

JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
Manual of Policies and Procedures

POLICY NO.: I:02:19.1

DATE: 05/14/2020

REVIEW/REVISION DATES: 05/14/2020, 01/1/2021

SUBJECT: Temporary Policy on Pay and Leave Time Related to COVID-19

APPROVED: Dr. Don C. Killingsworth, Jr., President

PURPOSE

This temporary policy provides short-term compensation guidance for those employees whose ability to work has been compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

This policy applies to all full-time staff and faculty employees.

POLICY

To protect the campus community against the spread of COVID-19, the University has voluntarily established a new paid leave benefit for full time employees, effective **Jan. 1, 2021**. The new 2021 COVID Leave benefit replaces the Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family Medical Leave previously provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act which expired on Dec. 31, 2020. The temporary 2021 COVID Leave benefit is available to all full-time employees employed by the University as of January 4, 2021.

2021 COVID Leave provides qualifying employees up to 48 hours of paid leave. If all 2021 COVID Leave hours are exhausted, then employees will be required to use their own accrued leave for additional absences. Employees in this situation may use comp time, sick leave, and/or annual leave. If an employee exhausts all available leave, the University, in its sole discretion, may consider additional options such as deficit sick leave, borrowing from the sick leave pool, and/or unpaid leave.

Some employees who are experiencing less severe symptoms with COVID-19, who are in quarantine, or who are experiencing other COVID-related issues may seek approval to work remotely instead of using 2021 COVID Leave. For the remote work option to be approved, the employee's situation must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor, divisional vice-president, and the president. Remote work is generally not available for non-exempt employees. HR's guidance regarding remote work related to COVID-19 can be found at: <http://www.jsu.edu/hr/management-and-administration/index.html>.

Frequently Asked Questions

To cover gaps created by the lapse of federally mandated paid leave and to protect the campus community against spread, JSU has voluntarily established a new paid leave, effective January 1, 2021, for full-time employees. The following FAQs cover basic information, but please email the Department of HR at benefits@jsu.edu if additional details are needed.

1. Did Congress extend the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)?

No, the FFCRA expired Dec. 31, and federally mandated paid leave benefits, including Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) and Expanded Family Medical Leave (EFML), were not extended into 2021.

2. Will JSU provide paid COVID-related leave benefits for full-time employees now that the FFCRA expired?

Yes, JSU has voluntarily established new 2021 COVID Leave, effective Jan. 1, 2021.

3. Who is eligible to receive 2021 COVID Leave?

All full-time faculty and staff who were on payroll as of January 4, 2021 are eligible for 2021 COVID Leave. To receive the leave, the employee must have a qualifying reason and must not be approved for remote work. Part-time employees will not be eligible.

4. What are the qualifying reasons for leave related to COVID-19?

1. Employee is diagnosed COVID-19 positive and is subject to an isolation order.
2. Employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis and/or COVID-19 testing for confirmation via the RMC/JSU Health Center.
3. Employee is in “close contact” with an infected individual and is subject to a quarantine order.
4. Employee has been instructed by a COVID-19 Taskforce member to isolate or quarantine for any other reason not referenced above.
5. Employee is caring for a child(ren) under 18 years old whose physical school building or place of care has been closed, or the childcare provider of child(ren) is unavailable, due to COVID–19 precautions, and the employee has been unable to secure alternative arrangements.

HR may require the employee to submit documentation showing that a qualifying reason has been established.

5. What is the definition of “close contact” for Reason #3 listed above?

Per CDC guidelines, “close contact” is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes, starting from 2 days before illness onset in those persons with symptoms or 2 days prior to positive specimen collection in those persons who are asymptomatic, until the time the patient is isolated.

6. Does “quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19” have a defined meaning?

Yes. Quarantine or isolation orders include a broad range of governmental orders, including orders that advise some or all citizens to shelter in place, stay at home, quarantine, or otherwise restrict their own mobility. An employee who is on 2021 COVID Leave for quarantine or isolation reasons may be subject to disciplinary action if the employee fails to comply with quarantine or isolation protocols.

7. Are employees required to contact the COVID-19 Taskforce before requesting 2021 COVID Leave?

It depends on why the employee is requesting 2021 COVID Leave. An employee must Self Report as soon as possible if the employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or the employee’s supervisor can email covidquestions@jsu.edu if the employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, and/or has been in close contact with an infected individual. The COVID Taskforce can provide guidance.

For childcare-related leave issues due to impact of COVID, employees and supervisors should contact HR, not the COVID-19 Taskforce.

8. How many total hours of 2021 COVID Leave are potentially available to qualifying, eligible employees?

48 hours

9. Do employees have to use any other accrued leave time before they can use 2021 COVID Leave?

No. Employees are not required to use other available paid leave first before using 2021 COVID Leave hours. However, when 2021 COVID Leave is exhausted, to be paid, employees must use other available leave.

10. Can 2021 COVID Leave be taken on a continuous or intermittent basis?

It depends on why the employee is taking paid leave. Eligible employees may report 2021 COVID Leave in the following increments for usage, depending on purpose:

- Unless approved for remote work, for any leave reason related to an employee's COVID illness or exposure, an employee may only request continuous leave to be reported in full-day increments.
- For a leave reason related to childcare needs, an employee may request continuous leave in full-day increments OR may request intermittent leave.

11. Are employees required to communicate with the University to continue to receive 2021 COVID Leave?

Yes. After the first workday (or portion thereof) that an employee receives 2021 COVID Leave, the University may require the employee to follow reasonable notice procedures to continue receiving such paid leave. The 2021 COVID leave ends with the first scheduled shift immediately following the termination of the need for leave for any of the reasons set forth above.

12. When does 2021 COVID Leave end?

The Leave ends with the first scheduled shift immediately following the termination of the need for leave for any of the reasons set forth above. If an employee does not exhaust all 48 hours, then the employee must reapply for 2021 COVID Leave each time another qualifying event related to COVID-19 is experienced.

The 2021 COVID Leave may be canceled or suspended at any time in the University's sole discretion, e.g., such as when vaccines are widely available and community spread ceases to be a major public health concern.

13. How can an employee apply for 2021 COVID Leave?

Employees who request 2021 COVID Leave should submit the [2021 COVID Leave Request Form](#). The employee's MYJSU username and password may be required to access the request form.

14. How long will it take to be approved for 2021 COVID Leave?

The form is routed through the employee's leadership, concluding with a review by the HR Benefits Manager, who will determine eligibility and respond to all requests via email in approximately five business days. If approved, an employee's leave request will be retroactive back to the requested start date on the form.

15. Does JSU have specific documentation requirements for employees to request 2021 COVID Leave?

No. To provide a more predictable and consistent leave benefit after the FFCRA regulation expired on Dec. 31, 2020, JSU only requires an employee to complete the 2021 COVID Leave Request Form. The request form contains detailed, required answers to questions related to the reason for leave. Human Resources may, however, request additional supporting documentation from an employee on a case-by-case basis.

16. Are new leave codes and earnings codes available in the Banner systems?

Yes, Payroll is currently working with IT to setup a new leave code (2021 COVID Leave) and leave bank (CV21) in Banner and TimeClock Plus. Questions about coding timesheets should be directed to benefits@jsu.edu. Once all new codes and banks are setup, non-exempt, biweekly paid employees will report hours used under the new 2021 COVID Leave codes in Self-Service Banner, and exempt, monthly paid employees will report hours on the monthly leave report in Self-Service Banner.

PROCEDURES

Employees must request leave through the 2021 COVID Leave Request Form.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for this policy.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed at the of the Spring 2021 semester.