



William Paterson University Voluntary Furlough Program Frequently Asked Questions

The information offered below are answers to commonly asked questions about benefits, seniority and pension during a voluntary furlough. It is intended to serve as a guide and should not be considered as the final authority.

1. What is a Voluntary Furlough?

Voluntary Furlough provides a unique opportunity for eligible full time employees to take advantage of unpaid leave time for personal use.

2. How can I use a Voluntary Furlough?

Voluntary Furlough may be used to extend a vacation or official holiday, pursue educational opportunities or meet family care needs. Furlough is not to be used in place of sick time or disability leave and it is also not to be used to engage in alternate employment.

3. What period of time am I eligible to take as Voluntary Furlough?

You may be eligible to take 30 days of unpaid furlough with up to six 10-day extensions per calendar year.

4. How may I charge time applied to a furlough?

Furlough may be used in increments of whole days, shorter workdays with a minimum of one hour of furlough charged per day. It may be used consecutively or intermittently.

All approved voluntary furlough time must be recorded on your timesheet using code "FUR".

5. How do I apply for the Voluntary Furlough Program?

The "Voluntary Furlough Request" form must be submitted to your supervisor for approval at least twenty (20) business days prior to the start of the furlough.

6. How will I know if my furlough has been approved?

Your supervisor will forward the form to the Division Vice President for review. The form will then be sent to the Office of Payroll and Benefits for final review. You will be then notified of the status of your furlough within two (2) business days of the Payroll and Benefits office receipt of the approved form.

7. Will my health benefits coverage continue while I am on a furlough?

Yes, Employees remain covered under the State Health Benefits Program by making their regular employee contributions at least *10 days prior* to utilizing the furlough time for the first 30 days of voluntary furlough time. Employee health benefits continue during the six 10-day extensions if the employee pays the entire cost of the health benefits (employee and employer share) at least 10 days prior to utilizing the voluntary furlough time.



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8. If I have a change of family status during the Voluntary Furlough, can I change my health benefits coverage?

Yes. You will be treated the same as an actively employed member. Simply complete a new enrollment application within sixty (60) days of the change in family status.

9. What if I am already out on a leave of absence and my health benefits coverage has terminated?

If you are not currently covered by the State Health Benefits Program, you will not be permitted to re-enroll until you have returned to employment.

10. Will my seniority or anniversary date be affected because of furlough?

If you are a classified staff member your status remains the same and you will continue to accrue seniority while on furlough. For those employees with anniversary dates linked to salary increments, participation in the program will not affect your anniversary date.

11. How will the furlough affect my vacation and sick leave time?

You will continue to accrue vacation and sick leave.

12. Will I be eligible for promotional opportunities while I am on furlough? (Classified staff)

Yes, you will be notified of promotional opportunities (provisional and permanent) just as you would with any other leave of absence.

13. Will I be paid for a holiday if I take a furlough the day before a holiday?

You will be paid for the holiday if you are in pay status at least one day in the bi-weekly pay period in which the holiday falls.

14. Can I take a furlough during my working test period? (Classified Staff)

Yes, your working test period will be extended by the number of furlough days used.

15. How will Voluntary Furlough affect my pension?

If you are a member of PERS, PFRS or TPAF, your pension deduction and your contributory life insurance premium, if applicable, will be affected only if there are pay periods where no salary is earned or insufficient salary is earned to take your normal pension deductions. If you are a member of ABP, the University's 8% contribution and your 5% contribution will be calculated on contractual (regular) base salary as long as you earn at least 50% of your regular base salary while on furlough.

16. Can I purchase pension service credit when I return to the payroll from a furlough?

PERS, TPAF and PFRS members may purchase up to 3 months of service credit. The Alternate Benefit Program (ABP) has no provision for purchase of service credit.



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17. How will Voluntary Furlough affect my life insurance?

As long as there is sufficient salary to meet all pension obligations, there will be no change or interruption in your life insurance coverage. Your coverage will not be affected if the furlough is taken in intermittent or continuous days up to 30 days. If a member of PERS or TPAF has contributory group life insurance coverage and has insufficient salary to make contributions, he or she may continue such coverage for up to 90 days if premiums are remitted in advance to the employer.

18. What happens to my loan, arrears, or back deduction payments while on furlough? (classified staff)

As long as there is sufficient salary to meet all pension obligations, there will be no change or interruption in your repayment schedule. If insufficient salary is earned to cover loan payments, the period of time over which the loan is repaid will be extended and when payments resume accrued interest will be included in your payment amount. Arrears payments will also be suspended until return to pay status.

19. Can PERS, TPAF or PFRS members take a loan from the retirement system while out of pay status?

No. Only those receiving sufficient salary to meet all pension obligations are eligible to apply for pension loans.

20. Can I rescind my Furlough?

Yes. Since this is voluntary, it may be rescinded by the employee at any time.

21. Is there a limit for number of days requested by AFT and Higher Education Managers?

For Higher Ed Managers and the AFT, the University was able to extend the benefit to an unlimited number of days during the Public Health Emergency or by agreement.