

## COVID-19 related questions – For HR Liaisons *(as of 4/9/2020)*

### Benefits

**1. Should we continue to record FMLA during this period?**

We are still awaiting an answer. For now, please use the FML code in Kronos.

**2. An employee is preparing to complete the retirement paperwork for submitting to TRS. Have there been any modified procedures for submitting the documents, deadlines and/or required notarized signatures?**

There is no change on the deadline of paperwork being submitting to TRS by 30 days prior to the retirement date. If you are unable to have your signature notarized, please submit without the notarized signature and a follow-up from TRS will occur. You may send your paperwork directly to TRS and Linda Sanders will be notified by TRS for the Employer Certification requirements.

**3. Is Linda Sanders available to meet for retirement discussions?**

Linda is available to meet via phone or Zoom for retirement planning discussions. Please email Linda at sandel2@auburn.edu for scheduling.

**4. Are we still tracking in Kronos with Vacation-FMLA or Sick-FMLA? (Same question related to Salary Continuation)**

They should continue to put the proper codes in Kronos since a decision has yet to be made. It is recommended to continue to record appropriately. Use FML for FMLA. Continue to use SCP if an employee is on SCP.

**5. An employee is retiring at the end of May and plans to take annual leave beginning in April. Will she be allowed the leave or is this a situation of no leave under the current guidance?**

Through May 9, all employees will be paid whether working or not, and will not be required to submit vacation or sick leave. If we return to normal operations, or if different guidance regarding use of vacation or sick leave is issued, an employee can then begin to use available vacation leave. As per normal guidelines, upon termination/retirement, an employee can receive a payout of one month's worth of vacation. That will continue to be the case, with any unused leave over that amount being forfeited, as we aren't asking anyone to use their leave during this time.

**6. Yesterday I submitted sick leave request for this past Monday, 3/23. Will that be removed and 8 hours be added in a different way? Would it be done differently for an exempt employee?**

Yes, it will be removed for all employees. An emergency closure pay code will be added programmatically.

**7. Will a new employee who is benefits eligible be able to enroll in benefits since there is not an in-person orientation session being conducted?**

Yes. New hires are receiving instructions from HR Development on how to enroll in benefits via AU ACCESS. Benefits specialists are monitoring the completion of benefit elections of the employee to ensure timely enrollment submissions.

### Campus Relations

**1. Has Employee Appreciation Week been cancelled?**

Yes, it has been canceled with the exception of the Employee Recognition Program. It will be held on a later date.

**2. Is there a plan to change the 90-day probationary period?**

A supervisor may extend the probationary period up to 180 days if they are unable to assess the work of the employee during this time without it being punitive or derogatory.

**3. Do we need to submit the Initial Training Review form within a 90-day period?**

If you have had an appropriate opportunity to observe and assess an employee's performance, then yes. If you need more time to assess, then follow the normal protocol to extend the initial training review period another 90 days. Campus Relations can help with wording.

**4. What if I am unable to fairly assess the new (or transfer) employee's performance to enable to meet the submission deadline of 90 days?**

If you have had an appropriate opportunity to observe and assess an employee's performance, then yes. If you need more time to assess, then follow the normal protocol to extend the initial training review period another 90 days. Campus Relations can help with wording.

**5. Are ID cards/badges being made for employees and affiliates during the alternate operations model?**

The Onboarding Center are making affiliate and employee ID cards by appointment only. Call 844-1763 for scheduling an appointment.

## Compensation

**1. If an employee is sent home will they be paid?**

As communicated by Dr. Gogue, all current employees (Faculty, University Staff, Administrative/Professional, TES, undergraduate and graduate student workers, paid visiting scholars, graduate assistants, postdoctoral fellows) will continue to be paid at their regular rate of pay through the spring term, even if they are unable to perform their normal job responsibilities.

