



Return-to-Work Plan

Unified UW-Eau Claire guidance for health, safety, infrastructure, academics and student life/housing

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

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A Message from Chancellor Schmidt

Dear UW-Eau Claire,

As we prepare to welcome Blugolds back to our campuses, classrooms and residence halls this fall, there are important steps the university must take to ensure the health of our faculty, staff and students.

So, while I know our shared passion for and commitment to our students and our work remains unchanged, how we go about engaging with our students and each other must change to ensure safe and healthy campuses.

With the help of my executive staff and fall planning task groups, we have created a guide that outlines the “new normal” for all faculty and staff teaching and working on our campuses in Eau Claire, Rice Lake and Marshfield.

New policies and protocols will include things such as:

- If you are working on a campus, you must do daily temperature checks using a university-provided thermometer and a newly created app to track COVID-19-related symptoms.
- You must wear face masks or face coverings always when on a campus unless you are alone in a private office.
- Physical distancing and safety measures will be in place in all common areas on all campuses.

These and other protocols detailed in this plan reflect best practices as identified by local and national health and other experts. We believe this science-based response to the pandemic prioritizes everyone’s safety while still allowing us to best meet the educational needs of our students.

While change is hard, especially in these trying circumstances, change is necessary if we are to achieve our goals around safety and transformative learning.

As we follow these new protocols, we will show our concern for our students and each other, while also creating opportunities for our students to have the kinds of transformative educational experiences they expect and that you work so hard to provide.

With many of you preparing to return to work on campus this summer or fall, please keep in mind that given the many uncertainties around the COVID-19 pandemic, our return-to-work policies and protocols will evolve as new information and/or circumstances require.

You can find the most current information about UW-Eau Claire’s COVID-19 response [here](#).

And finally, I want to thank our Fall Return Task Force members for their continuing efforts to ready our campus for when we can be together again.



Guiding principles for return-to-work plan

UW-Eau Claire's return-to-work plan will help the university achieve its dual goals of providing students with a quality education while also keeping the campus community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even as we navigate these unprecedented times, UW-Eau Claire will deliver the kinds of exceptional educational experiences that students expect and that our faculty and staff work so hard to provide. While new policies and protocols will require us to go about our work differently, quality instruction in the classroom, meaningful interactions among faculty and students, and extraordinary outside-the-classroom opportunities will continue to be hallmarks of the Blugold experience.

By establishing policies and procedures that reflect best practices as identified by local and national health and other experts, UW-Eau Claire is developing a science-based response to the pandemic that prioritizes safety while allowing us to meet the educational needs of our students.

The health and safety of our faculty, staff, students and the public with whom we interact will continue to be a priority as we monitor and respond to the ongoing pandemic.

As our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continue to evolve and more information becomes available in the weeks and months ahead, we will update our policies and plans as appropriate.

You can find the most current information about UW-Eau Claire's COVID-19 response [here](#).



Workplace expectations regarding new policies

UW System policies provide expectations for conduct in the workplace that apply to all UW-Eau Claire faculty, staff, volunteers and other representatives when they are speaking or acting on behalf of the university (UWS Administrative Policy 1292, Workplace Conduct Expectations). This policy also permits UW-Eau Claire to establish additional rules that it determines are necessary for the effective operation of the university.

To better ensure the safety of our entire campus community, all UW-Eau Claire faculty and staff must fully comply with the policies and protocols outlined in this document, as they are considered additional workplace conduct expectations in accordance with UWS Policy 1292. These practices are a requirement of employment; failure to follow them will result in corrective action.

These policies are applicable for anyone who works on UW-Eau Claire's campuses in Eau Claire, Rice Lake and Marshfield. Guidelines also apply to faculty and staff working at instructional sites off campus, such as medical clinical sites, practicum sites or in schools.

If the university's guidelines are more restrictive than public health orders in regions that are home to any UW-Eau Claire campus (Eau Claire and Rice Lake), campus guidelines will prevail.

Please note: The Dean of Students Office will establish and institute similar expectations for all UW-Eau Claire students. Appropriate health and safety protocols also will be established for all campus visitors.

Prevailing authority

The chancellor will be the ultimate internal authority regarding implementation of these plans and procedures.

