FAQs for leave time and staffing for COVID-19 – NEW 3/13/2020

Are we currently under emergency operations?

No. There are three different incident levels. We are currently under normal operations. Planning is under way for flexible operations related to online class delivery and postponement or cancellation of high-volume events. The three incident levels include:

1. Normal-Low severity: Operations continue. Minimal exposure. In this phase, employees may self-isolate if they feel that it is necessary or may call off or be sent home if exhibiting signs of illness. Employees will be required to utilize accrued leave time.

2. Moderate severity or exposure: Flexible operations. Emergency Sick Leave and Staffing Policy will be activated. Employees who call off must utilize accrued time unless the employee is notified that there is no work currently available. Employees who are informed that there is no work to be performed because of emergency conditions will be compensated by the university and will not be required to utilize paid time off.

3. High severity: Emergency Operations. Closures or reassignments. Employees will be asked to either work remotely or will be informed that there is no work currently available. Employees may be called in if work becomes available.

How will I know the status each day?

The emergency operations team is meeting at least daily to identify issues and update policies. Daily communication will be provided through various communication mediums. There is a comprehensive Coronavirus website that is constantly updated. HR policies can also be found on the HR website.

Leaders are creating emergency contact lists and communication trees so employees have access to each other remotely.

Which employees are considered essential personnel?

Essential personnel are employees whose duties are of such a nature as to require the employee to report to work, remain in the workplace or telework in an emergency situation. Essential employees are required to perform mission critical functions. This may include employees who formerly completed the essential tasks in a previous position or perform them in other departments and have the requisite skills to continue necessary operations.

- This definition is different than essential personnel designated for weather events.
- The essential personnel designation may change depending on the circumstances. For instance, if students are on campus, essential personnel would include Residential Life staff. However, they may not all be essential personnel if the residence halls are closed.
• The essential personnel designation may also change due to the illness of employees previously designated.

How will I know if I am considered essential personnel?

Leadership is finalizing the critical functions and essential personnel review. You will be notified as soon as possible if you are considered essential personnel. Departments may rotate essential personnel so not everyone is in the workplace at the same time. For instance, clerical staff could work one week on site and one week off.

What will happen if I become ill or my family member becomes ill and I am considered essential?

We want you to care for your health and your family’s health. However, if you are essential, you will need to provide medical documentation unless the documentation is unavailable due to public health issues.

Will I be subject to disciplinary action if I am essential personnel and I do not report to work (either onsite or remote as instructed)?

Yes. The safety of our students, campus and community is critical. If you do not report and do not provide an acceptable excuse, you will be subject to discipline dependent upon incident and pattern. If you have not been deemed essential personnel, the Time and Attendance Policy applies.

If I am diagnosed with COVID-19, what should I do?

Employees should notify Human Resources as soon as possible and forward medical documentation confirming diagnosis within three business days to HR@rowan.edu. Employees should complete web time entry using pay code health emergency. Diagnosed employees should stay home and follow medical direction regarding treatment and absence from work. In accordance with the guidelines, employees can be absent from work for the time period specified in accordance with the provided documentation without using accumulated leave time.

If I have been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, when can I return to work?

Employees who have been exposed to or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus will not be permitted to enter the workplace until they are either medically cleared (regarding those with COVID-19) or until the expiration of the recommended 14-day period of quarantine from the point of last exposure (regarding those who were exposed).

What if I am quarantined or otherwise unable to work due to exposure to COVID-19?
If an employee is directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to suspicion of exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, then the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time if they provide documentation verifying the same within three work days of the initial absence to HR@rowan.edu. Employees should complete web time entry using pay code health emergency.

What happens if I am impacted by the COVID-19 virus through a school closing?

Employees who are not under suspicion of having been exposed to the virus or diagnosed with the virus, but have to stay home with a child due to the closure of a preschool program, elementary or secondary school, or child care center related to COVID-19, will be required to provide documentation verifying the closing. Rowan may require work from home under certain circumstances. If a work from home arrangement cannot be accommodated, the employee will not be required to use accumulated leave during the period of the COVID-19-related closure. If not working remotely, employees should complete web time entry using pay code health emergency.

Employees may not bring children to work.

If I need to stay home to care with a family member diagnosed with COVID19, what should I do?

If the employee’s absence is caused by the employee’s need to care for an immediate family member who (i) has been diagnosed with COVID-19, (ii) was directed by a medical professional or government agency to self-isolate or quarantine due to possible exposure to or diagnosis with COVID-19, and/or (iii) is undergoing a period of self-quarantine or isolation pursuant to public health assessment recommendations, the employee shall submit documentation verifying the family member’s COVID-19-related illness, exposure, and/or quarantine period to Human Resources at HR@rowan.edu within three days of the employee’s initial absence. The employee will not be required to use accumulated sick time. If no such documentation is received, the employee will need to use accumulated leave time. If documentation is provided to HR, employees should complete web time entry using pay code health emergency.

