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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/>

Essential Employees, Telecommuting & Work Expectations

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 effective March 23, 2020. 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. While campus is at minimal staffing, what are the expectations for each essential employee tier?

- **Tier 1:** Work must be performed on-site, and employees are expected to report to work as needed.
- **Tier 2:** Work will be primarily performed remotely. On a very limited basis and with notification of a dean or divisional leader, an employee may come to

campus to utilize necessary equipment or resources to perform their job. This includes instructional staff that need resources on campus to continue teaching. Employees in this category may also periodically visit the office to check for faxes, go through mail, etc.

- **Tier 3:** Work can only be performed remotely. Employees in this tier are not allowed on campus while minimal staffing is in effect unless notified by their supervisor to report to work.
- **Tier 4:** Employees are unable to perform any work during this time and are not allowed on campus while minimal staffing is in effect unless notified by their supervisor to report to work.

3. 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.

4. If I am a supervisor, what do I need to know about communicating to my staff about their tiering status?

Supervisors must let their direct reports know what tier they are assigned to by 4pm on Friday, March 20, 2020. E-mail, Microsoft Teams, sharing a spreadsheet or making a phone call are all acceptable ways to communicate this information. When our campus formally moves to minimal staffing on Monday, March 23, 2020, employees should know if they are allowed on campus and to what extent they are able to perform their job. Please refer to the FAQs as much as possible when answering questions. If a tiering assignment changes, please e-mail sheah@uwosh.edu.

5. 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.

6. Will I still be able to access campus buildings while minimal staffing is in place?

All campus buildings, besides Blackhawk Commons and Reeve Union, will be secured. If the door is locked, Titan ID card access will allow entry into the building or physical keys will work. Facilities will be temporarily replacing their current Work Order and Card Access request forms on the Facilities website with a new set of request forms that can be submitted by staff working off campus. These new forms will not require VPN access. Titan Cards are still available through Reeve Union at Titan Central. If an employee needs to request access they should contact their supervisor.

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7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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](#) form
- Request a leave of absence without pay utilizing the [LOA Request form](#)

12. 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.

13. 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. All non-instructional employees that want to request to telecommute should complete [this form](#) and give it to their supervisor. Electronic signatures can be utilized in Adobe. Once signed by the supervisor, forms should be sent to hroffice@uwosh.edu.

14. 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.

15. If I have am looking for IT resources or information, where should I go?

Please refer to the IT News and Announcements section on the IT website:
<https://uwosh.edu/it/>

16. 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 of Monday, March 23 we will be at minimal staffing so student employees will likely be unable to continue working in most areas. If a student employee is leaving campus or the area to go home, they should be excused from their job.

17. If students receive federal work study funding, will they continue to be paid if they are not working?

Currently all federal work study payments are on hold as campus leadership is discussing this matter further. We will provide additional information once we receive it.

18. Are student employees who are now unable to work because of the pandemic able to apply for compensation via unemployment insurance?

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, student employees who are facing unemployment should apply for unemployment benefits. Students may be eligible based on previous jobs, and if there is a federal or state investment to expand eligibility, they will have had to apply to get help.

19. 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.

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- 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](#)

General COVID-19

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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](#). Impacted countries can change at any time, including while you are on your trip.

24. 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.

25. As an employee, if I am feeling anxious or troubled by the uncertainty that exists, where do I get assistance?

All employees are encouraged to utilize our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through FEI. Their services are free and confidential. More information about this program can be found [online](#).

26. 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

Payroll, Benefits & Leave

27. Will I continue to be paid on time?

Yes, all [payroll schedules](#) will remain unchanged. Employees should continue to report time and absence and supervisors should approve based on the [approval schedule](#).

28. Will my benefits continue?

As long as you are continuing to be paid, your benefits will continue as they are today. If for some reason you need to be in an unpaid status for a long period of time, the HR office will work with you individually to ensure benefit continuity.

29. Where can I get more information about the new COVID-19 Leave policy and who is eligible for COVID-19 Leave?

More information about this new policy is [online](#). This new leave provision 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.