Bringing faculty and staff back to campus

Until the academic year begins, our need to limit the number of people on campus to meet social distancing requirements will continue for some time. Given that reality, nonacademic support units that can continue to effectively work remotely will likely continue to do so until local restrictions are eased for larger gatherings.

Over the summer, gradually increasing the number of workers on campus will be a tightly controlled and coordinated process so we can mitigate potential risks and ensure safety.

Guiding principles for bringing faculty and staff back to campus include:

- Recognition that we need to prepare for a COVID-19 flare up in the fall.
- Recognition that COVID-19 will remain a threat for beyond the fall semester.
- Recognition that we must protect the faculty, staff and students and others to the best of our abilities.
- Recognition that we should learn from the COVID-19 experience and not simply return to what had been done in the past.
- Recognition that no single solution will work for every area of our campuses.

Our faculty and instructional staff will be back on campus beginning Aug. 25. Noninstructional staff will follow a fluid timeline that takes multiple factors into consideration. These factors include our ability to ensure appropriate physical distancing, the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the necessary work of a given nonacademic unit.

Staffing levels for academic/instructional operations

The provost and academic deans will balance concerns about health and safety with student needs and expectations as they develop plans for bringing faculty and instructional staff back to campus. These will be in place in advance of the Aug. 25 return date.

We know that face-to-face classroom instruction, as well as in-person interactions and collaborations among faculty, staff and students, are important elements of how we fulfill our mission and meet our goals for providing Blugolds with transformative educational experiences.

In their planning, the provost and academic deans are working to identify and put in place processes and procedures to keep faculty and instructional staff safe while returning to face-to-face teaching and other in-person interactions with students. These processes will include things such as physical distancing, the required wearing of masks and specified cleaning protocols in all areas. Classrooms will be reconfigured to allow for physical distancing and interaction between instructor and students.

Faculty and instructional staff accommodations

Faculty and staff members who have a physical and/or mental health condition that may be exacerbated by being on campus during a pandemic, should complete the appropriate accommodation request and/or family and/or medical leave (FLMA) paperwork. If telework or distance education cannot be approved given the existing guidelines, alternative accommodations, such as a leave of absence or personal protective equipment, will be evaluated as part of the accommodation process.

Concerns about transmitting the virus to people with whom the faculty or staff member is in close contact, or concerns about being infected with COVID-19 without an underlying physical and/or mental health condition, are not governed by the accommodation request and/or family and/or medical leave (FMLA). Those concerns will be handled by Academic Affairs in consultation with the department chair and college dean.

Staffing plans for nonacademic operations

Phase I — Begins July 6

Minimum staffing for nonacademic operations

As the university prepares to return to face-to-face instruction, research and the associated activities, the tempo of campus operations will pick up quickly. To best meet these needs while keeping safety in mind, many departments will return to “minimum staffing levels,” or staffing levels similar to the spring semester just before UW-Eau Claire moved to “essential employees only.”

Division leaders will meet with their departments to develop a minimum staffing plan, which goes into effect July 6 and continues until the start of the fall 2020 semester. As they create staffing plans for their departments, staff concerns about workplace exposure will be among the factors that will be considered.

In addition, by July 6, all policies and processes around PPE, physical distancing, daily health screenings and other safety-related procedures also must be in place for all departments/divisions.

Phase II — Begins mid-August

“New normal” staffing levels for nonacademic operations

Division leaders will develop plans for the “new normal” staffing level of operations for the academic year for their nonacademic units. To create these plans, they will evaluate how effectively staff have worked from home, staff concerns about exposure, staff’s ability to maintain physical distancing in the workspace and their ability to meet department and/or campus needs.

Plans will vary by department depending on responsibilities and staff needs, but plans may include:

- Extending minimum staffing levels through the fall 2020 semester. In this scenario, staff members who can work remotely to fulfill some or all their work responsibilities may continue to do so. This approach will limit the number of people on campus and the potential spread of the virus. Staff continuing to work from home must have the approval of the division’s designated approver and they must follow existing UW-Eau Claire and UW System policies.
- A permanent work-from-home arrangement for staff. If a department opts for this plan, it may be required to give up workspace on campus.

