

**From:** [SOM Administration](#)  
**To:** [SOMALL-L@LISTSERV.TULANE.EDU](mailto:SOMALL-L@LISTSERV.TULANE.EDU)  
**Subject:** TU School of Medicine Return-to-Work Update May 6 2020  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 6, 2020 11:58:06 AM

---



**Tulane University  
School of Medicine  
Workforce Update**

Wednesday, 6 May 2020



Dear Colleagues:

On Friday afternoon, the Dean's office announced that effective May 18, 2020 departments and units should begin to gradually phase in the return of their faculty, staff and trainees (with the exception of medical students), with the goal of having as many employees as possible returned to the medical school campus by June 15, 2020. We realize that you probably have many questions about how you will be impacted by the planned returns. Our goal is to make the processes and preparations for returning-to-work as consistent and transparent as possible. With this in mind, we are establishing this email communication series to all School of Medicine employees, to provide updates on the work we are doing.

Over the weekend, we distributed decision guides to each department, to begin laying out a framework for the measured and deliberate process by which employees will be safely returned to work. Those guides included recommendations for how to prioritize individual employees based on four factors: space available, job duties, individual risk factors, and childcare concerns. Your supervisors will use those four factors to determine when you will be asked to return.

### **Space Available**

We are conducting in-depth reviews of all of the school's spaces. In any specific space (one office, one laboratory, one clinic front desk, etc.) only as many employees will be brought back as that space can handle safely. In general, the guideline will be that six feet of space needs to be maintained between employees while they are working. There may be cases where physical barriers, such as dividing walls, will allow employees to work closer together, but six feet will be the general "rule of thumb."

### **Job Duties**

Some of you may be able to complete substantially all of your duties from home. On the other hand, some of you have primary responsibilities that cannot be performed remotely, or that require face-to-face interaction to support the school's missions. Many of you may be working on-campus now, and may never have worked from home at all. Example of the types of positions that require employees to be on-campus include work in a clinic setting; work with research or testing laboratory equipment; face-to-face interaction with students or trainees; and duties that need to be performed on-campus to support any of the first three types of positions.

Your supervisor will determine whether your duties can be completed at home, or whether you need to be on campus or in-clinic to effectively perform your job. It is important to understand that your job priority may change over time—for example, you may currently be able to work from home while students and trainees are away from campus, but when those groups return, your presence may become required.

If there is space available for you to return safely to campus, you may be asked to return even if your duties can effectively be completed from home. The educational, research, and clinical services that our employees provide are essential to the operation of the school, and we believe that for most employees, these services are best provided from on-campus or in-clinic work locations.

### **Risk Factors**

The CDC recommends that People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from the virus continue to take extra precautions for the time being. If you have a risk factor listed on the CDC page, or if you share a home with someone who does, and you do not feel comfortable returning to campus, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Depending upon your job duties, you may be able to continue working from home for an extended period of time. If you do not wish to disclose the exact condition that causes you to have a higher risk for severe illness, you may go through your

Human Resources business partner for a confidential verification. If your job duties cannot effectively be performed remotely, your department will work with the Dean's Office and with Human Resources to determine what should happen. Options may include reassignment of duties, administrative leave, FMLA leave, or other as appropriate.

### **Childcare Concerns**

Because many camps and day cares will not reopen by May 18, we understand that it may not be possible for employees with children to find affordable child-care right away. Supervisors have been instructed to be as flexible as possible in working with you in these situations. Please notify your supervisor if you have childcare concerns that will make it difficult for you to return to work on May 18. In most cases, as long as your job duties can effectively be completed from home, you will not be required to return to campus until the earlier of when you have found childcare or September 1. If your job duties cannot effectively be completed from home, your department will work with the Dean's Office and with Human Resources and you may be assigned alternative duties, or be able to use sick or vacation time, or be placed on FMLA leave.

In the coming days, we will provide updates about the preparations that facilities management and security are taking to prepare for your return, about testing policies and processes, about food service on campus, about specific measures that will be taken should an employee on campus test positive for COVID-19, and about other issues related to the full re-engagement of our campus. If there are specific topics you would like to hear about, please reach out to me with suggestions for future emails. We look forward to seeing you back on campus, and in the meantime, stay safe and be well.

/Margaret  
Margaret Y. Bell CPA | Assistant Dean for Finance  
Tulane University School of Medicine  
T: (504) 988-9135  
Cell (504) 388-6394  
E: [mybell@tulane.edu](mailto:mybell@tulane.edu)

---