



College of Liberal Arts and
Sciences

CLAS Return to Campus Guidelines for Staff: Fall 2021

After 17 months of profound and unpredictable change brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Iowa plans to fully reopen for fall 2021.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Senior Leadership Team, CLAS Human Resources, and a committee of departmental and Dean's Office staff and faculty have developed this document to guide the return to campus of CLAS P&S and Merit staff.

May 27, 2021

Return to Campus Pilot Guidelines

A message from Dean Sara Sanders

Throughout our College of Liberal Arts and Sciences community, staff members have made it possible for us to continue our mission of education, research, and public engagement during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. No course, research project, or community partnership could happen without the expertise and support of our Professional and Scientific and Merit staff employees. On behalf of the CLAS Senior Leadership Team, I extend my deep gratitude to our staff members for their perseverance, dedication, and creativity.

The guidelines and policies outlined here allow flexibility for employees and predictability for the populations we serve, while empowering team-building and the re-establishment of vibrant workplaces throughout CLAS.

I look forward to the camaraderie and the increased operational efficiency that being together will foster. Please reach out to CLAS HR if you have any questions about the plan.

Thank you, and see you around campus!

Sara Sanders, PhD, MSW
Dean and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
UI Alumni Association Dean's Chair
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Introduction

Changes to workplace operations during the COVID-19 pandemic required College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) employees to work fully remotely or in a hybrid model, beginning in March 2020 and continuing into the summer of 2021. Our college's sustained success during this time was due to the dedication of CLAS faculty and staff, the college's flexibility, and a drive to provide exceptional service during an extraordinary time.

As we shift our planning to the future and a return to in-person classes, CLAS will need to re-establish on-campus presence, while exhibiting those same attributes: resilience, flexibility, and a commitment to exceptional service.

CLAS senior leadership is committed to exploring the long-term viability of flexible work arrangements. Accordingly, the college will engage in a pilot phase from Aug. 2 through Dec. 31, 2021. The pilot will help us to balance the educational and support needs of our students, the business needs of the university, the preferences of CLAS employees for reasonable flexibility, and the physical infrastructure that CLAS occupies. This will require us to adjust, once again, to new work arrangements as we approach fall 2021.

The evaluation phase of the pilot will include the opportunity for staff to provide input and the opportunity for continuous customer feedback captured via online surveys. These efforts will provide data to inform decisions through the pilot phase and into 2022.

Please note that these pilot guidelines apply to CLAS P&S and Merit staff only; they do not apply to faculty, postdoctoral scholars, or graduate assistants. Faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate assistants will follow guidelines from the Office of the Provost as well as any collegiate guidelines set for CLAS faculty and instructors.

CLAS Mission Statement

The mission of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa is to foster community that enables innovative research and discovery and empowers students with the knowledge and skills to think systematically about all aspects of their lives—the creative, the professional, the personal and the civic. We are home to some of the leading programs in the world in the arts, humanities, and sciences, and we live at the intersection of all three—as writers and researchers, as performers and inventors, as individuals who work together to develop ideas of what might be and then to implement those ideas after a careful process of reflection and consideration. Our mission is guided by a value in diversity and inclusion that recognizes the wide spectrum of voices and talents that enable excellence in education, research, and discovery.

CLAS Vision Statement

We aspire to create and nurture a community in a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that is dedicated to a liberal arts education and to the diversity of thought that it generates. Our students will be able to think critically, to further their learning, to flexibly and creatively adapt to change, and be engaged, ethical, global citizens. Our scholars will be leaders in advancing knowledge and educating future generations. We strive for everyone in the college to have a sense of belonging and community and to have individual and collective purpose.

Business Rationale for CLAS Return to Campus Pilot Guidelines

- On March 17, 2020, the UI instructed employees to work remotely to emphasize the importance of health and safety associated with the pandemic.
- The UI is planning to return to in-person classes in fall 2021.
- CLAS provides services to students, postdocs, faculty, staff, student employees, and alumni. The Dean's Office and every department and service unit must ensure that our service delivery model meets the needs of our customers (students, faculty, staff, campus and community stakeholders, and visitors).
- As we experience and learn from the "new campus normal" during the pilot phase, CLAS senior leadership and CLAS HR will evaluate the pilot phase using data from surveys, employee and customer feedback, and other appropriate metrics, and in early 2022 will re-evaluate the college's policy options regarding alternative work arrangements.

University-wide Guidelines for Alternative Work Arrangements

- Preserve and build on core values of excellence, learning, community, diversity, integrity, respect, and responsibility
- Deliver world-class education, research, and health care
- Ensure equitable, transparent, and fair processes
- Comply with university and Board of Regents policy, and state and federal law
- Empower local decisions that prioritize business needs while taking into account employee preferences when possible.

