



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

1. How long will the University be working remotely?

The University is proceeding on the basis that remote work is indefinite at this point. While we hope it will only be through the Spring semester, it's possible it could be longer than that. Departments should plan for remote work through the summer to be best prepared.

2. Are OPS employees part of the hiring freeze? What if we are extending an original appointment as OPS?

OPS employees, including adjunct faculty, are included as part of the hiring freeze. Any new OPS appointment will be required to have the [Hiring Freeze Exception Request Form](#) completed and approved before they can be appointed. This includes those that are changing job codes from one appointment to another. As an example, if someone is appointed as a Graduate Assistant in the spring semester and they need to be appointed as an OPS employee for the summer, the Hiring Freeze Exception Request Form will be required. Extensions of appointments cannot have a break in service more than thirty-one (31) days.

3. Are Graduate Assistants subject to the University's hiring freeze?

Graduate Assistants can be hired for summer and fall semesters. However, appointment letters for both semesters must have the required contingency language. Please see [the Graduate Assistant Appointment Letter](#) for more details on what is required in the offer/appointment letter.

4. What should we do about employees who are traveling outside of Tallahassee?

The University discourages employees from non-essential domestic travel. Although we cannot mandate that employees not travel outside of Tallahassee or the surrounding counties on their personal time, supervisors can advise employees to notify them of personal travel plans in advance or at the very least when they return home, but before reporting to work. Domestic travel, depending on the location, may require the employee to self-quarantine for 14 days. During that time, the employee may be eligible for Emergency Sick Leave under the FFCRA or can use their accrued annual and/or sick leave.

5. How do you define the "Tallahassee area?"

The Tallahassee area is defined as Tallahassee and the surrounding counties.

6. Should Graduate Assistants follow the travel restrictions for students or for faculty and staff? Are they allowed to return to campus if they have left the area?

Graduate Assistants are considered students first and should follow travel restrictions for all students. Because Graduate Assistants are expected to perform their assigned duties and meet expectations of their roles and responsibilities, they should refrain from leaving the Tallahassee area if their duties are designated as on-campus essential and are required to be performed on campus. Teaching Assistants are expected to host their sections online and should work remotely. Teaching Assistants who are not instructors of record should continue to work with their faculty mentors/supervisors to provide ongoing TA support remotely based on the duties of the assignment, unless they are designated as on-campus essential. The same applies for students who are working as a Research Assistant or in another Graduate Assistant role. Graduate Assistants who have left the local area but are required to perform duties on campus

should notify their supervisors and consult with Human Resources on the details of the travel and whether or not they should self-quarantine before returning to campus.

7. Are employees over a certain age, whether or not they having underlying medical conditions, considered high risk and encouraged to work remotely full time?

The Governor of Florida has issued Executive Order 20-83 urging all persons over the age of 65 to stay home and take necessary precautions to limit their risk of exposure to COVID-19. The order also issues the same directive for persons with serious underlying medical conditions that may place them at high risk (i.e. lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised status, persons undergoing cancer treatment, and severe obesity). Both groups are considered high risk employees. Any employees deemed high risk should work remotely, if their duties are conducive to such work, and they are not designated as on-campus essential. Employees within these demographics who are unable to perform their work remotely and choose not to work on campus, should contact the Office of Human Resources for assistance. These employees may be eligible for Emergency Paid Sick Leave under the FFCRA.

8. What if an employee is not being responsive and has not completed assignments? Is this considered AWOL or Job Abandonment?

Employees that are working remotely should have expectations set by their supervisors and should meet those expectations. If a supervisor is having issues with an employee not being responsive or meeting expectations, they should consult with Human Resources on next steps. Additionally, employees and supervisors should be aware that the employee is required to adhere to the [Temporary Remote Work Guidelines](#), which they should have acknowledged on the [Temporary Remote Work Acknowledgement form](#). For issues related to faculty members, please contact Rebecca Peterson in Faculty Relations. For issues related to staff employees, please contact Tracey Pearson in Employee & Labor Relations.

