

COVID-19 Staffing and Leave Guidelines

As reported by many news outlets, the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has had a significant financial impact on the health care industry. Like all institutions across the country, UAMS has suffered financial losses – approximately \$16 million to date – as a result of the pandemic.

As a result, UAMS is deploying many cost-cutting measures. A hiring pause was implemented mid- March for 45 days. In order to continue to reduce our expenses, we will continue the hiring pause until May 31, 2020.

Additionally, we are aggressively exploring additional ways to cut operating costs and generate revenue. If you have ideas for how the University can save money and trim budgets, please submit your ideas to UAMSstrong@uams.edu

Despite this aggressive approach, based upon the financial losses, we have determined that it is necessary to look at other options related to our workforce. The following staffing plan includes several phases as follows:

UAMS STAFFING PLAN

1. Mandatory reduction in percent of time worked
2. Voluntary reduction in percent of time worked/salary option
3. Possible furlough.

The sections below explain the UAMS Staffing Plan followed by detailed guidance. Please contact your Human Resources Business Partner or Employee Relations at 501-686-5650 with any questions or for any needed assistance.

Mandatory Reduction in Percent of Time Worked (FTE)

In response to UAMS' operational needs and budgeting, we find it necessary to reduce the percent of time employed for various departments and/or individual positions with a department. All staff, physicians, researchers, and faculty (except those exempted by law) who are currently working fewer than their normal work hours as a result of the pandemic will be reduced to an FTE between 50% - 90% based upon average hours worked effective May 4, 2020.

Hourly employees should be paid for time actually worked. Hourly employees should not be allowed to claim hours not worked per current board policy, nor should hourly employees be allowed to clock in for work if there is no work to be performed.

Employees with no work should be placed on leave without pay, or be reduced to .5 and use paid leave to cover the non-working hours.

Voluntary Reduction in Percent of Time Worked or Salary

In addition, beginning May 4, 2020, employees not subject to the mandatory reduction in percent of time worked will be given the opportunity to sign up for a Voluntary Reduction in FTE in ½ day increments, or a salary reduction in 5% increments. Interested employees must complete the Voluntary Reduction in FTE form. The voluntary reduction must be taken by June 30, 2020.

Possible Furloughs

If UAMS does not achieve sufficient savings in the first two phases, mandatory furloughs may be considered. A furlough is an unpaid leave of absence from work for a specific period of time. It is different from a layoff in that an employee remains employed and maintains benefits, but is not being paid because the employee is not working.

We know any unpaid time is a burden, which is why the organization is looking at many other cost-cutting measures to avoid the need to implement a mandatory furlough.