**2. I am currently a student employee. I peer advise for the College of Human Sciences. We were to begin peer advising from March 16 until April 3. Will I receive pay for the hours I was scheduled for?**

As communicated by President Gogue, all current employees, including student employees, will continue to be paid at their regular rate of pay through the spring term, even if they are unable to perform their normal job responsibilities. In your case, you should be paid for the hours that you would have worked had the university not been on an alternate operating schedule.

**3. I am a TES employee. Does the email mean that even if I am not clocking into work, I will still be paid?**

Yes, as communicated by Dr. Gogue, "...all current employees" (TES included) "will continue to be paid at their regular rate of pay through the spring term, even if they are unable to perform their normal job responsibilities." Therefore, if you are unable to work, you will still be paid. It is important to note however, that if you are working, by Federal regulation you must continue to accurately record your time worked.

**4. Will Clinical Associates be compensated during this time of inability to perform clinicals? I understand part time and full time employees will be compensated and I was not sure if clinical associates fell into that category.**

As a part-time biweekly paid employee, you will receive your pay at your currently assigned FTE. While working, you will continue to clock in using Kronos, or another approved timekeeping method. Should you work hours in excess of your assigned FTE, you will be receiving your actual hours worked. If you should work less than your assigned FTE, you will continue to receive pay at your current assigned level of FTE.

**5. How are graduate students covered under this?**

Graduate students who are Graduate Assistants are exempt employees and will be paid just as they are now. Additional information is posted on our Coronavirus website,

[http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human\\_resources/coronavirus.html](http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/coronavirus.html)

**6. Has the deadline for Job Family Promotions changed?**

No, the deadline is April 15, 2020 to Human Resources. These are aligned with budget cycle planning and decisions.

**7. Do we pay Z-jobs and other additional compensation per the agreement that we made with those individuals?**

During the current alternate operations model period (ending May 9), and consistent with the university's commitment to pay all employees through this period, the following types of earnings will be included in the calculation of employee payroll:

1. Regular Rate of Pay associated with the employee's primary assignment.

2. Applicable differential premiums (such as shift differential, call-back pay, on-call premium. etc.) as appropriate and assigned to the primary assignment and consistent with the expectations of the supervisor.
3. Out-of-Class Pay for Interim or Acting assignments reflecting the execution and/or performance of additional higher-level functions or responsibilities being temporarily assigned to the employee, and being carried out independent of or integrated with the employee's primary assignment.
4. Z-job pay will not be included unless the employee executes the agreed-upon work commitments.
5. Overtime premium pay will be paid to employees who are in positions designated as FLSA nonexempt for all actual hours worked over forty hours during the designated workweek.

## Employment

### **1. Is the 1,450 hours for TES allowed to be waived during this period?**

No, we will continue to monitor the hours as normal. All hours paid are taken into account for ACA eligibility so monitoring and adherence to the hours will be followed.

### **2. Is there a modified template letter for providing offers now without an actual start date?**

There is a template letter that has been provided in the PeopleAdmin7 applicant tracking system for your use. Feel free to edit the document as appropriate.

### **3. I have two TES workers who were on their one-month "break" for part of the measurement period. I informed them that if they return to work after the break, they will be paid either the hours worked or the average, whichever is higher. Please confirm this is correct.**

First, they will be paid for any actual hours that they have clocked from performing work. If there are days that they are not working – due to the remote operations model – and their average hours are going to be skewed because of the month off – then I would recommend that the department input the hours – to fill in the non-working gaps – based on the hours that they anticipated that they would be working.

### **4. Can I continue to post non-faculty positions in the applicant tracking system?**

Posting positions are still permitted at this time.

### **5. Can I continue the interview and selection process for non-faculty hiring?**

Candidate interviews and search committee meetings may continue to meet following the social distancing guidelines through meeting remotely. However, please ensure that the hiring process is as equitable as possible -- taking into consideration consistent methods of interviewing with all candidates.

### **6. Can I continue to hire employees that already have accepted offers?**

If a department has already committed to a start date with a candidate (notices given, etc.), then the candidate may begin work on the pre-established start date.