- Flexible scheduling that would allow staff members to alternate days on campus. Scheduling partial staffing on alternate days will reduce the number of people on campus each day and limit the number of interactions among people. Alternate-day scheduling also will help enable physical distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.
- Staggering arrival/departure times. The beginning and end of workdays and class periods typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggering reporting and departure times by at least 30 minutes will reduce traffic in common areas, helping to meet physical distancing requirements.
- Full staffing as it was prior to COVID.

Noninstructional telework and accommodations

If accommodations can be easily permitted for noninstructional work, unit leaders may approve accommodations for a given class of workers for the duration of the pandemic. This includes any noninstructional duties for faculty or instructional staff. Arrangements should be reviewed every semester.

Staff members for whom telework has not been approved but who have a physical and/or mental condition that may be exacerbated by being on campus during a pandemic, should complete the appropriate disability accommodation request and/or family and/or medical leave (FMLA) paperwork. If telework cannot be approved given existing guidelines, alternative accommodations, such as a leave of absence or personal protective equipment, will be evaluated as part of the accommodation process.

Concerns about transmitting the virus to people with whom the faculty or staff member is in close contact, or concerns about being infected with COVID-19 without an underlying physical and/or mental condition, are not governed by the standard disability request and/or family and/or medical leave (FMLA). Those concerns should be handled according to the needs of the operating unit as defined by the division head.

Monitoring for COVID-19 Symptoms

Monitoring faculty and staff for COVID-19 symptoms

COVID-19 is highly transmissible and can easily be spread by people who do not know they have the disease. Daily monitoring for symptoms associated with the virus is important to your health and the health of those around you because it helps us to identify potential cases much sooner, provide needed treatment or quarantine and assure safer interactions among members of our campus community.

The CDC has identified several symptoms associated with COVID-19. Currently, symptoms associated with the virus include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (100.4)
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Runny nose or new sinus congestion
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- New GI symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell

Faculty and staff who show one or more symptoms must self-isolate at home. If you show symptoms, you must not return to campus for at least two weeks or until completing a negative COVID test.

Please note: Students showing symptoms are encouraged to seek clinical evaluation, including rPCR testing, in Student Health Service. Self-isolation at home protocols also will be in place for students.



Details about the app and self-monitoring can be found on the university's COVID-19 resource [website](#).

Blugold symptom monitoring app

Faculty and staff who come to a UW-Eau Claire campus (Eau Claire, Rice Lake, Marshfield) to work must self-monitor for COVID-related symptoms every day.

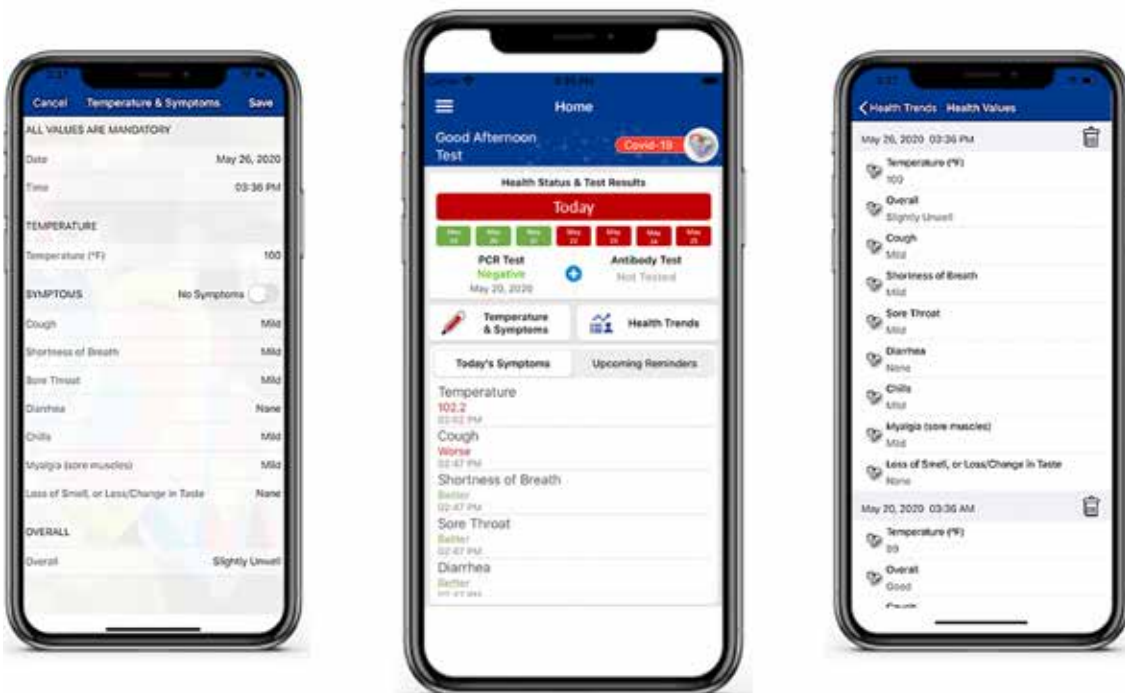
To self-monitor, you will use a newly created Blugold app for mobile phones that will allow you to complete daily assessments easily and quickly before coming to campus. A web-based symptom-monitoring portal also will be available.

