

Furlough Frequently Asked Questions

Who is required to participate in the furlough?

All benefited AFSCME, USA, PSU, and Non-unit employees without an underlying faculty appointment, except those more than 25% grant funded and/or those working under an authorized visa. Employees who are grant funded for 25% or less of their appointment shall serve the furlough for the non-grant funded portion of their work week.

How many days will employees be furloughed?

Impacted employees will participate in a five (5) day furlough. The days will be consecutive and occur between May 31, 2020 and June 20, 2020.

How do I know what week I am furloughed?

Supervisors will determine what week employees will be furloughed to ensure minimal impact on operations, though every effort should be made to accommodate an employee's preferred week, when feasible. When possible, the five consecutive days should occur in the same work week (e.g. Monday through Friday) and not cross work weeks (e.g. Thursday through Wednesday).

Can I work on the days I am furloughed?

No. Employees may not perform work for the University on any day or within the same week they are furloughed. For example, an employee who is furloughed Monday through Friday should not complete any work for the university until their next scheduled work day the following week.

Can I use accrued time on the days I am furloughed?

No. Employees may not use personal or vacation leave in order to be paid on a furlough day. Unfortunately, allowing furloughed employees to use their paid leave on furloughed days would eliminate the necessary short-term savings that is required at this time. Employees will be in an unpaid, standby status while on a furlough.

What if I am on FMLA, Emergency FMLA, or Emergency Paid Sick Leave?

Employees on approved FMLA, Emergency FMLA, or Emergency Paid Sick Leave will be furloughed for five (5) consecutive days.

Will my benefits be impacted?

No. Employees will not have any diminishment of accrued time or health insurance coverage. Employee elected premiums will be deducted as usual.

Will a furlough impact my Creditable Service toward retirement?

No. The Massachusetts State Employee Retirement System will waive up to twenty (20) business days of creditable services for employees required to participate in the furlough.

Am I eligible for unemployment assistance while furloughed?

In most cases, yes. For more information about unemployment, visit the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance at: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-unemployment-assistance> Further guidance on how to apply for unemployment will be provided prior to the furlough.

How do I report my furlough time?

Employees and timekeepers should use the FUR code for the five furlough days.

Can I change or cancel my voluntary retirement deductions?

- 403(b) plan contribution changes made in the NetBenefits system (<https://nb.fidelity.com/public/nb/umass/home>; tel 800-343-0860) by end-of-day May 21 are effective on the June 29 paydate.
- 457/SMART plan contribution changes made in Empower Retirement's system (mass-smart.empower-retirement.com; tel 877-457-1900) by end-of-day May 28 are effective on the June 12 paydate.

For any additional questions related to the furlough or Voluntary Separation Incentive Program, please email VSIP@umass.edu.