### **7. Does Auburn University have a hiring freeze?**

All hiring (establishing hire dates, etc.) should be curtailed unless deemed "mission critical". Approval to move forward with establishing start dates, inside the alternate operations timeframe, must come from vice presidents and above (Provost level).

### **8. What is the University's stance on completion of background checks that can't be finalized due to a court delay related to COVID-19 closure or modified operation?**

To proceed with the approved hire, as it is today, ensure that the contingency language of "employment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the background check" is in the offer letter. It should be understood by the department and the candidate that if something adverse is reported and confirmed to be accurate (if a disqualifying conviction) once the courts re-open, the University reserves the right to terminate the employment.

## Faculty HR Actions

### **1. Can PROV200 hires continue to be processed for summer and fall?**

Yes, PROV200 processes will continue; the forms must be routed to Kerry Ransel and Lavelle Bledsoe electronically for approval signatures.

**2. Is the Provost considering new recruitments for positions for staff, A/P and faculty during the alternate operations model?**

The Provost will review all requests. Please continue to submit requests for consideration.

**3. Are there any changes in the deadlines for faculty annual reviews?**

No, there are not any changes to the previously established deadlines. Reviews are to be conducted with faculty members by April 30. These reviews may occur via Zoom or other electronic means. The deadline for review submissions is June 1.

## General Questions

**1. Should we suspend any retirement parties/receptions for retirees during the alternate operations model?**

These discussions should occur with appropriate leadership of the respective areas. However, in keeping with social distancing guidelines and numbers of individuals gathered, it is recommended that these gatherings not take place (postpone) at this time. Furthermore, it is important to recognize this milestone in an employee's life. Explore ways to recognize employees while practicing social distancing.

**2. Is there a posting requirement for the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA)?**

Yes, there is a posting requirement for English and Spanish versions. AU Human Resources emailed the links on April 1.

**3. What type of documentation can I provide to my employees for COVID-19 travel authority for purposes of the approval to travel to work?** A template letter with LTG Burgess signature on President's Office letterhead was provided to HRLs for use on 4/5/2020.

**4. Are Co-op students expected to return to campus effective May 11 as planned?**

The May 11 start date is still valid for the summer semester. Most of the co-op students employed by Auburn are in IT roles and have been able to work remotely. We assume they will continue working remotely into the beginning of the summer term if the shelter in place order happens to be extended. Otherwise, co-op students employed by Auburn should follow the guidance of their particular departments.

**5. Is hiring for Graduate Assistant continuing for summer and fall as planned?**

There are no changes to date on the schedule for hiring grad assistants.

## HR Development

**1. Has the deadline for annual review completions changed?**

No decision has been made on this at this time. More information will be forthcoming.

**2. During the alternate operations model, can I take HRD courses and other online offerings? If so, is there a location that provides me a list and description of all online offerings?**

Yes. Additional information is [available online](#).

**3. Are we having in-person new employee orientation sessions? If not, are the new employees receiving any information through video (or other electronic methods) of pertinent information?**

Until normal operations resume, HR Development will not be hosting in-person new employee orientation sessions. However, the departments should continue to process new hires as they have in the past; A&P and Staff through HR Employment and Faculty and Contract requests through [orientation@auburn.edu](mailto:orientation@auburn.edu). Once the new hire is active in Banner, HRD will send a welcome letter with instructions for online benefits enrollment. The letter contains pertinent enrollment information and contact information for HR Benefits should there be questions. There will be a follow up email several days later with instructions for signing and submitting the Handbook Acknowledgement Form.

## Payroll

### **1. Are we supposed to keep a record of who takes what time even if it is not recorded in Kronos? My boss wants to know where the “sick and vacation” time is going to be charged to, i.e. what FOAP?**

You do not need to keep a record of any time off. Just make sure that hourly employees are clocking in and out for any time actually worked. The time won't show up as leave. It will be an “emergency closure” earnings code, and it will just be charged to whatever FOAP your regular job is set up with.

