

INTERIM POLICY

Effective Date: June 9, 2008
 Revised: January 9, 2020
 Approved by: President Sabah Randhawa

Authority: [RCW 43.01.042](#); [WAC 357-3129USC201](#)

See Also: [STN-U5400.04A](#) Reporting Time During Suspended Operations – Standard
 [PRO-U5400.04A](#) Reporting Make-Up Hours for Suspended Operations – Procedure
 [POL-U5400.03](#) Taking and Reporting Leave During Inclement Weather Policy
 [POL-U5410.05](#) Administering Work and Leave Time Reports Policy
 [FRM-U5400.04A](#) Essential Information Checklist

POL-U5400.04 SUSPENDING UNIVERSITY OPERATIONS

This policy applies to all University employees.

Definitions:

Department Heads: Non-academic department directors, department chairs, academic administrators, managers and college deans.

FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act): Federal law that establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state and local governments.

- FLSA exempt professional staff employees and faculty are not eligible for overtime pay.
- FLSA non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay.

Satellite Locations: Western Washington University (WWU) operated locations offices outside of the Bellingham city limits.

1. President May Suspend Operations

The President, in consultation with senior university officers and local officials, may temporarily suspend the operation of any or all units when an emergency situation adversely affects university operations, the public health, property, well-being, or safety of students, faculty and staff. Consideration will be given to those operations most directly affected by the emergency to minimize disruption of regular teaching and public service programs. Operations may be suspended for an entire or a partial day.

Directors of satellite locations may suspend operations at their site after consulting with the Provost.

Exception: Directors of satellite locations residing at another educational institution will comply with the decisions of that institution.

When suspended operations exceed 15 calendar days per event, the President will consult with state and federal officials.

Emergency situations which might affect such decisions include, but are not limited to:

- a) Severe weather conditions,
- b) Natural disasters,
- c) Fire or related hazards,
- d) Mechanical or equipment failure, or
- e) A local or pandemic health care emergency.

2. President Provides Notification of a Suspension During Normal Academic Days

The decision to suspend operations during normal academic days (Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) will be communicated by the President to:

- a) The vice presidents and deans, for subsequent notification to all persons within their units, and
- b) The Office of University Communications and Marketing.

3. Director of University Communications and Marketing and Department Heads Provide Notification of Suspension After Normal Academic Day Hours

The Director of University Communications and Marketing will communicate the suspension through the university's emergency notification systems including the Storm and Emergency Hotline and appropriate media. Notification will be accomplished no later than 6 a.m., or as soon as practical, on the day of a closure.

Department heads that have employees working between 5 p.m. and 6 a.m. will ensure direct contact is made to those employees regarding the status of university operations and their work assignment.

4. Notifications Will Include Specific Information

Announcements, to the degree practical, may include:

- a) Basic information about the nature of the emergency,
- b) Applicability to facilities (including satellite locations), units, employees, and students
- c) Hazard warnings of certain facilities when applicable,
- d) Anticipated duration of the suspension, and

- e) Direction on where to obtain related procedural information.

5. Employees Encouraged to Participate in Preparation for Effective Emergency Communication

Employees are expected to:

- a) Ensure they have the ability to obtain information from at least one source of media to be informed of university operation status and updates, and
- b) Have a current home and cellular telephone number and emergency contact information on file with their department and with Human Resources.

6. President, Vice Presidents and Deans Identify Essential Operations and Employees Who Perform an Essential Function

The President, vice presidents and deans will determine, in consultation with department heads, crucial operations and employees who perform an essential function. Notification to employees who will be instructed to report to work or be on-call during the closure will be made by the vice presidents or department heads.

7. Non-Essential Staff Will Not Report to the Worksite

Unless notified as an employee who performs an essential function as outlined in provision #6 above, staff may not report to the worksite when university operations have been suspended.

8. Staff are Expected to Work Remotely During Suspended Operations

Staff are expected to work remotely during suspended operation events that do not exceed 15 calendar days. Supervisors are responsible to ensure work is available to employees.

If staff are unavailable to work, employees will be expected to charge available leave per the applicable collective bargaining agreement, handbook or per provision #11 below.

9. Department Heads Ensure Work Areas are Secure

All department heads will establish and implement department procedures for securing work areas in the event operations are suspended during regular hours and when suspension is probable.

10. Staff Unavailable to Work During Suspended Operations Must Charge Leave

Staff unavailable to work during suspended operations will elect to:

- a) Make up time lost,
- b) Use available vacation, personal holiday, or compensatory time, or
- c) Take leave without pay.

All use of paid and unpaid leave must follow applicable bargaining unit contracts, or handbook.

See university required standards for *Reporting Time During Suspended Operations* (STN-U5400.04A) and procedures for *Reporting Make-Up Time for Suspended Operations* (PRO-U5400.04A).

11. Use of Sick Leave Limited

Employees who wish to charge sick leave due to being ill during the suspension must:

- a) Have notified their supervisor each day of illness during the suspension, and
- b) Provide appropriate medical documentation upon return to work if requested by their supervisor when there is a reasonable concern of sick leave abuse.

12. Human Resources Determines if Leave Without Pay Status Affects Holiday Pay for Staff

When applicable, employees who take leave without pay will be eligible for holiday pay if the suspended operations related absence falls prior to a holiday provided requirements for holiday pay are met. For example, the employee must be in full pay status (based on appointment percentage) on the last scheduled work day preceding the first suspended operations absence.

13. Supervisors Ensure All Employees Charge Leave for Prescheduled Leave

All employees scheduled to take vacation or who are on leave at the time suspended operations is declared will be compensated as previously arranged.

Employees on medical leave or other pre-approved leave will submit leave time in accordance with the appropriate policy or agreement.

14. Classified Staff and FLSA Non-Exempt Professional Staff Called to Work to Perform an Essential Function are Compensated

FLSA non-exempt professional staff called to work by a vice president, dean or department head to perform an essential function during suspended operations will receive time and one-half for any time worked.

Classified staff will be compensated for “call back” per their bargaining unit contracts.

15. Department Heads Must Plan and Prepare for Suspended Operations

Department heads will ensure that internal procedures are established for their respective areas in order to effectively respond and maintain some level of operation and communication when access to vital information is limited or cut off due to an emergency situation (see *Essential Information Checklist* FRM-5400.04A).

16. Department Heads Authorize Expenses for Employees Required to Remain on or Near Campus

Employees not on duty but required to remain on or near the campus or other university facilities during the closure will be housed and fed at university expense if a temporary relocation is needed and given prior approval by the department head.

17. President May Implement Staff Layoffs

If suspended operations exceed 15 calendar days per event, the President may implement layoff policies and procedures. All appropriate employee representatives will be notified in advance when a layoff situation is being considered. Affected employees will be given a minimum of 30 days’ notice or per relevant bargaining unit contract or handbook.