

COVID-19 FAQs for SDSU Research Foundation Employees

MARCH 13, 2020

1. Where can I find up-to-date information about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and its impact at SDSU?

Information about SDSU's response to COVID-19 is available by visiting <https://sa.sdsu.edu/student-health-services/coronavirus>

2. I'm worried that I have COVID-19. What should I do?

It's important to call your healthcare provider so they can direct you to the most appropriate care. In the meantime, SDSURF suggests that employees follow the public health authorities' recommendations on precautions to help prevent the possible spread of the virus to others.

3. What are the CDC recommendations for anyone sick and believed to be at risk for COVID-19 infection?

Please visit the CDC website for the most updated information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

4. When is it safe to return to work after having a fever, flu or other contagious illness?

Anyone having a fever, flu or other contagious illness should closely follow the instructions of medical professionals and avoid returning to work until their medical provider has indicated that they are safe to return. General guidance on this subject is available on the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/business/stay-home-when-sick.htm>

5. Is SDSU going to close campus to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Please see the SDSU website for the most updated information regarding campus operations:

<https://sa.sdsu.edu/student-health-services/coronavirus>

6. If SDSU closes, will SDSU Research Foundation offices close?

If, and when SDSU makes the decision to close some or all of its locations, SDSU Research Foundation will work with the university to make decisions about its locations.

7. If SDSU closes, will laboratories and off-site offices close?

If, and when SDSU makes the decision to close some or all of its locations, SDSU Research Foundation will work with the university to make decisions about its locations. At this time, campus is open. You may wish to consider developing a research continuity plan in the event that you cannot access your laboratory or off-site office, which should include which work could be conducted and which employees could work remotely.

8. Does the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or California Family Rights Act (CFRA) entitle an employee to take leave to avoid contracting COVID-19?

No. The FMLA and CFRA entitle employees to job-protected leave when they have a serious health condition or when they need leave to care for covered family members who have a serious health condition. Leave for the purpose of avoiding exposure to COVID-19 is not protected under the FMLA or CFRA.

9. Can managers and staff telecommute if they are medically ordered to isolate due to exposure to COVID-19?

Yes, this is a possibility. Not every position is suited for telecommuting due to specific job duties that cannot be performed at home or operating requirements of the unit. SDSU Research Foundation employees who have been medically ordered to isolate due to possible exposure to COVID-19 should contact the SDSURF leave administrator at sdsurfbenefits@sdsu.edu or call (619) 594-4139.

10. Can managers and staff telecommute if they elect to self-isolate due to concerns about COVID-19?

Employees who wish to request remote work for a period of time because they have an underlying health condition that puts them at heightened risk with regard to COVID-19, should contact the SDSURF leave administrator at sdsurfbenefits@sdsu.edu to discuss their request. SDSU Research Foundation will engage in an interactive process with the employee to determine if remote working, or another type of reasonable accommodation, can be provided.

Employees who do not have a health condition but would like to request, for other reasons, to work remotely, should contact their manager or supervisor to discuss whether working remotely is a feasible option. Not every position is suited for telecommuting due to specific job duties that cannot be performed at home or operating requirements of the unit.

11. What steps should be taken if an employee becomes ill with fever, cough or other concerning symptoms?

Managers and supervisors should direct staff who are sick with flu-like symptoms to stay home and recommend that they utilize sick leave or other accrued paid time off until symptoms resolve. Managers may also recommend the employee seek medical assistance, as appropriate.

12. Am I required to provide a doctor's note if I am out sick (unrelated to COVID- 19)?

Please refer to SDSURF's sick leave policy, which contains guidance on health care providers' notes: https://www.foundation.sdsu.edu/hr_benefits_sick.html

SDSU Research Foundation will continue to monitor guidance from the CDC and may choose to make exceptions or changes to doctor's note policies if/as necessary.

13. Can managers prohibit staff from coming to work if the employee is known to have contracted COVID-19 themselves, or to have had close contact with someone who has?

If a manager believes that a staff member has COVID-19 or has had very close contact with a person who has COVID-19 (such as living in the same household), please contact your HR Business Partner for assistance. In accordance with CDC guidance, SDSU Research Foundation may require employees with COVID-19, or those who have been exposed to a person who tested positive for COVID-19, to stay home from work for a period of 14 days. However, Human Resources alone will make these determinations and give direction to SDSU Research Foundation employees.

