

From: [Office of the Provost](#)
To: [KU Lawrence Faculty](#)
Cc: [KU Lawrence Unclassified Professional Staff](#)
Subject: Relief Options for Faculty Facing Difficulties in Fulfilling Job Duties During the Pandemic
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*Sent on behalf of Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor Barbara A. Bichelmeyer and
Vice Provost for Faculty Development Chris Brown.*

Relief Options for Faculty Facing Difficulties in Fulfilling Job Duties During the Pandemic

Dear Faculty,

You have been called upon over the summer to do extraordinary work preparing your courses. Likely you have also struggled to keep research and service activities on track, and may be dealing with challenging personal and family circumstances brought about by this pandemic. There is so much complexity already in our faculty work, and with all the pandemic has brought, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to support everyone.

The fall semester is upon us, and while we recognize the importance of flexibility for meeting the demands of our many obligations, **teaching responsibilities allow us the least flexibility to change.** We have an institutional commitment to deliver the instruction we have promised, so if you find yourself unable to teach, we need to adapt in a way that minimizes impacts to our students as well as to our university.

If you are experiencing any difficulties in meeting your faculty obligations, especially teaching, please reach out to your dean, chair, or director:

- Explain your concerns so they understand whether the difficulties fulfilling work obligations are related to health-related concerns, school or child-care concerns, or some other personal or professional matter.
- Work with your chair or dean to determine if there are ways to get relief with minimal impact to the teaching mission of your department.

Teaching in an effective and engaging way through the pandemic is a top priority for KU. If changes need to be made to relieve some of the challenges you are experiencing, please prioritize continuation of your most essential courses and consider temporarily reducing efforts in research or service rather than from teaching.

- Faculty Development and Employee Relations in Human Resource Management (HRM) are partners in helping deans, chairs, directors and individual faculty members think through and implement options for helping address the varied circumstances that complicate faculty work during this time.
- Full-pay options include: Modified instructional duties, differential allocation of effort (tenured/tenure-track faculty), and [EFMLA through FFCRA](#)* (available through Dec. 31).
- Reduced-pay options include: Leave of absence, and voluntary reduction of FTE.

* Under the FFCRA, an employee qualifies for paid time-off if the employee is unable to work (**or unable to telework**) and needs to be absent from work because the employee:

1. is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
2. has been advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2);
5. is caring for a child (up to 14 years of age) whose school is not offering in-person teaching or place of care is closed (or child-care provider is unavailable) for reasons related to COVID-19; or
6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the secretaries of Labor and Treasury.

If you are dealing with these situations, please review the [COVID-19 Leave Request Form](#) and discuss your options with your dean, chair, or director; Faculty Development; or Employee Relations.

Please know that we recognize the concerns among faculty about teaching evaluations, annual evaluations, review of progress toward tenure, promotion and tenure review, and post-tenure review. Faculty governance, the Faculty Success Design Team, and Faculty Development, among other groups, have already begun to work on proposals for short-term and longer-term adjustments in our evaluation processes to account for the disruption COVID-

19 has brought to faculty work. We will provide more details later in the semester.

We hope this information is helpful to you as we all work to navigate the challenges of COVID-19.

Thank you for all you do for KU.

Respectfully,

Barb and Chris

Barbara A. Bichelmeyer
Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

J. Christopher Brown
Vice Provost for Faculty Development