Our self-monitoring protocol will require you to take your temperature daily using a university-provided thermometer. In the Blugold app, you will complete a daily log of your temperature and any symptoms indicative of COVID-19.

Based on these daily screenings, the Blugold app will indicate if you should seek professional assessment testing by your health care provider. The app also will help you track your health status, test results, health trends and other important information related to COVID. It also will provide resources, emergency contacts and other helpful information.

This new app was modeled after the app used by the Todd and Karen Wanek Family Program for Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome at Mayo Clinic to monitor patient symptoms at home and has been enhanced to monitor COVID-19 symptoms for members of our campus community.

Please note: UW-Eau Claire will provide training to ensure you know how to accurately take your own temperature using the thermometer that is provided.



Sick leave policy during COVID-19 pandemic

These universitywide guidelines and protocols will help UW-Eau Claire reduce the risk of virus transmission among faculty, staff, students, families, visitors, community members and others. One of the most critical elements of achieving this goal is to identify people with suspected COVID-19 based on their symptoms, exposure status and/or travel history.

Therefore, there are multiple scenarios in which we will tell you not come to campus to work. These conditions may include:

- You have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (see above).
- You live in a household with someone exhibiting fever or respiratory symptoms who either has not been tested for COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19.
- You have had direct contact with someone who has a laboratory-confirmed positive case verified by public health authorities.
- You have recently traveled to an area that is deemed high-risk for COVID.

In these situations, you can use work-from-home, sick leave or other leaves such as vacation so long as it's handled pursuant to existing UW System and UW-Eau Claire policies and procedures. If you have questions, talk with your supervisor or Human Resources.

Personal safety practices

Return-to-work task group members have identified several personal safety practices that will be required of all faculty and staff when you are on any of our campuses/sites. These include:



Face masks/cloth face coverings: When on campus, everyone must wear face masks or face coverings when in the presence of others and/or in public areas where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain such as in common workspaces, hallways, stairwells, meeting rooms and classrooms. Appropriate use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others since you can spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.

We will give all faculty and staff members two reusable tight-woven cloth masks. If needed, you can purchase additional masks from the University Bookstore. Department and Foundation budgets may not be used to purchase face masks or face coverings for faculty and staff.

Not all face masks or face coverings are of equal quality. UW-Eau Claire's mask specification is 100% cotton with a tight weave, at least 2-ply and at least 180 GSM (grams per square meter).

Cloth face coverings must only be worn for one day and then properly laundered before use again (see below).

Disposable masks will be available for all campus visitors. Disposable masks can only be worn for one day and then must be placed in the trash.

Please note: Wearing a face mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.

Proper use and care of face coverings

Putting on a face covering/disposable mask

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face covering/disposable mask.
- Ensure the face covering/disposable mask fits over your nose and under your chin.
- Situate the face covering/disposable mask properly with nose wire snug against the bridge of your nose (where applicable).
- Tie straps behind your head and neck or loop around your ears. The covering should be tight against your face but not uncomfortable. Consider adjusting the ear loops with rubber bands or clips if necessary.
- Throughout the process, avoid touching the front of your face covering/disposable mask.

