

Human Resource Guidance and FAQ's about COVID-19

As the University community returns to campus, 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. *The information on this site is based on currently available guidance and information that may change as new or different information becomes available.*

- [For up to date guidance please see our return to work info on the Jacks are Back Web Site.](#)

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. Continue to use the [NAU Healthcheck](#) daily wellness assessment.
- **Keep in contact with your supervisor** - Changing conditions in the broader community – school schedule adjustments, child care changes, ill family members – are likely to impact regular work schedules for some individuals. Employees should communicate directly with their supervisors to begin 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 directly with [Disability Resources](#) regarding their situation.
- **Working from home** - Departments may have employees alternate days or continue to have some employees work remotely if the employee is able to perform their job duties from home and has the equipment, access and data security to do so. If employees are requesting flexibility such as fully remote work for non-ADA reasons, they should discuss this workplace modification request with their supervisor as outlined in the Employee Guidance for Accommodations and Workplace Modifications on the [Jacks are Back Return to Work](#) page.
- **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. 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 generally do not receive pay for time not worked but may be eligible for COVID related paid sick time.
 - Student and part-time employees should check with their supervisors about their work schedule and work options.

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. Continue to use the [NAU Healthcheck](#) daily wellness assessment.

What if I have some symptoms of COVID-19?

You should stay home, self-isolate and contact your health provider regarding your symptoms.

I'm going on vacation. Do I need to self-quarantine upon my return?

Employees should be mindful of COVID-related travel advisories for personal and essential business travel. However, an employee will not need to self-quarantine unless they believe they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Should any employee start to experience symptoms of fever and/or upper respiratory illness, the employee should notify their supervisor, stay home and contact their health care provider

[Additional guidelines can be found on the CDC website.](#)

Can I choose to go home to avoid exposure?

Supervisors and employees should work together regarding working remotely and alternative schedules in order to limit the impact and spread of COVID-19. Discuss with your supervisor options for working remotely, 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 should work directly with Disability Resources to request accommodations related to their underlying health condition.

[Additional details can be found on Jacks are Back webpage.](#)

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 discuss with the employee options to temporarily 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?

[The Office of Health and Safety has a training on how to stay well!](#)

Here are some general best practices to follow:

- 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
- [Additional details can be found on the Return to Work webpage.](#)

General Paid Time Off FAQs

Can I use paid time off (PTO) sick and/or vacation leave accruals during time I am approved to be 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, employees may 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. If an employee requests to work out of state please contact [HR/Payroll](#) as all current out of state processes must be followed.

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 a supervisor may need to cancel pre-approved vacation requests. Supervisors should provide as much notice as possible if this becomes 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. 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.

PEPST related FAQs

Who is eligible for PEPST?

All employees including: part time faculty, part time temporary employees, graduate students, post-doctoral scholars and student employees are eligible for two weeks (up to 80 hours) **paid sick time**.

- Fulltime employees (including faculty, appointed staff and post-doctoral scholars) will receive up to 80 hours.
- Part-time employees (including: part time faculty, part time temporary employees, graduate students and student employees) will receive prorated number of hours.
- **Note:** To be eligible for PEPST an employee must be scheduled to work and the employee and must be unable to work or telework for one of the [qualifying reasons](#).

How many PEPST hours am I eligible for?

- Full-time employees are eligible for up to 80 hours
- Part-time employees are eligible for a prorated number of hours up to the average number of hours worked over a 2-week period.

What are the reasons I can use my Public Emergency Paid Sick Time?

Employees will be able to use PEPST if they are unable to work (or unable to telework) because they:

- 1) are subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19
- 2) have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19
- 3) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis
- 4) are caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2)
- 5) are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19, or
- 6) are experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of Labor and Treasury.

This option is currently not available, we are waiting on guidance from the Department of Labor.

What do I need to do in order to use my PEPST?

First, you should talk to your supervisor about any time away from work you will need for a COVID-19 related reason. If your absence is unplanned you should follow your department's regular call in procedure. See the next FAQ for details on how to report any PEPST hours used.

How do I report any PEPST hours used?

To submit a PEPST request through an OnBase form, click on the provided link or the button found at the top right corner of this page ["Submit a PEPST Request"](#). You will need to submit a separate form for each pay period. The request will route to the assigned supervisor for approval and then to payroll for entry. **This time should NOT be requested through the timesheet.**

May we use two weeks of paid sick time for...

[One of the Qualifying Reasons Listed](#)

Reason 1: subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 and then another two weeks for....

Reason 5: caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

No. You may only take up to two weeks for any combination of qualifying reasons.

Who is responsible for approving the use of PEPST?

Your supervisor will need to approve your use of this sick time so it is a good idea to discuss your need to use PEPST prior to submitting your request.

How will my sick pay be calculated?

Your sick pay will be calculated at 100% of your regular rate of pay, but is limited under the act to a maximum benefit of \$5,110 for reasons 1, 2, 3 and 6 listed previously and \$2,000 for reasons 4 and 5 listed previously.

Please note: Reason #6, this option is currently not available for employees to choose, we are waiting on guidance from the Department of Labor.

I am a student employee, am I eligible for PEPST?

Yes, all employees are eligible to use PEPST for the 6 COVID-19 related reasons. You are granted a number of prorated number of hours equal to the average number of hours worked over a 2-week period.

