Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine
University Closing Policy
Supervisory Guidelines for Non-Bargaining Staff

General

Q. Where can I find the Johns Hopkins University closing policy?

A. This university policy is found in the university Personnel Policy Manual in Appendix J.

Q. Does the Johns Hopkins University closing policy apply to the School of Medicine?

A. Yes. The School of Medicine is one of the academic divisions of the university. School of Medicine staff are university employees.

Q. What does this university closing policy actually mean?

A. In accordance with the university policy, all departments are responsible for defining staffing requirements and for designating SOM Required Attendance employees on an annual or rotating basis. These Required Attendance employees must report to work and/or remain at work regardless of the existence of an emergency (weather or otherwise). This Required Attendance designation is to be confirmed in writing in advance to the employee, including the consequences of failure to report to or remain at work.

It is advisable to speak with employees in advance of the designation to make sure they understand and accept the responsibility. If, in speaking with an employee, a supervisor learns that there may be a legitimate reason an employee cannot uphold the obligation of being designated as Required Attendance, the supervisor may (1) wish to identify another employee instead, (2) talk more with this employee to determine if anything can be done to help them meet the obligation or (3) contact the SOM divisional human resources office for consultation.

Departments are expected to designate a sufficient number of SOM employees as Required Attendance in order to maintain clinical operations. Due to the financial implications, it is not necessary to designate everyone as Required Attendance unless a department feels a need to do so.

Other examples of Required Attendance include those whose presence is vital to the operation of a work group or whose presence allows continuation of any service deemed to be critical.
Q. What about research or other areas in the SOM?

A. While much attention is focused on maintaining clinical operations, departments are also able to use the same university closing policy to address research, administration, and any other staffing needs.

Q. What about SOM faculty/physicians?

A. Clinical operations generally require the presence of a faculty/physician employee. Therefore, based on departmental assessment, clinical faculty are expected to report to work and to remain at work during emergency situations.

Q. What about residents?

A. This document is intended to provide details relating to the university closing policy found in Appendix J of the university Personnel Policy Manual. This manual does not cover issues related to either faculty, residents or students. Therefore, decisions about them should be made at a departmental level.

Q. What should a supervisor do if the university announces a closing after employees have already reported to work - example: an announcement is made mid-morning that the university is closing at noon?

A. The supervisor should be in contact with the employees, both Required Attendance and non-required attendance, to discuss what needs to be done. Departments may advise all employees, in advance, that they are not to leave before checking in with their supervisor or other designee.

Q. What does the university mean when they announce liberal leave?

A. When the liberal leave plan is invoked, it means that employees who have been designated as Required Attendance must report to work or remain at work as scheduled. Other non-required attendance staff are permitted to arrive up to two hours after their normal scheduled start time or may choose not to report to work. Non-required attendance employees not reporting to work should follow departmental procedures to report absences. Time will be charged to vacation, if available, or unpaid leave. Non-required attendance employees who report to work within two hours of the normal start time will not experience a loss of pay or have time charged to leave. In those cases, the E210 does not need to be changed. If a non-required attendance person does not report to work on a day that liberal leave is announced, that absence is charged to vacation, if available, or is unpaid. The E210 should reflect either V for vacation or a W for leave without pay.

Q. What about employees who are members of the university bargaining unit?
A. Members of the university bargaining unit are covered by the terms and conditions outlined in the union contract. If supervisors of BU employee have questions, please refer to human resources.

NOTE: Take into consideration sleeping arrangements, food, hygiene and other accommodations for any employees you designated as Required Attendance.

Payroll

Q. If a Required Attendance employee who is designated to report to work when the university is officially closed does not report to work, does the employee get paid for that day?

A. No. Those designated as Required Attendance employees are required to report to work. If the Required Attendance employee does not report to work, the absence must either be charged to vacation, if available, or be unpaid. A Required Attendance employee will not be paid unless the employee uses vacation. The E210 should reflect this appropriately by use of a V to designate the absence is charged to vacation accrual or a W to indicate the absence is without pay. Text should be placed in the E210 to reflect that the employee did not report to work during an official university closure.

Q. If a Required Attendance employee fails to report to work during a university closure, what happens?

A. The Required Attendance employee who fails to report to or remain at work is subject to both loss of pay and possible disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances. The circumstances of the absence should be discussed with the employee and with human resources before finalizing a decision. The general expectation is that if one has been designated as Required Attendance and they fail to meet the obligation, they are subject to discipline. In addition, they must charge the absence to vacation, if available, or be unpaid for the day(s).

Q. If the university is closed and an employee has not been designated as Required Attendance, what happens?

A. If the department has not designated a SOM employee as Required Attendance and the university announces a closing, that employee is not expected to report to work unless they are advised by their department to do so. If the non-required attendance employee is not expected to be at work, they are paid their normal pay for the day and the E210 should reflect a P for that date to indicate pay for the day but were not physically present in the office. In the documentation section of the E210, indicate "university official snow closure".

Q. If a non-required attendance employee reports to work anyway, what happens?
A. If a non-required attendance employee reports to work when the university closing was in effect, place an X on the date in the E210 to indicate their presence in the office. In the documentation section, indicate "reported to work on university official snow closure day".

The SOM has also taken the position that if a non exempt staff member who has not been designated as Required Attendance comes to work when the university is officially closed, these employees can be paid their normal salary plus be compensated or receive time off at 1 1/2 for all hours worked. This is at the discretion of the supervisor and is not required. Attention should be paid, however, to the fair and consistent application of this practice.

Q. If a Required Attendance employee is classified as non exempt, how are they paid?

A. The current university closing policy states that when the university or division of the university is officially closed, non exempt Required Attendance staff receive normal pay plus one and one half times the hourly rate. Another method to compensate non exempt Required Attendance employees is to pay straight time for hours worked and grant time off with pay at a future date. The method used is at the discretion of the supervisor. For non exempt employees working in excess of 40 hours during the work week, overtime compensation must be paid in accordance with university policy.

Q. If a Required Attendance employee is classified as exempt, how are they paid?

A. Although the university policy is silent on the topic of compensation for Required Attendance staff that are exempt, the SOM has taken the position that it is the department's discretion to grant time off at straight time at a future date.

Q. What about part-time employees?

A. If a part-time employee is scheduled to work hours on a day that the university is closed, they will be paid only for previously established scheduled hours. If the employee did not have any previously established scheduled hours on that day, then the employee will not be compensated.

If liberal leave is announced on a day that a part-timer is scheduled to work, the part-time employee may report, if necessary, up to two hours late. If the employee reports to work, they receive pay for all hours worked. If the employee did not report to work, the absence is charged either to vacation (v), if available, or to leave with out pay (w).

Supervisors should be aware that designating a part-time employee as Required Attendance may result in a lack of coverage if the university closing occurs.
during a period the part-time employee is not scheduled to work. If a supervisor designates a part-time employee as Required Attendance, it is important for the supervisor to discuss the attendance expectations with them in advance.