

ECU – COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The HR Guide on Returning to Campus: Accommodations, Commuting + Illness

Scope

This guide applies to all areas that employ Faculty, Support Staff and Administrators.

Purpose

Emily Carr University is committed to providing working conditions that respect the different experiences and needs of each employee while we endeavour to resume on-campus work activities that are required for the ongoing operations of the university. The fundamental tenants underlying this document are rooted in the principles of support, compassion and empathy.

This guide provides direction on a variety of employment-related topics with the purpose of enabling a return to on-campus work. This includes:

- Workplace Accommodations
- Commuting and Telecommuting
- Illness: How to Support Employees Who Exhibit Symptoms

Workplace Accommodations

Under the BC Human Rights code, the university is required to accommodate employees who require changes to their work environment for reasons that fall under the protected grounds of the code. The most common form of workplace accommodation arise from the need to support individuals who come forward with a physical or mental disability, or where there is a need to accommodate a person in relation to their family status.

Leaders are to be proactive in initiating these conversations within their areas. Please do not wait for an employee to come forward before these options are discussed. This can result in undue stress during what is already a very difficult and stressful time.

Accommodating Employees with Disabilities

In accordance with guidelines from WorkSafeBC, the university will soon develop and implement policies and procedures to resume safe operations on campus. Once these measures are in place, the campus environment is to be considered safe, provided that appropriate measures are followed.

That said, there may be members of our community who have a condition or disability that results in a compromised immune system affecting their ability to safely work on campus.

What you need to know as a leader:

You may have a duty to accommodate an employee who self-identifies as having a condition or disability that prevents them from being present on campus during the pandemic.

How do you support this employee:

You are to report this accommodation request to Anthony Ki and participate in the accommodation process as defined by Human Resources: anthonyki@ecuad.ca

What is Human Resources' role?

Human Resources will work with the employee to understand their medical circumstances in a manner that respects their privacy and confidentiality. So as to not unduly burden the healthcare system during the pandemic Human Resources, at its discretion, may not collect medical documentation normally required for a workplace accommodation. That said, depending on the nature of the disability or condition, Human Resources may conduct regular reviews of the accommodation which could require detailed medical documentation.

Any medical records that have been requested by the University will be held by the HR Advisor, Benefits and Accessibility Services. The terms of the accommodation will be documented on the employee's personnel file, and shall be agreed to by the employee, their union (if applicable), their supervisor and Human Resources.

Accommodating Employees with Familial Obligations:

Once the university resumes safe operations on campus, there may still be members of our community who have familial obligations that fall under the following categories:

- The care provider for an employee's dependent has not resumed operations (e.g. daycare or other child care scenarios; nursing home or in-home supports; elder care, etc.).
- The employee has a family member who is at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g elderly or immune-compromised individuals).

What you need to know as a leader:

You may have a duty to accommodate an employee who is required to provide care to a dependant, or lives with a family member that is deemed high risk.

Note: under normal circumstances, the scenario of dependent care would not normally attract a duty to accommodate under the code; however, in the context of this pandemic response, we

are temporarily extending our duty of care to those who present with serious dependent care challenges.

How do you support this employee:

Your duty is to work with each employee who brings forward a dependent care issue and develop reasonable working arrangements that meet the needs of both the employee and the university.

For those employees who are seeking accommodation because of a high-risk family member, your duty is to report this employee to Human Resources and participate in the accommodation process as defined by Human Resources: anthonyki@ecuad.ca

What is Human Resources' role?

Human Resources will work with the employee to understand the medical circumstances of their family member in a manner that respects their privacy and confidentiality. So as to not unduly burden the healthcare system during the pandemic Human Resources, at its discretion, may not collect medical documentation normally required for a "family status" accommodation. That said, depending on the nature of the disability or condition, Human Resources may conduct regular reviews of the accommodation which could require detailed medical documentation.

Any medical records that have been requested by the University will be held by the HR Advisor, Benefits and Accessibility Services. The terms of the accommodation will be recorded on the employee's personnel file, and shall be agreed to by the employee, their union (if applicable), their supervisor and Human Resources.