Taking off a face covering/disposable mask

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth when removing the face covering/disposable mask.
- When taking off the face covering/disposable mask, loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear, or untie the straps.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing.

Care, storage and laundering

- Keep your face coverings/disposable masks stored in a paper bag when not in use.
- Cloth face coverings can be used for one day and then must be washed. Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing detergent before you use it the first time, and after each day it is worn. You should immediately replace your cloth face coverings if they are soiled, damaged (e.g. ripped, punctured) or visibly contaminated.
- Use disposable masks for one day and then place it in the trash. Do not use if it is soiled, damaged (e.g., stretched ear loops, torn or punctured material) or visibly contaminated.



Physical distancing policies

Keeping space between you and others is one of the best ways to avoid being exposed to the COVID-19 virus and slowing its spread. Since you can spread the virus before you know you are a carrier, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you have no symptoms. Physical distancing is important for everyone, especially to help protect people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Faculty and staff working on campus must follow these physical distancing practices:

- Always stay at least 6 feet — about two arms' length — away from other people.
- Minimize gathering in large groups in accordance with current county health guidelines.
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.



Handwashing

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, touched a surface, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol (the preferred form of hand hygiene in health care settings). Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Always wash your hands before and after touching your face.

Gloves

Faculty and staff working in high-risk areas such as Student Health Service should wear gloves as part of their PPE. However, according to the CDC, gloves are not necessary for general use and do not replace good hand hygiene. **Washing your hands often is considered the best practice for common everyday tasks.**

Gloves always should be worn as prescribed by lab procedures, policies and normal use situations regardless of COVID-19.

Goggles/face shields

You are not required to wear goggles or face shields as part of general activity on campus. Good hand hygiene and avoiding touching your face are generally sufficient for non-health care environments. Goggles and face shields may be appropriate when you are in close-contact areas such as in teaching and research labs and will be provided by the university for faculty, staff and students who need them.



Cleaning/disinfection

Custodial staff will clean office and workspaces based on CDC guidelines for disinfection. Facilities will maintain hand-sanitizer stations at major building entrances, elevator stops and high-traffic areas.

Mechanical, electrical, plumbing and monitoring systems will be assessed and readied prior to reopening of buildings.

Building occupants should wipe down commonly used surfaces before and after use, using products that meet the EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19 and are appropriate for the surface. This includes any shared-space location or equipment (e.g. copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, coffee makers, desks and tables, light switches, doorknobs, etc.).

Please note: Electronics should **only** be wiped down in accordance with training from Learning and Technology Services (LTS). LTS will train you on how to sanitize the copier electronic screen. Machines can be damaged if wiped down incorrectly.



Coughing/sneezing hygiene

If you are in a private setting and are not wearing a cloth face covering, always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60 percent ethanol or 70% isopropanol.

Guidance for best practices in various situations

Public transportation

If you must take public transportation, wear a mask before entering the bus and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers as soon as possible and before removing your mask. If several faculty, staff members or students travel together in a private vehicle, follow these same steps once you arrive at your destination.

Working in office environments

If you work in an open office environment, maintain at least 6 feet of distance from your co-workers. If possible, have at least one workspace separating you from another co-worker. You must always wear a face mask or face covering while in a shared workspace/room.

Department heads will assess open work environments and meeting rooms before instituting measures to physically separate and increase distance between co-workers and visitors to the work area.



Workspace measures may include:

- Placing visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to people where they should stand while waiting in line.
- Placing one-way directional signage for large open workspaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between people moving through the space.
- If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained. If more than one person is in a room, masks/face coverings must always be worn. A mask or face covering is not required if you are working alone in a confined office space. This does not include partitioned work areas in a large open environment unless partitions are full height.
- Masks/face coverings should be worn by any staff in a reception/receiving area.
- Masks/face coverings should be used when inside any UW-Eau Claire facility where others are present, including when walking in narrow hallways where others travel and in break rooms, conference rooms and other meeting locations.
- To the maximum extent possible, we will eliminate shared equipment (such as phones, desks, office supplies). If items must be shared, they must be disinfected after every use.