14. Do SDSU Research Foundation employees get paid if the campus is closed?

At this time, the campus is not closed. If campus were to close and employees were unable to telecommute, they could use their accrued time off (vacation, personal and sick). We are still determining what will happen if an employee does not have sufficient accruals to cover the campus closure. One possibility is to record unpaid time. An employee in unpaid status may be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits due to lack of work. Please see the EDD website for additional information: https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

15. How do SDSU Research Foundation employees enter work time or absences when the campus is closed, or they are not reporting to work?

SDSU Research Foundation employees should utilize Workforce to record their time worked and absences. The system may be accessed through any computer or mobile application with internet capability.

16. How would leave time be handled for employees who are medically required to isolate due to COVID-19?

Employees may use their accrued leave if medically required to isolate. Some employees may be able to work remotely. Please refer to Question #9 for guidance.

If there are medical restrictions that affect your ability to come to work, you should contact the SDSURF leave administrator at sdsurfbenefits@sdsu.edu to discuss reasonable accommodations.

17. How would leave time be handled for employees who elect to self-isolate?

Generally, employees may use their accrued leave if they elect to self-isolate. Some employees may be able to work remotely. Employees should discuss any elective self-isolation with their supervisors; please refer to Question #10 for guidance.

18. How would leave time be handled for employees who contract COVID-19?

Sick leave may be used for sickness and disease as well as exposure to a contagious disease. If sick leave is exhausted, employees may elect to use vacation and personal holiday time.

If an employee develops a serious health condition as a result of, or related to, COVID-19, they may be eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act or state equivalent. For questions regarding eligibility for FMLA leave, please consult our leave policies or contact the SDSURF leave administrator at sdsurfbenefits@sdsu.edu

Additionally, short term disability benefits may be available through EDD. Please see additional information here: https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

19. Are there any travel restrictions relating to domestic travel?

Yes. CSU has suspended non-essential domestic travel through May 31, 2020. If you have already incurred travel costs (e.g. airline tickets, conference registrations) for trips that fall within this travel suspension or that have been cancelled, please work with your grant specialist to discuss reimbursement procedures. Exceptions may be discussed with your dean or vice president.

20. Can I travel internationally for research-foundation-related business?

No. The Chancellor's Office has suspended all international travel through May 31, 2020. Faculty and staff who have essential international travel should consult their dean or vice president.

21. Since travel advisories change frequently, does SDSURF recommend purchasing travel cancellation insurance or purchasing refundable/exchangeable tickets?

The Chancellor's Office has suspended all international and non-essential domestic travel from now through May 31, 2020. Future travel, included summer and fall 2020, will be determined as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

Employees who wish to make travel plans for travel after May 31, 2020 should purchase travel cancellation insurance and/or refundable and exchangeable tickets. All employees traveling internationally are required to follow all requirements of the SDSU and SDSU Research Foundation Foreign Travel Insurance Program.

22. How should travelers handle nonrefundable costs related to events that have been cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns?

SDSU Research Foundation staff continue to partner with SDSU to determine how best to address concerns about funding and cancelled travel reservations, and answers to these questions will be provided as soon as they are available. In the interim, please contact your grant specialist for assistance with urgent questions regarding funding and cancelled travel plans

23. If nonrefundable travel has been cancelled due to COVID-19, and that travel's costs are currently charged to a gift fund, do those costs need to be moved or can they remain on the fund?

SDSU Research Foundation staff continue to partner with SDSU to determine how best to address concerns about funding and cancelled travel reservations, and answers to these questions will be provided as soon as they are available. In the interim, please contact your

grant specialist for assistance with urgent questions regarding funding and cancelled travel plans.

24. Can PIs/fund managers allow employees to take paid administrative leave if employees are quarantined because they are exposed to COVID-19?

No, project leadership cannot grant paid administrative leave to employees. Employees will be permitted to use accruals. If accruals are exhausted, the employee will go into an unpaid status and may qualify for wage-replacement benefits through the EDD. Please see additional information here: https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm. You may also determine if employees are eligible to work remotely. Questions should be referred to your HR Business Partner.

25. If an employee comes to work and exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 but claims that they are fine, can leadership send the employee home? What if the employee does not wish to leave because they do not wish to use accrued time off?

Yes, per OSHA guidelines, SDSU Research Foundation is required to provide a safe and healthy workplace. If an employee exhibits symptoms and does not wish to leave, please contact your HR Business Partner for assistance.

26. If an employee is out of the office with flu-like symptoms, does the manager need to inform other employees?

No, do not inform staff of personal health related issues of employees. If you have concerns about an employee with possible exposure to, or symptoms of COVID-19, do not discuss it with your peers or other employees: contact Human Resources.