Commuting and Telecommuting

As per the *ECU COVID-10 Safety Plan* for returning to campus, and provided that an approved risk analysis and plan has been conducted and approved by the President's Executive Committee ("PEC"), those areas with approved plans will be permitted to gain greater levels of access to the campus and ease-up on the current telecommuting requirements.

That being said, we are encouraging all areas to maintain leading practices in physical distancing, and for those non-curricular areas, we are encouraging leaders and employees to carry on with some form of telecommuting, where practicable.

Supporting Safe Commuting Strategies:

We recognize that a number of commuting modalities are employed by our staff and faculty when coming to and from the campus. We further recognize that an individual's fear and

anxiety may stem from concerns directly related to contracting the virus and from encounters with racial profiling and other bigoted acts directed toward minority groups.

It is important to recognize that some employees who use the more public forms of transportation will experience different levels of fear and anxiety about their commute than those who have more isolating and controlled forms. And while it is the employee's responsibility to make their way to the campus, it is incumbent upon all of us to be flexible and compassionate to all members of the campus community who are struggling with fears and anxieties about their commute.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that some individuals, due to their age, the presence of a pre-existing health condition, or because they live with a vulnerable individual, may be concerned about commuting to the campus.

What you need to know as a leader:

The university expects all leaders within the institution to demonstrate compassion for, and to work collaboratively with, those who are struggling to feel safe in their commute to the workplace.

Likewise, employees are required to be open to conversations with their supervisor in relation to their concerns about their commute, and to be receptive to solutions that would enable their attendance on site when it is required.

Employees who are experiencing racism or racial profiling either on campus or during their commute to work should contact either the AVP Human Resources or the Threat Assessment Team for support and safety planning:

- Adrian Tees, AVP HR – adriantees@ecuad.ca
- Kevin Bird, ED Student Services - kbird@ecuad.ca
- Sue Dorey, Program Manager, Violence Reduction + Incident Response - sdorey@ecuad.ca

How do you support this employee:

Your duty is to work with each employee who brings forward commuting challenges to develop reasonable arrangements that meet the needs of both the employee and your department. If the concerns stem from their age, the presence of a pre-existing health condition, or because they live with a vulnerable individual, then an accommodation may be warranted.

Illness: How to Support Employees Who Exhibit Symptoms or Who Have Been In Contact with a Symptomatic Individual

Employees who come to campus are required to perform a daily self-health assessment using the Thrive BC app: <https://bc.thrive.health>

Employees are not permitted to be on campus if they have recently started to exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- fever
- dry cough
- tiredness
- aches and pains
- sore throat
- diarrhea
- conjunctivitis
- headache
- loss of taste or smell
- a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- chest pain or pressure
- loss of speech or movement

Employees who experience or report difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; chest pain or pressure; or loss of speech or movement, should be directed to seek immediate medical attention by contacting 911.

If an employee requires assistance in contacting 911 due to the onset of symptoms, we would ask that supervisors seek the employees consent prior to contacting 911 on their behalf.

Employees with known chronic conditions - such as Asthma, Crohn's Disease, Arthritis, Diabetes, etc - and whom experience some of the above listed symptoms are to consult their physician prior to returning to campus.

What you need to know as a leader:

You have a responsibility to ensure a safe working and learning environment for everyone. In the event that an employee attends campus and presents with any of the above symptoms, you must ask the employee to leave campus or seek immediate medical attention.

It is acknowledged that this may seem severe given the prevalence of normal seasonal allergies, however, every precaution must be taken to mitigate the introduction of the COVID-19 virus into the university environment.

Your employees share this responsibility to ensure a safe working environment, and will be encouraged to remain home by either calling in sick or working remotely. Employees should not be asked to produce medical notes for short-term absences when calling in sick due to the presence of symptoms. If you have questions or concerns about absenteeism, you are to consult with your Human Resources Advisor.

How do I code someone's time if they cannot attend work due to the presence of symptoms?

All employees, regardless of status, will receive sick pay or short-term indemnity benefits if:

- they are required to remain away from the campus as a result of the direction provided in this guide; and
- they are unable to work from home due to these symptoms.

In the event that an employee is experiencing mild symptoms, the leader and employee may determine that it is reasonable for them to remain working while isolated at home. In this case, staff will not be required to report their time as "sick".

For clarification on this matter, please contact the appropriate HR Advisor for further guidance.