

## **Mandatory Furloughs Staff HR Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**These FAQs have been developed to help address the questions around mandatory furloughs. Please note the HR team will address and publish new questions as they are received.**

### **Why is MSU Denver mandating furlough days?**

As anticipated in the [July 20 email](#) from Larry Sampler, COO, Metropolitan State University of Denver will be adopting mandatory furloughs effective August 2020. With fall enrollment still approximately 10% down, these cost-reduction measures are the most effective tool to help address the University's budget shortfall for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

### **Why is the University instituting furloughs instead of across-the-board pay cuts?**

Opting for furlough days rather than temporary reductions in pay will at least allow staff a day off of work. Across-the-board pay cuts would have reduced employee pay, meaning the employee would be working the same number of hours for less pay. University leadership felt furlough days would at least allow the employee to take time away from work without an expectation to check in for that day.

### **How much will this save MSU Denver?**

Furloughs, combined with what is being asked of faculty, will provide \$1.1 million in additional savings and get us closer to bridging our budget gap.

### **How many furlough days am I required to take?**

	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>Tier 4</b>	<b>Tier 5</b>	<b>Tier 6</b>
Minimum Base Salary	\$0.00	\$50,000	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$150,000	\$180,000
Maximum Base Salary	\$49,999	\$89,999	\$119,999	\$149,999	\$179,999	and above
% salary reduction	0 days 0.0%	5 days 1.9%	7 days 2.7%	8 days 3.1%	9 days 3.5%	13 days 5.0%

### **Why are you utilizing a tiered approach for furloughs?**

A tiered approach places the least burden on those employees with the lowest annual income.

### **How will the mandatory furloughs work?**

All non-classified professional staff making more than \$50,000 annually will be required to take some furlough days over the course of this fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2021. Furloughs are unpaid days off, during which employees are not expected to work. Employees need to request furlough days and receive approval from their supervisor prior to taking the time off.

### **Are classified staff required to take furlough days?**

Classified staff are exempt from the furlough days. Mandatory classified staff furloughs would require Gov. Jared Polis to announce a financial exigency for the University to mandate this option to this employee group.

### **What if I am already participating in voluntary furloughs?**

Employees that are already participating in voluntary furloughs or leaves of absence will not be asked to increase their number of days unless the original request was less than required furloughs based on the employee's salary and tier above.

### **Can an employee take all their furlough days off in one month or is there a limit to the furlough days that can be taken in a month?**

Yes, employees have the option to take all their furlough days in one month, but should first discuss this with their supervisor. However, pay will be reduced for the entire allotment of furlough days in the following months' pay.

### **How do I report the furlough days?**

You will report the furlough days on your monthly timesheet.

### **How will my paycheck be affected?**

You will notice the pay reduction for the furlough days taken in the previous month on the following months' pay. For example – if an employee takes two furlough days in September, the pay reduction will be in the October paycheck.

**Will supervisors know which of their staff are impacted by furloughs?**

Yes, they should. If you are unsure, please contact HR. We will not require furloughs from any employees on H1B visas as it will affect their current visa status.

**Are there set days employees will be required to take furloughs?**

We are not setting days for furloughs. Employees can request the days that work best with their schedules with supervisor approval.

**Can staff split furlough days (for example, take 4 hours on Monday and take 4 hours on Friday)?**

Yes. The University wants to offer flexibility to employees in scheduling furlough days. If an employee wants to split their furlough hours, please work with your supervisor to request the time.

**Will staff who are less than 1 FTE be categorized according to their actual salary or their base salary at full-time? How will the furlough days' work?**

Part-time employees furlough days will be categorized off their actual salary. Part time employees who have questions about their furloughs should call the Office of Human Resources.

**Are grant-funded positions exempt from furlough days?**

Professional (non-classified) employees in grant funded positions will be required to take furloughs based on their yearly salary and the tier above. Federal guidance requires us to apply all salary actions evenly to grant funded positions. Normally, this means that when salaries increase at the institution, they also increase for the grants. We apply this guidance to all grants and cash funded programs, to ensure that all faculty and staff are treated equitably.

**Am I required to get approval from my supervisor prior to scheduling my furlough days?**

Yes, staff should work with their supervisors to select appropriate days. Your supervisor will be reviewing other requests for time off and will be ensuring essential department business continues.

