

Applies to: Faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student-employees*

Policy

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The university recognizes the need to prepare for unexpected catastrophic events such as natural or human made disasters or the outbreak of pandemic illnesses, as well as the need to return the university as quickly as possible to its normal operations should such events occur. Our preparation, response, and recovery will be informed by local, state, and federal agencies and experts. To prepare and support leaders, managers, and employees, this policy provides information related to human resource practices in the event of a University State of Emergency¹. All university community members should familiarize themselves with their department and college/VP unit plans, as well as the University Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

***Health System** employees are not covered by this policy. Health System includes employees of University Hospitals, University Hospital East, James Cancer Hospital, Ross Heart Hospital, OSU Harding Hospital, OSU Primary Care Network, and shared services. Health System employees should contact their human resource department for further information.

***College of Medicine** employees are covered under this policy.

POLICY GUIDELINES

I. Definitions

Employee – Employee refers to faculty, staff, and student-employees. For purposes of this policy, graduate associates are also included in this category.

Essential employee – One who has been designated as critical to the operation of the unit, whose presence is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition, and whose absence from duty could endanger the safety and well-being of the campus population and/or physical plant. Employees may be designated as essential on a situational basis, e.g., in the event of a snow emergency only, or in the event of a public health crisis. Essential employees must be notified in writing of their status as essential on an annual basis. Designations can be changed at any time depending on need.

Alternate employee – One who has been designated to serve as a back up to an essential employee. Alternate employees must be notified in writing of their status as alternate on an annual basis. Designations can be changed at any time depending on need.

Standby employee – Any employee not designated as essential or alternate. Standby employees must be notified in writing of their status as standby on an annual basis. Designations can be changed at any time depending on need.

Overtime compensation – Overtime pay or compensatory time off provided to nonexempt staff that are required by unit management to be in an active pay status for more than 40 hours in a work week.

¹ [Policy 6.15](#) Emergency Closing addresses closures of less than five days due to severe weather such as snow days, or partial or full day closures due to utility failure or other critical reasons. An emergency closing has neither the catastrophic effect nor the duration and impact on the university community as a University State of Emergency. Emergency closings and University States of Emergency are clearly identified as such when they are declared.

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Regular base pay – For nonexempt employees it is the hourly rate of pay for hours worked and/or in an active pay status. For exempt employees it is the normal rate of pay for hours worked and/or in an active pay status.

Report for work – Refers to time spent engaging in approved university work activities from any approved location.

Student-employee – Nonexempt graduate and professional students, and all undergraduate students, who work for the university. Graduate associates are not included as student-employees in this policy.

University State of Emergency – A University State of Emergency is in effect when the university president acts to declare such a state under the guidelines set forth in the university's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The University State of Emergency may be Columbus or regional campus specific, restricted to particular areas of any campus, or may be campus or university-wide, depending on circumstances at the time.

II. When This Policy is in Effect

This policy will become active and remain in effect when a University State of Emergency is declared, as defined in this policy. If a University State of Emergency is not declared, regular university policies remain in effect.

III. Guiding Principles

- A. The university will make every effort to communicate broadly and repetitively throughout any University State of Emergency.
- B. College/VP units need to ensure that business continuity plans are up-to-date and communicated on a regular basis.
- C. Departments should be as flexible as possible to enable all faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student-employees to work, including facilitating working from home and other remote locations; allowing full-time employees to work part-time; using flexible work schedules; and other appropriate solutions.
- D. Unless directed otherwise, individuals who are able to work should report for work and support the department or university in whatever capacity is needed. Faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student-employees can be required to work outside their usual classifications.
- E. In the event of a pandemic, to minimize the spread of the disease, employees may be directed not to report to the workplace. If so directed, employees must not report to the workplace.

IV. Essential, Alternate, and Standby Positions

Positions not designated as essential or alternate to essential positions are considered to be standby during a University State of Emergency. Depending upon the type of emergency or disaster, position designations may change during the emergency. Any position may be designated as essential at any point during a University State of Emergency, even if not designated essential or alternate to an essential position prior to the University State of Emergency.

Designations of essential and alternate to essential positions must be made by director or chair level appointments, or their designees, or higher.

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A. Essential Positions.

Departments must communicate designations to employees, as specified by the university's avian flu planning process.

Essential employees are expected to report for work during a University State of Emergency unless specifically directed by their department not to report, or if directed by civil emergency or medical authorities not to report for health and safety reasons.

B. Alternate Positions.

Employees in positions designated as alternate to essential positions whose designations are changed to essential during a University State of Emergency must report for work upon notification of their changed designation. Alternate employees must contact their departments for instructions during a University State of Emergency.

C. Standby Positions.

Employees in standby positions should not report to campus during a University State of Emergency. Faculty and staff who can work from home or another location may do so only with prior approval from the department.

