

Interim Furlough and Reduction in Hours Policy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Applies to

All full- and part-time non-faculty regular employees, as defined in the [Employment Status](#) policy, who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

Purpose

This interim policy provides a framework for temporary employee furloughs or reductions in hours to address a lack of work, a reduction of work, or a temporary curtailment or suspension of operations and programs, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to management-initiated furloughs or hours reductions, this policy includes parameters for an employee to request a voluntary furlough or reduction in hours/effort due to personal circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Definitions

Furlough: A temporary, employer-initiated unpaid leave of absence (LOA) with a return to the same position (recall) by an anticipated future date. A furlough is not a layoff or termination of employment as defined in Dartmouth's [Separation of Employment Policy](#).

Reduction in Hours/Effort: A reduction in an employee's hours per week or percentage of FTE (full-time equivalency), also referred to as an employee's "time status."

Voluntary Furlough or Voluntary Reduction in Hours/Effort: An employee-requested furlough or reduction in hours/effort.

Policy Provisions and Procedures

1. Furlough

a. Notice:

- i. Departments are encouraged to provide employees as much notice as possible of a furlough, though furloughs may also be implemented with minimal notice as operational needs dictate.
- ii. Departments are expected to review furlough decisions with Human Resources prior to implementation or notification to employees.

b. Duration:

- i. An employee will be notified of the expected duration of the furlough leave, with the understanding that as operational needs dictate the employee may be recalled at an earlier date or the furlough may be extended to a later date, in accordance with the below restrictions.
- ii. The duration of a furlough leave will be for a minimum of two weeks. A furlough may not exceed a total of six months (including any periods of intermittent

- furlough or extensions of the originally anticipated duration). A furlough period may also be intermittent (*for example, two weeks out of four in a given month*).
- iii. Furloughs are not appropriate to be used where a resumption of work is not anticipated within six months; in such cases where no work for the position is anticipated for a period longer than 6 months, the action will be considered a layoff under the [Separation of Employment Policy](#).
 - iv. If at any point after a furlough begins the Department and Human Resources determine a resumption of work is no longer anticipated within six months of the initiation of the furlough, the action will at that time be considered a layoff under the [Separation of Employment Policy](#), and the employee will be notified accordingly.
- c. Employment Status: Employees on furlough retain their employment status and service dates.
 - d. Paid Time Off:
 - i. Employees retain their accrued vacation balances during the furlough leave. Accrual of additional vacation time is suspended during any continuous furlough period. For intermittent furloughs, in which an employee works a specified amount during the furlough period, vacation time will accrue on a pro-rated basis for the periods worked during furlough.
 - ii. Employees may request to use previously accrued vacation or personal time prior to the commencement of the unpaid furlough.
 - e. Recall:
 - i. An employee is required to report to work when recalled. Departments shall provide at least seven days' notice of the employee's recall date.
 - ii. Employees who do not report to work or provide advance notice to the employer of their inability to report to work for an approved reason within three (3) days of notice of recall will be considered Absent Without Notification in accordance with Dartmouth's [Separation of Employment Policy](#). If an employee is unable to report to work for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the employee may apply for an extension of the furlough as a voluntary furlough under the provisions of this policy. Depending on the COVID-related reason, the employee may also be eligible to apply for paid leave under Dartmouth's short-term disability program or to have the leave extension request designated as a Family and Medical Leave.
 - iii. Employees are required to provide their current contact information and mailing address to their supervisors while they are on a furlough leave for purposes of recall notification.
 - f. Continuation of Benefits:
 - i. Dartmouth will continue an employee's medical, basic life insurance and long-term disability insurance while the employee is on a continuous furlough leave. Dartmouth will pay both the employer and employee's current cost to continue the medical benefits coverage.
 - ii. Unless enrollment is cancelled, employees will continue to be responsible to pay the premiums for their dental, optional and/or dependent life insurance, and additional long-term disability insurance while on furlough. Employees who choose to continue coverage during the furlough will be billed and will need to remit their premium payment. If payment is not received then coverage will be

terminated on the last day of the month for which premiums have been received.

