

RETURN TO ON-GROUND WORK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document provides answers to common questions regarding the phased return to on-ground work plan. Email today@tri-c.edu with any additional questions you may have.

1. Why is the College increasing our presence on campus now?

- We will not increase our on-ground presence until June. Until then, we will continue to monitor the environment and respond to any significant changes as needed.
- Recent advances in vaccine distribution, the number of individuals who will be fully vaccinated and the College's extensive list of health and safety precautions (see #4) were key factors in determining that a gradual increase to two days a week on-ground could safely occur in June.
- Student success data and student feedback tell us that our students want and need on-campus support services and engagement activities as well as in-person classes. Expanding the on-ground presence of all employees supports the long-term success of our students and the College.
- Remote and virtual services were not intended to be a long-term mode of operation. Our College culture thrives in an in-person environment, which provides opportunities for deeper levels of engagement, socialization and collaboration. Starting with two days a week in June allows for a gradual return to normal.

2. What factors were considered when planning to increase our on-ground presence?

The safety of our students, faculty and staff was the top priority. College leadership also considered the following:

- **Student needs.** A return to on-ground work will ensure that we are providing the education and support services our students depend on to enroll and succeed in their courses.
- **Employee needs.** Many of you have been working remotely for more than a year. For some, returning to on-ground work will be a welcome reprieve. For others, it will be an adjustment. We have planned a phased-in return to allow you to gradually acclimate to on-ground work and have time to plan for adjustments to your home life.
- **Advances in vaccine availability.** With the increased production and availability of vaccines, many people will be fully vaccinated by June. The College continues to connect employees and students with vaccine resources by providing codes for guaranteed appointments and information about vaccination opportunities. Vaccines are currently offered at Tri-C's Western Campus, and we expect to be able to offer additional opportunities for on-campus vaccination (more information to come).

- **Enhanced health and safety protocols.** This includes requiring masks to be worn over the nose and mouth, daily health assessments, social distancing in offices and classrooms, facilities planning for the installation of partitions where needed, OSHA-compliant cleaning practices and more. Review all protocols in the [Return to On-Ground Work Guidance](#).
- **Care Alliance partnership.** Tri-C continues to work with Care Alliance to offer free testing at the Care Alliance Central Clinic (2916 Central Ave. in Cleveland) and at the Metro Campus every Monday through April 19. Visit tri-c.edu/covidtest for more information about on-site testing.
- **Higher education landscape.** A number of area colleges and universities have announced plans for a return to “near normal operations” for fall. Many already have a significant on-ground footprint.

3. What is the schedule for return to on-ground work?

From June 3 – July 30, all employees* will work on-ground two days a week: Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Extended hours will be scheduled as needed.

- *Some employees who have been working on-ground throughout the pandemic will maintain their current schedules. Check with your supervisor.
- Instructional Faculty — Summer
 - Faculty with a fully online class schedule may continue to offer virtual office hours.
 - Faculty with a hybrid or fully on-ground schedule will offer at least two office hours each day they teach on campus.
- Counseling and Library Faculty — Summer
 - Counseling and library areas will be open to serve students on Mondays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Extended hours may be scheduled as needed. Non-instructional faculty with scheduled summer pro-rata hours on Mondays and Thursdays are expected to work on campus.

4. What measures are in place to keep employees safe on-ground?

We continue to follow all current health and safety protocols, including:

- All students and employees must review and electronically sign the COVID-19 [Statement of Personal Responsibility](#) each semester and perform a [daily health assessment](#). Visitors must acknowledge the [Visitor Statement of Personal Responsibility](#) and perform the [daily health assessment](#) for each visit.
- Masks are to be worn by everyone on campuses and at sites. Individuals in offices or conference rooms may remove their masks if alone and the door is closed. Those in open-air cubicles without a door and in common areas must remain masked.