Doors

When possible, commonly used interior doors should be left open during normal use hours. Leaving interior doors open will reduce the number of high contact surfaces that need to be cleaned during the day. For doors that must remain closed for temperature and humidity reasons, a paper towel dispenser will be available outside the door. Use a paper towel to open the door and then dispose of the paper towel in a receptacle afterward.

Please note: Exterior doors should never be left open or propped open.

Hallways

If building design reasonably allows, one-way traffic flows should be developed to minimize incidental contact. However, for most of campus, one-way traffic would be challenging, and compliance would be low. Instead, you should walk on the right side of all hallways and while using the stairs. This will create clear traffic flow and minimize incidental contacts within these common areas. Also, always keep 6 feet apart from anyone in front of you.

Elevators

Limit your use of elevators when possible to avoid being in close proximity with others in a confined space. If you do use an elevator, you are required to wear a face mask or face covering regardless of whether you are traveling alone or with others. You also should avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator.

Restrooms

Maximum occupancy of restrooms should be limited to the number of sinks to ensure appropriate social distancing. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

Meetings

Convening in groups increases the risk of viral transmission. Where feasible, you should hold meetings in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Bluejeans, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.). If you do meet in person, you must meet the restrictions of local, state and federal orders. In-person meetings should not exceed 50 percent of a room's capacity, assuming everyone can still maintain 6 feet of separation for social distancing requirements. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in meeting rooms to support social distancing practices among attendees. Everyone should wear a mask or face covering while sharing space in a common room.

While on campus, you are encouraged to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone or other technologies rather than face-to-face.

Meals

Before and after eating, you should wash your hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. If dining on campus, wear your mask or face covering until you are ready to eat and then replace it afterward. Campus dining areas will be configured to reduce close contact.

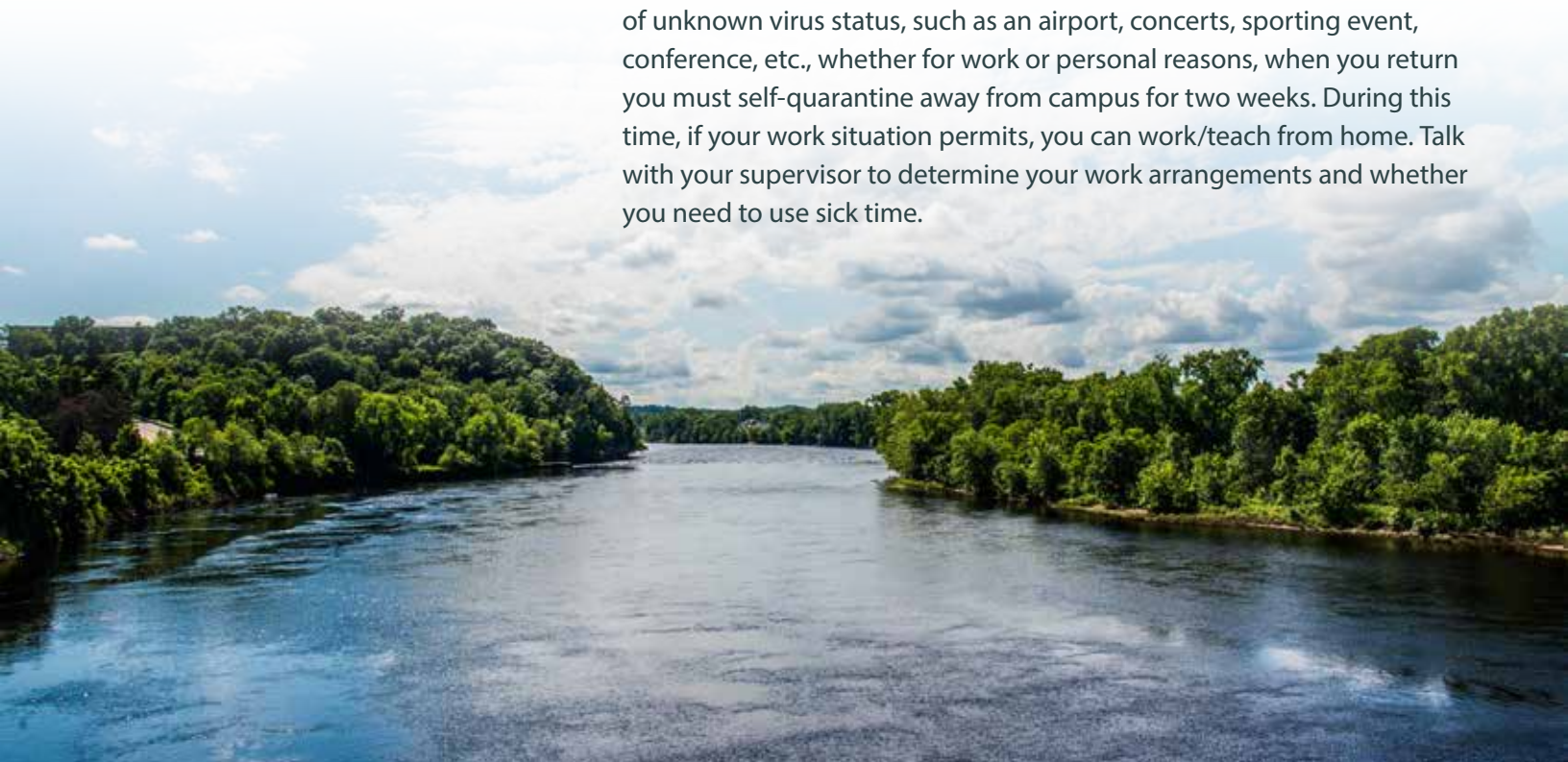
Faculty and staff are encouraged to take food back to their office area or to eat outside whenever possible. If you are eating in your work environment (break room, office, etc.), maintain 6 feet of distance between you and others. You should not sit facing one another. Only remove your mask or face covering to eat, then put it back on. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in break rooms to support physical distancing practices. Wipe all surfaces, including table, refrigerator handle, coffee machine, etc., after using them in common areas.

