Human Resource Guidance and FAQ’s about COVID-19

After spring break and beginning Monday, March 23, 2020, NAU classes will be moved to online instruction for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. **NAU’s campus in Flagstaff remains open** and operational and NAU employees will continue to perform their job duties. NAU leadership is following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal and state agencies to help protect the health and safety of the NAU community, implement recommendations, and evaluate options on how to best manage the numerous complex aspects of the COVID-19 response. Below is general guidance along with detailed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help employees and supervisors manage this fluid situation.

**General Guidance**

- **Stay at home if you are sick** - Per the ongoing guidance from health professionals, employees should stay home if they are sick – no matter what the symptoms or illness.

- **Keep in contact with your supervisor** - Changing conditions in the broader community – school closures, child care changes, ill family members – are likely to impact regular work schedules for some individuals. Employees should communicate directly with their supervisors to manage these situations.

- **Supervisors and employees should work together on creating work plans to meet individual and department needs** - These work plans may include a variety of approaches and combinations of work from home, alternative work schedules, on-site work, sick or vacation leave, and leave without pay. **If you are part of a high-risk group** - Employees who are in a high-risk group (autoimmune issues, serious underlying health conditions, etc.) should work with their supervisor regarding work from home options if work can be done from home. Employees who are high risk may, if they choose, work directly with Disability Resources regarding their situation.

  **Working from home** - Supervisors should be flexible in allowing employees to work from home if the employee is able to perform their job duties from home and has the equipment, access and data security to do so. If it is not possible or practical for an employee to work from home, supervisors should be flexible in approving time off.

- **Time Reporting** - All employees should continue to report time worked or time away in the usual manner through LOUIE time and labor. If an employee is sick or caring for a sick family member, they may use sick, vacation, or comp time accruals for their absence. If those are exhausted, they may use up to 24 hours of sick time that has not yet been accrued (but still would be reported on the timesheet as usual). Employees may also use leave without pay.
• **Student employees and part-time temporary employees** - Student employees and part-time temporary employees may also be allowed to work from home if there is work to be done and the appropriate equipment, access and data security is in place. Student employees and temporary employees do not receive pay for time not worked or any paid-time-off benefits.

Student and part-time employees should check with their supervisors about their work schedule and work options.

*For specific information and guidance, please review the following FAQ’s:*

**Preventing the Spread of Illness**

**What if I feel sick?**
In general, all employees are asked to stay home if they are sick, regardless of what they believe the cause to be. This will help stop the spread of any illnesses.

**What if I have some symptoms of COVID-19?**
You should stay home, self-isolate and contact your health provider regarding your symptoms.

**What if I don’t feel sick, but I traveled to an affected area or believe I was exposed to someone who had COVID-19?**
Even if you don’t have any symptoms, employees are asked to self-quarantine at home for 14 days after the exposure or the return from travel.

**Can I choose to go home to avoid exposure?**
Supervisors and employees should work together regarding work from home and alternative schedules in order to limit the impact and spread of COVID-19. Discuss with your supervisor options for working from home, working a different schedule or using vacation or sick leave to be out of the workplace.

**If I am in a high-risk category due to an underlying health condition, what are my options?**
Individuals in high risk categories can work directly with their supervisor to explore options to work remotely when that is appropriate. *No specific medical information needs to be shared with the supervisor and supervisors shouldn’t request it – only that the employee reports being at high risk.* Individuals can also contact Disability Resources to request accommodations related to their underlying health condition. Disability Resources will work with the individual and their supervisor to establish what options are reasonable and appropriate given the circumstances.

**What do I do if an employee appears to be sick at work?**
Employees who determine that another employee is showing or describing symptoms such as fever, cough, sneezing, or shortness of breath should share their concerns with a supervisor.

