

Coronavirus Workplace FAQ (3/13/2020)

University of New England leadership continues to monitor the developments of the coronavirus, known as COVID-19. It is important that all of members of the UNE community are cognizant of the fact that, while this virus may not be a significant risk for each UNE member, it does pose a risk for some people. To ensure a safe and healthy workplace, we all need to increase our commitment to preventing the spread of this respiratory disease. All faculty, professional staff, and temporary employees (“employees”) are urged to take proper precautions to avoid exposure to or infection by COVID-19. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has information about the virus. Additionally, the Maine CDC and 211 Maine have launched a new option for Mainers to get answers to questions about COVID-19 at any time. This service is available by dialing 211 (or 1-866-811-5695), texting your ZIP code to 898-211, or emailing info@211maine.org.

Employees are asked to review the following workplace frequently asked questions (FAQ). These FAQ are subject to change as developments occur on the national and local level. Questions may be directed to the Office of Human Resources at the following email address: HR-COVID19Questions@une.edu. We understand that employees may be feeling stress and/or anxiety about these events. Employees should feel free to contact UNE’s Employee Assistance Program (1-877-622-4327) or log into www.MyCigna.com for help.

Since students will not be returning to campus, do I still need to come to work?

Yes. Even though the students will not be on campus, the University is open for work. All benefits-eligible employees should report to work as usual. Adjunct faculty and temporary employees will be notified by their managers about work schedules.

Will there be a reduction in workforce or pay?

Employees will continue to work their regularly scheduled hours and will receive their regular pay. Overtime pay may be impacted. Any changes to an employee’s work hours will be communicated by their manager.

Will there be any changes to my benefits?

No, there will be no changes to benefits offered by the University.

If I am well, am I expected to report to UNE as usual for work?

Yes, employees are expected at work unless they have:

- Been caring for someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Traveled to a CDC Level 2 or 3 area of concern
- Been instructed to refrain from attending work by UNE Human Resources or public health officials

Note: If any of these situations apply to you, please email Human Resources for further guidance.

What if I become ill with COVID-19, am I expected to work?

No. The CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e., cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be sent home immediately.

- Employees who have symptoms of respiratory illness must stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants)
- A fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) taken by an oral thermometer
- Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or they should sneeze into the crook of their elbow if no tissue is available)
- Employees with concerns or questions about their illness or seeking advice about whether to come to work should contact their primary care physician

What if I am caring for or living with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, should I come into work?

No. If an employee has been directly exposed to somebody who has tested positive for coronavirus, the employee should self-quarantine at home and follow public health guidelines with regard to monitoring their health, some of which include:

- Do not report to the office. If possible, the employee should try to assume their duties remotely
- The employee should contact Human Resources to complete a UNE COVID-19 Risk Assessment form. The employee should self-isolate until receiving clearance from HR to return to work
- The employee should monitor themselves for symptoms. If they develop any symptoms — fever, cough, or shortness of breath — they should contact their healthcare provider

Will I be paid if I am out of work sick with COVID-19 or caring for someone who has COVID-19?

UNE provides significant paid sick time for all benefits-eligible employees. Related benefits may be found at UNE Benefits. Employees who are caring for dependent children, domestic partners, spouses, or other related household members who are ill with COVID-19 are urged to use sick time if needed to provide care; visit the UNE Leave Benefits for additional details.

Note: During this period of time, the University will accommodate other household members.

How do I report my sick time?

Employees should refer to the Personnel Manual-Time and Leave Reporting for instruction on proper reporting.

Will I need written medical clearance to return to work if I was out sick with COVID-19?

In general, written medical clearance will not be required for return to work. (UNE departments with specific health and safety requirements may have different policies). This is being done to avoid overtaxing health care resources.

Can I return to work if I am returning from University or personal travel to affected areas?

Please refer to the UNE Emergency Preparedness and Response for up-to-date recommendations about return from travel to affected areas. If an employee is returning to work from an affected area, they should contact Human Resources for guidance. The employee should self-isolate until receiving confirmation from Human Resources that they can return to work.

If I am an employee who is considered High Risk, as defined by the CDC, can I not attend work?

Employees who have health issues that put them at greater risk, per CDC guidelines, should consult with their primary care physicians or health care provider. If their advice is that the employee should avoid contact with others, the employee should email Human Resources. UNE will attempt to accommodate these situations on a case-by-case basis.

How is UNE responding to the needs of Essential Employees?

As a 24/7 residential university, UNE rarely closes. Many employees must work on campus to provide services that are essential to residential life, campus health and safety, critical research, the protection of physical and intellectual assets, or the continuity or resumption of academic programs and operations. Additional measures and policies to support these employees are being considered.

Additional Workplace Guidance for Managers

- Employees must not be pressured to come to work if they are ill or need to stay at home to care for ill dependents. Additionally, managers and supervisors need to ensure that they are not pressuring otherwise healthy employees to not come in for reasons such as the employee's ethnic or racial background, home address, having cared for a sick family member (without any indication of COVID-19) or recent travel to unaffected areas. As described above, there is a need to stay away from work because of caring for someone confirmed to have COVID-19.
- Given UNE's interest in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all, managers and supervisors (with the support and involvement of Human Resources as needed) should ask employees who are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to go home and stay home until 24 hours after they are free of symptoms. In these instances, the employee can use their paid sick time. Please cooperate with managers who are taking on this uncomfortable responsibility for the well being of all.

Update Contact Information

- Employees should make sure that personal and emergency contact information is up-to-date in their Banner and U-Online account.
- To update emergency contact information, go to www.une.edu/hr/support/employee-support and complete the Employee Information Form. Submit the completed form to hr@une.edu.
- Also, please make sure to register at U-Online — UNE's emergency notification system.

Sincerely,

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