

## Advice for staff who are currently on furlough leave (January 2021)

### Why and how our University is using furlough leave

Our University is using the government's [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#) or furlough leave for those staff who are unable to work from home, either because they can't do their job at home or because they have childcare responsibilities which make it difficult to balance work and caring commitments. Colleagues can be placed on furlough leave either full-time or part-time – the latter is sometimes referred to as 'flexible furlough'.

It's important to remember that if your role has been selected for furlough leave, it's in no way a reflection on you as a colleague or the value of what you contribute to our University. It doesn't mean that your role is redundant or that you're more likely to be made redundant in the future. The government has said the CJRS will continue until 30 April 2021. University colleagues placed on furlough leave will continue to be paid at 100% of their usual salary.

If after reading this guidance and FAQs you have further questions about furlough leave please contact your [HR Partner](#) who will be able to offer advice and support.

### Eligibility for furlough leave

HR Partners are asking managers to put forward roles which are eligible for furlough leave using these criteria:

1. Roles which are not primarily funded by the government
2. Roles where colleagues are unable to work because of the impact of coronavirus on the University's operations
3. Roles where colleagues cannot be redeployed elsewhere within the University OR
4. Where staff cannot carry out their role because of their caring responsibilities. If you believe this applies to you, you should read our [Guidance for staff with caring responsibilities](#) to see if temporary arrangements can be put into place to support you. When considering a request for either full-time or flexible furlough your line manager will have to take into account whether it will be possible to redistribute your work to colleagues whilst you are on furlough leave.

Everyone in an eligible role put forward for the CJRS will receive a letter emailed to their University account, or an alternative email address if provided, to let them know that they are on furlough leave until further notice.

### Selection for furlough leave

Your line manager will let you know that your role has been furloughed and why. You will receive a letter via email from HR Services advising you that you're on furlough leave, the effective period of furlough leave and outlining what this means for you.

This letter covers a range of information about what you can and can't do whilst on furlough leave, how long furlough leave will last and confirms that you will continue to be paid your usual salary in full. It's important that furloughed colleagues read this letter carefully.

Please remember that it's your role that has been selected, not you as an individual, and it's no reflection on you as a colleague or the value of the work that you normally do for the University. Different people will feel different things when they hear that they're on furlough leave. Some who may have been struggling with the demands of caring responsibilities and working may feel relief, whilst others may feel a sense of loss or lack of purpose during what is already a difficult time.

Whatever you feel, make sure that you speak with your manager at regular intervals so they can listen and advise you of the kind of support that is on offer. If your line manager is on furlough leave themselves you should speak with their manager instead.

### **Letting your colleagues know you're on furlough leave**

You will have agreed with your line manager who will let your colleagues know that you're on furlough leave. If you use email, it's a good idea to put on your out of office message so that people know you're not currently working. Here is some suggested wording:

*"Due to the coronavirus pandemic, I am now on furlough leave in line with the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Please re-send your email to [email address], otherwise, I will deal with this upon my return."*

If there is someone people should contact in your absence and they are happy for you to do so, you can include their contact details in your out of office reply.

### **University equipment**

You can continue to keep any University equipment you have with you at home whilst you are on furlough leave. If you have any University equipment which has been bought since 18 March 2020 specifically for you to use at home, but which you no longer require, your line manager may ask you to return this to be allocated to other colleagues.

### **Handing over your work**

Where roles are eligible for CJRS because there is no work which can be done, a hand over should not be needed. Where staff are on furlough leave on rotation or colleagues are on furlough due to caring responsibilities, a handover of work between colleagues will be required. You should agree with your line manager how this hand over will happen.

### **What you can do on furlough leave**

Staff on furlough leave because they are unable to carry out their role because of coronavirus and cannot be redeployed elsewhere within the University are permitted to carry out paid work elsewhere, however, you should bear in mind that the University may request that you return to work at any point during your furlough leave, giving you one week's notice to return. You should seek permission from your line manager before taking on paid employment elsewhere as required as part of your contract of employment. Staff who are on furlough leave because of caring responsibilities cannot carry out paid work elsewhere.

### **Volunteering**

Staff on furlough leave can carry out volunteering and the University has put together some [guidance](#) on this.

### **Learning and Development and Performance and Development Reviews (P&DR)**

You can carry out training and development whilst you're on furlough leave. Take a look at what's on offer from the University's Staff Learning and Development team as there are lots of online learning resources available with more being added all the time.

Performance and Development Reviews (P&DRs) will be taking place as usual as far as possible this year. If you're on furlough leave but your line manager isn't, they may ask you to take part in a P&DR conversation whilst you're on furlough leave. This conversation will be focused on your learning and development objectives as you can undertake learning and development activities whilst on furlough leave. You can access a wide range of free online resources at the University's Staff Learning and Development StaffNet site.

If your line manager is on furlough leave, they won't be able to offer you a P&DR until they return back to work.

Any P&DR conversations you do have whilst on furlough leave will not cover your performance or work objectives – instead these will be picked up in a further conversation when you return back to work. There is further guidance and FAQs for both reviewers and reviewees available on the Staff Learning and Development [P&DR site](#).

### **Keeping in touch**

You're encouraged to keep in contact with your line manager so have a conversation with them about how best and how often to do this. However you decide to keep in touch, both you and your manager need to be clear that you cannot undertake any work during this period. If your line manager is on furlough leave you should contact their line manager with any questions or concerns.

Keep an eye on your University email account as you'll continue to receive eUpdate on a Thursday which is a good round-up of the latest University news and includes Nancy's weekly message to staff, as well as updates specifically for furloughed colleagues giving you the information you might find useful to help stay connected.

You can access StaffNet where we've redesigned the homepage to give quick access to wellbeing support. You're actively encouraged to keep in touch with your colleagues and friends at work whether that's via email, phone, text, Yammer, WhatsApp or similar social platform – whatever works for you.

### **Sickness reporting**

If you are on full-time furlough you can no longer carry out any work for the University or any subsidiary companies and therefore the usual sickness reporting arrangements will not apply. If you are part-time furlough and are ill on days you would normally be working you should report your sickness absence in the usual way by informing your line manager.

However, your line manager will still wish to maintain contact with you to check on your wellbeing and make sure you know about the support on offer from the University should you not be well.

There's a range of [wellbeing](#) resources on StaffNet; there's access to a 24/7 [confidential helpline](#) and our University [Counselling Service](#) is available.

### **Coming back to work**

Your line manager will keep in touch with you during furlough leave and will let you know if you are required to return to work. They will give you at least one weeks' notice to return to work from furlough leave.