

Options that Lower University Expenses

Unless otherwise noted, the time-related measures described below apply to the period commencing July 1, 2020 and concluding Dec. 31, 2020. They may continue in some form in 2021, but will be reviewed before the new year to determine whether changes are required or recommended.

Convenience Leave

Convenience Leave is an option for employees who would like to take a specified period of time away from work while preserving their position and benefits.

This leave can be up to twelve weeks and is unpaid (unless the employee chooses to apply accrued vacation). Employees on a convenience leave are not typically eligible for traditional state unemployment benefits. However, some employees may qualify for unemployment benefits through the CARES Act Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program if their convenience leaves are prompted by certain COVID-19 related reasons.

Convenience leaves require supervisor approval.

The Convenience Leave option does not require a specific deadline for notification; it can commence once the Human Resources provides written approval of the Leave of Absence form completed by the employee and signed by the supervisor.

Reduced Work Hours

Reducing hours is an option for employees who would like to work fewer hours for a specified period of time (even as short as a week) while preserving their position and benefits.

For non-exempt employees¹, the reduced work schedule may not lower employee's effective hourly rate below the Ohio minimum wage of \$8.70 per hour. For exempt employees,² the reduction may not result in reducing the employee's weekly salary rate below the university's exemption threshold of \$913 per week (unless the supervisor chooses to complete the processes necessary to change the employee's position from exempt to non-exempt status).

This option requires supervisor approval.

Supervisors also may reduce employees' work schedules for a defined period of time to achieve proportionate salary savings.

Supervisors considering reductions to employee work hours **must first consult with Employee Relations** regarding the process and their options. Supervisors should not discuss potential hour reductions with anyone

¹ Per the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a non-exempt employee must earn at least the current federal minimum wage and receive 1.5 times their hourly pay for every hour worked beyond 40 per week.

² The FLSA defines exempt employees through multiple criteria, which can include amount of annual compensation, nature of duties and/or pay (annual salary vs. hourly wage).

in their departments—even employees who want to request them—prior to consulting with Employee Relations.

If proposals receive approval, supervisors must provide employees written notice at least five weekdays in advance of the start of the pay period in which the reduction commences (e.g. if a reduction in hours begins July 1, supervisors must notify employees not later than 5 p.m. EDT June 23).

Furlough

Furloughs are an option for departments that want to reduce staffing without permanently eliminating positions.

Employees receive no compensation during these periods but retain benefits and their positions.

Furlough periods may be implemented in daily increments for non-exempt employees and full work-week increments for exempt employees.

Employees may not perform any work for the university during a furlough period. Furloughs may be rotated or staggered among employees.

The maximum furlough period is six (6) months.

For purposes of COVID-19 budget reductions, the university is preparing a Furlough guide that will be added to the Human Resources site as soon as it is complete. HR will notify the campus of its availability—and provide a webpage link—at that time.

Furloughs do not require a specific notification period.

Departments cannot stack convenience leave and furlough to go beyond 6 months.

Reorganizations/Layoffs

Nearly all reorganizations are permanent position eliminations resulting in layoff and termination of employment for impacted employees. Employees who are laid off do not retain their benefits beyond the effective date of the layoff (but may be eligible to continue healthcare benefits under COBRA) and are eligible for unemployment benefits.

A reorganization requires a 45-day working notification period during which the employee continues to work and maintains their pay and benefits. Employees who are laid off in a reorganization may qualify for severance pay if eligible under the university's severance policy.

For purposes of COVID-19 budget reductions, the university is developing a specific layoff guide for supervisor submission. Unlike a traditional reorganization, the purpose of the COVID-19 reorganization is not a restructuring of a unit for a range of business purposes. It is instead a measure specifically chosen to reduce the department budget.

Consequently, employees remaining will not receive promotions, and the reorganization cannot result in additional FTEs or creation of higher-level positions.