Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the 2019 Novel Coronavirus

Latest Update: March 13, 2020, 10:00 p.m.

This document will be updated as additional questions come to our attention. Please revisit it regularly.

General Questions -- All Employees

Where can I find the latest information about the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the situation at the University of Central Florida?

- UCF Safety: Coronavirus [https://www.ucf.edu/safety/coronavirus/]
- UCF Student Health Services [https://studenthealth.ucf.edu/]
- UCF Emergency Management [http://emergency.ucf.edu]
- UCF Human Resources Department [http://www.hr.ucf.edu]

What are the symptoms of the Coronavirus?

For confirmed COVID-19 infections, reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS viruses.

Are screenings available on campus for Faculty and Staff?

If you are experiencing symptoms you are advised to contact your primary care physician for evaluation. Faculty and Staff who are insured may request an appointment for care at the following UCF locations:

- UCF Health (East Orlando) – Call 407-266-3627 for an appointment.
- UCF Health (Lake Nona) – Call 407-266-3627 for an appointment.
- UCF Student Health Services (Main Campus) - Call 407-823-2509 for an appointment.
I have a staff member who has asked to wear a facemask when meeting with students, staff, and customers. How do I respond?

As a general precaution, at this time, wearing a facemask is not medically necessary. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that when close contact (within 6 feet) with others cannot be avoided and in areas where transmission of the virus has been confirmed, facemasks may reduce the risk of getting the illness. They should be used along with other preventative measures.

What preventative measures should I encourage employees to take?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

I meet with students, staff, and customers as part of my job responsibilities. What should I do if I encounter someone who is obviously sick?

As with the flu or contagious illnesses such as colds, maintaining a reasonable distance from the person is a starting point. Do not shake hands or make other physical contact. Use a sanitary wipe after the person has left to wipe those areas of your workstation that the person has touched. There may be situations in which the meeting can be re-scheduled to a time when the person is feeling better or the business can be conducted by phone or e-mail. Do not hesitate to offer this suggestion if it is appropriate.

How do I know if I should “self-quarantine”?

Following guidance from Governor Ron DeSantis and State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees, UCF requests all faculty, staff, and students who return from a country that has a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Level 3 Travel Health Notice self-quarantine and not return to campus for 14 days upon return. If you have returned from one of these countries in the past two weeks — or will soon be returning from one of these countries, please immediately contact Student Health Services at 407-823-2509.

If you have traveled to a destination covered by a CDC Level 2 Alert, you should monitor your health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the U.S. Should you fall ill, you should immediately self-isolate and contact your healthcare provider.

I know that official university travel has been suspended. Are there any restrictions on my personal travel?

Personal domestic and international travel is strongly discouraged during this unique time in an effort to best protect you and those around you. Please be advised that employees who travel to any destinations included in the CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days upon return.
Reporting to Work, Time Off, and Pay During the Period of Remote Instruction

I understand that all UCF classes are moving online starting March 16 and students are asked not to return to campus for at least two weeks. **Should I report to work during this period of remote instruction?**

All UCF employees, with the exception of special cases approved by supervisors, are expected to report to work as usual.

**What should I do if I develop Coronavirus symptoms?**

If you become ill with Coronavirus like symptoms, including fever, cough, or shortness of breath, contact your primary care physician, who will determine whether testing or treatment is needed.

**If you are ill:**

- Notify your supervisor that you are ill and will not be able to work.
- Stay home as directed by your physician or until at least 24 hours after you are free of fever, or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Avoid contact with other people and avoid social gatherings as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue and then throw the tissue away. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

**When can I return to work?**

You should stay home until at least 24 hours after you are free of fever, or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

**I have an employee who is ill and has come into work. I’m concerned about the potential for exposure to other people. Can I send this employee home?**

Yes. Of greatest concern is an employee with a fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit and a cough; this employee should definitely be sent home. Other symptoms (difficulty breathing) may also be of concern; the decision to send an employee home who is exhibiting these symptoms is to be made on a case-by-case basis.

In addition, advise employees of the basic preventative measures (practice good hygiene, including frequent hand washing, covering your nose and mouth with your sleeve if you cough or sneeze, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands) and post prevention and treatment information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) throughout your work areas.


**May I choose to go home if I don’t want to be exposed to a sick coworker who isn’t sent home?**
Yes, with supervisory approval you may leave work; however, you must use your own accrued leave or request a Leave Without Pay. With your supervisor’s approval, making up the work in the same workweek, working a different schedule, or working from home may be options available to you.

**Are high-risk employees required to report to work?**

No. High-risk employees are defined as persons greater than or equal to 65 years old; those with chronic serious illnesses such as hypertension, coronary artery, disease and diabetes; pregnancy; and/or immunodeficiency from medications or medical conditions. High-risk employees should work with their supervisor on plans to work remotely or take sick leave.

