Updated September 22, 2020
Changing guidance will be provided as circumstances dictate

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine plans to return faculty, staff, and student functions to campus in line with the University’s Return to Campus Policy and in steps designed to support the reactivation of the research and educational enterprises while responsibly prioritizing the health of our community.

Feinberg Steps for Return to Work

Reactivation of campus-based faculty, staff, and student activity will occur in steps with an incremental ramp-up of in-person presence extending through the Fall. As a general premise, faculty, staff, and students who can effectively work from home may continue to do so; this will allow the returning workforce to rehabit our facilities at a density appropriate to need. Until further guidance is provided, no one can be required to come to campus unless they are designated as essential personnel.

Step 1 – Shelter-in-place except for essential personnel.

Step 2 – May include staff whose participation in the research or educational enterprises is significantly limited by remote working conditions, and for whom a return to campus is critical to fulfilling core job responsibilities in laboratory, clinical research environments, classroom, and other instructional settings. Given the variety and scope of research and educational activities, faculty and leadership are responsible for tailoring guidelines and recommendations based on location, type of space, number and type of personnel, and requirements of their work spaces.

Step 3 – May include staff in positions with leadership responsibilities that were performed on a remote basis. With the ramp-up of research and education activities during Step 2, restoring a regular campus-based leadership presence across units and departments will become more critical to supporting Feinberg’s mission. Consideration will be given at the departmental level to office configurations, team structures and work schedules, and functional necessity when planning for Step 3 returns. Step 3 may also include limited administrative staff in roles that directly support leadership or manage space resources.

Steps 4 and 5 – Will include staff in roles that may be sufficiently performed off-campus during Steps 1-3, and that may be gradually reintegrated into on-campus work environments and in-person teams. Departmental determinations based on function, space availability and attributes, and individualized factors will inform the sequencing and particulars of Steps 4 and 5 return-to-campus decisions. Density considerations and environmental factors including local and state guidelines will drive movement from Step 4 to Step 5.
Step 6 – Aligns with Northwestern University fall return-to-campus protocol and densification requirements. Research and education ramp-ups are complete, and a high percentage of faculty and staff roles have been integrated back to on-campus and in-person environments, aligned with local city and state densification capacity limits. All necessary precautions for on-campus safety remain in place, and restrictions on visitors, travel, and events remain. Step 6 continues until a vaccine is available; workplace flexibility and accommodations related to the pandemic are supported.

Principles

- Ensure that medical school personnel begin returning to campus in a way that is compliant and congruent with city and state stay at home policies, as well as University policies for environmental health and safety and phased return to campus.
- Recognize we are moving into an uncertain new-normal; risk can be mitigated with appropriate caution, but not completely eliminated; the virus is going to be in the community causing new cases of disease for some time; will need to adapt to change.
- Self-agency characterized by common sense behaviors and consideration of others in the work environment is critical to an effective return to campus.
- The school’s responsibility is to provide guidance and support for how to implement best practices for safely returning to work in an academic campus setting, as well as to ensure that return-to-work policies are equitable and flexible to the very wide span of employee roles and work settings on our campus. Entrusting departments, institutes, centers, and business units with the responsibility of implementing guidance and adhering to expectations in a manner appropriate to workplace configurations, operations, staff and team composition, and programmatic activities.
- Those involved with research must complete the “Pandemic Essentials: Research on Campus” training module assigned in myHR Learn. All PIs are required to develop and submit a laboratory activation plan with your group.
- Trust but verify: A monitored hotline (312-503-3437) is available to allow faculty, staff, and students to report concerns or issues that may need to be addressed by the school; it is hoped in the spirit of quality improvement that people using the hotline will leave contact information to provide confidential follow-up. In addition, buildings will be regularly monitored to ensure that programs and laboratories are meeting appropriate guidance. Finally, supervisors of employees or students should use the Northwestern Portal to report any new COVID-19 infections and self-isolations.
- Return to Chicago campus will be in steps, the timing of which will be determined by data on new cases, governmental decisions, and other factors.
- Common sense approaches for social distancing will be implemented within shared campus facilities.
• Be prepared for either tightening or loosening of occupancy and other guidance below, and the possibility of another shelter-in-place order, at any time.

