

CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Government created a new temporary '[Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)' with the aim of providing UK employers with support for paying the wages of staff in circumstances where work is otherwise unavailable. Further details are available on the [Government's Job Retention Scheme webpages](#).

Furloughed status is a result of work that is not required during the unique circumstances we currently face and is in no way an indicator of the continuing value of that work and the contribution made during normal University operations.

This page aims to provide further information in relation to common questions around the scheme.

1. How does the scheme work?

The Government scheme involves the University placing staff on 'furlough leave' due to no work being available, or as a result of it not being possible to deliver work from home during the crisis. Staff continue to be paid through the University Payroll. However, the University can claim through the HMRC for reimbursement of 80% of furloughed workers' wages, up to a cap of £2500/month. The University, however, has committed to maintaining normal pay for GCU paid staff who are furloughed.

2. Which roles can be furloughed?

Furloughed workers can be on any type of contract - (inc full-time, part-time, flexible hours).

Roles to be furloughed are being determined on an individual basis based on the type of role and the rules of the scheme. These revolve around the availability of normal duties/work and/or the extent to which work can be appropriately completed from home.

3. I am employed in a research role that has been impacted by the ongoing crisis, can/should I be furloughed?

The University is currently exploring how the Government's scheme (and the rules to be applied) may apply for those in research-related roles. The Government guidance continues to evolve and the University will continue to update its position as new information emerges, consulting with those involved as appropriate. It is important to note, if work can be carried out remotely and funding is continuing, then the scheme does not apply.

4. I am unable to work due to additional caring responsibilities arising from the coronavirus, should I be furloughed?

If you are unable to do any work at all due to caring responsibilities, you may be eligible to be furloughed. If your ability to work is reduced by caring responsibilities but not entirely prevented, you can agree a suitable reduced workload with your manager that enables you to continue to contribute to the work of your team while allowing you to focus on your personal responsibilities.

5. I am on a fixed-term contract that has ended or is due to end, can/should I be furloughed?

If your contract has ended or is due to end due to the work completing in line with the fixed term nature of the role, unfortunately the scheme rules would not allow the University to furlough staff in this category. The scheme is intended to support roles that are due to continue but are unable to be carried out as a result of the ongoing crisis.

6. I am engaged as a casual worker and my work has been impacted by the ongoing crisis, can/should I be furloughed?

The University is currently exploring how the Government's scheme (and the rules to be applied) may apply. The Government guidance continues to evolve and the University will continue to update its position as new information emerges, consulting with those involved as appropriate.

It is important to note, if work can be carried out remotely then the scheme does not apply.

7. Can anyone request to be furloughed?

Only staff who are undertaking no work at all are eligible for the furlough scheme. If you believe this applies to you but you have not been identified for potential furlough, you should discuss this with your line manager.

8. How will my pay be impacted while I am furloughed?

The University has committed to ensuring all staff receive their normal pay. Normal (take home pay) will be based on staff's current, regular salary. For staff whose monthly pay varies, this will be based on an average of pay over the previous year.

Staff on furlough leave will continue to receive their normal pay including pension contributions and access to any other benefits (e.g. childcare vouchers). Pay will be processed in the normal manner in line with normal salary pay dates.

9. How will my contract of employment be impacted while I am furloughed?

Your contract of employment will not be impacted while on furlough leave. You continue to accrue all normal benefits such as annual leave etc.

10. What happens if I don't want to be furloughed?

In order to qualify for furlough payment (at 100% of salary), the University requires individual consent to temporarily change to furlough status. Where there is no work available and no agreement to temporarily change to furlough status, the University will consider alternative options on a case-by-case basis appropriate to the circumstances.

11. How long could I be on furlough leave?

The Government's 'Job Retention Scheme' launched on a temporary basis from March 1, 2020, and is currently running until the end of October 2020. This date is subject to review.

The minimum furlough period is three consecutive weeks. However, many furlough durations will be influenced by Government advice regarding when and how the current restrictions may be lifted or eased. Those on furlough leave will receive further communication and notice ahead of any return to work.

12. How will my pension be impacted while I am furloughed?

Staff on furlough leave will continue to make employee contributions in the normal manner to their pension and the University will also continue to make employer contributions in the normal way.

13. Can I still do some work for the University while furloughed?

Furloughed staff cannot carry out any work for the University and to do so would be in breach of the scheme.

14. Can I work for another employer while on furlough leave from the University?

Staff who hold second/other roles with other organisations may continue to work for them as normal.

Staff considering taking up secondary employment, including voluntary work, while on furlough should be mindful of the short-term nature of furlough leave and the fact that the University may require them to return from furlough at relatively short notice. Normal permissions should be sought and discussed with line managers ahead of any other new employment being undertaken.

15. Can I carry out volunteering while on furlough leave?

Staff on furlough leave can carry out volunteering activity providing this activity does not provide any form of service to the University and that it is in line with Public Health Scotland advice.

16. What happens if I am sick while on furlough leave?

If you fall ill while on furlough leave there is no requirement to formally report sickness in the normal way (you cannot be on sick leave and furlough leave at the same time). You should, however, still notify your line manager that you are unwell for the purposes of maintaining communication and to discuss any possible support you may require, where appropriate. This will not, however, be treated as an absence and will not be recorded.

17. Can I undertake training/personal development while on furlough leave?

Staff on furlough leave can engage in training (and this is encouraged) providing that training does not provide a service to the University.

18. Do I still accrue annual leave while on furlough leave?

Staff on furlough leave continue to accrue annual leave as normal.

19. Can I take leave while furloughed?

Staff on furlough leave can take annual leave as normal and, in order to maintain equity and fairness with other colleagues not on furlough leave, should continue to take leave at times that it would otherwise have been taken.

20. If I am on furlough leave when a public holiday falls, can I take that day another time?

Staff who are on furlough leave when a public holiday falls on what would otherwise have been a normal working day will be allocated that public holiday at that time in the same way as applies to all other staff who remain at work (i.e. they will be unable to move it to a point later in the year). Part-time staff will continue to receive a pro-rata entitlement of annual leave to be deducted in line with normal leave rules.

21. I am on, or about to commence, a period of maternity/paternity/shared parental leave – how will this affect me?

The normal rules for these types of leave still apply. If you are already on leave, your manager may discuss with you the potential to be placed on furlough leave on your return. If you are furloughed but due to commence such leave, this will still happen in the normal way (e.g. at the point of childbirth or other pre-agreed date).

22. Will being furloughed impact my role on my return to work?

There will be no impact on career progression or future prospects for staff identified as furloughed.

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