Leave and Work Options for COVID-19 Response
Guidance for HR Professionals from April 1st through April 30th

Guiding Principles
Our guiding principle is to have a bias toward teleworking wherever feasible to promote social distancing, continue wages and not necessitate the need for leave or other options.

We are continuing to ask managers to be creative and as flexible as possible in reviewing tasks not previously considered for remote work, e.g. administrative/receptionist support functions can continue from home, e.g. answering department phone, arranging virtual meetings, etc.

Where an employee’s tasks are not currently needed on campus and where telework is not feasible, e.g. cashiers, parking attendants, etc., colleges, schools, and units (CSUs) should assess whether these employees, including student employees, can be assigned to special projects within their own CSU or assist with projects in another CSU (e.g. updating procedures, updating training materials, cross training to support core functions and build bench strength should staffing levels dip, etc.). If none of these options are feasible, then these employees should be assigned Professional Development (PD) tasks through LinkedIn Learning or other available online PD sites.

For employees needing to work on campus to support the core functions outlined in President Fenves’ email on Sunday, March 15th, they should practice social distancing and other prevention strategies and their regular wages will continue. The university acknowledges the important contribution of employees required to come to campus and premium pay guidelines were released to HR professionals in March.

Scenarios and Guidance
The university had a 3-day weekend closure event from March 13th-15th. Effective Monday, March 16th, the university began a period of modified-open status. Timekeeping guidelines for March are linked below.

- Campus closure guidelines from March 13th-15th:
- March modified open guidelines from March 16th-31st:
  https://hr.utexas.edu/sites/hr.utexas.edu/files/Timekeeping%20Guidelines%20March%2016-30%20Flowchart.pdf

Guidelines to address timesheets from April 1st through April 30th include the following:

Guidance 1: Employees who are working either on-campus or remotely supporting the university’s core functions - Employees enter regular work hours. No leave or alternate work arrangements are needed.

Guidance 2: Essential personnel whose duties require them to come to campus, but who express fear/concern about doing so – CSUs should assesses the work environment to ensure that social distancing and face covering precautions are in place, and to determine whether reasonable accommodations (including reasonable accommodations under the ADA) can be made. If all precautions and accommodations are in place, and employees remain unwilling or unable to work, they would use their paid time off accruals, including the new Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) under the Families

If employees exhaust their hours provided by the EPSL and their personal leave accruals, they may apply for additional time off through existing state leave options (e.g. paid SLD or SLP, then intermittent Unpaid Time Off or continuous Unpaid Leave of Absence, etc.). Temporary COVID-19 measures have been put in place to ease the employee’s documentation burden related to SLD, SLP, FFCRA and FMLA requests. CSUs should do their best to prevent punitive action against employees whose personal or family members’ health conditions are driving their concern.

### Guidance 3:
*Employees who cannot perform their regular duties remotely (for reasons other than childcare) nor do they have core duties that require them to be on campus*— CSUs should review the guiding principles stated above and have a bias toward work. If **special project work, cross training or PD is not feasible and/or this situation extends beyond the CSU’s ability to offer such alternatives**, then leave eligible employees should be placed on Emergency Leave (EL).

EL is approved through the end of April. Beginning in May, the continued mass use of EL will no longer be available and employees will need to transition to using their own personal leave accruals.

For non-leave eligible individuals, CSUs should have a bias for telework whenever feasible just as they do for leave-eligible employees. When these options are not sufficient to maintain wages, non-leave eligible employees should be assigned PD tasks through LinkedIn Learning or other available online PD sites. If **PD is not feasible and/or this situation extends beyond the CSU’s ability to offer such alternatives**, contact HR SWS to discuss the process for non-scheduling hourly, non-benefits eligible employees.

### Guidance 4:
*Employees who cannot work due to lapses in childcare or school options* - CSUs should explore telework in addition to highly flexible work hours as much as feasible, (e.g. allowing evening and weekend hours, etc.) to accomplish the goals of the department. If **these options are not feasible and/or the employee needs additional time off to implement their minor child’s school lesson plans or provide care**, the employee should apply to use the new EPSL and Extended Family Medical Leave (EFML) options available under the FFCRA.  

### Guidance 5:
*Employees who are well, but have been asked to self-isolate due to personal travel* – Now that sufficient notice has been given to the nation about the impact of personal travel, an employee choosing to engage in personal travel will need to use their own leave accruals, including EPSL, for the 14-day isolation period, where teleworking is not feasible. Emergency Leave is only available for critical university-related travel that requires a 14-day isolation period, where teleworking is not feasible.

**Special Note:** New leave options under the FFCRA are effective April 1st and became available for use in the timekeeping system on April 15th. If an employee used their own personal leave accruals, e.g. sick time, from April 1st-15th for an FFCRA leave-eligible event, the employee may want to update their earlier timesheets to use EPSL. Switching out their personal leave accruals for EPSL is an employee’s personal choice.