



## **COVID-19 Related Furlough FAQs**

**University of Utah Employees impacted by a COVID-19 Related Furlough are encouraged to contact the UHRM Employee Solutions Center at 801-581-7447, for further information and guidance.**

### **Below are several Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **Will I be eligible for Unemployment benefits while I am on furlough?**

Employees subject to a full furlough or reduced hours furlough may apply for Unemployment Benefits when the furlough becomes effective. Unemployment information can be found at: <https://jobs.utah.gov/ui/home>. Employees on reduced hours furlough will need to report earnings; UI benefits will be offset accordingly.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) offers a virtual workshop for employees. Information can be found at <https://jobs.utah.gov/covid19/templayoffvirtualworkshop.pdf>.

#### **What happens to my health care coverage while I am furloughed?**

During a full furlough, your department will pay the full cost of your health coverage if you are unpaid for an entire paycheck. If you on a reduced hours furlough, you will continue to pay the employee portion of the coverage through payroll.

#### **What happens to my FSA while I am furloughed?**

A full furlough is an event that will allow you to cancel your FSA election. However, if you wish to continue using your health FSA account for eligible expenses incurred during your furlough, you may pay the amount that would otherwise be deducted from your paycheck each month through billing. If you are on a reduced hours furlough, FSA deferrals will be continue to be deferred from your paychecks and you will continue participation in the plan.

#### **What will happen to life and disability insurance while I am furloughed?**

The University will continue to pay your University-provided life insurance. If you are enrolled in long term disability insurance, the University will continue to pay \$8 per month toward your premiums.

If you are on a full furlough, you may choose to continue your voluntary life insurance and disability insurance by paying premiums through billing. Please notify UHRM if you would like to be set up on billing. If you are on a reduced hours furlough, premiums will continue to be deducted you're your paychecks.

### **University Human Resource Management**

250 East 200 South, Suite 125, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Phone: (801) 581-7447 / Fax: (801) 585-7375

Email: [AskHR@utah.edu](mailto:AskHR@utah.edu) / Web: [www.hr.utah.edu/benefits](http://www.hr.utah.edu/benefits)

**Will there be an impact on my retirement?**

Employees enrolled in the 401(a) defined contribution retirement plan receive a University contribution to retirement equal to 14.2% of salary. If you are on a full furlough, you will not receive employer contributions. If you are on a reduced hours furlough, you will receive employer contributions corresponding to your reduced pay rate.

If you are enrolled in a Utah Retirement Systems Plan and you are on a full furlough, you will not receive years of service credit for any unpaid time in excess of ten days. If you are on a reduced hours furlough and your hours are at least 20 per week, you will continue to receive years of service credit. If you work less than 20 hours per week for more than 10 days, you stop earning years of service credit.

**Am I still eligible for tuition reduction for myself and eligible family members while on furlough?**

If you are in a full-time benefit-eligible position and have met the waiting periods, you are still eligible to receive tuition reduction for yourself and any eligible dependents who meet the eligibility rules in University policy. The furlough will not count as a break in service that will require restarting waiting periods.

**Can I withdraw from my retirement accounts while I am on furlough?**

Because a furlough is an unpaid leave of absence and you are still considered an active University employee, you cannot withdraw from your University retirement accounts. However, if you are age 59 ½ or older, you can withdraw from your 403(b) Plan account. As an active employee, you are eligible to take loans on money you have deferred to your 403(b) and/or 457(b) Plan accounts. As a result of the CARES Act, you can request deferral of loan payments for up to one year.

**Can I work another job outside of the University while on a furlough?**

Yes; however, the same conflict of interest rules apply to furloughed employees that apply to all other employees. The outside employment cannot interfere with the performance of your job or the interests of the University. You must receive approval from your director/dean and submit a financial disclosure to the University before engaging in outside employment. Please contact the Conflict of Interest Office if you have any questions regarding disclosure of external financial relationships. The University will still be considered your primary employer and you will be expected to return to work when called upon by university management.

**Can I volunteer to do my job?**

No. The Federal Labor Standards Act does not allow employees to volunteer without compensation do to the same work for which they are employed.

**Can I be reassigned to a position that is not being furloughed in order to continue to work and be paid?**

Employees on a temporary reassignment continue to be paid by their home department. Because a furlough is based on the department’s inability to fund compensation, employees who have been furloughed cannot be temporarily reassigned to another department. You may, however, apply for other available University employment at <https://employment.utah.edu/>.

**Will I continue to accrue leave while on furlough?**

On a full furlough, you will not continue to accrue vacation, sick, and personal preference while on furlough. If you are on a reduced hours furlough, you will continue to accrue vacation, sick, and personal preference leave.

**Can I use vacation, sick or personal preference during a furlough?**

If you are on a full furlough, you may not use any accrued leave. The reason for the furlough is the department's inability to fund compensation. As a result, employees who are on a full furlough cannot use accruals to continue receiving pay during the furlough.

If you are on a reduced hours furlough, you may use accrued leave for time you are scheduled to work if approved by your manager per standard university leave policies.

**Will I receive holiday pay during my furlough?**

If you work during the week of a holiday, you will receive holiday pay. If your furlough covers the entire week of the holiday, you will not receive holiday pay.

**What if I am furloughed while on leave (such as FMLA, vacation etc.)**

If you are furloughed while on an approved leave, your approved leave ends immediately and you are placed on furlough leave instead. Days that you are furloughed will not count towards your 12-week FMLA leave entitlement.

**If I am injured while on furlough will I be eligible for workers compensation?**

If you are on a full furlough, you are not eligible for workers compensation coverage because you are not working. Workers compensation benefits are only paid to employees if they are injured while performing their job duties. If you are on a reduced hours furlough you will be eligible for workers compensation for a work-related injury or illness you incur during your work hours.

**How will the furlough impact my service date with the University?**

There will be no impact to your service date with the University. The furlough time will continue to count as years of service toward vacation accruals and years of service awards.

**If I am furloughed, when will I be expected to return to work?**

Every employee's situation may be different. Colleges/Departments can expect employees to return to work as soon as possible, taking into account an employee's specific situation while on a furlough. After a furloughed employee has been notified to return to work, they are expected to contact their supervisor within 48 hours of being notified.

**COVID-19 Related Furlough Procedures and FAQ's also posted here:**

<https://www.hr.utah.edu/coronavirus/>