

## UVU COVID-19 Furlough FAQs 2020

### What is a furlough?

A furlough is a temporary separation from work with the expectation that the employee will return to work at the conclusion of the furlough period. Employees are not paid during a furlough, which is treated as a temporary, unpaid leave of absence. A furlough means that the employee ceases work for the university, does not conduct any business for the university, and does not receive pay.

### Why would UVU furlough an employee?

Due to the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus), Utah Valley University continues to operate under modified conditions requiring the temporary closure of certain programs, services, and facilities. These temporary closures have created a lack of work for a number of employees. Further, the economic impact of COVID-19 is creating budgetary constraints for UVU. This combination of operational and economic pressures requires UVU leadership to make some difficult personnel decisions. A furlough occurs through no fault of the employee.

### How long will the furlough last?

Furloughs resulting from the impact of COVID-19 are expected to last until temporary closure of the UVU program, service, or facility in which you work ends. UVU will notify you as the program, service, or facility in which you work is planned for reopening and when you should return to work. At the conclusion of this furlough, UVU expects that you will return to work.

### How will I know that I have been furloughed?

You will be contacted directly by your executive leader and/or supervisor. You will be provided with the date on which the furlough will begin, and you are expected to continue to work until that date. A letter confirming the furlough will be emailed to the personal email address you provide.

### Will I be eligible for unemployment?

While you are on furlough, you may qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. Please review the information available through the [Utah Department of Workforce Services](#). Information about unemployment during COVID-19 can be found [here](#), and you can find information about filing an unemployment claim at [this link](#). The letter emailed to you will provide some of the information you will need to submit an unemployment claim.

### What about my health and dental insurance?

If you are a full-time, benefits-eligible employee enrolled in one of UVU's medical and/or dental benefit plans, your coverage (including covered family members) will continue during the furlough period. UVU will pay the full cost of medical and/or dental premium — both the employer and employee premium share during the furlough period.

### **Can I change my health insurance?**

Unfortunately, no. Being furloughed (which is an unpaid leave) is not a qualifying life event, since there is no loss of eligibility for healthcare benefits. However, you may be eligible to make a change if your spouse or dependent child has a qualifying life event. Visit [this link](#) for more information, or contact Human Resources if you need assistance.

### **What about my other benefits?**

If you choose to continue your vision coverage, FSA contribution, HSA contribution, DCFS contribution, or other supplemental insurances, you will be responsible for continuing the premium payment. Please work with the UVU Benefits Office, who will provide you with a monthly invoice so that you can pay UVU to make these contributions on your behalf.

### **Can I use my accrued vacation, personal, or sick time during the furlough?**

No. A furlough is an unpaid leave.

### **Can I use my accrued leave time after I return?**

Yes. The vacation and personal time you have accrued can be used following your return, subject to supervisor approval.

### **What about my retirement contribution?**

Since retirement contributions are based on the payment of wages, contributions by the university will not be made.

### **Are there any mental health benefit resources available to help deal with the pressures of COVID-19 or my furlough?**

Benefit-eligible employees can access mental health services by reaching out to the Regence BlueCross BlueShield behavioral health providers via [regence.com](http://regence.com), as well as to UVU's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Reliant Behavioral Health at the following links:

[IBH Solutions](#) (Reliant Behavioral Health EAP)

[HR Benefits Service Center EAP](#)

A free emotional health relief hotline through Intermountain Healthcare is available to anyone feeling emotional distress due to COVID-19. This hotline is available to all Utahns seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The phone number is 833-442-2211. You can find more information via [this website](#).

### **I am currently signed up for summer and fall classes. What happens to my tuition remission benefit?**

You may still utilize your tuition remission (waiver) benefits during the furlough period. Feel free to contact HR if you have any questions about eligibility.

### **What happens to my email?**

Prior to the start of your furlough period, you should create an auto-reply message indicating that you are temporarily out of the office and provide the contact information for an individual who can provide additional assistance during your absence. Your email will remain active during the furlough. You should not delete any UVU-related email during your furlough, and you should not use UVU's email for personal use.

### **I have equipment and keys that belong to UVU. Do I need to return them?**

Please work with your supervisor to return any laptops or electronic equipment and any files, records, or documents. Your supervisor will also determine if you should retain any keys or proximity access during the furlough period.

### **What about personal items that I need in my office or work area?**

Since time is available prior to the beginning of the furlough, there should be time to collect personal items from your work area. Please work with your supervisor to establish a time when you can safely come to campus prior to the furlough commencing. If something comes up during your furlough where you find you have forgotten something, please contact your supervisor.

### **Should I look for another job during the furlough time period?**

At the conclusion of the furlough, UVU expects that you will return to work. However, you may choose to seek other employment. That is up to you. If you accept other employment and do not intend to return to UVU at the conclusion of the furlough, you must notify Human Resources.

### **Upon my return to work, will my wages be the same? Will I be eligible for future raises, if applicable?**

Your pay will be the same when you return as when your furlough began. If compensation changes are implemented at the university, the changes will also apply when you return.

### **How can I access food resources if needed?**

The UVU Food Pantry has temporarily suspended our services to reduce strain on community food bank resources. To find community food resources closest to you, please visit [bit.ly/UVUFOOD](https://bit.ly/UVUFOOD). As soon as we are able to resume our services, we will update the [UVU Food Pantry website](#).

If you have children, all area school districts have been authorized to offer free grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches for all children ages 0–18. For a list of locations, please contact your child's school district.

## Are there community resources available to students who are facing food or housing insecurity?

Yes. Please visit [Student Care Website](#) to access community resources or dial 211 to access the United Way of Utah County or visit the [United Way Website](#) to help support food or housing insecurity.

## For Students – What if I can't pay a bill or have an urgent, unexpected expense?

If you have a specific expense that threatens your housing, health, or safety, you can apply for the expense to be covered by the UVU emergency fund. These funds are usually given in amounts ranging from \$50-\$500. You are only eligible for this funding if you have already accepted all grants and/or scholarships available to you. Fill out the [emergency fund application](#) to submit your request.

You may also be interested in working with UVU's [Money Management Resource Center](#), which can help with managing money. Virtual appointments are now available.

## How do I access Financial Aid?

- Schedule a phone appointment: [Financial Aid Website](#)
- Email: [faresponse@uvu.edu](mailto:faresponse@uvu.edu)
- Live chat: [Financial Aid Website](#)

## How can I access the CARES Act funding as a student?

Visit the [Financial Aid website](#) for more information.

## What resources are available at Student Health Services?

The following resources are available:

- [Medical services](#)
- [Mental health services](#)
- [Psychiatric services](#)
- [Crisis services](#)

If you are in crisis, please access the [SafeUT app](#), which will connect you to licensed counselors who are ready to respond 24/7 at no cost. You can text, call, or submit a tip anonymously.

Here are additional resources:

- [Tips for coping with COVID-19 anxiety](#)
- [Managing stress and worries](#)
- [Mental health and coping during COVID-19 \(CDC\)](#)