UWO Coronavirus Guidance from HR

This FAQ contains answers to many questions, however, the situation regarding the COVID-19 virus is rapidly changing. These FAQs will be updated as needed. More information on the COVID-19 virus can be found at: [https://uwosh.edu/coronavirus/](https://uwosh.edu/coronavirus/)

1. **What are the current expectations of reporting to work for employees?**

   While the university remains open, we are moving to operations with minimal staffing. We are currently working to reduce the amount of employees working on-site and promote telecommuting as much as possible. Starting the week of March 16, 2020, supervisors have been asked to assign employees into one of the following essential employee tiers:
   - **Tier 1:** Employee performs mission-critical, time sensitive functions and must be onsite (e.g., Custodial, Police, Res Life)
   - **Tier 2:** Employee performs mission-critical, time sensitive functions and can work remotely (e.g., Faculty, IAS, HR, IT)
   - **Tier 3:** Employee does not perform mission-critical, time sensitive function and could work remotely if feasible (e.g., Student Rec, Special Events, Sponsored Programs)
   - **Tier 4:** Employee does not perform mission-critical, time sensitive function and cannot work remotely (e.g., Office support, Grounds)

2. **How will I be notified if I am an essential employee and what tier I fall into?**

   Your supervisor will notify you if you are an essential employee and will communicate alternative work arrangements where possible. If you are unsure you should ask for guidance. Before communicating to employees, supervisors should ensure their designations have received division leadership’s approval.

3. **If I am assigned to Tier 1, am I required to report to work on-site?**

   Yes. It is important that employees in Tier 1 report to work as required. Any time missed will be treated as it normally would, including applying any attendance or leave usage policies. If employees assigned to Tier 1 have concerns about meeting their work expectations, they should talk to their supervisor.
4. I am worried about being exposed to the COVID-19 virus at work. Should I still report for work and will I be protected?

The university is still open, but operating at minimal staffing, at this time and every effort must be made to ensure operational needs are met. However, because the university is making efforts to significantly reduce the amount of employees working on-site, employees are encouraged to telecommute as much as possible. We are making every effort to reduce exposure in the workplace and provide information regarding disease prevention to those that are Tier 1 and are required to be on-site due to operational needs.

5. Can an employee that is not in Tier 1 choose to work on-site if the university is at reduced staffing?

No, only essential employees (Tier 1) are allowed on campus when the campus is operating at minimal staffing.

6. What should I do if I am showing symptoms of the virus?

Minimizing the spread of the virus is critical. If you are showing symptoms, contact your health care provider and/or local health authorities. You should also contact your supervisor. You should not report to work if you believe you may have a contagious disease. Use of sick or other paid or unpaid leave will be handled pursuant to existing policies and procedures. If you are showing symptoms, your supervisor may direct you to leave work and use available leave until you are cleared to return to work by a health care provider.

7. If I am advised by my physician or public health authorities to self-quarantine and not to come to work, will I be paid, or must I use sick leave?

Effective March 17, 2020, UW System approved this COVID-19 Leave policy. If in self-quarantine and not working from home, eligible employees will have up to 80 hours of COVID-19 leave to use. Once the COVID-19 leave is exhausted, employees will be able to use other paid leave if they have it. We will continue to update employees regarding any changes to the COVID-19 Leave Policy provisions. If you are not eligible for COVID-19 leave or you do not have any other paid leave available, employees will be in unpaid status and must record their time as such in HRS.
8. **Who is eligible for COVID-19 Leave?**

The policy applies to the following UW System employees: Faculty, Academic Staff, University Staff, Limited Appointees, Employees-In-Training, and Graduate Assistants (Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants and Program Assistants) and Temporary Employees. Student Hourly staff are not included in this policy.

9. **If an employee is sent home from work due to illness, will they be paid?**

The following options are available, although not all options will be available in all situations depending upon the employee class, nature of the job responsibilities and the extent of the illness:

- Use COVID-19 leave, accrued compensatory time, vacation, personal holiday or sick leave.
- Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek with supervisory approval
- Work an adjusted schedule with supervisory approval
- Work from home with supervisory approval utilizing the revised [UWO Emergency Telecommuting Agreement](https://uwosh.edu/hr) form
- Request a leave of absence without pay utilizing the [LOA Request form](https://uwosh.edu/hr)

10. **I believe that my co-worker may be carrying the virus. What should I do?**

You should discuss the situation with your supervisor. You should not confront the individual yourself. All university community members should be aware that if you travel, you may be required to **self-isolate for 14 days** depending on where you’re traveling to and from, even if you do not exhibit symptoms. Areas that currently require a self-quarantine can be found on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov). Impacted countries can change at any time, including while you are on your trip.

