

University of Houston

FY'10 Furlough Program

With the anticipated budget shortfalls for fiscal year 2010 and directives received from the governor's office and the Legislative Budget Board, the University of Houston has developed an Interim University guideline on Furloughs, which allows the University to require employees to take an unpaid furlough day(s) based on the terms of this policy. The interim furlough guideline is applicable to all University employees except those covered by the provisions under Federal regulations.

Interim Furlough Guideline:

[\(Hyperlink to Guideline\)](#)

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document sets forth uniform guidelines for implementing a furlough which is unpaid time for employees in order to achieve cost savings to meet budget constraints. This document is prepared in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and it applies to all university employees regardless of source of funds from which paid, with exceptions noted in certain provisions.

All University of Houston full-time and part-time faculty, staff and student workers will be required to take one mandatory day of leave without pay during fiscal year 2010 under the Mandatory Furlough Program. Faculty will be required to take a mandatory furlough day on May 28, 2010. Administrators, staff and student worker employees will be required to take either May 28th or June 1st 2010 as their mandatory furlough day. In addition, the University will provide up to three voluntary furlough days for colleges and divisions to utilize to further support budget cut initiatives within their areas. Voluntary furlough days must be taken between June 1, 2010 and July 31, 2010.

Employee Pay and Benefits:

- Hourly, non-exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act will continue to be paid for days worked and will not be paid for the day(s) for which they take furlough leave without pay.
- Exempt employees monthly salary will be adjusted for furlough day(s) taken each month.
- Annual sick and vacation accrual rates will not be affected by furlough time.
- If furlough time is taken the day before and/or after University paid holiday, it will not affect holiday pay.
- Health benefits and employee premiums cost will not be affected due to furlough.
- Benefits deductions calculated as a percentage of earnings (e.g. retirement - TRS/ORP) will be reduced in any pay period in which furlough time is taken. (Retirement benefits may be impacted due to a change in earnings).

Frequently Asked Questions:

[\(Hyperlink to FAQ\)](#)

What is a furlough?

A furlough is a leave of absence without pay that is implemented as a cost savings measure.

Who is required to participate in a mandatory furlough?

All benefits and non-benefits eligible UH employees paid by state and locally allocated funds will participate with the exception of the following: H1-B visa status employees are exempt from this process.

How many days do I have to take off as furlough days?

There are two furlough levels Mandatory and Voluntary:

Mandatory: Friday, May 28 or Tuesday, June 1, 2010 (the University will remain open for services on these days and departmental approval for leave should be coordinated and approved with this in mind)
Employees with an annualized salary of \$30,001 or more - 1 day (8 hours)

Voluntary:

College/Division may implement a voluntary furlough in their areas for up to 3 days (24 hours) in addition to the mandatory requirement.

Will my unit receive acknowledgement for the salary savings associated with my furlough hours?

Savings from the voluntary furloughs will be shared between central and departmental resources.

Can I take more than 3 voluntary furlough days?

No, the maximum number of voluntary hours an employee can take is 24 hours.

Will I be paid for these hours?

No. A furlough is leave without pay.

May I apply paid annual leave, paid sick leave or compensatory time towards the furlough?

No. A furlough is leave without pay.

Can I choose to report to work on furlough time?

No, furlough time is non-work time.

When do I take time off for the furlough?

Supervisors and employees will schedule the appropriate number of furlough hours required to be taken on May 28, 2010 or June 1, 2010. Employees may schedule furlough time in full-day increments that allows the department to fulfill the business needs of the University. The University will not completely shut down in order to achieve the mandatory furlough requirement.

How will my paycheck be affected?

Your pay will be reduced by the number of furlough hours you take during any given pay period.

How will my benefits be affected?

- Furlough leave without pay will not affect your eligibility for state benefits such as health and dental insurance.
- Teachers Retirement System and Optional Retirement Plan contributions will be reduced slightly.
- Unpaid furlough time will not impact the accumulation of paid annual leave, paid sick leave, and retirement service credits.

How do I submit my request for furlough days?

Furlough requests will be handled like departmental leave requests. Monthly employees will record 8 hours of unpaid leave in PASS as Code- 422. Bi-weekly employees will record 8 hours of unpaid leave on their time sheet as Code- 423. All employees should report the unpaid time on a paper Leave Request form with both the employee and supervisor signatures and retained in the department by the Payroll approver.

May I donate part of my pay to support other employees in need?

No. Each eligible employee will be required to take the time identified.

