



January 2021

COVID LEAVE POLICIES NOW EXPIRED

Effective December 31, 2020, Congress expired the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which provided paid leave for COVID specific absences (above and beyond our usual personal/sick leave). In response, University Human Resources has expired policies 5.11 Emergency Paid Sick Leave (COVID-19), and 6.14 Expanded FMLA Leave (COVID-19) in the Employee Handbook effective January 1. If you or one of your employees needs time off from work for COVID related reasons, please contact your HR Partner or the Office of AA/EEO to discuss options. The [COVID FAQs](#) on the University HR website have also been updated with new information.

POLICY UPDATES

Effective January 1, 2021:

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Description</u>
2.3.1 Terms & Conditions of Employment	Revised for clarification, but no change to current processes
2.3.5 Anniversary Date	New policy to add information, but no change to current processes
2.4.1 Regular Employee	Policy revision. Historically, USM has referred to part-time employees less than 20 hours as “temporary.” We have changed this to part-time (without benefits).
2.4.2 Temporary Employee	Per the revisions made in 2.4.1, we redefined temporary employment to working 3 months or less.
2.4.11 Volunteers	Revised for clarification, but no change to current processes
3.2.2 Working a Second Position	Revised for clarification, but no change to current processes
4.9 Employee Assistance Program	New policy to add information, but no change to current processes
4.10 Lactation/Breastfeeding Space	New policy to add information, but no change to current processes
5.4.7 Lactation/Breastfeeding Breaks	New policy to add information, but no change to current processes
5.11 Emergency Paid Sick Leave	Policy expired December 31, 2020 per the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)
6.2.3 Break in Service	Revised for clarification, but no changes to current processes
6.3.2 Break in Service	New policy to add information, but no change to current processes
6.14 Expanded FMLA	Policy expired December 31, 2020 per the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)
7.3 Sexual Misconduct	Revised to reflect new Title IX regulations
8.3 Pertinent University Policies	Revised to update the list of pertinent University policies

TRANSITIONING FROM 12-MO to 9-MO REMINDER

Faculty Administrators transitioning from a 12-month to 9-month position should be prepared to enter a “without pay” status during the transition time of July and August. Additionally, any personal leave accrued will be frozen and not available for use at any time unless resuming a 12-month position. For those enrolled in PERS, the unused leave will be credited to PERS when employment with USM ends. For those enrolled in ORP, personal leave has no value. If you would like more information about the transition and how your time may be impacted, please contact Kameron Dale, HR Director.

JOB CODE UPDATE

As we shared last month, University HR just completed a major job code overhaul in SoarHR which included creating all new job codes and updating every single benefit eligible staff member’s record. In order to keep our records up to date going forward, there will be very important requirements that everyone will have to follow. For instance,

- The business title of a position must exactly match on the job description, job posting, and PAF. If not, HR will not be able to process until resolved.
- Additionally, you will not be able to change someone’s title simply by submitting a PAF with the change- you will have to work with your HR Partner to update the job description and job code book before we can move forward.

We will work through all of that with you; we just wanted to alert you that the process will be a little more stringent moving forward so that we can ensure we are maintaining accurate records.

PI ASSESSMENTS ARE BACK!

We are very excited to share the PI assessment is back. Over 400 of us have already participated and reaped the benefits of gaining a better understanding of our drives and motivation as well as that of those around us. If you or your department is interested in learning more, please reach out to your HR Partner to discuss. In addition to offering a PI review for the entire team when it is first taken, we also now have PI 2.0 which is another level of teambuilding training for those who have already done the initial PI review. Contact your HR Partner if you are interested in either taking the PI or having training.

UPCOMING VIRTUAL TRAINING

Staff Hiring Toolkit: Tuesday, January 12th at 10am

Audience: Anyone involved in the hiring process

Progressive Discipline: Tuesday, January 19th at 10am

Audience: Anyone in a leadership role

Contact Karen Figueroa Karen.figueroa@usm.edu to RSVP and she will send you the TEAMS link.

CORNERSTONE UPDATES

As we begin the new calendar year in accordance with our Affirmative Action Plan please remember to close out all requisitions opened in 2020 that were either Hired and filled or Cancelled due to a failed search. Contact your HR Partner for questions or concerns about open requisitions.

2021 HEALTH INSURANCE REMINDERS

Remember that the health insurance premiums increased for 2021. The new premium was included on your December check.

Deductibles: The medical deductibles for Select Coverage will increase effective January 1, 2021. The in-network deductible will increase from \$1,000 to \$1,300 for individual coverage, and from \$2,000 to \$2,600 for family coverage. The out-of-network deductible will increase from \$2,000 to \$2,300 for individual coverage, and from \$4,000 to \$4,600 for family coverage. Please note that the deductibles for the Base Coverage will remain the same in 2021.

Coinsurance Maximums: Effective January 1, 2021, the coinsurance maximums are increasing by \$500. The Select Coverage individual coinsurance maximum will be \$3,000 for in-network and \$4,000 for out-of-network. There is no family coinsurance maximum for the Select Coverage. For the Base Coverage, the coinsurance maximum will be \$3,000 in-network and \$4,000 out-of-network for individual coverage, while the family coverage coinsurance maximums will increase to \$5,500 for in-network and \$7,500 for out-of-network. Out-of-pocket maximums will remain the same in 2021. Please see the new 2021 Plan Document for details on what applies toward the coinsurance and out-of-pocket maximums.

