EWU FAQ ON PSE MANDATORY FURLOUGHS

Eastern Washington University and the Public School Employees of Washington (PSE) negotiated an MOU effective December 1, 2020, which authorized mandatory temporary furloughs to allow for more flexibility in maneuvering budgetary shortfalls at the University due in large part to declining enrollment, changes in state tuition policies, changes in state funding policies, and the uncertainty created by the Global COVID-19 pandemic. Effective December 1, 2020 through November 30, 2021, the University is implementing the mandatory temporary furloughs which require full-time PSE represented administrative exempt employees who make more than $40,000 per year to take the equivalent of one day per month (8 hours) of furlough time during this period (12 months), pro-rated for employees working less than full-time, but more than half-time (i.e. A "furlough day" for employees working five (5) hours per day would be five (5) hours). Click here to view the complete MOU.

The following FAQ is designed to provide further guidance regarding the implementation of the mandatory furloughs:

1. **Question:**

   Can I take mandatory furlough days for my co-workers or friends, so they don't have to?

   Answer:

   No – While you may volunteer to take <u>additional</u> furlough days beyond the mandatory twelve days, all eligible employees must personally take their designated mandatory amount of furlough days.

2. **Question:**

   Who is exempt from the mandatory furloughs for PSE represented Administrative Exempt employees?

   Answer:

   PSE represented Administrative Exempt employees are exempt from the mandatory furloughs **if they are paid $40,000 per year or less, as of September 1, 2020.**

3. **Question:**

   Are affected employees required to take their mandatory furlough days in increments of one day per month, or do they have flexibility regarding when they can use the time?

   Answer:

   Furlough eligible employees have flexibility regarding how they use their mandatory furlough days, dependent on Supervisor approval. Supervisors may approve requests from employees to use their mandated furlough time as:

   - A series of partial days (i.e. 2 hours per day for 40 workdays) or
   - More than one day per month (i.e. 2 days per week for five weeks).

   Please note: Depending on when employees take their "furlough days," and the amount taken in each pay period or month, it will affect employees' paychecks in different ways (i.e. taking them all at once, instead of spread out over 12-months).

4. **Question:**

   Will each employee be on mandatory furlough at the same time? (i.e. all of CAAR closed on the same day to accommodate employee furlough days)

Answer:

NO. It is very important to mitigate the impact of employee furloughs on students, and the University as a whole. Employees will work with their supervisors individually to schedule their furlough days to limit the impact to students and the services the University provides as much as possible.

5. **Question:**

How do I go about scheduling mandatory furlough days with my supervisor?

Answer:

Each employee and supervisor are required to work collaboratively to schedule furlough days that limit the impact to student/university services as much as possible. Furlough days will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. So, if you want to take a furlough on a specific day, its important that you work with your supervisor to set your furlough schedule as early as possible. Furlough plans for each employee are required to be completed with their supervisor by December 18,2020.

6. **Question:**

I am interested in the "Voluntary Temporary Layoff" provisions included in the MOU, but if I volunteered for this, would I be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

Answer:

EWU does not determine employee eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits. The Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) administers the State's unemployment insurance program, and makes those determinations. Should an employee choose to apply for unemployment insurance, EWU will cooperate with the process and not unreasonably oppose their application's approval. For more information about unemployment insurance, and eligibility, visit: https://esd.wa.gov/unemployment.

7. **Question:**

I am a PSE represented Administrative Exempt employee who works less than full-time at the University, but more than half-time (50%). Do I have to take a mandatory furlough?

Answer:

Yes, however the amount of mandatory furlough time you are required to take will be prorated. For example, an employee whose workday is eight-hours must take eight hours for a "furlough day." Employees whose workday is five hours must take five hours for a "furlough day."

8. **Question:**

Can I take a furlough day right before a paid holiday, to make the holiday break a little longer?

Answer:

Yes, with supervisory approval. However, employees who are on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) status for a full day prior to a holiday are NOT ELIGIBLE for holiday pay. An employee must be in paid-status for at least one-half (1/2) hour on the last scheduled workday immediately preceding a holiday to be eligible for holiday pay.   The use of approved paid vacation qualifies employees for being in paid status. Day(s) following the holiday may be scheduled with supervisor approval without affecting holiday pay.

9. **Question:**

I work an alternate shift, consisting of four ten-hour days. Does this mean each of my "furlough days" will be ten-hours, when most everyone else's will only be eight-hours?

Answer:

No – The University recognizes that some full-time employee work schedules are more than eight hours in a day. In order to promote equity, the University has defined a "furlough day" as eight hours for this mandatory furlough, regardless of whether an employee's actual work shift is longer. During the term of the mandatory furlough (December 1, 2020-November 30, 2021 – twelve calendar months) each full-time employee subject to mandatory furloughs must take <u>at least</u> ninety-six (96) hours of furlough (twelve days of mandatory furlough, based on an eight-hour day), prorated for those employees working less than full-time, but more than half-time.

10. **Question:**

My shift is ten hours, four-days per week (four 10's). If a "furlough day" is eight hours, what do I for the other two-hours of my shift?

