

## **FAQs: COVID-19 Bank**

### **Who is governed by this policy?**

This policy applies to all U.S. staff employees – both benefits and non-benefits eligible employees, including temporary and seasonal employees and those who are covered by collective bargaining agreements.

### **Do new employees qualify for this benefit?**

Employees who are active current employees will qualify for this benefit.

### **What if an employee is expected to come to campus to work but is concerned about COVID-19 or falls in a high-risk group (immune-compromised, over age 65)?**

Exempt and non-exempt staff who are scheduled to work, but do not work due to personal decisions when the University of Chicago is open, may, after consultation with their manager, charge the time to sick leave or vacation (in accordance with those policies). This includes staff who are concerned about working due to a colleague being sick (flu, cold, or quarantined COVID-19 case). Departments have already taken steps to ensure social distancing best practices are followed and increased cleaning will continue.

If the employee is eligible, they may qualify for leave under the Temporary COVID-19 Leave policy if they are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19 during the 2019-2020 academic year, including the inability to work remotely, personal illness and/or the need to quarantine or provide for family care.

In addition, with approvals from managers and unit directors, staff may and are encouraged to work remotely when possible. Remote work is available for staff whose responsibilities do not require them to be on campus and can take effect as soon as plans are agreed upon between relevant staff and their managers.

### **I am considered an essential employee, and my work requires physical presence at the University of Chicago. How does the COVID-19 bank benefit me?**

The University of Chicago depends on and greatly appreciates our employees who are serving in these critical roles and providing services during this challenging time. The COVID-19 bank will benefit these employees if they meet a qualifying reason as defined in the policy, including personal illness, and/or the need to quarantine or provide for family care.

### **I am currently receiving short term disability (STD) benefits or expect to be receiving them in the near future, can I supplement the other 40% of my pay while on STD with hours from the COVID-19 bank?**

The University of Chicago's [Short Term Disability](#) policy will remain in effect. Per that policy, employees receiving STD payments are not permitted to:

1. accrue sick leave, vacation or personal holidays;
2. apply for STD payments within two weeks following a return to work from STD;
3. receive University of Chicago holiday pay; or
4. supplement STD payments with vacation or personal holidays.

Under the provisions of this policy, STD payments will not be supplemented by hours in the COVID-19 bank.

**Will shift differentials and/or premium pay be included in hours used from the COVID-19 Bank?**

All hours approved for payment from the COVID-19 bank will be at the base rate of pay.

**If I do not use these hours during the spring quarter, will they be paid out?**

The COVID-19 bank is intended to bridge a gap for those staff employees who otherwise face non-payment due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic as indicated in the policy. It is not a vested benefit and thus will not be paid out at any time following the return to normal operations or upon separation of employment.

**If I am working from home, do I still qualify for this benefit?**

It is anticipated that those able to work remotely will continue their work and contributions that are critical across campus at this time. However, if an employee currently working remotely experiences a situation as described in the policy which prohibits remote work (the inability to work remotely, personal illness, and/or the need to quarantine or provide for family care), that employee will qualify to use hours from the bank subject to manager/HRP approval. Departments will work with employees regarding expectations while working from home including the adjustment of hours should an employee work remotely while also taking care of their children.

**What if a staff position is funded through NIH?**

If an individual is working remotely and contributing to the project, then salary can be charged to the grant.

If an individual cannot contribute to their current project but can contribute to another sponsored project or school activity, the salary must be moved to that funding source.

If an individual is assigned to work remotely but cannot contribute to any University of Chicago activity, NIH is allowing salary to continue to be charged to the award (see [NOT-OD-20-086](#)) consistent with University of Chicago policy. We plan to extend this to all sponsored programs unless a sponsor specifically restricts these charges. This is allowable up to the limits communicated in the University of Chicago policy update on March 19, 2020 (up to 30 days).

While we await further guidance from other sponsors, the University of Chicago has chosen to rely on the information and administrative relief document issued by OMB (see [M-20-17](#)). This means that local divisions may leave these charges on any awards; however, they may need to be removed based on future sponsor guidance. Please contact [URA Post Award](#) if you have specific questions about the allowability of a charge.

**General Administration:**

**How do I request COVID-19 time in Workday?**

A quick reference guide on how to request time off can be found [here](#).

**Who approves my hours?**

While your request should be discussed with your immediate manager prior to entry into the Workday system, time off approval requests will be sent to your manager and time approver for approval.

**Can I take partial days or intermittent time for COVID-19 hours?**

Employees may take COVID-19 leave either intermittently or in a block leave depending on the need for the leave. Non-exempt employees may take the leave in increments of one (1) hour and exempt employees may take the leave in single, full day increments.

**Will I continue to accrue time while using the COVID-19 Bank hours?**

COVID-19 is considered an 'out of pay' status, so an employee will not receive accrual benefits for vacation or personal holiday if COVID-19 bank hours are used for more than half the month. Please refer to the University of Chicago's [Vacation \(U509\)](#) and [Personal Holidays \(U511\)](#) policies for additional clarification.

**How were my COVID-19 available hours calculated?**

Hours were calculated by taking your daily scheduled hours for all your positions and multiplying it by 30 (representing the number of workdays in 6 weeks).

**Was there a cap of hours used in the calculation of the employee's COVID-19 bank hours?**

COVID-19 is calculated at 30 \* scheduled daily hours, capped at 40 hours.

**Why am I unable to request COVID-19 prior to March 19, 2020?**

The COVID-19 Leave plan became effective on March 19, 2020; thus accessible on March 19, 2020.

**What will the earning be called on my pay slip?**

For exempt employees, they will not see a change to their regular earnings, but the COVID-19 hours will be reduced from their bank. Non-Exempt employees will see a new earning called COVID-19 Time.