I’m not sick or at high risk, but I don’t want to come to work for fear of becoming ill. Is my supervisor required to approve my request for time off?

You may request to take annual leave; however, it is subject to approval by your supervisor at his or her discretion, especially if your department is short-staffed. It is important to educate yourself about the virus and its transmission. Visit the UCF web sites listed at the top of this FAQ document.

**What options are available for me during the period of Remote Instruction if I do not want to work?**

If your unit is open and you choose not to work, you may request to use accrued annual leave; however, it is subject to approval by your supervisor at his or her discretion, especially if your department is short-staffed. It is important to educate yourself about a possible outbreak and its transmission. Visit the University’s emergency preparedness web sites listed at the top of this document.

**If an employee is sent home, or stays home from work due to illness, how will he/she be paid?**

The following options are available, although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the nature of the job responsibilities and the extent of the illness:

- Use accrued leave; for example, sick leave or annual leave.
- Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek for non-exempt (hourly paid) employees with supervisory approval. UCF’s workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. on Friday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on the following Thursday.
- Exempt employees may make-up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same pay period with supervisory approval, or if absent for a full workday, may use accrued leave.
- Telecommute - from home with supervisory approval.
- Request a Leave Without Pay for up to ten days with supervisory approval. If an employee is out more than 10 days, the employee will need to request a Medical Leave of Absence. The Medical Request Leave Form is located at [https://hr.ucf.edu/files/MedicalLeaveRequestForm.pdf](https://hr.ucf.edu/files/MedicalLeaveRequestForm.pdf)
- Use a combination of the options above.

**Do I have to use my own accrued leave if my supervisor sends me home even though I think I’m well enough to work?**

Yes, you must use your own accrued leave or request an absence without pay. Depending upon the nature of your illness and your job responsibilities, you may be able to make up the work in the same workweek, or work from home with supervisory approval.
I don’t have enough leave to cover my absence from work due to the Coronavirus outbreak. How can I afford to stay home until I am completely well before returning to work?

To minimize the potential exposure to others, it is very important that you do not return to work until at least 24 hours after you are free of fever, or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

The following options may be available to you, although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the nature of the job responsibilities and the extent of the illness.

- Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek for non-exempt (hourly paid) employees with supervisory approval. UCF’s workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. on Friday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on the following Thursday.
- Exempt employees may make-up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same pay period with supervisory approval.
- Telecommute from home with supervisory approval.
- Request a Leave Without Pay for up to ten days with supervisory approval. If an employee is out more than 10 days, the employee will need to request a Medical Leave of Absence. The Medical Request Leave Form is located at https://hr.ucf.edu/files/MedicalLeaveRequestForm.pdf
- Use a combination of the options above.

I am an OPS employee and do not accrue paid leave time. What should I know about staying home from work?

- OPS positions are paid for the hours they actually work. Work hours are reflected on timesheets and approved by supervisors.
- Some OPS positions perform work that can be done remotely, as approved by the supervisor and depending on the needs of the department. OPS positions that can work remotely should be permitted to do so if necessary. Note that due to equipment and/or staffing constraints, some departments may not be able to accommodate OPS positions in remote work and/or may not be able to provide those OPS positions with as many hours as they might typically work on campus.
- OPS positions for which remote work is not available may have hours extended upon returning to UCF to mitigate the impact of lost work time. This option is available only if the supervisor approves it AND if the work warrants it.

Does my supervisor have to approve my request to work remotely?

At the current time, requests to work remotely are only being considered on a case-by-case basis for employees who are self-quarantined, at high medical risk, experiencing symptoms of illness, or granted an exception by their supervisor. Supervisory approval is necessary to work from home, but not all requests to telecommute can be approved. Not every position is suitable for telecommuting due to specific job duties that cannot be performed at home or operating requirements of the unit.

Is a telecommuting agreement required for employees who are approved to work remotely from home due to self-quarantine, high medical risk, or symptoms of illness?

Because the self-quarantine is not an ongoing recurring instance greater than two weeks, the telecommuting agreement will not be required. Employees who are at high medical risk or
experiencing symptoms of illness will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All remote work arrangements are subject to supervisors’ approval.

**Can my supervisor cancel my annual leave request that has already been approved?**

Yes, your supervisor has the authority to cancel any pre-approved leave request, especially in circumstances where there are serious staffing shortages as a result of illness. Your leave can also be cancelled if you have been designated as critical or essential personnel due to the nature of your job responsibilities. The terms “critical” and “essential” are the same as “emergency” referenced in the UCF policies.

**Can my supervisor schedule me to work hours or shifts that I normally do not work?**

Yes, you may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as critical or essential personnel or the university is short staffed as a result of an outbreak. We will attempt to provide advance notice if possible.

