

## **UNIVERSITY POLICY ON FURLOUGHS**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

The information presented below is for explanatory purposes only. It is not intended to modify or expand the policy on furloughs. This is based on the information that is currently known. More information will be posted as it becomes available. The University reserves the right to supplement or modify the FAQs as circumstances warrant.

#### **What is a mandatory furlough?**

A furlough is a leave of absence without pay. When a mandatory furlough is declared, faculty and staff shall take time off without pay for the period of time designated by the furlough.

#### **What policy governs mandatory furloughs?**

IGP #189 was approved January 28, 2010. To read the complete policy, click on this link: <http://castle.eiu.edu/auditing/189.php> .

#### **Who is eligible for furlough within the University?**

If a mandatory furlough is declared, any or all University employee classes may be assigned furlough day(s). If an exception is necessary, such exception shall be due to operation necessity, safety, health or welfare of the University.

#### **Why is Eastern Illinois University implementing a furlough policy?**

It is a potential option in addressing a financial shortfall for the University.

#### **If a furlough becomes necessary, will the University Administration share the expected cost savings with the University community?**

Yes. The University will make this information available, when or if the furlough becomes necessary.

#### **How many days could an employee be furloughed?**

According to Eastern Illinois University's IGP, furloughs shall not exceed more than twenty-four workdays in any twelve month period.

**Will mandatory furloughs guarantee that layoffs or other employment reductions will not occur?**

No. It may be necessary for the University to make further budget reductions in the future. However, the University will make every effort to minimize the impact on current employees.

**Can the mandatory furlough program be curtailed mid-year if the University's financial circumstances improve?**

Yes. If a mandatory furlough is instituted, the University will periodically evaluate the need to continue to impose a mandatory furlough. If the University's financial circumstances improve, the University will determine if the mandatory furlough program is still necessary and the number of days, if any, which will be required for the remainder of the year.

**May I work during the furlough period?**

No. The furloughed employee will not be expected or required to work.

**Will the amount of mandatory furlough days be prorated based on the different work schedules i.e., 9 month, 10 month, 12 month?**

Yes. The amount of time an employee must take off on unpaid leave for furlough will be prorated based on the employee's full-time equivalency (FTE). Furlough days could also be based on employee classes and/or employee salaries.

**What if I am a new hire after the program is in effect?**

In this case, the amount would be prorated based on the actual number of months employed during the required furlough period.

**Will I be paid for these furlough days?**

No. A mandatory furlough is leave without pay.

**Can I work additional hours to offset the loss of pay caused by the mandatory furlough?**

No. Working additional hours for the sole purpose of making up lost pay caused by furlough days is prohibited.

**Can I take vacation or sick leave benefits on a mandatory furlough day?**

No. A mandatory furlough is leave without pay.

**When do I take furlough days?**

If mandatory furloughs are instituted, more information will be announced that will address the issues of timing and identifying the number of days required, as well as identifying impacted employee classifications.

**Does my supervisor have to approve when I take a furlough day?**

Yes. Your immediate supervisor (Dean, Director, Department Chair) shall approve the requested furlough days prior to the pay period in which a furlough day(s) will be taken.

**What if a holiday occurs during the period of approved furlough and it is a scheduled workday?**

Employees are expected to observe all paid holidays if eligible and are allowed to take accumulated vacation and sick leave as necessary. However, employees are still required to take their allotted furlough days within the time specified by the University.

**May I take a furlough day before or after a University designated holiday?**

Yes. A supervisor approved furlough day may be used before or after a University designated holiday.

**What if I am on an approved leave of absence during this furlough period?**

Eligible employees are still required to take their allotted furlough days within the time specified or to be taken as soon as possible after returning to work from said leave.

**What if I am on an approved leave of absence without pay during a portion of the furlough period? Will I be able to count those days toward my furlough time?**

Every leave situation is unique. The Department of Human Resources will review circumstances on a case by case basis to make an individualized decision.

**How does SURS (retirement) treat a mandatory furlough for purposes of crediting service?**

All furloughs are treated as a leave of absence without pay from the University for purposes of crediting service at SURS. The University requested a ruling from the State Universities Retirement System to determine whether employees would be able to buy-back furlough time. The result of that ruling was that SURS determined furlough time could not be considered as a buy-back option for service credit purposes.

**Will any other of my benefits (health, life, and so on) be affected by being on furlough?**

For eligible employees, furlough is not expected to affect benefit plans. However, as the Department of Central Management Services makes more information available to the University on this subject, the University will make this information available to all employees.

**Will I continue to accrue sick and vacation days while on furlough?**

Yes. Eligible employees will continue to accumulate sick and vacation leave at their same rate.

**Can I be furloughed if I work under a collective bargaining agreement (CBA)?**

Some collective bargaining agreements carry furlough language. Each CBA is different and the University would have to work with each of the unions regarding this issue.

**Note: If you have specific questions that have not been addressed in this document, please address your questions to the office of the Vice President of Business Affairs, 217-581-2921**