The revised COVID-19 Special Faculty and Staff Work and Leave Provisions will go into effect on November 1, 2020, and remain in place until further revised or extended. Specific changes from the August 12th guidance are highlighted below and become effective November 1, 2020. In addition to the below guidance, the University has released incremental return to on-site work guidelines designed to facilitate the gradual return to on-site work.

**Summary of Changes from Previous Guidance**

- Since the implementation of the University’s August 2020 COVID-19 leave guidelines, employees have been eligible to receive up to 160 hours of COVID-19 paid leave (cumulative through December 31, 2020) once an employee has exhausted their 80 hours of FFCRA Emergency Paid Sick Leave and exhausted all personal leave, but still need to be out of work for any of the following reasons:
  - An employee is subject to a local quarantine or isolation order;
  - A healthcare provider has recommended an employee to self-quarantine, or;
  - An employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a diagnosis.

  **Effective November 1, 2020, employees will be allowed to utilize up to 80 of these 160 hours of COVID-19 paid leave prior to being required to use any personal leave.** This is designed in the interests of public health and safety to encourage employees to self-report and stay out of the workplace in the event of a suspected COVID-19 exposure, to include awaiting the scheduling of a COVID-19 test or pending test results based on the specific advice of a healthcare provider.

- COVID-19 paid administrative leave will be provided at two-thirds pay for elder care needs due to COVID-19 related elder care facility closings (up to a maximum of 12 weeks equivalent to FFCRA related child care leave). Once all FFCRA-equivalent leave is exhausted, employees must use their accrued leave or accrued paid time off for hours not worked.

- **Effective August 12, 2020, Mandatory On-Site Employee Designations** are discontinued. To align with the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, faculty and staff working onsite will no longer require mandatory designations.

- With supervisory approval, permanent SHRA and EHRA employees may use up to 80 hours of Expanded Community Service Leave to work with non-profit organizations on COVID-19 volunteer activities. These hours are accounted for separately from an employee’s regular annual community service leave allotment.

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).

**Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Leave Provisions**

- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides up to two weeks of Emergency Paid Sick Leave (80 hours, pro-rated for part-time employees) to all active employees (both permanent and temporary). This leave is counted separately from a permanent employee’s normally accrued sick leave.

- Emergency Paid Sick Leave is paid at 100% of the employee’s pay if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:
  
  - is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
  - has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine for COVID-19-related reasons; or
  - is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis.

- Emergency Paid Sick Leave (used June 1, 2020 or later) is paid at two-thirds of the employee’s pay if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

  - is caring for an individual with whom the employee has a personal relationship (such as an immediate family member, roommate or other similar person) and who is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
  - needs to care for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
  - is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (none has been declared at this time).

- FFCRA also provides an **Expanded Family & Medical Leave (FML)** benefit for employees who need to care for their child whose school or place of care is closed (or childcare provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons. This program provides up to 12 weeks of Family & Medical Leave to any employee (permanent or temporary) who has been employed by the institution for at least 30 calendar days.

  - The first two weeks of the Expanded FML is unpaid. For the remaining weeks of Expanded FML (up to ten weeks), FFCRA provides two-thirds of the employee’s pay.
  - Employees may use Emergency Paid Sick Leave, if available, to cover the first two weeks of Expanded FML, or use other available accrued personal leave or paid time off if no Emergency Paid Sick Leave is available.
  - The Expanded FML does not expand FMLA coverage for other issues to employees who are not otherwise eligible for the usual 12 weeks of Family & Medical Leave in a 12-month period, and any Family & Medical Leave used for another purpose within the past 12 months will reduce the weeks of Expanded FML available to an employee.

**COVID-19 Special Paid Administrative Leave and Other Leave Provisions for Permanent WCU Employees**

- For elder care needs due to COVID-19-related elder care facility closings, employees may receive COVID-19 paid administrative leave at two-thirds of the employee’s pay for the period of scheduled time they are unavailable due to providing elder care. This leave is provided equivalent to the same compensation rules and eligibility requirements applied to FFCRA for child care. This also means that the maximum elder care benefit for an employee is 12 weeks (or fewer, depending on the employee’s FMLA eligibility). Once all FFCRA-equivalent leave is exhausted, employees must use their accrued leave or accrued paid time off for hours not worked.
• Once FFCRA leave is exhausted, employees must use their accrued leave or accrued paid time off for hours not worked; however, once an employee has exhausted all of their accrued leave and paid time off, absences due to quarantine/isolation order, advised to self-quarantine, or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and awaiting a diagnosis, will receive COVID-19 paid administrative leave at 100% of the employee’s pay, up to 160 hours through December 31, 2020.

• WCU employees who were on other pre-approved leave or are unavailable for reasons other than provided for in the special COVID-19 provisions must use available and applicable leave types; e.g. vacation leave, parental leave, bonus leave, compensatory time, or take leave without pay.

• 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 paid administrative leave to avoid inappropriate overlap of leave usage for child and elder care needs.

• Through December 31, 2020, employees may use accrued sick leave, vacation leave, and bonus leave interchangeably, regardless of the reason for the employee’s absence; however, paid leave cannot be used to cover hours on which an employee is on emergency temporary furlough.

• Through December 31, 2020, employees who have exhausted all other forms of available leave, may avail themselves to the University COVID-19 Voluntary Shared Leave Bank Program. Specifically, the COVID-19 voluntary shared leave bank program allows 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:
  o The COVID-19 Shared Leave Bank Program will be available from July 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020. Leave bank donations may be applied only to eligible absences occurring during this time frame.
  o An employee will be eligible to receive leave from the COVID-19 shared leave bank program only for absences due to:
    ▪ The employee being unable to telework due to the nature of their position; and/or
    ▪ Has ongoing child/elder care needs (above and beyond coverage provided by FFCRA and/or UNC System Paid Admin Leave); and
    ▪ The employee has exhausted all accrued personal leave (vacation, bonus, sick) and any paid time off (e.g., comp time for holiday, overtime, equal time, etc.).
  o Eligible employees may receive up to 80 hours of donated leave with a maximum of 20 hours per week for eligible absences.
  o WCU employees may donate a maximum of 120 hours (sick, vacation or bonus) to the leave bank.
  o Donations may not be made to a specific individual.
  o 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.
  o All leave allocations will be awarded equitably based upon the number of leave requests and the availability of shared leave.
  o Any unused leave donations cannot be retained by the recipient beyond December 31, 2020 with unused leave being returned to the donating employee.