

Guidelines for Developing Return to Work Plans for CVM Graduate Students

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Input in creating these guidelines was gathered from CVM OGP coordinators, Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) for the CMB and VMED graduate programs, and our CMB and VMED graduate student representatives.

This document will describe general guidelines and a process for graduate faculty advisors to develop return to work plans for their individual CVM graduate students. However, because each student's program is potentially unique, and because the activities and responsibilities of each student are constantly changing as they matriculate through their training program, the actual final return to work plan for each graduate student will be made on a case-by-case basis by their major advisor.

While many graduate students will return to a 100% on campus work schedule starting September 7, 2021, the OGP is supportive of the idea that remote work or a hybrid model may be appropriate for many students. We anticipate that each student's return to work plan will be influenced by a variety of factors including where the student is in their program (i.e. stage of training), their graduate course schedule and how those courses are offered (e.g. in person, virtual or hybrid), requirements for ongoing research activities (e.g. lab or field-based research versus analytical research), writing activities, and other responsibilities.

Major advisors should meet with their advisees at least 2 weeks before the September 7, 2021 start date to discuss and finalize a return to work plan for each student. The Directors of Graduate Programs (DGS) and OGP will be available to offer assistance and to provide guidance as advisors and students are working out their plan. The final return to work plan will be communicated by the major advisor to the student both verbally as well as in writing (e.g. written in an email) at least 2 weeks before the September 7, 2021. However, the plan does not need to be submitted to the Project Leadership Team (PLT) for the CVM Future of Work committee.

Following implementation of the return to work plan, graduate students and advisors are strongly encouraged to meet either virtually or in person at least once per week at a minimum, with more frequent communication as needed. A consistent 'in office' schedule will be kept from week to week the entire semester, unless a future planning meeting between the student's advisor and the student determines that the plan needs to be modified for some reason. If the schedule is to change, written and verbal notice will

again be given from the advisor to the student at least 2 weeks in advance of implementing any change. The return to work schedule will be reviewed at least 2 weeks before the beginning of each semester.

The CVM OGP recognizes how important it is to build and maintain a culture of connectivity and inclusivity within our community. The isolation that we have all experienced in the past 17 months has been particularly hard on a large proportion of our students and faculty, alike. At particular risk for feeling isolated are students from out of state or out of country, and newer graduate students. As such, when possible, advisors are strongly encouraged to ensure that a significant amount of regular in-person interaction occurs among students and between students and their advisors/mentors in order to meet social and mental health requirements. While the nature of these in-person interactions will be left to the discretion of individual advisors, examples could include multiple people working alongside one another in the lab or doing field research, working in shared student office spaces, or during regular in-person lab meetings. The CVM OGP also encourages our graduate students to be cognizant of this need, and to look for opportunities to interact with, and support one another.

There are no specific technologies or accommodations required to implement this plan, beyond what is already available to CVM graduate faculty and students.