**Occupancy Considerations Across Steps**

• At every step of campus reactivation, personnel with fever (>100.4), respiratory illness, cold, or other symptoms of illness are expected to stay home.
• Larger office suites should organize in shifts (morning/afternoon, alternate days, etc.) wherever possible, and continue to use collaborative tools and remote work options when functional necessity does not substantially require on-campus presence.
• In open floorplans, adjacent staff should coordinate to minimize the number of personnel onsite and in close proximity.
• Common sense measures such as avoiding hallway conversations, breakroom gatherings, and the crowding of elevators, stairwells, or entryways should be observed.
• Minimize eating and drinking in groups in the workplace and in communal spaces such as breakrooms and lounge areas.
• Elevator usage should be limited to 4 riders, one in each corner; use of stairs is strongly encouraged for one floor up and two floors down.
• Doors may be propped open when office spaces are occupied to minimize contact with handles unless doing so poses a security or safety risk.

**Health Considerations**

• Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 or presumed COVID-19, or who have been in close contact with someone (i.e. a family member) who tests positive for COVID-19, must follow strict self-isolation recommendations and comply with all posted Northwestern University return-to-work policies for communicable disease reporting.
• Ongoing testing for Feinberg faculty, students, and staff members:
  o Medical students and clinical faculty involved in direct patient care should contact the COVID hotline at 312-472-6843 to be routed to NM Corporate Health for testing related to a potential workplace exposure to COVID-19.
  o All other faculty, staff, and students not directly involved in patient care should follow the University’s COVID-19 testing protocol for symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals:
    ▪ Graduate and professional student testing information
    ▪ Faculty and staff testing information
• Cloth or procedure/surgical masks must be worn by all personnel on campus, including in laboratories, even when social distancing is being observed. Exceptions might include: when individuals are using potentially hazardous volatile or particulate materials, or when you are
the only one in a microscopy room for several hours. Please consult Research Safety if you
have questions about when it is unsafe to wear a mask in your research laboratory.
• The unit assigned the space is responsible for providing sanitizer in work areas. To order
hand sanitizer and disinfectant, use Procurement & Payment Services’ online form.
• Lobby stands in some entryways will dispense masks, hand sanitizer, and facial tissues.
These resources are not intended to meet needs within work areas.
• Handwashing and sanitizers should be used several times during the workday.
• Spray sanitizer such as 70% ethanol should be located in all common areas.
• If common equipment is used, use a booking sheet, put an "in use" sign up, do not share
usage time, and wear masks while using. Wipe down equipment after use with 70%
ethanol.

Meetings and Visitors

• Meetings, lectures, seminars, and other activities should be held virtually, using Zoom or
similar platforms until further guidance is available.
• Maximum capacities of meeting, seminar, and classrooms should be significantly
reduced by 50% to ensure that occupants can maintain social distancing.
• Visitors to campus other than patients are limited to those needed for essential or life
safety issues, including preventive maintenance and repair of equipment. Units must
pre-register visitors to Feinberg buildings using the EasyLobby system. To set up system
access, email fsm-research@northwestern.edu.
• Volunteers are prohibited until further notice.

Transportation

• Use private modes of transportation to campus whenever feasible.
• Use apps such as Spot Hero to find discounted parking if garage parking is unavailable.
• Always wear a mask when using public or shared transit (CTA/Metra/shuttles).
• Travel at non-rush hours when possible.
• Consider biking or walking to campus; additional bike racks have been installed under
the canopy at 345 E. Superior.

Resources

• Northwestern Medicine video on properly using masks
• Supervisors send questions to:
  o In research areas, contact Michael Blayney, Executive Director, Research Safety,
at (847) 491-4387 or michael.blayney@northwestern.edu, or
In non-research areas, contact Gwen Butler, Director, Environmental Health and Safety, at (847) 491-4936 or gwen.butler@northwestern.edu.

For HR issues/questions, please contact your HR Business Partner.

- Aramark cleaning protocol for Feinberg
- Feinberg COVID-19 site
- Northwestern University Research COVID-19 site
- Northwestern Medicine COVID-19 site
- Northwestern University COVID-19 and Campus Updates site