



UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD

COVID-19 Pandemic Voluntary Furlough Program

Effective Date: Start: July 1, 2020 – End: December 31, 2020

Application Deadline: June 15, 2020

PURPOSE

The purpose of the voluntary furlough program is to allow employees to volunteer for an unpaid temporary leave of absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The voluntary furlough will begin July 1, 2020 and continue until December 31, 2020 or until recall, resignation, or permanent layoff. This program sets forth the framework under which employees can voluntarily furlough.

SCOPE

All full-time, Texas based, staff and administrators (including exempt and nonexempt) are eligible to apply for participation in this program. Generally, employees occupying essential, critical, or hard-to-fill positions, or with critical knowledge or skills, may not be approved to participate. The approval of the department head, area vice president, and Human Resources will be required. Employee participation in the voluntary furlough program is not an entitlement and is subject to the approval and discretion of UIW.

During the temporary furlough period, the employee:

- does no work for UIW and receives no pay;
- remains a University employee;
- must continue to comply with all provisions of the employee handbook;
- is eligible to apply for unemployment compensation;
- is eligible to apply for Federal CARES Act weekly supplement of \$600;
- receives continued University benefits, including tuition benefits;
- continues to receive the University contribution toward insurance plans including medical, dental, vision, provided the employee continues to pay their portion of premiums;
- retains accrued vacation and sick hours (additional time will not accrue); and
- retains university service date during furlough.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the voluntary furlough program, an employee must have been offered an opportunity to participate and have not submitted notice of resignation or received notice of separation prior to the voluntary furlough offer. If there are more volunteers than needed, and all are equally good matches, UIW will process voluntary furlough applicants in order of seniority by department and business need of the department in which the employee is assigned. Volunteering for a furlough under this program is strictly a voluntary action on the part of any employee to whom this option is offered.

STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Employees participating in this program may file a claim for state unemployment compensation. The University will not contest the claim as long as the employee did not decline a request to return to work or be redeployed to another position.

Eligibility for and amount of unemployment benefits are determined by the State of Texas. Currently, the maximum weekly benefit is \$521. Unemployment benefits may include an additional weekly supplement of \$600 from the Federal CARES Act through July 31, 2020. For more information on Texas unemployment benefits can be found <https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/eligibility-benefit-amounts> .

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Employees may continue their University benefits (medical, dental, and vision) while participating in a voluntary furlough. The University will continue to fund 50% of the premiums. The employee will be responsible for paying the employee portion of the premiums to continue coverage. Employees may continue supplemental coverage with AFLAC, Catholic Life, and MetLife, and Proficient, provided they make timely premium payments each month.

Employees on furlough may continue to participate in the tuition benefit programs including tuition waiver, tuition exchange, and tuition discount programs.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Should employees approved for a voluntary furlough decide to accept other employment, they are required to follow the reporting guidelines as defined in the Employee Handbook, Section 7.9 Other Employment Policy.

RESIGNATION DURING FURLOUGH

Should an employee on furlough decide not to return, the employee may resign during the furlough and receive compensation for accrued but unused vacation.

RECALL FROM FURLOUGH

If University operations require early recall from voluntary furlough, a minimum of one-week notice will be provided for the employee to return to work.

END OF FURLOUGH PERIOD

At the end of the furlough period, if the employee has not been recalled, the employee will be reinstated into the position held or another available position or may be subject to lay off.

TEMPORARY PROGRAM

This temporary program in no way operates to amend or modify any portion of the Employee Handbook and is intended as temporary COVID-19 pandemic program. All other provisions of the Employee Handbook remain in full force and effect.