Supervisors should speak with the employee exhibiting symptoms, share what you or others have observed, and ask if the employee believes they may be sick or contagious. *No specific medical information should be requested.*
If the employee says they have a non-contagious condition such as allergies, ask them to be sure to follow recommended hygiene guidelines such as covering their mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

If the employee confirms that they are not feeling well and/or have the symptoms described, remind them that NAU and current health guidelines recommend that all employees that are sick need to stay home - then direct them to go home.
   - The employee can use accrued vacation, sick leave, or leave without pay if all other paid time off is exhausted or is unavailable to them.
   - As a supervisor, you can approve the employee to work from home if there is work to be done and the employee has the equipment and access to work from home.

If the employee insists on remaining at work and you still have concerns, contact Human Resources at 928-523-2223.

What precautions can be taken for those working on campus?

As the university and individual departments work through work from home and alternative work schedules options, work continues to happen on campus. In order to meet student and university needs, on campus work continues. Everyone on campus must do what they can in order to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. In addition to the very important precautions of regular hand washing and covering your nose and mouth with a tissue or sleeve when you cough or sneeze, please consider these recommended practices:

- Choose to have individual or group meetings via Skype, Zoom, or phone
- Stagger schedules if possible
- Determine where or how you can create social distancing/spreading people out within your work area
- In addition to the enhanced cleaning protocols being carried out by Facility Services, coordinate among staff to sanitize high-touch surfaces regularly (door handles, copy machines, etc.)
- Promptly report areas needing additional cleaning
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

Pay, Time Off, and Leave

How will I be paid if I have to be away from work?

NAU will continue to run normal bi-weekly payroll processing based on the published Payroll Schedule that can be located on the NAU HR Payroll Website under the Quick Reference Section.

Can I use paid time off (PTO) sick and/or vacation leave accruals during time I am off work?

Employees who miss work due to illness or the illness of a family member, are self-quarantining or in self-isolation, in a high-risk group, living with a household member in a high-risk group, or managing childcare may use accrued sick or vacation leave.
What if I run out of sick, vacation or accrued comp time hours?
If all accrued sick and vacation leave are exhausted, benefits eligible employees may use up to 24 hours of sick time that has not yet been accrued. Employees may also use leave without pay. All time should continue to be reported on the timesheet as usual.

Will part-time employees or student workers see a reduction in hours?
Part-time employees and student workers may see a reduction in hours. However, part-time employees and student workers may be allowed to work from home if there is work to be done and they have appropriate equipment, access, and data security in place. As is the case with full-time work, not all work is able to be done remotely and on-site work may be important to support student and university needs.

Are student workers required to work during the university’s shift to online instruction?
Because of the fluid nature of this situation, student workers should check with their supervisor for further direction about their work schedule for the remainder of the semester. Supervisors should communicate with their student workers regarding any change in schedule or assignments.

Can my supervisor cancel my vacation that has already been approved?
While we don’t expect this to be a regular occurrence, we are facing a unique situation and possible staff shortages, and a supervisor may need to cancel pre-approved vacation requests. Supervisors should provide as much notice as possible if this become necessary.

Can my supervisor change my schedule or change my work assignment?
Yes, due to the unique situation and departmental needs, your supervisor may make adjustments to schedules or adjust work assignments if necessary for the continuity of operations. We are asking supervisors and employees to be flexible with work assignments as we work through the COVID-19 response.

What happens if the university closes?
We are working hard to maintain operations and support our students through the end of the semester. If the university, or certain areas of the university, were to close, certain operations would still need to continue and certain employees may be required to work in order to meet student, staff, or faculty needs. If that occurs, further detailed information would be communicated to the university community and supervisors and departments would communicate requirements to individual employees.

Health Care Coverage

What should I do if I am sick and need to see a doctor?
You should contact a medical professional. Convenient and cost-effective care options such as Telehealth are also available for those covered by a NAU medical plan who need to see a physician quickly and are not able to get into their primary care physician.

For more details go to the Telehealth webpage.
Will my NAU employee medical plan cover expenses related to the testing and treatment of COVID-19?

