

UPDATED COVID-19 SPECIAL FACULTY AND STAFF WORK AND LEAVE PROVISIONS
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
Effective January 1, 2021 Through March 31, 2021 – Until Revised/Rescinded

The revised COVID-19 Special Faculty and Staff Work and Leave Provisions will go into effect **on January 1, 2021, and remain in place through March 31, 2021 or until further revised or rescinded**. In addition to the below guidance, the University's [return to on-site work guidelines](#) remain in effect.

1. **“FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT” (FFCRA):** Leave benefits provided under this federal program end on December 31, 2020. Starting January 1, 2021, absences that may have been covered by FFCRA are subject to the provisions described below.
2. **COVID-19 VOLUNTARY SHARED LEAVE BANK PROGRAM:** The COVID-19 voluntary shared leave bank program allows permanent, leave-eligible employees who qualify for the program to receive donated leave time from other WCU employees to use when their own leave balances are exhausted in certain qualifying circumstances. Specific guidelines for the program are as follows:
 - The COVID-19 Shared Leave Bank Program is currently available for eligible absences between July 1, 2020 and March 31, 2020. Leave bank donations may be applied only to eligible absences occurring during this time frame.
 - An employee will be eligible to receive leave from the COVID-19 shared leave bank program for absences only if the recipient employee cannot report to work on-site or telework because the employee:
 - **Must provide childcare because a school or child care facility remains closed, or the school has required or has allowed remote learning for the family due to COVID-19;**
 - **Must provide elder care because an elder care facility is closed due to COVID-19;**
 - **Has been confirmed as being in close contact with a COVID-19 positive person in the last 14 days;**
 - **Received instructions to isolate or quarantine by a health department or health care providers;**
 - **Has COVID-19 symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis or has been diagnosed with COVID-19;**
or
 - **The employee has exhausted all COVID-19 paid administrative leave, accrued personal leave (vacation, bonus, sick) and any paid time off (e.g., comp time for holiday, overtime, equal time, etc.).**
 - Eligible employees may receive up to **80 hours** of donated leave with a maximum of **20 hours per week** for eligible absences.
 - WCU employees may donate a maximum of **120 hours** (sick, vacation or bonus) to the leave bank.
 - Donations may not be made to a specific individual.
 - Donations to and receipt from this leave bank are available only from and to employees within the institution; exchanges with employees at other institutions/agencies are not permitted.
 - All leave allocations will be awarded equitably based upon the number of leave requests and the availability of shared leave.
 - Any unused leave donations cannot be retained by the recipient beyond December 31, 2020 with unused leave being returned to the donating employee.

3. COVID-19 PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE:

- **Use of COVID-19 Paid Administrative Leave for the purposes listed below is cumulative from March 16, 2020 through March 31, 2021.** If an employee used FFCRA emergency paid sick leave in 2020 for any of the reasons below, then those hours must be deducted from any remaining paid administrative leave available through this option.
- Employees may receive COVID-19 paid administrative leave under the following conditions:
 - The employee is subject to quarantine or an isolation order or has been advised to self-quarantine by a health care provider or public health official;
 - The employee has had exposure with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and is awaiting a diagnosis (the employee may or may not be demonstrating symptoms).
 - Under the above conditions, COVID-19 Paid Administrative Leave is allocated as described below:
 - The employee may receive up to 80 hours of COVID-19 paid administrative leave for the absences prior to using any accrued personal leave and paid time off;
 - Once this 80 hours has been exhausted, the employee must use their accrued personal leave and paid time off for the absences.
 - Once the employee has exhausted their accrued personal leave and paid time off, then the employee may receive an additional 80 hours of COVID-19 paid administrative leave for the absences.
- Temporary employees and student workers are eligible for up to 80 hours of COVID-19 Paid Administrative Leave when meeting one of the eligibility criteria described above.

NOTE: *Employees who have symptoms of a communicable disease and are required to stay home, or who are ill with the communicable disease, must not return to work until they are fully recovered in accordance with current CDC or NC Division of Public Health guidelines.*

4. **DUAL STATE EMPLOYEE HOUSEHOLD:** If more than one person in the household is a state employee, then the employees are expected to work with their supervisors to determine how to allocate leave to avoid inappropriate overlap of leave usage for child and elder care needs.

5. **OTHER ABSENCES:** Employees who are on other pre-approved leave or who are otherwise unavailable for reasons other than provided above cannot use paid administrative leave as described in this document for the absence and must use their accrued personal leave and paid time off for hours not worked.

6. **INTERCHANGEABILITY OF LEAVE:** Through March 31, 2021, employees may use accrued sick leave, vacation leave, and bonus leave interchangeably for COVID-19 related absences (child/elder care, cannot telework, etc.). This provision does not allow interchangeability of leave usage in regard to the leave options provided in state policy for retirement, transfer, or separation.

7. EXPANDED COMMUNITY SERVICE LEAVE (CSL):

- **COVID-19 RELATED SERVICE ACTIVITY:** In August 2020, institutions were allowed to provide permanent SHRA and EHRA employees up to 80 hours of Expanded Community Service Leave for service with non-profit organizations on COVID-19 related volunteer activities. Although the unused CSL hours allocated for this purposed in calendar year 2020 are forfeited as of December 31, 2020, a new allocation of 80 hours, effective January 1, 2021, has been provided. These hours are accounted for separately from an employee's regular annual allotment of 24 (or 36) hours community service leave.
- **TUTORING AND MENTORING:** Use of tutoring and mentoring options under CSL may occur in a formal standardized program or may include non-conventional tutoring/mentoring arrangements. For example,

tutoring sessions may be carried out in a virtual and/or in-person environment, performed as part of a remote student cohort, or could include activities with an employee's own child(ren). The tutoring and mentoring of "at-risk" students includes those that, by virtue of their circumstances, are more likely than others to fail academically, particularly in a virtual academic environment, and who require temporary or ongoing support to succeed academically.

8. Special consideration should be given to WCU employees who are determined to be "high risk" for contracting COVID-19 (i.e., over 65 years of age; have underlying health conditions, including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes; or a weakened immune system) or who are providing care to someone at high-risk.
 - Consistent with current University protocols and when requested by a faculty or staff member considered at high-risk from exposure to COVID-19, the University will provide options for reasonable alternative work arrangements such as online teaching/instruction, telework, alternative work locations, reassignment, or social distancing measures whenever possible. Faculty or staff who meet [high risk criteria](#) (or have a household member who meets these criteria) and for which face-to-face instruction or onsite work could place them further at risk may request assistance through the University's formal request process ([COVID-19 Assistance Request Form](#)).
 - Questions regarding this process may be directed to Matt Brown (mbrown@email.wcu.edu or 227-3139) or Trisha Ray (trisharay@email.wcu.edu or 227-2522).