CLAS Pilot Guiding Principles for Alternative Work Arrangements

During the return to campus, we must:

- Deliver world-class education throughout the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Ensure that services and programs in each department and service unit are accessible to all faculty, staff, and students
- Maintain all college-level and departmental operations
- Encourage team-building and a team environment among staff, faculty, and student employees in every department and service unit
- Ensure equitable, transparent, and fair processes; encourage constructive and collaborative discussions at all levels of CLAS
- Comply with UI and Board of Regents, State of Iowa policy, as well as state and federal laws
- Allow flexibility in work hours and location within an established framework that departments may use to prioritize business needs at the local level
- Adopt and adjust innovative approaches to return-to-campus problem-solving

Schedules for Employees' Return to Campus

- Starting July 1, 2021, members of the CLAS Senior Leadership Team will be on campus full time.
- All CLAS employees will start returning to work on July 1, unless they have a documented alternative work arrangement specifying otherwise.
- The date for all CLAS departments and offices to be fully staffed on campus is August 2, 2021.

Work Schedules and Alternative Work Arrangements

- To request an alternative work arrangement, staff members should start by discussing the feasibility of the arrangement with their supervisor.
- If the supervisor agrees that an alternative work arrangement is appropriate for the employee, the staff member will initiate an Alternative Work Arrangement in Self Service to be routed for approvals by their supervisor and HR representative. All alternative work arrangements will be reviewed within the first three months of implementation to ensure employee/unit success.
- Alternative work arrangements should not include more than 40% remote work. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 100% remote work arrangements will be considered only in rare situations, based on the business rationale for the request.
- Employees with an alternative work arrangement may be required to share their on-campus work space with other employees.
- CLAS senior leadership recognizes that some alternative work arrangements were established before the pandemic. CLAS HR and departmental leadership will work with these employees to develop a plan that is aligned with the guidance in this document.
- Departmental leadership will assess alternative work arrangements monthly during the pilot. If concerns arise regarding work arrangements, staff may be required to shift additional effort back to campus.

Hours

- Normal business hours are defined as 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Departments and service units may request limited flexibility in their “open” hours from CLAS HR and, if applicable, the unit’s area associate dean.
- Alternative schedules should be consistent and predictable (times of day in-office/remote, days of week in-office/remote).
- Non-exempt staff will work with their supervisor to document hours worked or scheduled outside of normal business hours.

Supervisor Criteria and Process for Evaluating Alternative Work Arrangements

- When evaluating alternative work arrangements, supervisors will consider:
 - The business rationale for the arrangement
 - The responsibilities of the position
 - The employee’s performance history
 - The impact on team-building among the unit’s employees
 - The priorities and mission of the department
 - CIMT space guidelines
 - Physical infrastructure
 - UI and HR guidelines
- Supervisors will ensure that overall staffing levels are sufficient for assisting students, faculty, and other customers during regular business hours (as defined in this document).
- On a monthly basis during the pilot phase, supervisors will confer with employees regarding their alternative work arrangements, and evaluate whether an arrangement is working for both the employee and the unit.

Documentation of Alternative Work Arrangements

- All alternative work arrangements must be documented during the pilot, using the form in Self Service.

Leadership/HR Evaluation of the CLAS Return to Campus Pilot

- Collegiate leadership, departmental leadership, and CLAS HR will use the criteria listed below to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative work arrangements. In addition, CLAS HR will conduct periodic surveys to gather data used for evaluating the pilot phase, and will conduct exit interviews with CLAS employees who separate during the pilot phase. CLAS senior leadership reserves sole discretion to make any adjustments to the availability of remote work status deemed necessary to fulfill business or operational objectives.

View FAQs about Return to Campus: <https://hr.uiowa.edu/administrative-services/current-initiatives/future-workiowa/faqs>

- **Internet:** Employees are responsible for providing internet connectivity and bandwidth adequate to working effectively from remote locations. Technical requirements may vary depending on an employee's function and/or the technology required for essential job functions.
- **Standard IT services:** The university is responsible for providing standard IT services, technology, and training to support remote work.
- **Equipment:** Computers and other equipment required to perform the essential functions of the job should be provided by the college/department, unless the employee requests to use personal equipment. Approval for equipment requests should be managed at the department level, with consultation from local or collegiate IT staff.
- **Data security:** Employees with access to sensitive data are responsible for maintaining the security of that data while working remotely.
- **Confidentiality:** Employees are responsible for ensuring that remote workspaces are able to accommodate the privacy and confidentiality requirements of their role.
- **Existing policies:** All university and departmental IT policies apply in remote, hybrid, and on-campus work situations.
- **Office supplies and equipment:** Additional information will be released as it becomes available.