

**Who determines the holiday/closing schedule for System Office?**

The System Office holiday and closing schedule is based on input from the executive officers and Human Resources. Human Resources typically provides various options and recommendations for consideration.

**How many holidays are provided to University employees each year?**

Per the North Carolina Human Resources Act, eligible employees receive 12 paid holidays per year.

**Do UNC System Office employees get the same number of holidays as employees at other agencies and universities in the State of North Carolina?**

Yes. Each campus of the University system, however, designates the specific days it observes as holidays, which can vary based on their academic calendars and other institution-specific factors.

**Why did the System Office decide to implement a winter closing practice?**

Our research shows that the majority of employees use vacation time during Winter Break. In addition, this will align with existing practice at our constituent universities.

**Is the System Office the only UNC System organization/campus that closes for winter break?**

All of the constituent institutions have observed this practice for many years.

**Do the closed days also apply to NCSEAA and UNC-TV?**

NCSEAA will be exempt from the designated closed days due to externally facing client needs and essential business operations. Likewise, UNC-TV leadership may designate a limited number of staff members as essential to critical operations during the holidays and exempt these employees from the two closed days.

**Could the System Office simply close for the winter break and designate those extra days off as additional holidays for employees?**

No. The System Office does not have authority to add more holidays to the number of allowable holidays that the General Assembly establishes.

**What if employees do not have leave to cover these days?**

At the discretion of the supervisor, management may advance vacation leave to an employee based on individual circumstances and organizational requirements. The maximum that can be advanced is the amount the employee would earn through the remainder of the current calendar year. An employee must be in pay status for leave to be advanced.

Supervisors are encouraged to work with employees in scheduling the leave and in offering flexible work schedules if the work supports this arrangement.

Employees must plan ahead to have the necessary leave days to cover the absence. State policy requires leave to be balanced at the end of the calendar year so employees who do not have leave to cover the absence will have their pay reduced for the hours that are needed.

**What happens to recently hired employees who have not earned enough leave time to cover a winter break closing?**

Employees hired between Dec. 1- 16, 2019, should accrue leave for the month of December and may use their vacation leave to cover one or both of the System Office closed days. Employees who do not have sufficient leave will not be paid for Dec. 27.

We also encourage supervisors to work with employees in scheduling the leave and in offering flexible work schedules if the work supports this arrangement.

**How should negative leave balances be handled?**

A negative leave balance cannot be carried over from one calendar year to the next. If an employee is overdrawn on leave, it will be necessary to make deductions from the employee's last paycheck of the calendar year or as soon after as allowable.

**What types of leave can employees use to cover the System Office Closed Day(s)?**

Employees can use annual leave, bonus leave, or accrued compensatory time to cover System Office closed day absences.

**If employees want to work on days that the System Office is closed, can they do this instead of using their leave?**

The intent is for the System Office to be closed so employees do not have the choice to work or not. Supervisors can require employees to work to perform essential functions. However, for all System Office and UNC-TV employees who are not designated as essential employees, the closed days are mandatory.

**Will some departments be open on days that are designated as holidays and closings?**

Some departments have essential work that must be done and designated employees report to work regardless of state, federal, or University holidays. SHRA employees who work on designated holidays must be paid holiday premium pay, in addition to hour for hour compensatory time up to 8 hours daily. State guidelines do not permit the System Office to pay premium holiday pay for the closed days during winter break.

**How will those designated essential employees be chosen?**

For the System Office, the president or a senior vice president may identify designated essential employees to Assistant Vice President Ashley Nicklis in System Office HR. At UNC-TV, senior leadership may designate essential employees after conferring with HR Director Anne Schwarz.

**Can employees be required to work on holidays? Do they get extra pay?**

Yes, supervisors can require employees to work on holidays. If they do so, SHRA employees are paid holiday premium pay (an additional 1/2 of their regular rate) as well as given hour for hour comp time up to 8 hours.

**Do employees get additional pay for working on the System Office Closed Day(s)?**

No. However, these employees will retain the leave they would have had to use if they had not worked during the closing. Example: An SHRA employee works 8 hours on a day that is designated as a holiday and 8 hours on a day that is designated as a Closed Day. The employee would be paid holiday premium pay for the hours worked on the holiday and receive 8 hours of compensatory time. The employee would be paid regular pay for the hours worked on the Closed day and would not code any leave for that day (no additional entry needed for payroll).

**Who can provide additional information?**

If you have questions about the holiday schedule, please contact the Benefits unit in the Office of Human Resources at 919-843-4869.