Pharmacy Benefit Manager: CVS Caremark was selected as the Plan's new Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) effective January 1, 2021. Please visit <https://knowyourbenefits.dfa.ms.gov/pharmacy-benefit-manager-transition/#/content/content/edit/12526> for additional information about the new PBM. Make sure to read the PBM Frequently Asked Questions.

Prescription Drug Coverage: Beginning January 1, 2021, if you buy a brand name drug when a generic version is available, you will be responsible for the appropriate brand drug copayment (rather than a generic drug copayment), plus the difference in the cost of the brand and generic drug. This change is designed to further incentivize the purchase of generics over brand drugs. Please note that the current prescription drug deductible and copayments will remain the same in 2021. As a reminder, participants with Select Coverage must first meet a \$75 prescription deductible before the pharmacy copayments are applied. Participants with Base Coverage must meet their \$1,800 deductible before prescription copayments are applied but may purchase certain preventive maintenance medications that are only subject to a \$75 preventive medications deductible.

If you have questions about these benefit changes, please feel free to contact Amy Hester, Benefits Manager, at amy.hester@usm.edu or ext. 6-4055.

2020 Brags-

What were the major HR achievements last year?

- Coronavirus response:
 - Converted many of our processes (like [PAFs](#)) to electronic almost overnight
 - Created a plan for remote work with all associated [forms and processes](#)
 - Created and continuously updated [communications](#)
 - When Congress created new leave of absence laws, we had to quickly create and implement new policies and all associated forms and letters, update SoarHR codes to be able to track the leaves, write FAQs, and develop an online application process
 - Served as a department partner for information and support
- Despite COVID, regular operations never stopped!
 - Processed almost 15,000 transactions in SoarHR (more than 2019)
 - Posted 750 openings in Cornerstone (more than 2019)
 - Presented approximately 80 training sessions on HR topics (on track with 2019)
 - Partnered with the Provost office to conduct Faculty Search Committee training
 - All [HR training](#) has either been recorded and made available on our website or we have offered them virtually.
 - Coordinated the effort to get [new leader orientation](#) available online
- Data clean-up: HR has been working on this project for years!
 - All staff positions have a current job description
 - Every staff business title (the actual title of the job) has been updated in SoarHR
 - Created all new job codes and updated every staff record to ensure all coding, such as EEO and SOC, are accurate for proper reporting
 - Created a job code reference book to ensure proper coding and accuracy in the system stays maintained
- Affirmative Action Plan (AAP)
 - Thanks to our data clean-up project, we produced an AAP with full confidence the data was valid and reliable
 - Conducted 20 training sessions on the AAP throughout the university on our legal obligations as well as our opportunities and barriers to improving diversity at USM
 - Completed our conciliation agreement from our OFCCP audit successfully
- Continued streamlining processes, for example:
 - GA hiring process- partnered with the Graduate School and Dean's offices to create a hiring checklist in Soar so that departments can review the status of the GAs in the hiring process. Prior, departments were unaware of where the GA was in the process, which caused many to start without being processed appropriately.
 - Termination outprocessing- Updated our termination [outprocessing](#) to eliminate the "walk of shame" requirement and instead now the department ensures final steps are taken. An email notification is now sent to all relevant parties to alert them of the termination. A [termination information sheet](#) was created to give to the terminating employee about benefits, final paychecks, and other pertinent exit information.

2021 HR Plans- What's on deck for next year?

- **Performance Management**

In 2019, University HR worked with staff and leaders to assess our performance management needs and to create a new program to replace our current performance evaluation process. The original goal was to roll that program out in 2020 but COVID interrupted our plans. In 2021, we will be able to pick that back up by piloting the new program with a few volunteer departments with the goal of a full rollout in 2022. (If you are not part of the pilot, continue as usual until the full rollout occurs in 2022; contact your HR Partner if you need assistance).

- **Diversity & Inclusion**

Our records update has given us valid and reliable data for our Affirmative Action Plan, so we now have a good understanding of where we have opportunities for improving the diversity of our workforce representation and where we have barriers. We will be working with University leadership to implement plans for improvement. We are also looking forward to partnering with the new diversity officer that is currently being recruited for the University.

- **Process Improvement**

We are continuously assessing our processes for improvement and efficiency. We are attempting to make as many forms and processes available online as possible. We are also close to converting new hire orientation to an online format. This year, we plan to implement the Onboarding feature in Cornerstone, which enables Cornerstone to directly transfer information into SoarHR thus reducing the need to duplicate keying. It is one step closer to a fully electronic process.

- **Still to Come**

As time has shown, University HR does a great job at jumping on opportunities for improvement as they present themselves. Many new policies, procedures and process improvements are made when problems, issues, suggestions, or feedback arises. We look forward to seeing what might be ahead!

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, please contact our main line at 6-4050 or your HR Partner for more information.

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