouraged to take precautions, closely monitor their health, and telework if possible.

Managers are required to contact Human Resources immediately if one of their employees has tested positive for COVID-19.

Managers must maintain all information about employee illness as a confidential medical record in compliance with the ADA and state anti-discrimination laws. If an employee tests positive for or is diagnosed with COVID-19, the employer has the legal obligation not to disclose the employee's identity. HR will coordinate any communication to other employees about a positive test result. When giving notice to other employees, HR will provide only a general notice without disclosing the identity of the employee. Note that employees often voluntarily self-disclose their illness to their co-workers, which is lawful.

- **Cleaning and Disinfection**

- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to keep their personal items (e.g., cell phones, other electronics) and personal work and living spaces clean. Encourage students, faculty, and staff to use disinfectant wipes to wipe down shared desks, lab equipment, and other shared objects and surfaces before use. Managers should address workspaces with Facilities that are not properly maintained.

- **Shared Objects**

- Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to [clean or disinfect](#).
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own supplies, lab equipment, computers) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and [clean and disinfect](#) between use.

- Avoid sharing electronic devices, books, pens, and other learning aids.
- **Gatherings**
  - Utilize virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held. Limit group sizes as much as possible.
  - Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county). Outside visitors must be approved by CRT unless we are in Phase Green where the department VP may approve.
- **Telework and Virtual Meetings**
  - Consider approving telework for as many faculty and staff as possible, especially employees at [higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
  - Replace in-person meetings with video or tele-conference calls whenever possible.
  - Provide student support services virtually, as feasible.
  - When possible, use flexible work or learning sites (e.g., telework, virtual learning) and flexible work or learning hours (e.g., staggered shifts or classes) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing (maintaining distance of approximately 6 feet) between people, especially if social distancing is recommended by state and local health authorities.

## **Phased Staffing**

RVU will phase in the return of employees over time in a coordinated process to ensure appropriate social distancing, availability of PPE (personal protective equipment) and screening.

RVU will assess expanded staffing based on mission-critical operations in support of student return, ability to control and manage specific work environments, and necessity to access on-site resources. These decisions, once approved, will be communicated by the CRT.

The need to reduce the number of people on campus (density) to meet social distancing requirements may continue as long as necessary. We will support employees to continue to work remotely as we work through the phases of re-integration.

Expanded staffing will be tightly controlled and coordinated to mitigate potential risks and ensure the safety of faculty, staff, and students as well as the communities we serve. The CRT must approve an increase of staffing levels in further support of critical on-site operations. Once decisions to expand on-site staffing in certain areas have been made, employees should follow the policies and protocols detailed in this guide for returning to work on campus.

As we phase in, the CRT will closely monitor and assess the status of the virus, as well as existing policies and procedures to mitigate it. If outbreaks re-emerge, or if local authorities release new guidance, directives, or orders, tighter staffing restrictions and reduced staffing may need to be implemented again. These actions will be reflected in the RVU reintegration phases, which are fluid and may be moved backward or forward.



## **Staffing Options:**

Once employees have been instructed to return to campus to work on-site, there are several options departments should consider to maintain required social 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 to reduce the number of individuals on campus and the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. These arrangements must be approved in advance by the immediate manager and can be done in 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 and possibly various times. Such schedules will help enable social distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.

Staggered Reporting/Departing: The beginning and end of the workday typically brings many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by 10-15 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet social distancing requirements. (See Enter/Exit Controls for further details as these efforts may need to be coordinated campus wide).

## **Determine Which Positions Can Work Remote**

As we continue to encourage employees to work remotely, it's important to identify which positions in your department can be effective in a remote environment and which need to be on campus. Managers are encouraged to continue allowing employees to work remote for social distancing reasons. You should also be thinking about how workload and workflows will likely change.

Think about which positions can be effectively handled at home versus on campus. Please identify one of the below categories for each position in your department. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your campus HR Representative. Utilize separate form to assist your efforts.

- Essential functions of the position can be performed without adjustments.
- Essential functions of the position can be performed with minimal adjustments that remain feasible.
- Essential functions of the position can be performed with moderate adjustments that remain feasible.
- Essential functions require significant adjustments making it unfeasible to perform at home



## **Telecommuting Guidance**

### Engage, Enable, and Motivate

- Communicate minimally weekly and regularly, even daily - ask first about employee's well-being.
- Provide key, clear expectations to your employees up front so they know what they will be held accountable for and how you can best support them.
- Empower employees to self-track accomplishments and share success/challenges with you and team to promote togetherness.
- Recognize often team and individual accomplishments-share the good news.
- Help particularly our hourly employees as it's a big shift to be working at home.
- Keep an eye out for employee burnout and overstressed workers. Remind employees who to talk to if they have concerns.