30. When can COVID-19 leave be used?

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This new leave policy provides up to 80 hours of paid leave for employees who can't perform their assigned duties during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency due to the following:

- inability to work remotely
- self-quarantine
- self-isolation
- illness
- care of an immediate family member
- child/elder care due to school and day care closures

Delivery of instruction to students, which is work that can be performed remotely, does not qualify for COVID-19 leave without extraordinary circumstances and the availability of course coverage.

31. How do I enter COVID-19 leave in HRS?

Entry instructions can be found [here](#). COVID-19 Leave can be used on or after 3/17/20, which is the date the policy was approved. At this time, only bi-weekly employees have the capabilities to enter COVID-19 leave on their timesheet. If you are a University Staff Temporary employee, you will need to complete this [leave usage spreadsheet](#) and send it to Marge Cosmutto, bi-weekly payroll specialist, at cosmutton@uwosh.edu and include your supervisor for an email approval.

Information regarding monthly paid employees and when they will have the capability to enter COVID-19 leave will be communicated as soon as UW System releases it. This document will be updated as information becomes available.

32. How many hours of COVID-19 leave am I eligible for?

The number of hours an employee is eligible for is based on the employee's FTE. Employees with a 1.0 FTE are eligible for 80 hours of COVID-19 leave. This allocation is prorated based on FTE.

Employee's FTE x 80 hours = Allocation of COVID-19 Leave

33. 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.

34. What happens if I use leave without pay?

If an employee goes without pay for any reason, they need to contact HR at benefits@uwosh.edu. Employees will need to enter “Leave without pay” in the absence system or timesheet. It is important to enter all absences weekly at minimum for payroll processing accuracy.

Benefits:

- If employee goes unpaid causing insufficient earnings to cover benefit premiums, the employee will be billed directly.

Paid Leave Allocations:

- Faculty/Academic Staff/Limited Appointments
 - Those eligible for vacation are allocated 176 hours/fiscal year (prorated based on FTE). If an employee goes unpaid, vacation allocation will adjust downward accordingly
 - Those eligible for sick leave earn 8 hours/pay period (prorated based on FTE). If in unpaid status, the employee will not earn sick leave
- University Staff
 - Those eligible for vacation are allocated at different rates according to years of service (prorated by FTE). If an employee goes unpaid, vacation allocation will adjust downward accordingly
 - Those eligible for sick leave earn 5 hours/pay period (prorated based on FTE). If in unpaid status, the employee will not earn sick leave

35. What if I need to update my W4 or Direct Deposit?

W4 updates can be made via self-service in the [My UW System Portal](#). For instructions on how to make updates via the portal, please refer to the [instruction guide](#).

Direct Deposit updates can be made by creating/uploading the document in your employee OneDrive and sharing the document with:

Katelyn Fenrich – monthly payroll (fenrichk@uwosh.edu)

Marge Cosmutto – bi-weekly payroll (cosmutton@uwosh.edu)

Do not send bank information via email as it is not secure

If you have questions on either method, please email the appropriate payroll specialist.

36. If I need to submit paper applications for benefits, what do I do?

Employees may email benefits@uwosh.edu and attach their benefit applications.

IMPORTANT – Please omit Social Security Numbers on the forms as email is not secure.

37. Where can I find information about health benefits and COVID-19 if I have a State Group Health Insurance plan?

If you are covered by the State Group Health Insurance Program, you may have questions on if or how your doctor's visit will be covered if you or a covered dependent shows symptoms of COVID-19. To answer your questions regarding testing, telehealth, biometric screening cancellations and more, visit the Department of Employee Trust Fund's (ETF) [COVID-19 webpage](#). ETF's webpage includes information about using telehealth and nurse line services as an alternative to an office visit.

38. Can I change my Dependent Daycare flex-spending contribution due to day care closings?

If you are enrolled in the Dependent Day Care Account and have experienced a change in the cost of your day care provider (e.g. your day care has closed), you may be able to decrease your contribution amount. Per IRS guidelines, changes due to qualifying life events must be made within 30 days. The employee can submit an [application](#) to make an election change to their Dependent Day Care Account. **Any** employee can use the [Election Change Request](#) form to decrease their election due to "Change in Cost of Coverage" and then when the time comes, can increase their election due to the same reason.

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