



Guidelines for Faculty/Staff Regarding Concerns with Returning to In-Person Work or a Need for Workplace Accommodations in the Context of COVID-19



INITIAL CONVERSATION

If you have concerns with returning to campus for in-person work in the context of COVID-19, first approach your manager/head to discuss your concerns. Your manager/head will listen to your concerns, ask about the nature of the concerns and whether they are related to yourself or someone in your care that would be defined as a dependent. Your manager/head will also review with you the relevant information regarding the protocols in place to ensure the safety of staff and faculty in your unit. If the concerns can be resolved through this discussion, no further action is required. If you are a member of a Union or Association, you may want to first discuss your request with them before discussing it with your manager/head.

REVIEW MEASURES IN PLACE

Prior to voicing concerns with your manager/head, please ensure you review and understand the measures that have already been taken in your unit and across the university to ensure the safety of faculty and staff in the context of COVID-19:

- Routine cleaning is scheduled daily and follows industry cleaning standards laid out by the Association for Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA), a blended approach designed to manage risk. Our cleaning standards comply with APPA's best practices.
- UBC has posted information to remind people of how to reduce the spread of infections and continue to monitor and refill our current hand sanitizer stations located in the main entrances.
- Campus users are encouraged to visit <http://srs.ubc.ca/covid-19/health-safety-covid-19/prevention>.
- For current guidelines on the use of non-medical masks, you can visit the [Safety and Risk Services](#) website.
- Review the unit safety plans to ensure they are aware of the protocols specific to your work location. For specific information regarding your building, visit <http://facilities.ubc.ca/covid-19/about-your-building>.
- Review the current public health guidance - including the state of the vaccination program.
- All students, faculty, staff, and others must assess themselves daily for COVID-19 symptoms before engaging in in-person UBC activities on UBC premises. For more information on these protocols, view the [COVID-19 self-assessment requirements](#).



You should also consider any measures that you individually can undertake to address your concerns. If you still have concerns following this discussion with your manager/head, and the concerns are based on your personal preference, and not on an issue that requires accommodation, your manager/head will explore options with you that might help to address your concerns.

EXPLORE OPTIONS

With your head/manager explore options to address your concerns. For example, consider whether there are options available with the Remote Work program that might address your concerns. If so, discuss the possibilities of Remote Work with your manager, and if appropriate, make an application for the Remote Work program <https://hr.ubc.ca/remote-work-ubc>. Consider whether there are other options that can be implemented on an interim or time-limited basis.

For faculty, explore whether there are teaching supports available from UBC resources like the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology.

If, after these discussions with your manager/head, it is determined that the nature and basis of your request requires a formal workplace accommodation, the process outlined below will be used to clarify your limitations and determine the medical evidence required.

WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATION

Under the BC Human Rights Code, UBC has an obligation to provide a work environment free from discrimination and harassment on a number of prohibited grounds, including physical disability and family status. UBC has a duty to accommodate the employee to eliminate barriers and avoid such discrimination. More information on this can be found in the [Discrimination Policy \(SC 7\)](#).

A workplace accommodation typically involves medical documentation or other evidence to help the university understand your restrictions and limitations and provide reasonable accommodation to help support you in the workplace.

You can expect the following approach in circumstances where a workplace accommodation is required:

- If you have not already, meet with your head/manager to discuss your accommodation need. This is an initial conversation, and medical evidence will not be required. If you are a member of a Union or Association, you may want to first discuss your request with them before discussing it with your manager/head.
- If the nature of your need is related to a family status accommodation, your manager/head will consult with Human Resources to obtain advice on the process required.
- If the nature of your need requires a medical accommodation for yourself, your head/manager will then contact the Workplace Health Services (WHS)/Work Reintegration and Accommodation Program (WRAP) to determine if medical information is required.
- In Vancouver, you may choose to work with either your manager/head or WHS to explore how to better understand your medical needs. On the Okanagan Campus, the WRAP program will connect with you directly following the conversation with your manager/head to better understand your medical needs.



- If it is determined that medical information is required, your manager/head, along with WHS/WRAP as appropriate, will provide you with a request for medical information for you to take to your physician to complete.
- The medical information will be returned to WHS/WRAP or your manager/head, who will review the accommodation request, work with your manager/head to assess your limitations as documented by the physician, identify the core needs of the role and identify options. There may be some circumstances where further documentation is required.
- If required, a workplace accommodation plan will be created and enacted. There will be dates for review of the accommodation, and additional medical documentation may be required throughout the duration of the plan.
- Your role as faculty/staff is to participate and cooperate in the process of assessing, determining, and implementing an accommodation. The accommodation may not be exactly what you want, but it must be reasonable in all the circumstances. It is also important that you advise the team that worked with you on this if any changes in circumstances affect or change your accommodation plan.