2. Reduction in Hours/Effort

- a. A reduction in hours or effort may be either temporary or permanent (for the foreseeable future).
- b. If temporary, the employee will be expected to resume the position's previous time status at a date anticipated in the future.
- c. Employees whose hours are reduced on a temporary or permanent basis will continue to receive the employer-paid Dartflex contribution to medical benefits based on their time status prior to the hours or FTE reduction, through the end of the current plan year (December 31, 2020). Benefit costs beginning for the plan year commencing January 1, 2021 will be based on the employee's time status (hours/effort) on that date.
- d. Employees whose hours or FTE are involuntarily reduced by greater than 20% for a period to exceed six months will be given the option to instead elect a layoff under Dartmouth's [Separation of Employment Policy](#).

3. Voluntary Furlough

- a. COVID-19 related requests:
 - i. An employee who is unable to report to work when work is available, or declines to report to work when work is available, for COVID-19 related reasons (as further defined in section b below), may request a voluntary furlough.
 - ii. An employee may also request a voluntary furlough to assist Dartmouth in COVID-19 related budgetary savings.
- b. COVID-19 Related Reasons for Requesting Voluntary Furlough include:
 - i. Employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or documented advice of a health care provider), and/or the employee or a member of the employee's immediate household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis, as evidenced by a note from a health care provider. (*Furlough may be available in the event that other Dartmouth paid leave policies are inapplicable.*)
 - ii. Employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or documented advice of a health care provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.
 - iii. Employee has an underlying health condition that places them at heightened risk for COVID-19 complications, as evidenced by a note from a health care provider. Employee has the right to seek workplace accommodations for documented disabilities but is under no obligation to do so prior to seeking a voluntary furlough.
 - iv. A member of employee's immediate household has an underlying health condition that places them at heightened risk for COVID-19 complications, as evidenced by a note from a health care provider.
 - v. Employee volunteers for furlough to assist Dartmouth in COVID-19 related budgetary savings (subject to approval based on departmental/operational needs).
- c. Applicability of Other Leave Programs or Policies:

- i. If the voluntary furlough request is based on an FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) qualifying reason, the voluntary furlough time up to twelve weeks will be designated as FMLA leave for FMLA-eligible employees.
 - ii. If a leave also qualifies under Dartmouth's short-term disability program as determined by Dartmouth's third-party administrator, an employee may also be eligible for short-term disability.
- d. Procedure: A voluntary furlough application must be submitted through the employee's Department to the Office of Human Resources and must provide a valid and verifiable COVID-19 related reason for the leave. Supporting documentation for the request should be submitted to the [Human Resources Benefits Office](#).
- e. Duration: A request for a voluntary furlough may be made for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of 3 months and may be approved or extended in one-month increments. A voluntary furlough request may also be intermittent. The total period of a voluntary furlough may not exceed six months, whether alone or in combination with other furloughs or reductions in hours/effort during the same fiscal year.
- f. Employment Status:
 - i. Employees on a voluntary furlough retain their employment status and service dates.
 - ii. Departments may hold a position available for the employee to return to at the conclusion of a voluntary furlough if it is operationally feasible to do so.
 - iii. If operational needs dictate, a Department, after consultation with Human Resources, may refill the position with notice to the employee of the operational need to do so. The employee will be provided the opportunity to be recalled and return to the position at that time with seven days of notice. If the position is refilled during the voluntary furlough period, the employee may remain on the voluntary furlough period for the duration the furlough was approved. At the conclusion of the voluntary furlough, the employee's employment will be terminated if the employee has not secured another position at Dartmouth at that time.
 - iv. If the position held by the employee is eliminated during a voluntary furlough, the employee will be laid-off in accordance with the [Separation of Employment](#) policy.
- g. Paid Time Off:
 - i. Employees retain their accrued vacation balances during the furlough leave. Accrual of additional vacation time is suspended during any continuous furlough period. For intermittent furloughs, in which an employee works a specified amount during the furlough period, vacation time will accrue on a pro-rated basis for the periods worked during furlough.
 - ii. Employees may request to use vacation or personal time prior to the commencement of the unpaid furlough.
- h. Continuation of Benefits:
 - i. Dartmouth will continue an employee's medical, basic life insurance and long-term disability insurance while on a continuous furlough leave, including a voluntary furlough. Dartmouth will pay both the employer and employee's current cost to continue the medical benefits coverage.
 - ii. Unless enrollment is cancelled, employees will continue to be responsible to pay the premiums for their dental, optional and/or dependent life insurance, and additional long-term disability insurance while on furlough. Employees who

choose to continue coverage during the furlough will be billed and will need to remit their premium payment. If payment is not received then coverage will be terminated on the last day of the month for which premiums have been received.