### **2. Will the timekeeper input the time, or will HR make sure everyone has a full pay for the pay period?**

If the employee is unable to sign out, please communicate with the timekeeper in your unit, as they have received guidance on how to handle time reporting during this period. Depending on the employee's position, their time with either be automatically populated in Kronos, or the timekeeper has received guidance on how much time should be entered in Kronos.

### **3. I have a concern regarding the pay periods that are being used to average our weekly hours. I took my four weeks of leave during that time (before the email was sent that it was no longer required). My first day back at work was Monday, Jan. 13, 2020. Therefore I have no hours recorded for the previous week which will hurt my overall average hours worked in a week. Because of the nature of my job, I will not have work to do as the month goes on and will need those compensated hours. Please let me know how we should proceed. I am just trying to budget for this unique situation we are all in.**

Please contact your timekeeper, who should be able to adjust your hours so your average does not include the “previous week”. They have guidance on how to do that.

### **4. I am a TES employee. How will overtime work -- i.e., will overtime be paid for hours clocked in for over 40 hours, or hours clocked in for, adding up to over 40 hours, when combined with previous pay periods' average hours of work?**

All TES employees who are working will continue to clock in using Kronos, whether working on campus or remotely, to ensure proper payment of overtime and any relevant differential pay (shift differential, lead pay, etc.). Should the employee work in excess of 40 hours in the designated work week, they will receive overtime premium pay at a rate of time and one-half for every hour worked over the 40 hours worked in the designated workweek.

### **5. Hi! I am a student employee at Auburn, and I was wondering if you could clarify the announcement that was emailed out. Will the hours we are paid over the next few weeks, which represent an average of pay periods 2-5, automatically be added to our paystub each pay period, or will they need to be added through Kronos as normal?**

The hours will be automatically populated. However, if you work, you will still need to clock as normal using Kronos.

### **6. I'm a timekeeper for HR139 and we employ a number of student workers. The Engineering Peer advisors (ST1393) are one type of student workers who did not start working regularly until Feb. 17. I have all of their weekly scheduled hours I could send. Would it be possible to pay them based on their scheduled hours instead of an average that would include weeks they weren't working?**

You should set up the pay as they are being paid for what they are scheduled to be working.

### **7. We have some full-time non-exempt staff who may have some incomplete clock-in and clock-outs. Is the expectation that the manager will clean up the holes in the 40 hours per week?**

They need to correct any missed punches. But if they just didn't work 40 hours, the timekeeper doesn't need to do anything. We are populating the rest with the emergency closure earn code to get them to 40 hours.

## Records

### **1. Based on the DHS guidance, do I have to see the I-9 documents in-person with the employee for new hire purposes?**

Since we are still open, we still have to meet with an employee to view the documents because the guidance of the deferral from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) only applies to “employers and workplaces that are operating remotely. In-person verification and document inspection exceptions are not applicable.”

**2. Are the deadlines still in effect for Section 1 and Section 2 completions?**

Yes, all deadlines remain the same; if you are late completing and I9 due to the alternative operations model, use the reason COVID-19 for the reason.

**3. If I am able to view documents remotely in cases where the hire is remote outside of Auburn, are there additional requirements of documentation that the verifier must complete?**

Copies of the documents must be maintained. Make arrangements for receipt of those documents through electronic means.

**4. Are there additional requirements associated with documentation on situations where I do have an employee will be working outside of Auburn and I was able to view documents remotely?**

Yes, the guidance states that once normal operations resume, the employee who had his documents verified through the acceptable remote methods must report in-person to present the original documents to the verifier.

**5. Will records continue to enter new hire records and/or apply electronic personnel actions (ePAFs) into Banner during the alternate operations model?**

Records will continue to function as they always have.

**6. Can new employees who are foreign nationals apply for Social Security cards?**

At the time SSA offices are closed to the public and are offering some services on-line. However, in this instance they suggest that you can mail an application with the original documents (no copies or notarized permitted) and they will process at some point. Our contact has indicated that these are not a priority.