

FAQ Return to the Workplace

These FAQs answer questions you may have about Converse's plan to implement the return to campus on June 1, 2021

Timing and Temporary Exceptions

1. What is the timeline for the plan?

On June 1, 2021, all employees, independent of having received a COVID-19 vaccination, are asked to return to work on campus.

Possible exceptions:

- Employees who are primary caregivers of pre-school and school age children who need to make alternative care arrangements *
- Employees who are in a medical high-risk category and have not yet opted to receive or have not yet received their vaccination will go through the. *
- Other [Medical Accommodations Request Form](#). *
- Employees whose workspace requires safety modifications *

*Where there are exemptions possible it requires university/division approval.

2. Will departments have flexibility and autonomy in making decisions based on their needs?

YES.

There are a multitude of factors to consider when arranging a safe and effective Return to the Workplace plan. These include but are not limited to, medical considerations, childcare, work place modifications and more. If you have questions reach out to your supervisor and/or HR. At the end of the day, we have to make sure that business needs are met while creating a safe workplace environment and ensuring equal treatment.

There are ways to allow employees time to make arrangements for childcare or obtain a vaccine if they are in a high-risk category.

Departments may also temporarily exempt an employee whose workspace requires modifications.

3. Do departments need to provide return-to-work letters for all returning employees?

No. Departments only need to issue formal return letters to employees whose schedule will change. (For example, if an employee is normally scheduled to work from 8:30 am through 5:00 pm and requests a change to work from 7:00 am through 4:00 pm). Departments must provide (7) seven day's notice of a schedule change. Supervisors needing to advise an employee of a schedule change should contact HR to review and HR will provide a template letter.

4. Are Student Workers included in the plan?

No. This plan does not apply to student workers. And add **where to find guidance ask JW**

Childcare Issues

5. If the childcare center or school for the child of an employee is not open to in-person, full-time learning, is the employee expected to report to the workplace?

Yes. All employees are expected to return to the workplace full-time. However, parents with pre-school or school age dependents who attend school or daycare facilities not offering in-person instruction/care may be given additional time to make arrangements for alternative childcare accommodations and/or flexible work arrangements.

Employee may be asked to provide supporting documentation from the facility. All extensions must be approved by your supervisor and sent to HR.

6. What leave types can an employee use if their child's school or daycare is not open?

Employee may use vacation leave or leave without pay if they need to take time off work to provide child care during the school closure.

If a child is ill due to COVID-19, the employee may use leave provided under the FFCRA leave through June 30, 2021 and other appropriate Converse leave as available. Contact HR if you have any questions.

Medical Concerns

7. Does the return to the workplace consider those employees with medical conditions?

Yes. However, we still follow the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and other federal and state laws. Therefore, if an employee has a disability (e.g., congestive heart failure) that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies as placing the individual at higher risk for severe illness resulting from the COVID-19 virus, the interactive process should be utilized to evaluate a request for a **temporary** reasonable accommodation to work remotely until the individual has had an **opportunity** to be vaccinated. The CDC provides a [list of conditions](#) that place an individual at a higher risk of severe illness from the COVID-19 virus.

Speak to HR and your supervisor if you have questions about other medical conditions that are not listed.

8. Is an employee expected to report to the workplace if a family member or household resident is at higher risk for severe illness from the COVID-19 virus?

Yes. The Americans with Disabilities Act does not apply when the individual with a disability is a family member or household resident of the employee. Qualifying employees may be eligible for leave pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) if they need to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Requests for FMLA leave will need to be made by the employee and processed in accordance with federal law and Converse policy.

9. We have an employee who has received the vaccine but doesn't want to come on-site to work?

Employees are to return to work as of June 1, 2021 unless they are working under an approved exemption or if a formal teleworking agreement is in place. Prior Teleworking

agreements shall be reviewed for relevancy and adjusted as necessary. The supervisor should discuss with the employee and if necessary, elevate to Human Resources.

10. If an employee is required to isolate or quarantine for COVID-19 can they work remotely?

Yes. If an employee is required to stay home as a result of an isolation order or quarantine order, they are well enough to work and their work duties are amenable to remote work, they may temporarily engage in remote work during the isolation or quarantine period.