**If a large number of employees are unable to come to work because of an outbreak, are there a maximum number of overtime hours my supervisor can require me to work?**

In the event of a serious outbreak, we may all be needed to work differently to ensure the university continues to function. You may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as critical or essential personnel or the university is short staffed as a result of the outbreak. Supervisors will make efforts to permit employees to take rest periods and may use their discretion in scheduling additional breaks for employees working additional hours.

**If the building I work in is closed, can I work if I don’t have the Coronavirus?**

If you are affected by a building or unit closure or cancellation of classes, you will be assigned an alternative work assignment or location if possible. If no alternative work assignment or location is available, the affected full-time employees who were scheduled to work and were not at work solely because of the adverse working conditions will incur no loss of pay and will not be required to cover any absences due to the closing. If an alternative work assignment or location is available and you choose not to accept it, you will have to cover the time away from work with annual leave or leave without pay if your annual leave hours are exhausted.

**My child’s school or day care is closed due to an outbreak and my child is not sick. I have no other childcare arrangements. Can I bring him to work with me?**

Bringing a child to work is not recommended or advisable—and in many work areas it is prohibited. Decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the dean or department head.

**My child’s school or day care is closed due to an incident of Coronavirus and my child is not sick. I have no other childcare arrangements and must stay home with him. How will I be paid?**

Promptly notify your supervisor of the reason for your absence and your anticipated return to work date. In this situation, the following options are available although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the nature of your job responsibilities:

- Use accrued annual leave.
• Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek for non-exempt (hourly paid) employees with supervisory approval. UCF’s workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. on Friday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on the following Thursday.
• Exempt employees may make-up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same pay period with supervisory approval, or if absent for a full workday, may use accrued leave.
• Telecommute from home with supervisory approval.
• Request a Leave of Absence (annual leave usage for pay) or Leave of Absence (without pay) if you will be out more than 10 days.
• Use a combination of the options above.

Note: OPS hourly employees do not receive pay for time not worked. OPS hourly employees do not accrue leave or paid time off days.

**Does FMLA apply if I contract the Coronavirus? Does FMLA apply if my spouse or child contracts the virus and I must stay home to care for them?**

In most cases yes, provided the employee and family member meets the eligibility requirements. A qualifying condition is one that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider. The continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a healthcare provider or one visit and a regime of continuing treatment. If you are out for more than 10 days, you must submit a Medical Leave Request Form and a UCF Certification of Healthcare Provider Form.

FMLA requires the university to provide up to 12 weeks or 480 hours of unpaid job protected leave to an eligible employee to care for the employee’s spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; or for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee’s job. An employee is entitled to FMLA if they have worked for the University for at least one year and have worked 1250 hours in the previous 12 months.

FMLA information and resources are available at:

https://hr.ucf.edu/liaisons-and-managers/manager-resources/personnel-issues/medical-leave/

OPS employees are entitled to FMLA if they meet the eligibility requirements.

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**Student Employees**

**I am a supervisor of a student employee, should I allow them to work at UCF during this period of Remote Instruction?**

- Each supervisor needs to make an individual assessment of each student he/she supervises, including Federal Work Study students.
- Assessment factors include the [CDC Level 2 and Level 3 guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/traveler-levels.html) for international travel.
- All types of student employees are allowed to continue working while the university remains open. Supervisors should work with student workers to determine the appropriate schedule.

**I am student employee. Can I work during this period of Remote Instruction?**
Yes, you may work during the period of Remote Instruction IF your supervises permits you to work AND you do not meet one of the CDC criteria for self-quarantine due to travel restrictions.

**Can student employees work remotely from home?**

*Federal Work Study Students may not work remotely.*

Other students may be able to work from home while the university remains open if:

- They are required to self-quarantine, deemed to be at risk, are experiencing symptoms of illness, or granted another exception by their supervisor.
- Their supervisor deems that remote work is feasible.
- The supervisor provides adequate supervision for the student’s remote work.

**Can supervisors require students to work during this period of Remote Instruction?**

In general, most supervisors will not require students to work during this period of Remote Instruction. However, some student employees have contracts that require them to work while the university remains open. These students may be required to work and should check with their supervisors.

### Employee Services

**What assistance is available to me to help me cope with the emotional impact of an outbreak?**

UCF provides resources to help benefits-eligible employees and their dependents cope with these types of life events through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP), administered by Health Advocate. The EAP provides confidential, short-term counseling at no cost to the employee.

- **Health Advocate Toll-Free Number:** 877-240-6863
- **Health Advocate Website:** HealthAdvocate.com/members

**Will my state-sponsored healthcare plan cover medical expenses associated with treatment for the Coronavirus?**

Yes, you will have the same coverage that is currently available for any emergency or non-emergency illness. For additional coverage details visit https://hr.ucf.edu/current-employees/insurance/

To contact your insurance carrier, please visit the Benefits Vendor Contact Sheet at https://www.mybenefits.myflorida.com/health/health_insurance_plans