Q&A for early-release fridays pilot summer program

1. **Q.** What is the early-release pilot summer program?
   
   It is a program that allows staff members to leave work at 3 p.m. on eight designated Fridays in June and July—without any commensurate decrease in compensation.

2. **Q.** When are the designated days?
   
   June 5, 12, 19 and 26, and July 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2015.

3. **Q.** Which staff members are covered by the program?
   
   Early release applies to full-time staff only. Part-time staff, staff who have a compressed work schedule or those who are not normally scheduled to work on Fridays are not eligible.

4. **Q.** What is the purpose of this pilot program?
   
   President Barbara R. Snyder launched the early-release program to demonstrate the university’s appreciation of the contributions staff make to Case Western Reserve. In announcing the initiative, President Snyder emphasized that she would prefer to be able to recognize staff through more significant compensation increases, but economic constraints have precluded that option in recent years.

5. **Q.** Will this program continue every year?
   
   The program applies to the summer of 2015 only. University officials will assess its impact in the fall and report back to the campus community.
6. **How does this program affect staff who work shifts in the evening and/or early morning hours?**

   For those units where staff work shifts throughout the day and night, supervisors will develop alternative arrangements to ensure that the designated paid time off is still provided.

7. **How much flexibility do supervisors have in terms of managing the timing of these early-release days?**

   Supervisors should try to ensure that the majority of staff are able to leave at 3 p.m. on the designated Fridays. In a limited number of cases, supervisors may need to work with their staff members to identify mutually agreeable alternatives so that services or other aspects of a unit’s responsibilities proceed without interruption. For example, if an office needs to remain open on Friday afternoons, staff in that office potentially could rotate who among them leave early on Friday each week, with others departing early—or arriving a comparable number of hours late—on other days within the week.

   Supervisors are encouraged to establish summer schedules with staff as early and efficiently as possible. This process should include consultation with staff regarding their preferences before final decisions are made. Finally, supervisors should do everything possible to avoid the need to provide overtime pay to accommodate the early-release Fridays.

8. **If a staff person is scheduled for vacation on one of the designated early-release Fridays, does he or she now enter only half a vacation day?**

   No. Those who take vacation days on one of the designated Fridays will need to take a full day. The early release program is designed to provide a distinctive additional benefit to staff in recognition of their exceptional contributions to Case Western Reserve. It is not intended to provide a short-cut to additional vacation time.

9. **If a staff person takes vacation time for the morning of one of the designated early-release Fridays, should he or she now take the whole day off?**

   No. Those who take vacation time on the morning of one of the designated early-release Fridays should report for work at their scheduled time in the afternoon. The number of hours included in
half day will vary depending on whether an employee works a 37-1/2 hour or a 40-hour work week.

10. If a staff person chooses to work during the time granted for early release, can he or she apply those hours toward other vacation time—or add it to accumulated time that is paid when the staff person leaves the university?
   
   No. The early release time is not vacation time, and therefore cannot be used for vacation at another time or be counted toward accumulated vacation time.

11. If a staff person calls in sick on one of the designated early-release Fridays, is the entire day counted as sick time or just a portion of it?
   
   The entire day.

12. If a staff member is on an approved leave of absence from the university during any or all of the early-release Fridays, is the total amount of leave time reduced by the number of hours provided to employees through the early-release Fridays?
   
   No. The early-release Fridays apply only to those working at the university during those designated days.

13. Does the early release time need to be recorded on the timesheet?
   
   No. However, any exception time used on early-release Fridays should be recorded following the guidelines noted in these questions and answers.

14. Who should staff contact if they have questions about this program?
   
   Carolyn Gregory, Vice President for Human Resources. Staff and faculty in the School of Medicine also may contact Dan Anker or Danielle Price Haslett.