Work and personal travel

Since work or personal travel increases the risk of exposure and bringing the virus onto campus and into the greater Eau Claire community, the chancellor strongly encourages everyone to minimize their travel.

Travel guidelines

- Limit university travel as much as possible. Any university travel must be pre-approved by a division leader.
- We strongly encourage you to limit personal travel to protect yourself and others.
- If you leave the local community to travel to another safe place/rural space, such as a hiking or field location, whether for work or personal reasons, and have minimal transient exposure such as stopping at a gas station, no special action is required. If more than one person is traveling in the same vehicle, everyone should wear face masks and take precautions as if you are using public transportation.
- If you leave the local community to join a small gathering of people who do not have COVID symptoms, such as friends or family in another city, you may return to campus provided you wear your face mask and limit your contact with co-workers and students.
- If you leave the local community to travel to another location, whether for work or personal, that has more than transient exposure to people of unknown virus status, such as an airport, concerts, sporting event, conference, etc., whether for work or personal reasons, when you return you must self-quarantine away from campus for two weeks. During this time, if your work situation permits, you can work/teach from home. Talk with your supervisor to determine your work arrangements and whether you need to use sick time.



Cleaning protocols and supplies

Facilities Management will centrally stock COVID-19-related cleaning supplies. Departments and units should place orders to secure hand sanitizer and disinfectant wiping materials from Central Stores. To encourage uniformity across campus, all products provided are consistent with those currently used by custodial staff.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for proper use of university-provided cleaning supplies will be posted on the university [website](#).

Hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies will be provided at no cost to departments or units. Departments and units will be responsible for placement and distribution of hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies within their areas. Hand sanitizer also will be available at key locations within all buildings.

Departments and units should not purchase other disinfectant supplies for their areas.



Mental and emotional well-being — Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available if you need support during this stressful time. Telephonic or video counseling is available. You can access this service using most smartphones, tablets and computers with a camera.

Faculty and staff can contact UW-Eau Claire's Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), FEI, user name SOWI, or by calling 866-274-4723. You also can also find COVID-related updates on the Human Resources [website](#).

Please note: Students needing mental or emotional support should contact Counseling Services at 715-836-5521 or COUNSL01@uwec.edu. Student also can find information on the Counseling Services [website](#).



Task group leaders

Health and Safety:

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Anna Ziebell, Student Representative

A representative of Eau Claire City-County Public Health.

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Anna Ziebell, Student Senate Executive Committee