How do I document my time off for one of the COVID-19 related reasons?

Employees should complete web time entry using code health emergency. If employees cannot access web time entry, either the employee or the employee’s timekeeper may submit a manual time record and submitting it to payroll through payrollservices@rowan.edu.

If I am subject to documentation requirements due to excessive absenteeism or abuse of sick leave, will I be penalized for further COVID-19 related absences?

Employees who had previously been subjected to documentation requirements under Rowan’s standard operating procedures due to excessive absenteeism or abuse of sick leave will not be disciplined for future absences that occur as a result of them being suspected of or diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus or having to be absent to care for a family member impacted by the virus.
What type of documentation will I be required to submit?

For cases where individuals are undergoing a period of isolation or quarantine, documentation from a local, state or federal governmental agency, a medical professional, office, or hospital or proof that the employee was recently in a location where the recommendation by a governmental agency is to self-quarantine will satisfy the requirement to provide documentation. Additional forms may be required if approved by the state.

For cases where individuals are caring for an immediate family member sickened by or diagnosed with COVID-19, then the employee shall submit documentation verifying the family member’s COVID-19-related illness to Human Resources within three days of the employee’s initial absence.

Is there a work from home policy?

Although Rowan does not have a work from home policy, we have implemented a Telework and Emergency Preparedness Policy. The telework policy is to provide critical functions for continued operations in the event of a closure, self-isolation or the need for social distancing.

Can everyone Telework?

No. Divisional leaders must identify operations that can be performed through Telework. Telework is not appropriate for all personnel since some personnel such as Facilities, Clinical providers, Resident Assistants, etc. must be onsite to provide services.

Employees authorized for Telework will be required to accept the terms of the policy and complete the necessary documentation. The level of access and university equipment will be determined at the time approval is granted. Workstations must meet Workstation and Security policy except in cases of an emergency authorization.

Can my supervisor require me to work a different schedule or perform duties outside of my job title?

Yes. Under the New Jersey Executive Order 103, Rowan is permitted to modify schedules and work assignments to ensure the continuous delivery of essential services while providing greater latitude in use of leave to prevent the spread of the virus and to prioritize health.

Employees may be reassigned to duties outside of their work title provided 1) the employee is otherwise qualified for the out-of-title work, 2) the assignment is temporary in nature, and 3) the employee’s normal job duties resume when staffing is returned to normal.

Can my supervisor require me to work from home?

Yes. Rowan may require an employee to work from home under certain circumstances. If an employee has not submitted medical documentation for their own health condition or the health condition of a
family member needing care, the employee may be required to work from home. The university must provide all equipment, tools and resources required to accommodate this work.

**Is my Family Medical Leave or ADA accommodation still valid?**

Yes. The emergency staffing plan does not eliminate the protections provided by federal and state law. However, vacations scheduled may be rescinded in an emergency if no other alternative is available to provide critical functions.

Employees who become ill may apply for FML. HR will provide direction and will relax documentation if required.

**Is the University requiring employees or students who travel to self-isolate after returning?**

Rowan is following the CDC Guidelines. Unless a person has traveled to one of the designated countries such as China or Italy, we are not requiring self-isolation. As mentioned above, an employee may elect to self-isolate. Returning international travelers may be directed by Public Health to quarantine based upon airport screening. We will continue to update based on CDC and New Jersey Emergency Operations guidelines.

**Is there a difference between quarantine and self-isolation or social distancing?**

Yes. Quarantine is imposed by Public Health and employees or family members would be mandated to remain out of the public to limit exposure. Employees under Public Health quarantine would be paid and would not be required to utilize paid leave time. Self-isolation is self-imposed because the employee wishes to minimize exposure to self or others. Employees may self-isolate without consequences but will be required to utilize paid leave. Social distancing is limiting group events and remaining six feet from others.

**Can my supervisor require that I leave work because I am sick?**

Yes. Supervisors must receive approval from Human Resources. No diagnosis will be made. Supervisors will only separate employees who are exhibiting the CDC designated symptoms of cough, fever and respiratory distress. Supervisors may not discuss why an employee left work.

**This is very stressful, I am afraid of becoming ill. What can I do?**

Employees may access the Employee Assistance Service at 1-866-327-9133.

**Should we continue on-campus interviews?**
We are attempting to minimize on-campus visitors and maximize the use of technology for communications. As such, we encourage you to convert your proposed on-campus interviews to Webex or other online formats. If you have specific questions, contact Human Resources.

**How will tenure and recontracting requirements be addressed, such as student interviews and peer evaluations?**

We will collect online evaluations from students if possible, but we are working with the University Senate to ensure that faculty are not penalized by this crisis in the tenure and recontracting period.

**I’m a faculty member with travel plans. What should I do?**

Faculty who have already been approved for University-related international travel should immediately contact the Office of the Provost. The University is suspending approvals of international travel requests until May 31, 2020.

**Is Commencement going to be canceled?**

We will monitor the situation and make a decision no later than April 1.