



COVID-19 | Summer 2021 Planning FAQs (as of May 6, 2021)

FAQs Related to the Guidance for On Site Activity and Work

Reference : [Pack Planning Guidance](#)

Caveat to all questions:

Planning models are predicated on [current NC State community standards](#) and evolving campus operation expectations. We expect that UNC System mandates, CDC updates and statewide Executive Orders will continue to change, and flexibility will be required in the coming weeks and months.

County Extension employees shall follow their local county policies on staffing offices, keeping in mind the safety considerations that have been provided by Extension Administration. This follows what we do for county holidays, adverse weather and other closings.

Q: What has changed that allows us to bring people back to work?

A: In line with the Governor's recent easing of COVID restrictions, declining trends in transmission rates, and increasing trends in vaccination rates, we are continuing to adjust our activities and parameters.

Concerns over COVID and community transmission still exist, but taking certain precautions mitigates the risk. With the promising trends noted above, like many workplaces and educational institutions, we are able to gradually increase the numbers of employees on site. Some workplace safety protocols have changed and some have not, as we continue to review safety and public health guidance.

We continue to monitor CDC, State and System Office guidance, and will make adjustments as new information is forthcoming:

- **Face coverings are still required at all times inside (except in private offices and in private residence hall rooms).**
- **Increased gathering size, workplace density and overall occupancy in venues.**
- **Risk understanding and continued education - as health guidance evolves from regulatory entities, new information will be shared.**



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General practices will remain in place:

- Maintaining distance from others, to minimize your exposure in general.
- Safe behavior expectations, include monitoring your health, staying home if ill; regular hand washing.
- Hand sanitizer use in general, especially in commons areas and high traffic locations.

Q: What is the current guidance regarding on site interviews and recruiting activities? Provided minimum SF/per person ratios are maintained, and community standards are adhered to, are departments now back to normal with regard to on-site / in-person interviews?

A: Onsite interviews and recruiting trips are allowed but remain subject to travel exception review and should follow the existing community standards. Virtual interviews are still appropriate.

Q: Related to the above, can we provide travel, lodging, meals, etc for candidates visiting from out of the area. (Again with eye on CDC travel guidelines)?

A: Travel exceptions and the review process will remain in place until at least July 6.

Q: Can employees who have been vaccinated work in a shared space? / Travel in a vehicle together?

A: Vaccinations are voluntary, as well as uploading vaccine records into the Student Health Service's Healthypack portal. At this time, vaccination status does not impact guidelines. Employees can work in shared spaces and travel in vehicles together as long as they follow current NC State Community Standards. Employees must wear face coverings unless they are alone and in a private enclosed office with the door closed. Employees traveling in shared vehicles must always wear face coverings with the windows down to ensure fresh ventilation. These community standards apply to all employees regardless of their vaccination status.

Q: How many people can travel in a vehicle together?

A: Current regulations allow for vehicles to be used at 50% capacity. Masks must be worn when multiple people are in a vehicle and windows should be opened for air circulation.



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Q: Can we require employees to get vaccinated before returning to onsite work?

A: **No. According to the UNC System there is a NC Statute that specifies vaccine requirements and COVID vaccines are not on that list. (per UNC SO guidance issued 4/29/2021).**

Q: Will travel to professional conferences be allowed beginning 7/6? Out of state conferences? Out of country?

A: **It is too early to know exactly how travel will be impacted. The travel exception process is still viable for domestic destinations and limited international destinations.**

Q: Can on-site meetings or interviews include meals? Face coverings would have to be removed. Is this allowable?

A: **Yes. Face coverings should only be removed while actively eating or drinking.**

Q: Will employees who work in cubicle spaces be required to wear masks all day? What about other shared/public settings (restrooms, dining facilities, etc.)

A: **Yes. Employees [must always wear a face covering](#) indoors unless they are alone in a private enclosed office with the door closed.**

Q: What if an employee refuses to return on-site, but does not have a reasonable accommodation that would support their continued remote work arrangement? They feel very anxious, or don't want to wear masks all day. What is the process, and who do we contact? Is this a disciplinary consideration?

A: **If a supervisor has designated this position to return onsite fully or in a hybrid capacity, the employee is obligated to do so unless they have an OIED-approved ADA or Religious accommodation. The supervisor can reach out to their District Director or Employee Relations for assistance with conducting the conversation. If the employee is currently working remotely, they should receive no less than 10 days written notice of the expected change in work location and/or schedule; and the employee is expected to comply. If the employee has extenuating circumstances that the supervisor is able to temporarily address, then a suitable work-around (flexible schedule) may be reached, but a total non-return is not an option at this time.**



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Q: Can I ask my employees whether they have been vaccinated?

A: No, the UNC System has made the determination that vaccinations will not be required for employees, so asking about an employee's vaccination status is not necessary. Individual employees may volunteer their vaccination status information on their own accord, but an employee who does not disclose their vaccination status may not be required to do so.

Q: Will employees who had a previously approved accommodation or exception be required to submit a new one for Summer Return to On-Site? What is the review process for these accommodations/approved requests?

A: Return to work onsite will no longer use the existing COVID special circumstance exception process. That process will close May 28th and only apply to work situations on or before July 6th. After that date, accommodations will need to be discussed with supervisors directly, in line with both human resources and OIED guidelines. Should you need ADA or Religious accommodations, please review [accommodation information](#) provided by the Equal Opportunity and Equity unit of the OIED.

Q: Although I enjoy working at NC State, I'm concerned about our ability to recruit and retain talented employees when neighboring employers, such as private universities and high-tech companies, offer full-time remote options or other competitive benefits.

A: Raleigh, and the triangle region, are certainly very competitive marketplaces for talented faculty and staff. This pressure will likely increase over the next decade. We are committed to exploring the merits of flexible work and its contribution to our university community.

Thanks to the advocacy of employees, supervisors and managers, and university organizations such as Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and the Council on the Status of Women, we have expanded employee benefits and offerings recently including implementing new [Paid Parental Leave](#), increasing partnerships with [child care providers](#), offering a new [Employee Emergency Loan Program](#) and refreshing [employee recognition and appreciation programming](#). We will continue to advocate for employee matters, with the hope that our fellow employees feel valued, supported and part of the NC State community. Please remember:



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- NC State continues to rank highly as a [great place to work](#), according to a recent Forbes survey; placing NC State as one of the top employers in the state and region.
- Our strong workplace culture depends on engaged employees, a vibrant campus experience and collaborations across all aspects of the university. As the Chancellor stated in his [April 23 Help Keep the Pack on Track video message](#), we know NC State students thrive with an in-person education, research and experiential learning opportunities. Likewise, our campus work culture values in-person engagement, provision of services, and collaborative teamwork.
- As noted in our employee recruiting materials, working at NC State presents extraordinary opportunities for more than 10,000 faculty and staff, supporting 36,000 students who represent all 100 NC counties, 100 countries and speak over 35 languages.
- Cutting-edge research, transformational student experiences, entrepreneurial public-private partnerships, a unified mission to support the State of North Carolina as a premier land-grant university - all present unique and rewarding employment opportunities at NC State.