



# TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin  
Division of Diversity and  
Community Engagement

## Preliminary Guidelines for Return to Work for the 2021-2022 Academic Year

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) fully supports President Hartzell's plans for staff to return to campus and to implement flexible work arrangements when appropriate.

The 2021-2022 Academic Year (AY21-22) will be a pilot year for hybrid and flexible work arrangements for eligible employees within the division. Eligibility may be determined by using the FWA eligibility decision tool . All division employees who are approved to work remotely or have an alternative work schedule must have a Flexible Work Agreement (FWA) on file with DDCE Human Resources (HR) or their appropriate auxiliary unit HR department by September 1, 2021. The following guidelines are provided as a means of assisting managers and employees with the transition back to campus and in developing these agreements.

### Ease into the Transition

Employees who have been working remotely should transition back to campus work on a part-time basis over the summer, with the goal of returning full-time by August 16, 2021 unless a FWA is approved. For AY21-22, an employee's University office shall be considered their primary work location. Plans for hybrid or flexible work arrangements for fall 2021 should be developed during the summer.

### Determining Eligibility

Managers should evaluate all positions for eligibility for flexible/hybrid work. Decisions about alternative work schedules or locations should be determined based on the unit's business needs, not on an employee's non-work and personal responsibilities. Considerations include:

- Employee duties and scope of work (e.g., Does the position and duties require onsite work? More generally, how important is onsite work to achieving the institution's goals? Does the position directly engage students, visitors, or classes? Does the work require onsite equipment, labs, or technologies? Do students or instructors require onsite help or support?)
- Health and safety guidelines (e.g., Do safety and compliance requirements limit where specialized equipment, chemicals, circuitry or supplies must be acquired, used and maintained? Do individual employees understand how to make an accommodation request if they are unable to get a vaccine because of health issues?)



- Team/Project requirements (e.g., Do teams need to meet onsite on a recurring basis? Do projects require collaborative work with other individuals or units that are best facilitated through onsite work? Do projects require regular or periodic onsite work, or require such work to be accomplished at a high level?)
- Additional Factors:
  - Employee input (e.g., Is the employee interested in onsite work, hybrid work, full-time telework, and/or flexible work hours?)
  - CSU and sub-unit requirements (e.g., Does the unit require some level of onsite coverage? Does the unit require periodic and/or regular in-person engagement?)
    - Other factors (e.g., Is the FWA plan conducive for work requiring sensitive data and/or privacy protections? Is it possible to assess performance when the work is performed remotely? Does the employee have a demonstrated history of sufficient productivity while teleworking?)

Options for fall FWAs may include flexible work hours and/or a hybrid schedule allowing for 1-3 days of telework from another location based on the employee's job functions. FWAs are within a supervisor's discretion to allow, continue, end or modify and any approved FWA should be re-evaluated on a semester-by-semester basis.

## Resources

FWA requested by an employee due to medical condition or disability that is not otherwise available or beyond the parameters for what is offered should be referred to University's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator and the ADA interactive dialogue process. ([Employee Accommodations](#))

## Additional Support

We recognize that transitions are difficult and the transition back to campus may be harder for some. [The Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) provides [counseling](#) to benefits-eligible employees and promotes wellness in several ways, including meditation practice, workshops, resources regarding anxiety reduction and stress management, and trainings, among others. We encourage all supervisors to be particularly aware of employees who may need assistance with the transition and refer them to EAP or other campus resources as appropriate.