

## Frequently Asked Questions about Harvard Workplace Policies with regard to COVID-19

1. [If the students at Harvard College are no longer in residence and learning online after their spring break, and I work in the College, do I still have a job?](#)
2. [Should I start working remotely now?](#)
3. [If I can't work remotely, will I still be paid?](#)
4. [If students are no longer in residence, doesn't it follow that employees work from home?](#)
5. [I have heard about co-workers who are staying out of work because of what seems like a fairly distant connection to a person diagnosed or suspect to have COVID-19. Is this what we are supposed to do?](#)
6. [Up until now, I have been pretty calm and not too worried. Recently, however, I've really started to feel concerned and upset. What should I do?](#)

1. **If the students at Harvard College are no longer in residence and learning online after their spring break, and I work in the College, do I still have a job?**

Yes, if you are a “regular” (non-temporary) employee. At this writing, Harvard College and Harvard University are both still fully open and operational. Our faculty and staff are needed to fulfill Harvard’s mission, even as we shift to distance learning in some of our academic programs. Regular employees are still being paid, and eligible for benefits – including many different kinds of paid time off and supports to get through the COVID-19 situation.

2. **Should I start working remotely now?**

Please follow your normal routine, but be prepared for changes. If you work remotely now, please continue to do so. If you do not work remotely at present, please **prepare** to work remotely if your job duties permit it. Harvard will make a specific announcement when large-scale remote work is enacted to increase social distancing in our workplace.

3. **If I can't work remotely, will I still be paid?**

Yes. As a general principle, Harvard is committed to sustaining the pay continuity for our dedicated and talented workforce. Since the effects of the virus cannot be fully foreseen, this and other policies will be revisited on a periodic basis.

First, people who continue working (remotely or on campus) will be paid as they are normally.

Second, Harvard’s regular and newly expanded workforce policies provide many kinds of paid time off -- for illness, isolation/quarantine, disability and dependent care.

Third, for those who cannot work remotely, and for whom there are no alternate assignments or work available (for example, due to shutdowns), Harvard will provide **emergency-related paid excused absences** for a defined period of time (e.g., 30 days), and will revisit this commitment as the situation evolves.

4. **If students are no longer in residence, doesn't it follow that employees work from**

## home?

No, not necessarily. The decision to have undergraduate students, if they are able, remain off-campus and begin distance learning after spring break was made to increase social distance in the residential houses (dormitories), classes, athletics and extra-curricular activities. It would be very difficult to house, feed, isolate and medically care for the student body if many were ill with COVID-19. And, it would be difficult to protect well students from infection if they remained in the close, shared quarters of dormitory living.

Obviously, health and safety measures for the workforce are a bit different, as employees do not live together in congregate housing. For the workplace, we are focused on measures that will be most effective – promoting good hygiene practices, extra surface cleaning, and restrictions on travel, meetings and events. **If needed**, Harvard will take additional steps to increase social distancing by reducing the “density” of work spaces in terms of occupancy and possibly by large-scale remote work.

**5. I have heard about co-workers who are staying out of work because of what seems like a fairly distant connection to a person diagnosed or suspect to have COVID-19. Is this what we are supposed to do?**

Employees who are in doubt about whether to attend work are invited to email Harvard University Health Services ([healthservices@huhs.harvard.edu](mailto:healthservices@huhs.harvard.edu)) for advice and guidance. Medical professionals there are best equipped to offer advice based on factors such as how direct or indirect the contact was, travel or exposure to travelers, health history and symptoms.

**6. Up until now, I have been pretty calm and not too worried. Recently, however, I've really started to feel concerned and upset. What should I do?**

Remember that Harvard's health plans offer comprehensive coverage for both physical and mental health care. In addition, all employees are invited to contact the Employee Assistance Program at 877-EAP-HARV (877-327-4278) for help with feelings of stress or anxiety about these events. Harvard fully supports and encourages self-care in these stressful times.