Guiding Principles

University at Albany policies and protocols for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic will be rooted in safety for our faculty, staff, and students and for the public with which we interact.

The primary goals for UAlbany’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic are to protect public health and continue the institution’s vital missions of education and research.

UAlbany plans are aligned and consistent with guidance from SUNY, local orders and ordinances within the Capital Region, as well as Governor Cuomo’s NYForward Plan. UAlbany plans also follow recommendations from the federal government, OSHA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the state and local Departments of Health.

Our success in limiting the spread of COVID-19 is also rooted in the personal responsibility of everyone on campus, principally:

- frequent hand washing and/or using hand sanitizer,
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow,
- not touching your face,
- wearing a mask or face covering,
- maintaining physical distance from others and monitoring your own health and not coming to work if sick

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

WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS & GUIDELINES
All employees shall comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of UAlbany workplace expectations and guidelines. Ensuring safety is a responsibility shared by the University as an employer and with the University community, through its actions and attentiveness for proper public health practices. Union employees should refer to their respective collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”). Where this document conflicts with or is silent on a topic that is covered by a relevant CBA, the CBA governs. Nothing in this document shall supersede any provision of a CBA. Employees working at off site and leased locations must follow these protocols in addition to those established at these locations.

RETURN TO WORK TRAINING REQUIREMENT
All employees must complete return to work training prior to returning to the workplace. (As a new requirement, this training also applies to employees who may have already returned to the worksite or have been working on-site throughout as essential staff.) This is a short on-line on-demand session that reiterates safety protocols.

SYMPTOM MONITORING REQUIREMENT
Employees who will be on campus must complete a health screening assessment each day they are on campus before or within one hour of reporting to work. You must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 or have had evaluation and clearance by your health care provider and HR to be eligible to report to work.
At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever or chills
- Congestion or runny nose
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If symptomatic, do not report to work (or leave work) and immediately call the UAlbany Medical Reporting hotline 518-442-1501 24/7 to leave your name and contact information if a State employee. Non-State employees should contact their HR Office. A Human Resources staff member will contact you with further instructions. Be sure to also follow call-in procedures. Contact your personal physician or call 911 if in distress. Your supervisor must keep any health related information confidential and only discuss with Human Resources staff.

According to the CDC, certain individuals may have a higher risk for COVID-19 severe illness. Those individuals may include:

- People aged 65 years or older
- People who are immunocompromised – Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Liver disease

The University is taking many precautionary measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection for all employees as outlined in this document. Employees who have been instructed to return to work on-site and have concerns about doing so should review the existing Policy and Procedure to Request a Reasonable Accommodation: State employees [https://www.albany.edu/hr/assets/ADA-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf](https://www.albany.edu/hr/assets/ADA-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf), or call 518-437-4700 or ohrm@albany.edu. Non-state employees should contact their HR office. Employees who cannot telecommute and cannot secure daycare due to COVID-19 closures should contact their Human Resources Office.

**STAFFING OPTIONS**

It is anticipated that the need to reduce the number of people on campus (density) to meet physical distancing requirements will continue for some time. At this time, occupancy of office building space is limited to 50% capacity. All or portions of support units that can continue to effectively work remotely are encouraged to do so. Supervisors will determine who must report to work to perform job assignments.

**Remote Work:** Those who can effectively work remotely to fulfill 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, which must be approved by the immediate supervisor, can be done on a full or partial day/week schedule as appropriate given the employee’s ability to complete their work from home. A Pilot Telecommuting Program form must be completed and on file with Human Resources. A new form is not needed if already on file.

**Alternating Days:** In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those who must perform a portion of their work on campus, departments should consider scheduling partial staffing on alternating days or mornings/afternoons. Such schedules will help enable physical distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces. This does not change the number of hours or the professional obligation that each employee is obligated to meet.

**Staggered Reporting/Departing:** The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 15 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas to meet social distancing requirements. (See Enter/Exit Controls for further details).