**How will volunteer furlough days be taken into consideration? Do we just deduct the amount of voluntary furlough days from the amount of days we need to take?**

Yes. The Office of Human Resources Benefits Team has a list of approved voluntary furlough requests. Employees who requested voluntary furloughs will not be asked to take more than the mandatory furloughs listed above.

**Who will track the furlough days an employee is taking?**

The Office of Human Resources Benefits Team will keep track of employee furlough days. If you have any questions you can contact, Amanda Berry at [aberry11@msudenver.edu](mailto:aberry11@msudenver.edu) or Kristen Wall at [kwall7@msudenver.edu](mailto:kwall7@msudenver.edu).

**Will staff have to fill out a form showing which days they will be on furlough or just indicate it on their timesheet?**

Employees will indicate their furlough days on their timesheet. Other forms will not be required. Voluntary furlough days can be indicated as VFL, mandatory furlough days can be indicated as MFL on their monthly timesheets.

**If a staff person needs to take five furlough days; can they take five days in one month and then just indicate one day per month for the next five months so there is not such a big pay cut at one time?**

Unfortunately, no. Our current process does not allow for the pay reduction to be spread out over the fiscal year.

**By what date do employees need to complete mandatory furlough days?**

By the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2021.

**What if I do not use all my furlough days by June 30, 2021?**

If an employee does not take their allotted furlough days, HR will determine what days are still needed and deduct those in the June paycheck in 2021.

**Staff are asking about unemployment eligibility due to reduced hours. What guidance can HR give?**

Please refer to Human Resources' FAQ on [unemployment](#) for more information.

**I am leaving MSU Denver and I have not taken my allotted furlough days. Will you deduct those days from my last paycheck?**

HR will prorate what the employee should have taken in furlough days and these days will be deducted in the employees' final paycheck.



**If I took voluntary furlough days in June will it be included in the next fiscal year mandatory furlough days?**

Yes, HR will include requests for voluntary furloughs, even in last fiscal year, to determine if the employee should take more furlough days.

**I am on a H1B visa. Will taking furloughs effect my visa status?**

The guidance we have received from our immigration attorney is, yes, it could affect the employee's current visa. Because of this concern, employees on a visa will not be required to take mandatory furloughs.

**I am on Family Medical Leave (FML). Will I be required to take the furlough days?**

Please contact Amanda Berry at [aberry11@msudenver.edu](mailto:aberry11@msudenver.edu) and she will work with you on the furlough days and your medical leave.

**I make \$50,500. Will I be required to take furloughs?**

Yes, you will fall into the first tier of furloughs. We tried to find a reasonable tiered approach to meet the budget challenges, but also attempted to not negatively impact our lowest paid employees.

**Will hourly and student employees be required to take furlough days?**

Hourly and students are paid for hours worked in a week. They are not eligible for leave or benefits and hours can be reduced based on department needs.

**When will you reassess the budget situation to determine if further furloughs are needed or if the financial situation has improved?**

We will continue to monitor the budget situation and will update employees as we have more information.

**How will mandatory furloughs affect employee benefits and retirement?**

Furloughs will not impact health, dental or vision benefits. Employee will need to call their individual retirement vendor to understand how furloughs may impact their overall retirement planning.

**Can you please provide a formula so that we can calculate the financial impact the furlough will have on our salary?**

Please refer to the online salary calculator tool on the HR Benefits [webpage](#).

**Will there be any additional furloughs for fiscal year 2020-21?**

Unfortunately, we are not able to say if this will be the only round of furloughs. However, this process will continue to be transparent, and employees can expect timely communications should the University's situation change.

**Will department chairs be treated as faculty or professional staff for the purposes of the furlough pay reductions?**

Chairs will be treated as faculty since they are in faculty lines.

**How do I manage increased workload from the current situation and reduction in workforce, and still take furlough days?**

Now more than ever it's very important that employees and supervisors work together on goals and expectations. Given the changes due to the budget crisis, we encourage employees and supervisors to have collaborative conversations on priorities, goal setting and expectations given the new environment, and to reprioritize if needed.

**How will we ensure that the work not being done by the furloughed workers does not get passed down to those earning less than \$50K, who are already overextended?  
How will evaluations be altered to account for lost productivity due to forced days off due to the furlough?**

Evaluations are based on your results. We encourage employees and supervisors to have collaborative conversations on priorities, reprioritizing if needed, goal setting and expectations given the new environment.