Individuals in positions not designated as essential may expect their department to attempt to contact them, and should attempt to contact their department during a University State of Emergency, according to the department's usual call-in procedures.

Departments will determine if there is meaningful work for particular employees to do, what are acceptable alternative work arrangements, and must give prior approval to those who wish to work from home or another location during a University State of Emergency. To the extent possible, such arrangements should be agreed upon in advance of any University State of Emergency.

Any position may be designated as essential at any point during a University State of Emergency, even if not designated essential or alternate to an essential position prior to the University State of Emergency.

D. Employees and departments must follow the directions in the matrix below. Departments and individuals must remember that communication during a University State of Emergency will be challenging. Departments need to be reasonable and flexible in responding to employee requests and employees must make their best effort to comply with this policy.

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Position Designation	What To Do	Compensation And Leave Time
Essential (able to work; any location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department to ensure where to work (campus location, home, other designated location) • Report for work as directed by the department • If contact with the department cannot be made, report for work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will receive regular base pay and overtime compensation as applicable
Essential (not able to work at any location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department to communicate specific reasons for inability to work and seek approval for absence (see FAQ) • Do not need to report to work if specifically directed not to report by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Department ○ Civil emergency or medical authorities for health and safety reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not receive regular base pay • May be granted paid or unpaid leave at the discretion of their department provided that established departmental call-off rules and procedures are followed and consistent with Human Resources Policies
Alternate (to essential position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department to inquire as to whether you are needed and if so, where to report for work (campus location, home, other designated location) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If designated as essential, see essential employee information • If not designated as essential, see standby employee information
Standby (able to work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department to determine if you are needed to work • If you cannot make contact with your department, do not come to work • Work from home or another location if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pre-approved prior to the University State of Emergency, or ○ upon approval during the University State of Emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If pre-approved to work by the department, will be paid according to usual practice for time worked • If not pre-approved to work by the department, or if approved to work fewer than regularly scheduled hours, will be granted paid or unpaid leave consistent with Human Resources Policies • If working outside of classification will receive regular base pay for original appointment unless other arrangements are approved by the Office of Human Resources
Standby (able to work but not approved by department to work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department to determine if you are needed to work • Complete application process for use of paid leave time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not receive regular base pay • May be granted sick leave, vacation leave, compensatory time, or unpaid leave consistent with Human Resources Policies
Standby (not able to work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact department to communicate your status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not receive regular base pay • May be granted sick leave, vacation leave, compensatory time, or unpaid leave consistent with Human Resources Policies

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V. Approval of Designation of Essential, Alternate, and Standby Position Designations

- A. Each college, vice president, and vice provost unit must submit their lists of essential, alternate, and standby personnel for approval in advance of a University State of Emergency.
- B. Lists of essential, alternate, and standby designations will be approved by a three member panel made of up of the university emergency and disaster preparedness coordinator, a representative from the Office of Human Resources, and a representative from the Office of Academic Affairs.
- C. Such lists are to be submitted to the Office of Human Resources for re-approval whenever changes are made.

VI. Paid and Unpaid Leave During A University State of Emergency

- A. Faculty and staff may request approval for use of sick leave, vacation leave, or compensatory time, consistent with the Paid Leave Programs and the Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation policies.
- B. When paid leave options have been exhausted, faculty and staff may apply to use unpaid leave, consistent with the Unpaid Leave Policy.

VII. Other Human Resource Issues During A University State of Emergency

- A. Employees may be mandated to work based upon unit and/or university needs.
- B. Working Outside of Classification and Home College/VP Unit.

Employees may be required to work outside of classification as deemed necessary by the department or university. This includes employees with the necessary skills that are needed to work outside their colleges/VP units. In these cases, the university will notify these employees that they are designated as essential and when and where they must report for work. The college/VP unit for which the work is performed is responsible for funding and assuring compensation for this work. Compensation will be at the individual's regular base pay for their original appointment unless other arrangements are approved by the Office of Human Resources.

- C. Grant-Funded Employees.

Employees funded by external grants must be paid according to the specific requirements and limitations of the grant. Employing units and principal investigators are encouraged to work with funding agencies to determine how grant-funded employees will be paid in advance of any University State of Emergency.

- D. Bargaining Unit Staff.

Staff represented by unions will be compensated in accordance with the terms of their collective bargaining agreements for time worked and may be required to work out of classification as deemed necessary by the department or university.

- E. Graduate Associates and Student-Employees.

Graduate associates and student-employees should make reasonable efforts to contact their departments during a University State of Emergency, and are to report for work as needed. Student-employees are not eligible for paid leave and will be paid only for hours worked. Graduate associates may request approval for leave consistent with the Graduate School's leave policy for graduate associates.

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F. Compensatory Time Off.