Answer:

Employees in this scenario have several options, all of which would require prior supervisor approval. The options are:

- Take eight hours of furlough, come in to work the remaining two hours of a shift;
- Take eight hours of furlough, take two hours of appropriate paid accrued time off (i.e. vacation)
- Take ten hours of furlough (entire shift), and decrease overall mandatory furlough time (96 hours) by ten; or
- Take incremental furlough leave to supplement shift (i.e. two hours of furlough –eight hours of shift, three hours of furlough – seven hours of shift, etc.).

Employees will work with their supervisor to develop a schedule that not only helps them meet the mandatory furlough time requirement, but also supports the University's continuity of operations.

11. **Question:**

How should I account for furlough days on my timesheet?

Answer:

Please report all furlough hours/days on your EagleNET timesheet (accessed via InsideEWU) using the Leave without Pay – Furlough code. To input your furlough time using the new EagleNET timesheet (effective November 20, 2020):

1) Sign into EagleNET with your SSO log-in, and go to EMPLOYEE
2) Select TIMESHEET. After verifying the correct pay period, select START TIMESHEET (once Timesheet has been started, it will show IN PROGRESS)
3) Once you have started the timesheet, you will be directed to the calendar. Select the day on which you took furlough hours, and it will be highlighted. Select +ADD EARN CODE.
4) Select the "Leave Without Pay – Furlough" Earn Code from the drop-down menu
5) After selecting the Earn Code, enter the number of Furlough hours you are reporting in the HOURS tab. Once the Earn Code and Hours have been entered, select the SAVE tab at the bottom of the page. Note: you can enter in more than one Earn Code, if necessary.
6) After all time and hours have been entered for that pay period, and you are ready to submit the timesheet, go to the PREVIEW tab at the bottom of the page and SUBMIT.

12. Question:

How much time am I allowed to work during a week in which I take a furlough day?

Answer:

Employees must not exceed 40 hours (including salaried employees) during a week in which furlough time is used, including the furlough time, work time, paid leave or any combination of the three. For example:

- If an employee accounts for a 36-hour week, using work time, paid leave, or a combination of the two, the employee would only be eligible for four hours of furlough time for that week (36 + 4 = 40 hours).
- If an employee accounts for a 24-hour week, using work time, paid leave, or a combination of the two, the employee would be eligible to use up to 16 hours of furlough time for that week.   (24 + 16 = 40 hours)

13. Question

Can I use paid or accrued leave in lieu of taking a mandatory furlough day?

Answer:

No – employees cannot use paid or accrued leave in lieu of the mandatory furlough day.

14. Question:

I finalized my original furlough schedule with my supervisor, but now I need to make changes to the original schedule. How can I do this? (Note: furlough plans should be completed by all eligible employees, in coordination with their supervisors, no later than December 18, 2020).

Answer:

To change original furlough day schedules, employees must send a written request (with the changes) to their supervisor. The supervisor may deny the request due to operational needs. If the supervisor agrees with the proposed change, they will forward the request to the appropriate University Vice President for approval or denial. Please note: Proposed changes to an employee's furlough plan after finalization must be approved by the appropriate University Vice President (or designee) prior to implementation.

15. Question:

When must I take all of my mandatory furlough time by?

Answer:

Employees are required to complete all mandatory furlough time by November 30, 2021.

16. Question:

I have been given a mandatory furlough, but am interested in taking additional time off to help the University save money, which may ultimately help save additional jobs. Can I volunteer for more time off?

Answer:

Yes! Employees have the option to volunteer for additional furlough days, which are uncapped and count toward the mandatory furlough days. Employees also have the option to volunteer for a Temporary Layoff, for up to ninety (90) calendar days. Voluntary layoff is a job protected leave, meaning you will return to your regular work schedule and pay at the end of the layoff. You also have the ability to utilize accrued leave during the temporary layoff, so

you can maintain your health insurance benefits. If interested in voluntary temporary layoff, please contact your supervisor. Both voluntary furlough and temporary layoff require supervisor approval.

17. **Question:**

How do I request additional Voluntary Temporary Furlough Days?

Answer:

Employees may request voluntary temporary furlough days by submitting a written request at least seven (7) business days in advance of the effective date of the furlough to their supervisor. The supervisor will review the request within at least two (2) business days, based on financial and/or operational needs, and if in agreement will forward the request to the appropriate University Vice President for review and a final decision. The Vice President or designee will review and approve/deny the request based on financial and/or operational needs within three (3) business days prior to the effective date of the requested action. The Vice President or designee will submit their written decision to the employee, the supervisor, and HR. Remember: When requesting additional furlough days **be specific!**

18. **Question:**

Are new employees, hired after December 1, 2020, subject to the mandatory furlough?

Answer:

Yes, all PSE represented Administrative Exempt employees who meet the eligibility requirements, who are employed with EWU between December 1, 2020 and November 30, 2021 are subject to mandatory furlough. Employees hired after December 1, 2020 will be subject to prorated furlough days (i.e. Hired February 2021, would be subject to ten (10) furlough days, rather than twelve (12) furlough days.

19. **Question:**

I made less than $40,000 on September 1, 2020, but I received a pay increase since then that puts me beyond that amount. Am I subject to mandatory furlough?

Answer:

No, only employees making at least $40,000 on September 1, 2020 are subject to mandatory furloughs. Employees who receive pay increases subsequent to that date that puts them above $40,000 will not be subject to mandatory furlough.