

Voluntary Furlough FAQs

1. What are the basics of the Voluntary Furlough Program?

Answer: Those participating in the Voluntary Furlough Program make a short-term commitment to time off without pay and can keep or withdraw from that commitment. The following chart may also be helpful:

Factor	Voluntary Furlough
Amount of reduction allowed/ Non-exempt and exempt	Up to 30 days at one time
Type of reduction allowed	½ day increments (hourly employees) Full day increments (salaried employees)
Deadline to submit paperwork	Furlough requests accepted prior to payroll when furlough would occur throughout the year
Deadline to change dates or to withdraw from the Program	Two weeks before the change in dates and discussed with your supervisor
Effect on sick, vacation, and personal days	None
Effect on tuition remission	None
Effect on TIAA	Reduced in accordance with your earnings
Life, Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD &D), Long-Term Disability	None

2. I am a supervisor. I'm worried about how to balance needs, allowing staff in my office to take furloughs and keeping the office running. How do I decide if/how to allow furlough days? Will workloads be decreased to accommodate for furlough time being taken?

Answer: It is up to the supervisor to determine, in consultation with their supervisor, what needs to be done regarding workload. That is not a decision that can be made centrally. The Program Description does give some guidelines stating, “Approvals will be based on ensuring that academic programs, administrative support services, and all other offices of the College continue to achieve their goals of student success and business continuity.” It may be helpful to use a maternity or medical leave scenario as a frame of reference for coming up with workable solutions.

3. When do we have to make our decisions?

Answer: Requests will be accepted throughout the year and must be approved and received by the Payroll Office prior to the furlough. If employees want to participate but are not sure of exact dates, or worry that dates selected will change, they could make a tentative plan with their supervisor and discuss alternate dates now or in the future. Example: Juan requests 4 days in July for furlough and discusses the possibility with his supervisor that he may want to change those dates for 4 days in August. The supervisor agrees or offers to consider an alternative set of dates due to office needs in August. Through mutual discussion, Juan and his supervisor come to agreement about two possible time periods during which Juan may take his leave. Juan requests 4 days in July.

4. Can I change my mind about my participation in the voluntary program?

Answer: You can opt out of participation in the Voluntary Furlough Program at any time.

5. People are thinking they should overestimate how much time they will take off, blocking off a lot of time now and then selecting from the time off they have indicated and taking some portion of that time. Is this okay?

Answer: The best decision is to request ONLY the number of voluntary furlough days for which you can actually commit to, especially as you can request voluntary furlough time throughout the year. Second, an employee and a supervisor can discuss and agree to another time to which the original requested dates can be changed so there is no need to “double book” voluntary furlough time. Example: Maria wants to commit to one week of voluntary furlough in August, but realizes she may need to change to take the one week of time in October. She should approach her supervisor about this optional October time period before she even signs up for the voluntary program. She should not sign

up for two weeks of furlough, just to hold two sets of dates; she should work out her options with her supervisor using real estimates of days she feels she will take.

6. Will we hear what senior administration or certain departments or divisions have requested?

Answer: Human Resources recommends that supervisors at all levels make their own decisions and not use their efforts to rally others. The decision to participate in the Voluntary Furlough Program is an individual decision. No one should feel compelled to share their efforts and should realize that doing so could feel coercive to others. We all need to understand that we have colleagues who cannot participate. In other cases, colleagues will participate but do not want their participation shared with others. Let's not make anyone feel pressured or judged. Please remember, no one should sign up for any participation beyond what they feel they can comfortably commit to at this time. Voluntary is voluntary. There will be some, perhaps many, at the College who feel they cannot participate in the voluntary program.

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