The university reserves the right to award compensatory time off in lieu of overtime to eligible staff during a University State of Emergency.

G. Probationary Periods.

Probationary periods are extended for the duration of the University State of Emergency, or up to 60 work days, whichever is less.

H. Recruitment and Selection.

The Office of Human Resources may implement expedited recruitment and selection processes during a University State of Emergency as needed.

I. Timekeeping.

Employees must submit timekeeping records as directed by the department.

PROCEDURE

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I. President, Provost, and Vice President Shared Responsibilities

- A. Declare a University State of Emergency as appropriate.
- B. Consult and collaborate with government and emergency relief agencies.
- C. Communicate regularly and repetitively to the campus and neighboring communities.
- D. Communicate changes to standard processes and procedures.
- E. Ensure that disaster planning and preparedness is a priority within the university community, and that departments are prepared to implement their disaster plans and this policy.
- F. Ensure, to the extent possible, that departments have the resources needed to carry out essential functions.

II. Office of Human Resources Responsibilities

- A. Provide guidelines and consultation on human resource issues such as compensation, flexible scheduling, benefits, job sharing, etc.
- B. Provide an emergency employee placement service to match up employees willing and able to work with units that have a particular need for their skills.
- C. Communicate changes to standard processes and procedures.
- D. Coordinate the approval process for essential, alternate, and standby position designations.

III. College/VP Unit Responsibilities

- A. Maintain confidentiality of emergency contact information to the extent allowed by law.
- B. Provide workforce with regular, repetitive information regarding the emergency, continued business operations, and the status of the college/VP unit and its departments.

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- C. Facilitate advance planning for emergencies; communicate such plans to employees and students.
- D. Ensure that employees are trained and well informed regarding emergency procedures.
- E. Communicate business continuity plans.

IV. Department Responsibilities

- A. Determine essential, alternate, and standby designations. Discuss designations with impacted employees and communicate to employees annually.
- B. Encourage supervisors and their employees to define, document, and keep up to date a list of meaningful work in preparation for a University State of Emergency for each employee.
- C. Provide timekeeping guidelines in the department's business continuity plans.
- D. Communicate business continuity plans.
- E. Maintain confidentiality of emergency contact information to the extent allowed by law.
- F. Provide employees, supervisors and leaders with regular, repetitive updates using a variety of communication mechanisms.
- G. Plan for and provide flexible work arrangements in response to a variety of disturbances and individual needs.
- H. Communicate your work expectations to faculty, staff, graduate associates, and student-employees regularly and repetitively.
- I. Provide timekeeping instructions to employees.
- J. Facilitate employing unit support networks to the extent possible and as appropriate (e.g. care for property, family, or pets; sharing rides; sharing jobs; etc.).
- K. Refer employees to the University Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (UFSAP) or other support resources as needed and appropriate.
- L. Implement directives from university administrators and civil emergency or medical authorities.

V. Employee Responsibilities

- A. Provide department with current emergency contact information, and update it on an on-going basis.
- B. Discuss with your supervisor alternative work arrangements such as working from home or another location in case of a University State of Emergency.
- C. Seek approval from your supervisor of meaningful work you can perform during a University State of Emergency.
- D. Contact your department to determine need to report for work.
- E. If approved by the department, report for work when able and appropriate, whether on campus, at home, or at another location.
- F. If unable to report for work, update department of your condition or whereabouts as soon as possible.
- G. Communicate specific requests and needs to your department.

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RESOURCES

For consultation:

- Office of Human Resources, [Organization and Human Resource Consulting](#) 614-292-2800, ohrc@hr.osu.edu
- Medical Center Human Resources 614-293-4988

For forms:

- [Application for Leave](#) form
- [Medical Certification Statement for Leave](#) form
- [Sample FML Letters](#) (Word format)

For related policies:

- [Graduate School Handbook](#)
- Human Resource [Policy 6.10](#), Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation
- Human Resource [Policy 6.15](#), Emergency Closing
- Human Resource [Policy 6.27](#), Paid Leave Programs
- Human Resource [Policy 6.27A](#), Paid Leave Programs: Vacation Donation
- Human Resource [Policy 6.27B](#), Paid Leave Programs: Parental Leave
- Human Resource [Policy 6.45](#), Unpaid Leave Programs

For counseling and support:

- [University Faculty and Staff Assistance Program](#) (UFSAP) 614-292-4472
- [Counseling and Consultation Service](#) 614-292-5766
- [Office of Student Affairs](#) 614-292-9334

For more information:

- [Benefits Eligibility](#) by Appointment
- OSU Emergency Management and Fire Prevention 614-247-4276, emergencymanagement@dps.ohio-state.edu
- Policy 6.17 Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Policy 6.17 Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency [Work Life Guidance](#)
- University [Avian Flu](#) Web site
- U.S. Government [Avian and Pandemic Flu](#) Web site