## **Manager Expectations**

All managers shall do the following:

**Emphasize** the importance of a phased return for the health and safety of our campus community. Employees should not return to work and should continue to telework until they are notified by their manager to come to work.

**Consider** staffing options: remote work, alternating days, staggered reporting, creative scheduling, safety & health habits in the workplace, and other protocols established in the reopening plan for their department. Enforce this plan and regularly communicate with faculty and staff on progress and/or changes as needed.

**Emphasize and enforce** work site adherence to all health and safety guidance by ensuring that employees:

- Operate as if they assume they are infectious and others are infectious; limiting interactions with other.
- Use designated building entrances and restrooms.
- Follow accepted policies and procedures with respect to health and safety (i.e. social distancing, wearing a mask in high traffic areas, washing hands, etc).

Managers should report an employee refusing to follow health and safety guidance to Human Resources immediately.

**Apply** appropriate leave policies:

- Send an employee home if you suspect they may be sick. This may be considered emergency sick leave under the FFCRA. Submit questions to Human Resources or refer to Q&A section on COVID-19 website.
- If an employee is unable to work because they are under a court-ordered quarantine, a doctor-ordered quarantine, or the employee tests positive for COVID-19, the employee may be entitled to paid sick leave. If an employee satisfies any of these conditions, contact HR.
- If an employee is unable to work or telework because an employee's child's school is closed due to reasons related to COVID-19 or the employee cannot obtain child care for a minor child due to reasons related to COVID-19, the employee may be entitled to paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave. The university encourages managers to exercise maximum flexibility in scheduling, including options such as flexible hours, shift swaps, and alternating work days. If an employee is unable to work or telework after

these options have been explored, the employee may be eligible for paid leave and is entitled to job protection for up to 12 weeks. If an employee requests paid leave, or you believe that an employee might be eligible for paid leave, consult HR.

- Review requests for leave and approve use of accrued leave as appropriate. Submit questions to HR.

**Remind** employees about available resources and supports such as the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) and FEMA Resources.

**Consult** HR regarding cases where employees may feel unsafe to return during their designated phase per department plan (examples: high risk, vulnerable populations, unavoidable exposure to elderly family members, concerns about a lack of PPE).

**Keep informed** of any changes to this guide or other safety measures the university is taking to ensure everyone's safety. Information regarding COVID-19 changes on a constant basis, so managers are required to remain informed of any necessary changes the university makes to this guide or other similar guidance or policies.

## Appendix

### **Determine Which Positions Can Work Remotely Form**

As we continue to encourage employees to work remotely, it's important to identify which positions in your department can be effective in a remote environment and which need to be on campus. Managers are encouraged to continue allowing employees to work remote for social distancing reasons. You should also be thinking about how workload and workflows will likely change.

### Identify Positions Within Your Department

The below tool will help you identify positions in your department to determine the feasibility if they can work remote. Please identify one of the below categories for each position in your department. If you have questions, please contact your campus HR Representative.

- Essential functions of the position can be performed without adjustments.
- Essential functions of the position can be performed with minimal adjustments that remain feasible.
- Essential functions of the position can be performed with moderate adjustments that remain feasible.
- Essential functions require significant adjustments making it unfeasible to perform at home

*Essential job functions* are the fundamental duties of a position that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation.

You may access your employee's job description on the Shared RVU drive in the RVU Job Descriptions folder. Once you review the essential job functions determine which category that position should be placed in and enter the position title in the chart below. If you are unsure, consult with your employee.

# ROCKY VISTA UNIVERSITY

Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Essential Functions Performed Without Adjustments	Essential Functions Performed w/Minimal Adjustments	Essential Functions Performed w/Moderate Adjustments	Essential Functions Require Significant Adjustments

## References

- Adapted from Duke University's Staff Guide for Returning to the Workplace
- Images with permission from Cleveland Clinic: Return to Work Amid COVID-19 Guide
- CDC – Coronavirus COVID-19 Website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- SHRM Return to Work Guide for Employees
- CUPA-HR
- RVU COVID-19 FAQs [Website](#)
- U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
- U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)