9. For summer appointments, should we hold off on reappointing or should we start submitting ePAFS?

Funding extensions and summer appointments can be submitted for current employees. Summer appointments for faculty start on May 7, 2020, and are due to HR by May 1. It may be best to hold off on submitting summer appointments until closer to the end of April so that current needs and assignments can be evaluated based on university operations at that time.

10. Are summer camps being evaluated for termination? If so, when might we know?

All Summer Camps scheduled to be held prior to July 4 have been cancelled. Summer Camp season is continually being monitored and evaluated for appropriate safety measures in accordance with CDC, State of Florida, Leon County, and City of Tallahassee health mandates.

11. Will FSU employees be furloughed or laid off?

There have been no discussions or determinations regarding furloughs or layoffs for University employees. The University is reviewing how the impact of the coronavirus may affect our budget. At this time, we have taken proactive measures, such as ceasing all non-essential travel, implementing a hiring freeze, and discouraging non-essential purchases. These efforts are intended to mitigate the financial impact, but where we will be financially when normal operations resume is unknown.

12. Regarding staff providing medical letters, will there be any consideration regarding limited access to general practitioners during this time? For example, due to volume and remote work in medical offices, what if the employee is not available to provide a letter quickly?

We understand that all areas of the community are impacted, including medical professionals. We will work with employees on a case by case basis. Fortunately, our experience has been that medical providers have been very responsive and have provided any requested documentation within a reasonable period of time.

13. If an employee in our department was advised by HR to self-quarantine for 14 days because they traveled to a high-risk area (and their supervisor required them to follow HR guidance) but they were tested for COVID-19 and the results came back negative, would HR advise that they may return to their workplace sooner than the 14-day period?

Employees should continue to self-quarantine for the 14-day period. At this time, it is very unlikely that asymptomatic individuals are being tested. Therefore, if the individual presented with symptoms that initially prompted testing, it would be best to err on the side of caution and continue the 14-day quarantine period. Only on-campus essential employees would return to campus after the 14-day quarantine period.

14. Are facilities staff continuing to deep clean even while we are away?

The University's restriction of on-campus operations will include significantly reducing the amount of facilities staff available to provide the usual cleaning and sanitation services in University Academic and Research buildings. As a result, we cannot guarantee that facilities will be maintained on a daily basis in a manner that meets with best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For these reasons, and for your own continued health and safety, the University must insist that all employees not designated as on-campus essential work remotely at all possible times. If there are additional measures you need in order accomplish remote work, please advise your department head or chair.

15. How do we deal with employees that are in the higher risk group and deemed essential? How do we determine that without asking personal health information?

You can provide the information we have shared via the listserv on March 26, 2020, regarding [High Risk Employees](#). Those employees can contact Human Resources directly, if they have questions or would like to discuss what options are available to them.

16. Can an OPS employee work remotely? If so, what form is needed?

Yes. There may be an opportunity for an OPS employee to work remotely depending on the nature of their job duties. For more information, please see the policy on [Temporary Remote Work](#). All employees, including students and OPS employees, are eligible for this agreement if their work duties permit, and there is work available.

17. An OPS employee wants to apply for unemployment, and he asked me for a letter stating the date we closed and asked if he should say he was laid off. We have not actually laid off anyone; we just are closed temporarily and have no hours to offer OPS staff. When you say FSU will respond to those unemployment claims, any insight on how FSU would receive those requests?

The University is not closed, but some departments may have a decline in temporary work based on a curtailment of operations that would occur under normal circumstances. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) is assessing all claims received from claimants who have lost wages in response to the coronavirus protocols. Claimants who have experienced a loss in wages have the opportunity to submit a claim through the DEO website.

Each individual's claim is considered unique and would be assessed on a case by case basis by DEO. The University responds to claims electronically directly to DEO.

18. Is there any required documentation of work completed by employees working remotely?

The expectation is that supervisors and managers are maintaining contact with their employees on a regular and consistent basis, and have implemented processes to ensure that work continues to be performed while the employee is working remotely. Regular check-in meetings and follow up on assigned tasks is critical to maintaining communication and should be expected.

19. How do we deal with employees who are not familiar or equipped with distance work?

Information regarding [Employee Remote Work Essentials](#) and [Key Tips for Transitioning to a Remote Work Employee](#) are available on the HR website. We encourage employees to review these resources. In addition, supervisors should develop expectations and clearly communicate with employees about what is expected. Supervisors are encouraged to develop special assignments and trainings for employees working remotely to ensure they have meaningful work and stay engaged.

