

USAC Web Submissions April 2024

1. Idea/Question

On 3/1/24, the CDC issued updated guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/precautions-when-sick.html>) on respiratory viruses stating that people should stay home if they have symptoms, but UR does not have a policy that mandates employees/students to stay home/in their room if they are sick to prevent the spread of illness. Will UR consider requiring individuals with respiratory virus symptoms to stay away from others until they have been fever-free for 24 hours and improving symptoms without medication? This is in line with the updated guidance.

Rationale/Reason

Leaving the decision about how to handle interactions with sick employees and students up to managers is ineffective since there are different standards for different departments, which is why we need an institutional policy. Scheduled appointments can obviously be switched to Zoom or re-scheduled, but on this campus there are many interactions with students especially that are not scheduled, and staff need to have protection against exposure in all circumstances. Obviously we can wear masks, but some responsibility needs to be placed on the person who is sick to not infect others.

Response:

The University encourages all employees to stay home if they are ill and/or contagious, and our paid leave policies are available for just this purpose. If an employee does come to work and doesn't feel well, they are encouraged to be considerate of those around them. We recommend that those employees take any possible precautions, such as maintaining distance from others, wearing a mask, washing hands frequently, attending meetings by zoom, and, for certain positions, working remotely on a temporary basis. We trust our students and employees to use their best judgment and to be courteous of others. If there is an issue in the workplace, please reach out to your supervisor for advice.

As for COVID-19, the University's protocol is that "students, staff, and faculty who test positive for COVID-19 are expected to follow current public health guidance, which may include isolating at home and not coming to class or work. Information regarding isolation is available on the websites for the [Virginia Department of Health](#) and the [CDC](#)."

2. Idea/Question

Is it possible to get a monthly phone reimbursement or can we request phones for our offices to use? (I believe this used to be something UR did)

Rationale/Reason

I need to use my phone often to communicate with interns as well as post on social media - and the photos and videos take up a decent amount of space on my phone.

Response:

In accordance with the Cell Phone Policy, *“the University will continue to make a limited number of cell phones, cellular enabled devices such as iPads, and mobile hotspots available to departments for shared use during on-call rotations or on a check-out basis. These devices may be used only for University business needs and are not intended for personal use.”*

3. Idea/Question

Dave Hale and Lori Schuyler sent an announcement on March 13th indicating the university would discontinue supporting University cell phones for those currently in its cell phone program (necessary for their work). Please encourage them to communicate a more comprehensive justification to the university community.

Rationale/Reason

The one justification made in that announcement was that "cell phones have become ubiquitous and are commonly used across both [sic] personal and business requirements." The announcement also stated that there would still be support for "positions that require extensive travel or emergency response." Didn't those positions experience the same ubiquity of cell phones with use across personal and business requirements that the rest of the positions in the cell phone program experienced? That is, there seems to be something missing from the announcement.

Response:

The Cell Phone Policy addresses a longstanding practice in which there was not a stated rationale for which employee positions are eligible for a cell phone/cell phone plan and those positions who do not require such support. As a result, the University's practice of providing cell phones was ad hoc and needed to be addressed.

In determining which positions may require University cell phone support, it was determined that jobs which consistently require travel to fulfill job expectations or those jobs which may be first contact for University-related life/safety issues, would be provided with cell phone stipend support. Due to the ubiquity of cell phones, however, the University will no longer provide cell phones or manage cell phone plans for any employees.

The previous practice required significant administrative effort from many offices. Making this change will instead allow Information Services and the Finance areas to focus their resources on providing the technology infrastructure and support that the entire campus relies on. The new policy will also ensure a more equitable standard for providing cell phone allowances only to those who are required to travel extensively for the University or whose primary role is emergency response.