

# COVID-19 HIRING GUIDELINES & FAQs

## GENERAL SUMMARY

This document is intended to provide guidance for commonly asked questions regarding potential impact to individuals resulting from COVID-19 response measures. This document also addresses the adjusted 2019 annual compensation and performance management process which was in process prior to implementation of COVID-19 response measures.

## GUIDELINES FOR NEW EMPLOYEE HIRING - OUTSTANDING OFFERS AND FUTURE HIRES:

- As of March 25, all approved offers that have been extended and accepted will be honored.
- Hiring managers should review all 2020 budgeted hires to confirm that the start dates are accurate. Consider whether the new hire will be able to effectively onboard and carry out their duties in the current remote work situation.
- If a start date for a critical hire is scheduled to occur during the remote work timeframe, the new remote onboarding process should be initiated, and the employee must be able to assume his/her responsibilities effectively.
- Until further notice, all verbal and written offers must receive prior written approval from the Chief Academic Officer or the Chief Executive Officer/Interim President.

## HIRING PRIORITIZATION: FOR HIRING MANAGERS

Faculty hiring will continue. The request for approval to extend an offer that is submitted to the CAO must include a justification that provides a plan for the corresponding decrease in contributing faculty or lab assistants. All 2020 budgeted faculty hires will be limited to those required for compliance/regulatory and to meet needed student to faculty ratios.

All non-faculty positions will be prioritized as follows:

- **Group 1** – Functions required to meet compliance and regulatory standards. *Status: Continue search.*
- **Group 2** – Functions required to achieve Strategic Priorities that must be hired in the short term. *Status: Continue search.*
- **Group 3** – Functions required to achieve Strategic Priorities but which can be deferred while the Coronavirus situation remains a priority. *Status: Postpone search, unless identifying candidates requires long lead time.*

- **Group 4** –Functions that are not directly necessary for Compliance and Strategic Priorities. Consideration will be made for those positions that are necessary to support the restructure of a department. *Status: Postpone search.*

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### **ANNUAL MERIT INCREASES & PROMOTIONS**

#### **Will I receive an annual merit increase? If so, when?**

Given the uncertain duration of the COVID-19 crisis, we believe it is best to defer merit increases until we have greater visibility into the Summer and Fall terms. Deferral provides a buffer to absorb any revenue shortfalls. With clear results and greater visibility later this year, we will revisit merit increases.

#### **Will faculty promotions that were announced be honored?**

Yes, the faculty promotions that were approved in early 2020 will move forward and are effective April 2020.

#### **If merit increases are being deferred at this time, will there still be professional development funds for current faculty and staff?**

We remain committed to investment in and support for professional development and growth opportunities for our current staff and faculty via online trainings, virtual sessions, or conferences once travel restrictions are lifted. We understand the many of our faculty and staff need to complete professional development to maintain current licenses

#### **Should I proceed with delivering performance evaluations to my direct reports? If so, can I discuss the compensation that was proposed?**

Managers may schedule and deliver annual performance evaluations as soon as possible. The discussions will focus on performance and will not include communication of annual merit increases. Human Resources will provide optional training highlighting best practices in performance evaluation messaging, delivery, and feedback. Invitations will be forthcoming.

#### **If I have an employee who has been communicated an approved promotion, salary increase or bonus/award, can I move forward with the promotion and corresponding compensation increase or award?**

Any promotion approved prior to March 26 or previously approved as part of the annual performance or budgeting process will be supported. Please direct questions to Susan

Waugh, Executive Director, Human Resources for validation by the Chief Academic and Chief Executive Officer/Interim President.

**If I have an employee who would have been approved through the performance review process for a promotion, salary increase or award, can I move forward with the promotion and corresponding compensation increase or award?**

Any promotion previously approved as part of the annual performance and budgeting process will be considered. Please direct questions and the appropriate justification to Susan Waugh, Executive Director, Human Resources for consideration by the Chief Academic and Chief Executive Officer/Interim President. No new requests beyond those included in the performance review process or resulting from a department restructuring will be entertained until we have greater visibility of our Summer and Fall terms.

**HIRING**

**Why are we hiring new faculty and staff but not proceeding with annual merit increases?**

We maintain our commitment to deliver quality instruction and maintain compliance with all accreditation and regulatory requirements. As such, we will continue to hire positions critical to accreditation, compliance, and regulatory requirements, as well as those positions tied to continued academic excellence and student outcomes. We are deferring merit increases until we have greater visibility and transparency into upcoming terms and will revisit merit increases later this year.

**Why are we proceeding with faculty hires, but not staff positions?**

We will be hiring both faculty and staff positions. We are moving forward with hiring faculty or staff that are directly tied to accreditation, compliance and regulatory requirements, as well as those positions that are directly tied to academic excellence and student outcomes.

**WORK SCHEDULE, REPORTING TIME, and REASSIGNMENTS**

**Are there plans for a furlough or are layoffs being considered?**

We have no plans for layoffs or a temporary furlough. Our focus is on continuing to fulfill our mission of delivering exceptional academic experience to our current students and prospective students.

### **As an hourly employee, what hours should be reported on my timecard?**

Hourly employees must only report and record actual hours worked on their timesheet. You may not report time that was scheduled but during which you do not perform any work. If you have available time in your work schedule, the University would like to provide you with assignments and projects from other areas in the organization.

### **During the period of modified and flexible working operations, will my schedule be reduced or changed?**

During this COVID-19 remote work period, virtual learning has changed the manner in which we engage with our students, colleagues and external community members. This will require in many cases changes to our work schedules. In addition, some employees may have work assignments that do not transfer effectively to a virtual environment. Your schedule may be modified or reduced by your supervisor to accurately reflect the time required to perform your job duties during COVID-19 response measures.

However, we will make every effort to place employees who are affected with reduced work or hours into other assignments for which they are qualified. If you have availability to assist with a special assignment or project, contact your supervisor, Human Resources partner, or Laura Kauffman, Executive Director, Human Resources Operations, who will be managing a University-wide temporary placement process. And, if you or your department require additional support please complete the [COVID-19 Special Projects Request form](#).

### **I am unable to work my normal schedule. Can I use available sick, vacation, or floating holiday to ensure I receive a full paycheck?**

If you are unable to work your normal work schedule, you should notify your immediate supervisor to ensure your duties are covered. You may use accrued vacation, sick or floating holiday hours that are available to you and accessible in Dayforce (only to account for your normally scheduled work hours and days). Employees who have exhausted accrued sick leave are able to request use of additional 2020 sick leave scheduled to be accrued through December 31, 2020. To do so, please submit a request to [payroll@usa.edu](mailto:payroll@usa.edu), with your supervisor's approval. If your available leave is exhausted, please contact your local HR Campus Partner to explore other alternatives such as Family Medical Leave (FML) or Disability benefits.

### **What leave should I use for personal reasons – to care for myself, a family member or because of dependent of childcare issues?**

During the COVID-19 response period, employees with a medical need for themselves, a qualifying family member, or those who do not have dependent care coverage, should use accrued sick leave, vacation or floating holiday hours. If you have additional

questions, please check with your local HR Campus Partner to explore available alternatives.

**Can I use my volunteer hours to supplement my missed work hours?**

Employees may not use volunteer hours to supplement work hours. These hours are reserved for legitimate volunteer activities.

**If I am a full-time employee and my schedule is modified under 30 hours per week, am I still eligible for benefits?**

Employees who are currently in a full-time (FT) position/status will remain eligible for benefits as long as a full-time schedule is maintained per week. If a full-time employee is regularly working less than 30 hours a week, the supervisor and employee should work with Human Resources to identify another area where assistance is needed.