**Working Part-time:** Employees who wish to reduce their work percentage should speak to their supervisor. Human Resources can provide information regarding options, impact and procedures.
Health and Safety Guidance

Personal Safety Practices

**Face masks/Face Coverings:** Face masks or face coverings must be worn by all employees working on campus when within 6 feet of others and in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., common work spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Even if you previously tested positive for COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies you must still wear a mask or face covering. Appropriate use of face masks or coverings are critical in minimizing the risk to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. **A mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.**

A cloth mask will be provided by the Office of Environmental Health & Safety: [albany.edu/ehs](http://albany.edu/ehs)

**USE AND CARE OF FACE COVERINGS**

**Putting on the face covering/disposable mask:**

- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face covering/disposable mask.
- Ensure the face-covering/disposable mask fits over the nose and under the chin.
- Situate the face-covering/disposable mask properly with nose wire snug against the nose (where applicable).
- Tie straps behind the head and neck or loop around the ears.
- Throughout the process: Avoid touching the front of the face covering/disposable mask.
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands after touching your face.

GLOVES
Healthcare workers and a limited number of others in high-risk areas should use gloves as part of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), but according to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general University employee use. Washing your hands often is considered the best practice for common, everyday tasks. Employees should contact the Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) if there are any questions or concerns regarding the use of gloves at their workplace.

GOGGLES/FACE SHIELDS
Employees do not need to wear goggles or face shields as part of general activity on campus. Good hand hygiene and avoiding touching your face are generally sufficient for non-healthcare environments. Contact EH&S if you believe a face shield is warranted.

PERSONAL DISINFECTION
While custodial crews will continue to clean and disinfect high use common area public and work spaces based on CDC guidelines at periodic time(s) the additional care should be taken to wipe down and disinfect commonly used, public-facing surfaces used by multiple people. Accordingly, those offices or functions with high traffic service counter areas will be provided with cleaning products for wiping down surfaces throughout the day by employees. Contact EH&S for distribution of disinfecting supplies.

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

Taking off the face covering/disposable mask:

- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face covering/disposable mask.
- When taking off the face covering/disposable mask, loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear, or untie the straps.
- Wash hands immediately after removing.

Care, storage and laundering:

- Keep face coverings/disposable mask stored in a paper bag when not in use.
- Cloth face coverings may not be used more than one day at a time and must be washed after use. Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing detergent when soiled and after each shift. Cloth face coverings should be replaced immediately if damaged (e.g. ripped, punctured) or visibly contaminated.
- Disposable masks must not be used for more than one day and should be placed in the trash after your shift or if it is soiled, damaged (e.g., stretched ear loops, torn or punctured material) or visibly contaminated.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING
Keeping space between you and others is one of the best means of avoiding exposure to the COVID-19 virus and slowing its spread. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you (or they) appear to have no symptoms. Physical distancing is important for everyone, especially to help protect people who are at higher risk of getting very sick. Employees at work on-site should follow these physical distancing practices:

- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm’s length) from other people whenever possible
- Do not gather in groups
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

HANDWASHING
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
Guidance for Specific Workplace Scenarios

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/UALBANY TRANSIT
If you must take public transportation or use UAlbany Transit, wear a mask before entering the bus and minimize touching surfaces with your hands when selecting a seat. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol as soon as possible and before removing your mask.

PUBLIC-FACING COUNTERS
Work areas and functions that involve a high level of interaction with others (mail room counter, Registrar, library reference desks, etc.) will have plexiglass shields installed. Requests for plexiglass shields should be directed to the Facilities Customer Service Center through an AiM on-line work request as coordinated by your department’s Facilities contact. General questions regarding plexiglass installs can be directed to the Customer Service Center at 518-442-3480. Please note that the need for plexiglass installations will be based on volume of public interaction and the ability to practice other means of social distancing, such as floor decals for distancing, limiting access through appointments, remote service, etc.

WORKING IN OPEN OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS
If you work in an open environment, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet distance from co-workers. (Brief encroachments on this distancing, for example passing in a hallway, are acceptable and low-risk especially since wearing a mask). If possible have at least one workspace separating you from another co-worker. You should wear a face mask or face covering at all times while in a shared work space/room, whenever 6 feet distance can’t be maintained or as directed by your supervisor. Masks must be worn when engaging with the public, including students.