11. **May I choose to go home if I don’t want to be exposed to a sick coworker who isn’t sent home?**

Employees in Tier 1 are still expected to report to work during this time. If an employee wants to request the ability to work from home or use leave due to personal reasons, they should discuss their situation with their supervisor. Supervisors have the discretion to make alternate arrangements on a case-by-case basis. Making up the work in the same workweek, working a different schedule, or working from home may be options available to you.
12. I’m not sick, but I don’t want to come to work for fear of becoming ill. Is my supervisor required to approve my request for time off?

No. You may request to take vacation; however, your supervisor is not required to approve your time off request if your department is short on staff. It is important to educate yourself about COVID-19 and its transmission. Visit UWO’s coronavirus webpage for the latest information.

13. During a COVID-19 outbreak, can my supervisor cancel my vacation time off request that has already been approved?

Yes, your supervisor has the authority to cancel any pre-approved vacation request, especially in circumstances where there are serious staff shortages as a result of illness. Your vacation also could be cancelled if you have been designated as essential staff due to the nature of your job responsibilities.

14. I am considered to be at high-risk for serious complications if I contract a virus, what should I do?

Employees who provide a letter from their medical practitioner may use COVID-19, sick or other leave such as vacation pursuant to policy if there is a risk to their health in coming to work. This documentation should be provided to the Human Resources office. If your supervisor approves, you may arrange to work remotely.

15. Does FMLA apply if I contract COVID-19? Does FMLA apply if my spouse or child contracts COVID-19, and I must stay home to care for them?

FMLA leave may be available in relation to your illness or the illness of a qualifying family member. Medical documentation will be required in order to approve FMLA for eligible employees. FMLA information and resources are available at the FMLA webpage. Please contact the HR Office to initiate a new FMLA request.

16. What do I need to know about telecommuting and what is the process to request to telecommute?

UW Oshkosh has created a new emergency telecommuting request form. Employees that want to request to telecommute should complete this form and give it to their supervisor. Once signed by the supervisor, forms should be sent to hroffice@uwosh.edu.
17. Does every employee have the ability to telecommute?

Only employees whose job duties can be fulfilled from a remote location and who have all tools required for their job available to them at the remote location are able to telecommute. Employees should work with their supervisor to determine if telecommuting arrangements can be made. Supervisors are encouraged to work with employees that submit telecommuting requests as best as possible, but in some cases the ability to telecommute may not be possible. This may be an opportunity for employees to complete online professional development activities, work on special projects or complete other duties outside of an employee’s daily on-site responsibilities.

18. Can my supervisor schedule me to work hours or shifts that I normally do not work?

Yes, you may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal, especially if you have been designated as an essential employee or the university is short staffed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We will attempt to provide advance notice if possible. Such changes are subject to the provisions of the work schedules and relevant pay policies located on the UWO HR website.

19. Are student employees allowed to work at their on-campus job while the university has cancelled in-person classes?

We recognize that many departments rely heavily upon student employees to perform certain work in their department. At this time student employees may continue working, with supervisor approval. However, as the university moves to minimal staffing student employees will likely be unable to continue working. If a student employee is leaving campus or the area to go home, they should be excused from their job.

20. Can I be assigned to perform work that is not normally part of my position?

Yes, in times of emergency all employees must remain flexible to get the work done and may be asked to do work outside of their normal duties. Employees should anticipate being asked to perform work in place of absent or ill co-workers.

21. What if my child’s school or day care is closed due to illness, and my child is not sick. I have no other childcare arrangements and must stay home with them. How will I be paid?

Promptly notify your supervisor of the reason for your absence and your anticipated return to work date. In this situation, the following options are available although not all
options will be available in all situations depending upon the nature of your job responsibilities:

- Use up to 80 hours of COVID-19 leave
- Use accrued compensatory time, vacation, personal holiday or sick leave.
- Make up the work on an hour-for-hour basis during the same workweek with supervisory approval
- Work an adjusted schedule with supervisory approval
- Work from home with supervisory approval utilizing UWO Emergency Telecommuting Agreement form
- Request a leave of absence without pay utilizing the LOA Request form

22. What should search and screen committees do if on-campus interviews are scheduled?

In an effort to maintain social distancing, all on-campus interviewing is suspended. Candidates should be contacted immediately and notified that all on-campus interviews are being cancelled at this time. The committee will need to decide if they will wait to bring candidates on-site until a later date or if they will make arrangements to interview via video conferencing. The following template can be used to communicate with candidates:

Dear Candidate,

On March 12, 2020, UW Oshkosh announced that all on-campus interviews are suspended due to the coronavirus situation. Your interview has been cancelled and you will be contacted at a later date regarding rescheduling. We sincerely appreciate your interest in working at UW Oshkosh and your patience as we work to keep our campus community and candidates safe during this time.

Thank you,

Search and Screen Committee