

Furlough Extension Q&A

1. What does furlough mean? Furlough refers to employees being placed on a temporary leave of absence from work due to special needs of a company or employer, which may be due to economic conditions at the specific employer or in the economy as a whole. This term has been adopted by the Chancellor in his recent announcement in relation to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The scheme applies to employees/workers who were being paid through the University's payroll through Pay as You Earn (PAYE) as at 28th February 2020.

2. Why am I being furloughed? If you are designated as a furloughed worker it means that work has ceased or significantly reduced in your area such that, on a temporary basis, the University no longer requires you to work.

3. What is my status during the time I am furloughed? You will be kept on the payroll, remain employed and designated as a furloughed employee/worker.

4. Can I refuse? You can refuse to be furloughed although all that is being asked is that you agree not to do any work for the University or an associated employer during the furlough period. Our ability to place employees on Furlough and utilise the Government's job retention scheme is really important. The Vice-Chancellor has previously advised of the very challenging financial circumstances we now find ourselves in. The decisions and actions we are taking are first and foremost to ensure that we can protect jobs and be in the best position to enact our "bounce back" strategy following this period of uncertainty.

5. What criteria are being used to decide those who are furloughed? The following criteria will be considered: - Whether the area of work has closed temporarily or the need for work has significantly reduced in that area - Whether the role is temporarily not needed due to reorganisation of priorities to support the COVID 19 business continuity plan

6. How long will I be furloughed for? The minimum period during this extended period is seven days. Initially we are expecting that designated staff will be furloughed for up to three months from the date when work ceased (which can be backdated from 1st November 2020) up to and including 2nd December 2020.

7. Does this mean I am going to be made redundant? No. Furlough is an arrangement that seeks to avoid the need to make redundancies. No redundancies are currently proposed and if that changed this would be subject to a separate process of consultation.

8. Will I be paid while I am furloughed?

You will continue to receive payment on the same pay day as normal. The University's Policy and Resources Committee has agreed to maintain salaries at 100% so you will receive full pay, subject to the normal tax, NI and pension deductions.

9. I have not been furloughed but think I should be. What should I do? There is no right to be furloughed but if your work has ceased or significantly reduced you should discuss this with your manager.

10. Will I continue to accrue annual leave? Yes, however we would expect you to take your leave during this period of furlough.

12. What will happen to my pension while I am furloughed? There will be no change to pension contributions.

13. I have annual leave booked during the period I am being furloughed what will happen to my leave? Any pre-booked leave will remain as it is and should not be cancelled or re-assigned.

16. Can I do any work whilst I am furloughed? No. The reason you have been furloughed is because your work has temporarily ceased. You must not do any work in any role for the University, UECS Ltd or Wivenhoe House during furlough leave but you may undertake unpaid voluntary work or temporary paid work outside of the University during the furlough period.

17. Can I be brought back to work before the end of the furlough period? Yes, the minimum period of furlough leave is seven days but we reserve the right to recall you to work and end the furlough period if the need arises.

18. I am on a fixed-term contract that will end part-way through the furlough period. Unless you have been advised otherwise, your contract will end on the planned end date and your salary will be maintained up to this point.

19. I am on a tier 2 visa. How will being furloughed affect my visa status? Your visa status will not be affected if you are furloughed. Please email t2andt5compliance@essex.ac.uk if you intend to be out of the country during the furlough period so we can advise on any implications this may have for your visa.

20. I am off sick but my work has ceased or significantly reduced, does that mean I will be furloughed? Whilst off sick you cannot be furloughed. For those who have longer-term health issues, a full medical assessment will need to be made to ensure you are fit to return to work. On returning to work a decision will be made whether to furlough.

21. I am due to go on maternity/adoption/paternity leave part way through the furlough period, what will happen to my maternity/adoption/paternity leave and pay? Furlough leave will end automatically at the point you have told us you will be starting your period of leave. Normal leave and pay arrangements will apply according to the type of leave you are taking.

If you are returning from maternity/adoption/paternity leave and work has temporarily ceased you will start furlough leave by agreement upon your return to work.

If you have any queries about any aspect of furlough please contact the People and Culture team at staffing@essex.ac.uk

Our campus trade unions are also providing support for members of staff during this period and can be contacted as follows:

Unison - uoel.unison@gmail.com

UCU - ucu@essex.ac.uk

Unite - unitetheunion@essex.ac.uk