- 230 bipolar ionizers that remove 99.4% of the virus from the air were installed across the College.
- Plexiglass has been placed in areas where face-to-face transactions and/or interactions occur.
- Furniture in classrooms and common areas has been arranged or removed to allow for social distancing.
- Touchless systems have been added for doors and water stations.
- Thermometers are available throughout the College.
- See [Return to On-Ground Work Guidance](#) for a complete list of health and safety precautions.

5. Do I have to return to campus if a member of my household — or a family member for whom I am the primary caregiver — has a health condition that puts them at increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19?

Employees providing care to a family member who is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 may work with their supervisor and Tanja Foster in Human Resources to find a flexible work arrangement (if compatible with employee’s responsibilities and department goals) or apply for continuous or intermittent FMLA leave. A flexible work arrangement includes at least some on-ground presence unless the employee has a 100% remote work accommodation approved by Human Resources. These arrangements may be modified at any time to meet College needs. Any arrangement made to accommodate an employee’s unique situation will be done at the sole discretion of the College and will not infer, imply or ensure a continuation of such arrangement for any guaranteed period of time.

6. Do I have to return to campus if I haven’t received the vaccine?

Yes. Tri-C has provided employees with numerous vaccination resources. Given these opportunities, it is the College’s expectation that all employees will return to on-ground work unless they have a 100% remote work accommodation approved by Human Resources.

7. Is this approach in compliance with Ohio Department of Health guidelines?

Yes. See below for additional details.

- **General:** Campus buildings have been assessed to ensure that they will not exceed established limits at any given time based on class sizes and staff scheduled on campus. Classrooms have been configured to adjust capacity to 40-50% of maximum approved occupancy.
- **Classrooms and labs:** Occupancy guidelines provide for a 6-foot radius between attendees and faculty/instructors. In instances where this is not feasible, plexiglass dividers have been erected.

- **Student service areas:** Occupancy is defined by the size of the space, with a focus on de-densification. Appropriate signage, including floor decals and tape, indicates queuing locations, guides traffic flow and encourages social distancing. Plexiglass shields are installed at reception desks, check-in counters and other locations where face-to-face transactions or interactions must be performed. Waiting area and workstation furniture has been spaced apart or removed to promote appropriate social distancing.
- **Administration and other office space:** Students, employees and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines currently recommended by the CDC and the Ohio Department of Health. All individuals must refrain from gathering in common areas and in large groups while on College property. Everyone must wear a face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth at all times, including during all classes and labs and while within 6 feet of another individual. Individuals in offices or conference rooms may remove their masks if alone and the door is closed. Those in open-air cubicles without a door and in common areas must remain masked.

8. Can we hold in-person meetings?

Most meetings should still take place virtually through Webex to allow for continued safe distancing practices.

In-person meetings of 10 or fewer individuals in areas that permit 6 feet of social distancing are allowed *on a limited basis* as needed. Masks must be worn during such meetings. Employees should not hold in-person meetings involving more than 10 individuals until further notice. This excludes classes and meetings approved by Campus Presidents or EVPs (approval must not exceed 25% of room capacity).

Maintain social distance, including when meeting new people or reuniting with coworkers.

9. Can we travel for business? What about personal travel?

All travel for College purposes is suspended until further notice.

The CDC recommends a seven-day quarantine after international travel or travel to another state for unvaccinated individuals. If you're vaccinated, there is no requirement for quarantine after *personal* travel. Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the most recent travel advisories.

10. What if a co-worker gets sick? How will I know?

The College's Risk Management team will directly contact and notify any students, faculty and/or staff who were in contact with a COVID-positive individual and advise on next steps. A Collegewide email will also be sent notifying employees and students of the date and location of exposure.

If you experience symptoms, test positive or have any questions or concerns, email risk.management@tri-c.edu.

11. Do we have the option to work on ground more than two days per week?

Discuss this with your supervisor. During this past year, many people have worked on-ground on various days of the week. We have to give cleaning crews time to clean, so situations differ.

12. Will there be opportunities to continue remote work?

We will gather input from across the College and use what we've learned during the emergency remote work period to develop a flexible work policy that will include remote work options for some positions.