20. Will FSU make decisions that may differ from federal or state government guidelines if they feel it is safer for the staff?

The University continues to make decisions that are in the best interest of our faculty, staff, and students, using guidance from the Center for Disease Control, Florida Department of Health, and other federal, state, and local authorities. We will continue to adjust our approach as we receive and evaluate new information.

21. Also, when hiring faculty (9-month) how would you like us to fill out the loyalty oath? Should we have the employee find a notary or upload the loyalty oath to supplemental docs and send the stamped loyalty oath to elm-docs once things resume to normal?

Departments and candidates are able to use an online notary if possible. If that is not available, we will accept a signed version of the loyalty oath in onboarding. Once campus has returned to normal operations, a notarized loyalty oath will need to be submitted to Human Resources. Information on how department notaries can register as an online notary public and a listing of current online notaries can be found [here](#).

22. I heard there was recent legislation passed that may provide employees with additional leave. Is this applicable to FSU and when does it take effect?

On March 18, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was signed into law, with an effective date of April 1, 2020. This new law contains two leave benefits that will be available to eligible employees (including OPS) at Florida State University. These leave benefits will be provided in addition to an employee's accrued leave balance. To assist departments with understanding and implementing the new law, the HR Coronavirus Taskforce will host another open Zoom call on **Friday, April 3, 2020**, to answer questions about FFCRA.

23. Does the Emergency Paid Sick Leave apply for those that have to self-quarantine for travel outside the area or only to those with symptoms?

The FFCRA applies to those on federal, state, or local ordered quarantine or isolation related to COVID-19.

24. Can the 80 hours of FFCRA leave for a vulnerable (elderly) employee be used in combination with remote work assignments (if full-time remote work assignments are not available)?

Yes, if an employee is under medically advised quarantine or isolation related to COVID-19, the 80 hours of FFCRA leave can be used intermittently if full-time remote work is not available.

25. Can you explain how FMLA works? Some think it is additional pay and not used along with sick or vacation leave

Typically, FMLA is unpaid leave, but can be used in conjunction with accrued sick and vacation leave. The Emergency Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Expansion applies if an employee is unable to work remotely due to childcare needs related to COVID-19 and has been employed for a minimum of thirty (30) days. The Emergency FMLA Expansion provides employees with up to twelve (12) weeks of emergency FMLA. The first two weeks are unpaid followed by ten (10) weeks of paid emergency FMLA at two-thirds an employee's rate of pay.

26. If the University requires an employee to self-quarantine due to potential exposure from travel but is not experiencing symptoms and cannot work remotely, what type of leave should be applied?

Faculty and staff are discouraged from personal travel. Please refer to the University's coronavirus information page for up-to-date recommendations about return from travel to affected areas and other topics. Employees returning from international travel or a cruise, regardless of destination, will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days. Faculty and staff who traveled to domestic areas with an outbreak should contact Human Resources for guidance regarding the need to self-quarantine. If an employee is advised to self-quarantine they will be eligible to apply for Emergency Sick Leave or use accrued leave.

27. Will the transfer of vacation hours be allowed inside FSU from one employee to another to help our fellow employees? Any thoughts of pooling them and letting people donate them?

Currently, FSU does not allow the transfer of leave hours between employees directly. The [Sick Leave Pool](#) is available for a member employee's serious or catastrophic health condition. At this point, there are no changes to the current policies. However, if there is a change to authorize internal leave transfers among employees, we will communicate through the HR listserv.

28. If I am supervising an A&P employee who is working at home and caring for a young child as a single parent, how does she document hours worked for her time?

We understand the dynamic situation has had a significant personal impact on our employees. The University will allow employees to care for children at home while on the Temporary Remote Work agreement. We urge supervisors to be as flexible as possible in approving remote work and alternative work schedules. With approval from their supervisor, an employee can work an alternative schedule such as non-traditional hours or supplement their hours worked with annual leave. Hours worked should be documented on the timesheet as Regular hours worked (REGHP).