4. Voluntary Reduction in Hours/Effort

- a. Employees who, for reasons relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, are unable to work the full scheduled hours for their position or to devote their full professional effort to the position based on the position's time status/FTE, or who wish to voluntarily reduce their hours or time status/FTE to help Dartmouth reduce costs, may request a temporary and voluntary reduction of hours/effort.
- b. COVID-19 Related Reasons for Requesting Voluntary Reduction in Hours/Effort Include:
 - i. Employee is unable to work their full schedule because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or documented advice of a health care provider), and/or the employee or a member of the employee's immediate household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis, as evidenced by a note from a health care provider. *(Reduction in hours/effort may be available in the event that other Dartmouth paid leave policies are inapplicable.)*
 - ii. Employee is unable to work their full schedule because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or documented advice of a health care provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.
 - iii. Employee has an underlying health condition that places them at heightened risk for COVID-19 complications, as evidenced by a note from a health care provider. Employee has the right to seek workplace accommodations for documented disabilities but is under no obligation to do so prior to seeking a reduction in hours.
 - iv. A member of employee's immediate household has an underlying health condition, as evidenced by a note from a health care provider, that places them at heightened risk for COVID-19 complications.
 - v. An employee voluntarily requests a temporary or permanent reduction in hours or effort as an option for their department to save costs.
- c. Procedures
 - i. Requests may come in the form of a weekly schedule change or annualized reduction in the position's time status or FTE. Acceptance of a voluntary reduction in hours/effort request must be appropriate for the operations of the department or program and must be approved by the supervisor and department head, in consultation with Human Resources.
 - ii. Requests for a voluntary reduction of hours under this interim policy should be made under the procedures and considerations outlined in Dartmouth's [Alternative Work Arrangements Policy](#) and are subject to departmental discretion. The COVID-19 related reason for an AWA request under this policy should be noted on the COVID-19 Related AWA Request Form to accompany the application. Supporting documentation for the COVID-19 health-related reason should be submitted by the Employee directly to the [Human Resources Benefits Office](#). The remainder of the application should be submitted to the Office of

Human Resources for review through the Employee's Department. If a department denies the request for reduced hours for operational reasons, an employee may alternatively request a voluntary furlough.

d. **Benefits:**

- i. Employees granted a reduction in hours/effort under this interim policy will continue to receive the employer-paid Dartflex contribution to health benefits based on their time status/FTE prior to the hours or FTE reduction through the end of the current plan year (December 31, 2020). Benefit costs beginning for the plan year commencing January 1, 2021 will be based on the employee's time status on that date.
- ii. If the voluntary reduction in hours request is based on an FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) qualifying reason, the voluntary furlough time up to twelve weeks will be designated as FMLA leave for FMLA-eligible employees.

5. ADA and Voluntary Reductions / Furloughs

Nothing in the voluntary options made available through this policy is intended to limit or preclude an employee's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). An employee with a disability under the ADA who believes they may be able to continue to perform the essential functions of their position with reasonable accommodations should contact Dartmouth College's ADA Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity to begin the [accommodation process](#).

Exceptions

The voluntary reductions contemplated in this policy do not apply to fellows on training grants or where a voluntary furlough or time status reduction is not permitted based on an employee's immigration or grant status.

Duration

This policy will be in effect until further notice.

Additional Resources

[Voluntary Furlough Application and Benefits Election](#)

[Furlough Benefits Election Form](#) *(for employer-initiated furlough)*

[COVID-19 Related Alternative Work Arrangement Request Form](#) *(for voluntary reduction in hours/effort)*