Yes. If you require an office visit for testing or treatment for a diagnosed case of COVID-19, you will have the same coverage that is currently available for any emergency or non-emergency illness, subject to the normal deductible, copay, and out-of-pocket amounts under your medical plan. Find out more about how COVID-19 testing and treatment will be handled under your medical plan

- NAU BCBSAZ PPO or HDHP\HSA
- State of Arizona PPO, EPO or HDHP\HSA

You can find more information about your medical plan benefits on the Benefits Offered webpage.

Important: If you have coverage through another employer or plan, please contact your insurance company to ask about coverage for COVID-19 testing and treatment.

When does FMLA apply?

To be eligible for FMLA, you must first meet the criteria below:

- You have worked 12 months for the university, and
- Have worked 1,250 hours in the preceding 12 months.

If eligible, you may use FMLA for a Serious Health Condition affecting you, your child, or your spouse. A Serious Health Condition includes a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days.

You can find more information on FMLA and NAU’s of Leave of Absence policies on the Leave of Absence webpage.

What assistance is available to help me cope with the emotional impact of the situation?

Employee Assistance and Wellness is available to assist employees with personal and professional issues. You can find more information on the EAW webpage.

Work from Home and Alternative Work Schedule Options

Supervisors are asked to be flexible in reviewing and identifying work from home options where appropriate, using the new Guidelines in place for the COVID-19 situation. Please note that not all work is able to be done remotely and on-site work may be important to support student and university needs.

My child’s school is closed and I don’t have daycare. Can I work from home or request an alternative schedule?

You and your supervisor should discuss the availability of work that you could do from home or during an alternative schedule. You and your supervisor should follow the Work from Home and Alternative Work Schedule Guidelines related to COVID-19 Containment to make arrangements for your specific situation. While supervisors are encouraged to be flexible, there is no guarantee that an employee will be able to work from home or to work an alternative schedule.
Can I work from home some, work an alternative schedule and use my paid time off accruals when I’m not able to work?
Yes. You and your supervisor can make arrangements for you to work some from home, or work an alternative schedule and receive pay for those hours you work. You may also arrange to take time off using your sick or vacation leave accruals to receive pay.

Does my supervisor have to approve my request work from home or work an alternative schedule if there is an outbreak?
We are working hard to identify and implement work from home options across the university. Supervisory approval is necessary to work from home or to work an alternative schedule.

Not all requests to work from home or work an alternative schedule can be approved due to the nature of the work. Decisions should be based upon whether or not an employee’s responsibilities can be performed from home and if they have the equipment and technology available to fully perform the work away from the office/work location, or if the work can be done during the alternative scheduled time.

How do I get help with technology or other logistics related to working from home?
You should discuss options with your supervisor. The university is working to provide technology support and guidance to employees and supervisors. Keep in mind that due to specific job duties that cannot be performed at home not all jobs can be done from home. See the NAU Work from Home Guidelines related to COVID-19 Containment document for guidance.

I’ve never worked from home – how do I get connected to my email, files, etc.?
Discuss with your supervisor the options your department has. For information on safely connecting from a home computer and where to get assistance with any technical issues, visit NAU’s Information Technology Services (ITS) website.

Can I work from home while caring for a child or family member at home?
During the COVID-19 situation, employees are managing sudden school closure and limited access to child care providers. We are asking supervisor to be flexible and allow employees to care for children or ill family members if the employee can effectively balance family care and work. This may require a balance of taking time off from work (for which sick, vacation leave may be used) and working from home.

Can my supervisor schedule me to work hours or shifts that I normally do not work?
Yes, you may be asked to work more hours or different hours than normal because of staffing shortages or university needs. Supervisors should provide as much advance notice as is possible when changing an employee’s work schedule.

How long will any working from home arrangement last?
Please understand that this is a rapidly changing situation, and that the university will continue to monitor the pandemic and appropriate state and federal guidance. Any changes which might affect our campus community will be communicated as conditions change.