I currently accrue sick time, will my two weeks of PEPST be added to my current sick time balance?

No, this is a separate sick leave plan. You will have a separate balance and will only be able to use your hours for the specific COVID-19 related reasons.

What happens if I exhaust my two weeks of PEPST?

If an employee needs additional time away work for any COVID-19 related reason 1,2,3 or 4 then they can use other available paid time off (regular sick, vacation or compensatory) hours.

If an employee is not eligible for paid time off or has exhausted their paid time off hours (PEPST, sick and vacation) they will need to report Leave Without Pay.

Public Health Emergency Leave: If an employee needs more than 10 days of time away from work because are unable to work (or unable to telework) because they need to care for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19 you can request up to an additional 10 weeks of leave with the new FMLA reason added as Public Health Emergency Leave. The maximum amount of paid FMLA cannot exceed \$10,000.

If I do not use all of my PEPST hours will they carry over to next year?

You can use your PEPST hours between April 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. Unused hours will not carry over after December 31, 2020.

If I leave NAU before December 31, 2020 will my unused sick hours be paid out?

No, unused hours are not eligible to be paid out if you leave the university and they are not eligible for the Retiree Accumulated Sick Leave (RASL) program is you retire.

I currently have sick hours, do I need to use those hours before I can use my PEPST?

No, if you are out due to any of the 6 COVID-19 related reasons you are not required to use current sick time first. You can use your PEPST hours before your current sick time. If you are out for any other reason you will need to continue to use your sick or vacation time per NAU Policies.

FAQs related to Public Health Emergency Leave

What is Public Health Emergency Leave?

Eligible employees can request up to 12 weeks of FMLA if they are unable to work (or unable to telework) because they need to care for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

Who is eligible to request Public Health Emergency Leave?

All employees including: part time faculty, part time temporary employees, graduate students and student employees, who have work for NAU for 30 days or more, are eligible to request up to 12 weeks FMLA.

To use this benefit, you should talk to your supervisor about any time away from work you will need for to care for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

- How do I report Public Health Emergency Leave?
- Visit the [‘How to report Public Health Emergency Leave’](#) page for reporting details.

I have only worked for NAU for 4 months so I normally would not qualify for FMLA, am I still eligible to request Public Health Emergency Leave?

Yes, all employees including: part time faculty, part time temporary employees, graduate students and student employees, who have worked for NAU for at least the preceding 30 days, are eligible to request up to 12 weeks FMLA for this reason.

The only reason you are eligible to request FMLA is only available to employees if they are unable to work (or unable to telework) because they need to care for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

Who is responsible for approving my request for Public Health Emergency Leave?

The first two week of this leave is unpaid so if the employee only needs 2 weeks or less of time away from work they can use either of Public Emergency Sick Time or if eligible their paid time off benefit (regular sick, vacation or

compensatory time).

If the employee needs more than two weeks of leave they should request for Public Health Emergency leave through Human Resources. If approved an employee may receive up to 10 weeks of paid leave at 66 2/3 of their regular rate of pay.

Is Public Health Emergency Leave paid or unpaid?

- The first 10 days of this leave is unpaid. Employees may use PEPST, sick, vacation or compensatory time to receive pay during the first 2 weeks.
- If approved, weeks 3-12 are paid at 66 2/3 of their regular rate of pay. Employees may use any sick or vacation for the 33 1/3 pay not covered by Public Health Emergency Paid FMLA

I am currently on FMLA, is my leave of absence now paid?

No, the 10 weeks of paid leave is only available to employees if they are unable to work (**or unable to telework**) because they need to care for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19.

Do I qualify for the Public Health Emergency Leave for a COVID-19 related reason even if I have already used some or all of my leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

First, all NAU employees are eligible for up to 2 weeks (up to 80 hours) of Public Emergency Sick Time regardless of how much leave you have taken under the FMLA.

However, since NAU was covered by the FMLA prior to April 1, 2020, your eligibility for expanded family and medical leave depends on how much FMLA you have already taken during the rolling 12-month period prior to when you want to start your new FMLA leave. You may take the remaining portion of your total FMLA entitlement. If you have already taken 12 workweeks of [FMLA](#) leave during this 12-month period, you may not take additional expanded family and medical leave.

For example, assume you are eligible for preexisting FMLA leave and took four weeks of such leave in January 2020 to undergo and recover from a surgical procedure. You therefore have 8 weeks of FMLA leave remaining. Because expanded family and medical leave is a type of FMLA leave, you would be entitled to take up to 8 weeks of expanded family and medical leave, rather than 12 weeks. And any expanded family and medical leave you take would count against your entitlement to preexisting FMLA leave.

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.

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](#).

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](#).

Work from Home and Alternative Work Schedule Options

For the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak, supervisors are asked to be flexible in identifying and reviewing telework options where appropriate.

- See the COVID-19 Work from Home Guidelines and the [Telework](#) page for additional information.
- Please note that not all work can be accomplished remotely and certain on-site work may be important to support student and university needs.
- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the on-going efficacy of all telework arrangements.

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?

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 to work from home or work an alternative schedule if there is an outbreak?

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. Keep in mind that due to specific job duties that cannot be performed at home not all jobs can be done from home.

When working 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 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 changing university needs. Supervisors should provide as much advance notice as is possible when changing an employee's work schedule.