How will the furlough program affect an employee hired during the FY 2010?

New employees hired after June 1, 2010 will not be required to participate this fiscal year.

Can I request a furlough the day before or the day after an observed holiday or in conjunction with my vacation?

Yes, as long as the furlough is pre-approved by your department.

If an employee uses approved Family Medical Leave in FY 2010, what is the impact on the employee's required furlough?

Furloughs must be taken in addition to any FML taken. You will take furlough hours for the part of FY 2010 outside your approved FML period.

If I am on sabbatical leave, am I subject to the furlough?

Yes, while on sabbatical leave you are still in a paid status.

If I am on leave without pay, am I subject to the furlough?

No, not while you are in an unpaid status. You will take furlough hours for the period of FY2010 that the furlough applies and you are in a paid status.

Will the mandatory furlough interrupt delivery of education to our students?

Faculty and instructional personnel will be required to take furlough hours during non-instructional days.

May I file a grievance regarding the mandatory furlough?

The President's decision to impose furloughs is not subject to the University's grievance processes for staff or faculty.

Am I eligible for unemployment during my days off?

No, UH employees are not eligible for unemployment compensation during their days off.

How will the furlough affect garnishments being deducted from my paycheck?

It depends on the requirements of the garnishments;

How will the mandatory furlough affect child support payments taken out of my paycheck?

The University forwards a set amount in accordance with court orders, so this dollar amount will not be reduced.

What will happen if I fail to take my required furlough days by the end of FY 2010?

All employees will be required to complete their mandatory furlough day by June 1, 2010. Voluntary furlough days will be required to be taken between June 1st and July 31st 2010. The time frame required to complete furlough days will ensure all time taken will be appropriately calculated for the FY10 fiscal year.

How does furlough time affect overtime compensation?

When a non-exempt employee physically works more than 40 hours in a work week, he or she is eligible for overtime compensation. Furlough time is not work time.

If an employee is called back to the University for an emergency on a furlough day, how does the Call-Back policy apply?

If a non-exempt employee is required to report to work from furlough status (physically, remote access, by phone, etc.) the Call-Back Policy will apply for the employee to be paid for this time. Furlough hours will need to be rescheduled until the full number of mandatory hours has been met.

*****Please note that the University reserve the right to amend, add or delete any questions provided as it relates to these frequently asked questions. *****

Manager's Guidelines:

([Hyperlink to Manager's Guidelines](#))

Managing furloughs will require a crucial balance between maintaining day-to-day operations and ensuring your employees are adhering to the furlough program. Deans/directors/department heads are ultimately responsible that all required furlough time is taken and ensuring appropriate supervision is maintained throughout the furlough process. You are encouraged to communicate openly and early in the process so that employees know what you expect and how you will manage the process in the coming months. Your support and outstanding leadership will result in a successful furlough program which will ultimately impact budget savings for the University.

- Deans, directors, and department heads are responsible for ensuring all required furlough time is taken in their college/divisions.
- No units will be closed due to furloughs.

- The one day Mandatory Furlough will be required of all eligible employees. The days are designated as Friday, May, 28, 2010 or Tuesday, June 1, 2010.
 - Faculty will be required to take Friday, May 28, 2010 as their mandatory furlough day.
 - Since the University will remain open during the furlough period, administration and staff will take either May 28th or June 1st as their mandatory furlough day.
- If Voluntary Furlough days are implemented in your work area, they must be scheduled and coordinated to be taken no later than July 31, 2010.
- Due to federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) implications, employees shall not work during their furlough time, nor shall they work additional time within the same week to make up for furlough time taken.
- Sick, vacation, and/or compensatory time may not be used to offset furlough time.
- For those employees who work less than twelve months, furlough time must be taken during normally scheduled work/contract periods.
- Furloughs must be taken during regularly scheduled work time.
- Supervisors must manage the process to balance the individual and departmental needs.
- The Furlough program is a temporary program to assist the University in meeting current and potential economic and budgetary conditions.
- Furlough time should be scheduled within a full work day rather than one hour increments.
 - Full-time employees should take 8 hours
 - Part-time employees should take 4 hours
- Employees on an H1B status are exempt from the furlough program due to reported wages to the provided to the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) during the visa request process.
- Student Workers working in your work area can participate in the furlough program; hours not worked should be reported to the financial aid office for appropriate processing. Unpaid time from student workers receiving full pay from a federal grant will not directly impact cost savings from your budget.
- (Solicit more manager questions)