Department should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other coworkers, and customers, such as:
- Place visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line. Queuing decals are being developed by the Facilities Office for distribution to departments.
- Place one-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
- Consider designating specific stairways for up or down traffic if building space allows.

Office cubicle environments where a barrier exists between co-workers when in siting/desk position will provide proper physical distancing and no additional barriers, such as plexiglass, are necessary.

If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained or if a barrier exists between co-workers. Masks/face coverings should be worn at all times if more than one person is in a room and 6 feet distance cannot be maintained or if there is no barrier between employees.

Masks/face coverings should be worn by any staff in a reception/receiving area. Masks/face coverings should be used when inside any UAlbany facility where others are present, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel and in break rooms, conference rooms and other meeting locations.

USING RESTROOMS
Care should be taken in restrooms, when possible, to ensure at least 6 feet distance between individuals. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. (It’s always been good hygiene. That hasn’t changed).

USING ELEVATORS
When possible, use should be limited to one person unless all occupants are wearing a face covering.

Please use the stairs if physically capable. If you are using the elevator, wear your mask or face covering and try to avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Use a tissue if available to touch the buttons.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol prior to entering, when possible, and upon departing the elevator.
MEETINGS
Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. Meetings should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.).

In-person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal orders. For commonly used meeting rooms on campus, the University will establish and post revised adjusted maximum occupancy limits. For all other rooms, attendance at a meeting should not exceed 50 percent of a room’s capacity, assuming individuals can still maintain 6 feet of separation for physical distancing requirements. Where possible, and if necessary, Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables and/or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support physical distancing practices between attendees.

During your time on-site, you are encouraged to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone or other available technology rather than face-to-face. You can also use a range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Jabber, etc.).

MEALS
Before and after eating, you should wash your hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

If dining on campus, you should wear your mask or face covering until you are ready to eat and then replace it afterward. Eating establishments will meet requirements to allow distancing between each customer, including lines and seating arrangements. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Only remove your mask or face covering in order to eat, then put it back on. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support social distancing practices between employees.

LABORATORY WORK
Specific criteria have been developed for faculty and staff working in laboratory environments Reopening Research at UAlbany.

ACADEMIC SPACES
All protocols apply similarly to academic spaces (classrooms, libraries, etc.) including physical distancing, face coverings, and good hand hygiene. As the University continues to work towards finalizing instructional plans for the fall 2020 semester, additional information specific to academics will be communicated by the Provost’s Office.

Wellbeing – Mental, Emotional and Physical

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)
EAP is available to all employees with the goal of offering support and promoting a healthy state of mind and wellbeing, both in and out of the workplace. You may contact EAP by calling 518-442-5483 or visiting the EAP website (albany.edu/eap). Additional COVID-19 related resources have been compiled by EAP and can be found here: https://www.albany.edu/eap/links.htm.

New York State Employee Assistance Program Office
518-486-9769 or 800-822-0244

NYS Office of Mental Health COVID-19 Emotional Support Line
1-844-863-9314

NYSHIP (NEW YORK STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM)
Should you or a family member need access to your health insurance benefits related to COVID-19, here are the quick links that outline the coverage
and assistance you can get from your plan for State employees. Non-State employees should contact their HR Office.

**Empire Plan**  
https://www.empireblue.com/nys/

**CDPHP**  
https://www.cdphp.com/members/wellness/common-health-topics/cold-and-flu/corona-virus

**MVP**  
https://www.mvphealthcare.com/covid19

**Empire Blue Cross HMO**  
https://www.empireblue.com/coronavirus/individual-and-family/
At this time, entry to buildings will continue to be regulated. Your UAlbany Card is required for entry to all buildings, and you may not hold or prop open exterior doors for any other person.

Employee arrival and departures should be scheduled in 15-minute increments, if possible, to reduce physical interactions at building access points, hallways, stairs/elevators, etc.

Visitors will be limited on campus during this time.

Violation of these guidelines may result in the immediate revocation of building access privileges, as well as corrective action.