

Supplement to the Simmons University Employee Handbook

A Special Reference Guide for Workplace Issues in the Time of COVID-19

The [Simmons University Employee Handbook](#) remains a comprehensive and reliable resource regarding workplace policies and procedures for Simmons employees. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, created new challenges. This **supplement** to the Employee Handbook gathers together in one place important employee-related information related to COVID-19.

We hope you find this information useful and we welcome your feedback.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES UNDER THE ADA

Simmons' process to request an accommodation for a documented disability has not changed because of COVID-19. If you require an accommodation, whether related or unrelated to COVID-19, please reach out to hr@simmons.edu for more information.

MANDATORY COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

The [Simmons' mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination policy](#) contains information about requesting exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine policy as well as information regarding non-compliance with the Simmons COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, GENDER-BASED MISCONDUCT AND TITLE IX

On August 14, 2020, new federal regulations went into effect to govern the review and investigation of complaints of sexual harassment that fall under Title IX. These new regulations apply to Simmons faculty, staff, and students who seek to bring complaints as well as those faculty, staff, and students who may be the subject of complaints. Comprehensive information about how Simmons is fulfilling its responsibilities to comply with these new regulations can be found on the [Title IX page](#).

ETHICSPPOINT HOTLINE

Simmons University has established a hotline with EthicsPoint to enable employees to report policy violations anonymously and confidentially. An employee may file a report directly on the [EthicsPoint website](#) or by calling the EthicsPoint call center at 1-888-260-5947.

BIAS RESPONSE PROTOCOL

The **Bias Response Protocol**, sponsored by the Office of Culture, Inclusion, and Equity, is no longer available to staff and faculty because it may not meet state and federal criteria for investigating reports of unlawful activity. Any faculty and staff member with concerns about disparate treatment

or unlawful discrimination is encouraged to seek assistance from the [Human Resource Office](#) or the Office of the General Counsel.

TRAINING

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston expect all employees planning to work on campus to complete one or more COVID-19 training modules to learn what is required of them before they return. You will receive an email from Simmons University sent from Everfi (our training partner) with instructions on how to access the courses online. At the end of the course you will receive a certificate of completion for your records.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

Our plans for reopening our campus rely heavily on the cooperation of all who will be coming to campus to learn, live, and work. The University has established health and safety protocols which cover [hygiene and frequent handwashing, physical distancing, regular health screenings, weekly testing, and mask wearing indoors and outdoors.](#)

We urge respect and patience towards one another as we adjust to these protocols designed to protect individual and collective well-being. If you see someone who is not following the protocols, respectfully remind them of the health standards and the need to uphold them. Let's also agree to accept and respond to such reminders with grace and goodwill.

If you plan to come to campus, or are thinking about coming to campus, you will need permission to do so. [Click here](#) for forms to request approval.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

All Simmons faculty and staff are expected to comply and model compliance with the COVID-19 protocols established as part of the University's Fall 2020 re-opening plan. Faculty and staff who fail to follow, disregard, or intentionally violate our COVID-19 workplace expectations may lose their access to campus. They may also be subject to disciplinary action. Faculty or staff with concerns about COVID-19 compliance for themselves or others are urged to raise those concerns with Human Resources at hr@simmons.edu.

Faculty and staff who observe others not following our COVID-19 policies, or who have specific health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, should immediately notify their department chair, Dean, Vice President, or manager. Concerns may also be reported confidentially using EthicsPoint, the University's anonymous reporting tool at [EthicsPoint website](#) or by calling the EthicsPoint call center at 1-888-260-5947.

TESTING AND WORK HOURS FOR NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

Simmons will require employees to be tested regularly for the COVID-19 via anterior nasal swabs. For non-exempt employees, the time required to comply with testing requirements shall be counted toward the hours worked during the payroll period.

REMOTE WORK POLICY

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, all non-essential Simmons employees have worked remotely and will continue to do so through December 31, 2020. When a determination is made to have additional non-faculty staff return to their campus-based positions, eligible staff may apply to continue to work remotely for a portion of their work schedule, typically up to two days per week. A copy of the University's Remote Work Policy can be found [here](#) [Remote Work Policy](#).

This remote work policy for campus-based positions policy does not apply to employees who have been hired into full-time "remote positions" or to faculty members.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Simmons's **Outside Employment Policy** is contained in the [Simmons Business Conduct Policy](#). While working remotely for Simmons, employees remain subject to the requirements of the University's **Outside Employment Policy**. If you are a non-faculty staff member, questions about outside employment are to be directed to [Human Resources](#); if you are a faculty member, questions about outside employment are governed by the **Faculty Policy Manual** and any questions are to be directed to your Dean or the Provost.

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

The ban on domestic and international business/educational travel by Simmons faculty and staff announced in March 2020 remains in place until further notice. The ban is not expected to be lifted before the start of the Spring 2021 semester and may remain in place until the end of the academic year. Limited domestic travel exceptions may be considered for admissions representatives, athletic coaches, and advancement gift officers through an approval process sponsored by the COVID-19 Working Group, led by Laura Brink Pisinski.

OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT RECORDS

Simmons employees are entitled to review and obtain a copy of their employee records, including their health records. Before the pandemic required us to work remotely, responding to requests for employment records was relatively easy and could be accomplished typically within five business days.

These days, because records maintained by [Human Resources](#) and other offices are in storage due to construction work in the Main Campus Building, additional time is needed to locate the records and to photocopy them. At this time only an electronic version of an employment record can be provided to employees requesting a copy. We cannot provide in-person review.

NEW COVID-19 LEAVE

Full and part-time Simmons faculty and staff, including temporary staff, may request Special COVID Leave. A total of 80 hours of [Special COVID Leave](#) is available to eligible faculty and staff between now and June 30, 2021.

Special COVID Leave is paid leave. The Leave may be used when eligible employees need time off to attend to circumstances or conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such circumstances could include, but are not limited to:

- If you or a member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If you are a member of your household are awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and the testing results are not expected to be available before you are scheduled to return to work on campus.
- If you or a family member has been directed to quarantine or self-isolate as a result of a COVID-19 diagnosis or suspected COVID-19 exposure.
- If you are returning from travel outside of Massachusetts and are requested by your manager, Dean or Human Resources to be tested for COVID-19 before returning to campus.
- If you are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed or whose child care provider is unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

If you request Special COVID Leave for five or more consecutive days of work due to COVID-19 exposure or diagnosis, you will be required to supply documentation from a medical provider to support your request for a leave.

For health issues not related to COVID-19, please use other accrued time off such as sick time, vacation time, and/or floating holiday time. Employees are reminded that they may use up to five (5) days of sick time per academic year to care for a family member.

For more information or to request this Leave, please contact benefits@simmons.edu.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

The William J. Holmes Sports and Fitness Center will continue to be closed and not available for employee use.

PARKING

The University will continue to have limited parking for benefits-eligible employees during the Fall 2020 semester. For complete information including rules and regulations, please visit the [parking website](#).