Remote Work and Telecommuting

11. If I had a prior Telecommuting agreement will that automatically be renewed?

No. Supervisors and Employees are asked to revisit the existing agreements and adjust as necessary.

12. Can we still stagger schedules to ensure there is not a lot of congregation at start and end time of the day?

Yes, employee schedules may be staggered.

If the schedule is different than their normal schedule, a 7 day-written notice must be given based on SC Payment of Wages Act. Please contact Human Resources for a template letter.

13. Can departments use flexible scheduling to support staff?

Yes, departments may still use flexible schedules to accommodate employees who work non-standard hours or a compressed work week. Please see Flexible Work Arrangements Policy and the [Flexible Work Schedule Guidelines and Request Form](#).

14. If we have employees who want to telework, can they complete the teleworking request form?

Converse supports the principle of flexible work arrangements for its employees to provide for more efficient utilization of the abilities of its employees, improved service to the Converse community, and adaptable working conditions for employees.

Formal teleworking requests may be submitted for review and approval consistent with the [Flexible Work Arrangements](#) Policy-section telecommuting.

15. What is the difference between flexible work arrangements and teleworking?

Teleworking is a type of flexible work arrangement but all flexible work arrangements do not include telework. Please see the [Flexible Work Arrangements](#) policy for more details.

Additional consideration may be given to Teaching faculty who mostly conduct in person instructions

Risk Mitigation

16. What COVID-19 Protocols are in place for Fall 2021?

Find detailed information [here](#)

17. Are face masks still required?

Yes. All safety protocols remain in place.

Converse is requiring face coverings to be worn at all times inside all campus buildings unless you are in your own private office or you are actively eating or drinking. All individuals on campus in outdoor areas are expected to wear a face covering whenever physical distancing (six feet or more) is difficult or the risk of infection is high.

18. What can I do to mitigate occupational risk of exposure to COVID-19 for my employees?

Supervisors/managers should continue to identify ways to modify the workplace to the extent possible to promote the safety of employees. Examples of modifications include:

- Offering staggered start times to mitigate the congregation of employees at points of ingress/egress.
- Spreading out workstations to increase the distance between work areas.

- Utilizing common space (e.g., conference rooms) as temporary worksites for some employees to promote social distancing.
- Installing sneeze guards or plexiglass barriers.

19. Does this mean we can hold face to face meetings now?

Converse will still offer online conferencing platforms like zoom and google meets.

Departments are also allowed to resume in person meetings as long as all safety protocols are followed.

Testing and Vaccination

20. If an employee doesn't want to get the vaccine and wants to teleworking, what should we do?

Vaccinations are highly recommended and even when not vaccinated, Converse is planning to have all employees return to the campus unless they were approved prior to COVID-19 for telecommuting. Converse will still offer flexibility to supervisors in determining remote work options. If the person falls in a high-risk category based on CDC guidelines, they should follow the ADA process. (See question concerning employees with medical conditions).

Converse recognizes that employees may have reasons to not receive the vaccination.

Converse strongly encourages the vaccination but supervisors will work with individual employees on determining the appropriate return to work plan.

21. Are employees returning to campus for the first time this FALL, 2021 required to be tested for COVID-19?

Yes, they are required to be tested for COVID-19 unless they:

- Have been fully vaccinated for at least 2 weeks
 - have received 2 doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
 - one dose of Johnson and Johnson vaccine, or
- are within 90 days of a positive COVID-19 test.

Documentation of vaccination or positive test MUST be uploaded to the [vaccination portal](#) or [proof of test portal](#) to qualify for exemption.

Faculty and Academic Schedule

22. How does the Return to Normal Work Operations impact Faculty?

Faculty are offering instruction in a variety of modalities and they will continue to do so. The expectation for Faculty is that the work location will be on site and in person as much as possible. The work location are Converse classrooms (whether in Spartanburg or Greenville). Exceptions are generally possible in the case where a course was already an online course or if there are approved accommodations in place. Should you have questions about work arrangements, you are advised to speak with your Chair, Dean or Human Resources