

Work Share FAQ

The pandemic continues to be a part of all our lives. As a result, the University will again participate in the Work Share program beginning in May, 2021, and running through at least August 1, 2021. This FAQ intends to provide general information to employees regarding work share participation. Specific questions should be directed toward your supervisor or Human Resources.

What is Work Share?

The Work Share program is effective May, 2021, and expected to run through mid-August, 2021, and includes selected non-exempt bargained-for employees. EMU's Work Share plan was submitted to, and approved by, the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA). The work share program for this summer affects approximately 200 employees. The announcement of the program was sent out by President Smith on May 21 and employees who are affected have all been notified. That announcement may be found on [EMU's Covid-19 website](#).

This Work Share FAQ has been developed to help answer some common questions-EMU employees may have about EMU's Work Share plan. It is a living document which will be supplemented as needed as additional questions arise that need to be addressed. It should be stressed that the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency and the federal government establish the rules for the program and make decisions based on their interpretation of the rules. The UIA has also developed a [helpful FAQ](#) for employees participating in Work Share.

A. General Information

1. How long will I be on a reduced work schedule in the Work Share Program?

Most bargained-for staff participating in the Work Share program will be participating in Work Share until August 14, 2021. It is anticipated that the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance \$300 per week unemployment supplement payment will be available until September 1, 2021.

2. What sort of notifications will I get that I am included as a participant in the Work Share plan EMU submitted to the State of Michigan?

You should have already been notified via email and/or your supervisor regarding your participation in Work Share. You should also get a notification from the State of Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) notifying you that EMU's Work Share plan has been approved and that you are a participant.

3. What actions should I be taking to make sure I'm registered for Work Share and receive payment?

Individual employees **do not** need to file for unemployment benefits as part of the Work Share program. The Work Share program is entirely employer-driven. Once the UIA approves an employer's Work Share application, employees are paid unemployment benefits by the UIA in accordance with the details included in the University's Work Share application. According to the State, all employees participating in the Work Share program should be automatically eligible to receive the federal \$300 federal pandemic unemployment supplement through September 1, 2021.

4. Do I need to worry about whether I will lose my job while I'm participating in Work Share?

No. One of the conditions of an employer participating in the Work Share program is that it cannot layoff or further reduce the hours of an employee while that employee is participating in the Work Share program.

5. I received several notices from UIA telling me the plan was terminated and then another one that I was placed in a plan. Why am I getting multiple notices?

You may receive multiple notices from UIA about your participation in the plan. This is caused when we have to make an adjustment to a plan. In order to make an adjustment to a plan, the existing plan has to be terminated and then the revised plan submitted. As we establish the groups, changes may be required causing us to create a modified plan, which generates a notice to you each time this happens. These changes do not affect your eligibility or your benefit.

B. Work Share payments from the State

1. When can I expect my payment from the State?

EMU must certify participating employees' time with the State of Michigan every 2 weeks. EMU cannot certify with the State until after (a) employees have submitted their work hours and leave time to Payroll and (b) EMU reviews the work hours and leave time submitted for compliance with Work Share program requirements. The State's website says payments are made 2 to 3 days following an employer's Work Share certification.

2. If I have questions about Work Share and my benefits from the State, who do I contact?

Please reach out to the State of Michigan about the Work Share program. Visit the website at www.michigan.gov/uia or call 1-844-WORKSHR (1-844-967-5747).

2. The State of Michigan is not getting back to me about my question regarding Work Share benefits from the State. Who can I talk to at EMU?

EMU cannot answer your questions about your Work Share benefits from the State. Please continue to follow up with the State of Michigan.

3. EMU's Work Share plan was effective in May 2021 what if the payment is delayed or I have not received my payment from the State, will this be back-dated?

Per the www.michigan.gov/uia website – Approved claims will be dated to reflect the effective date of an employee's participation in a Work Share plan.

4. How are payments made by the State of Michigan?

Per the www.michigan.gov/uia website – Payments are disbursed through direct deposit or debit card after EMU certifies employee eligibility on a bi-weekly basis. Unless further action is taken by a Work Share participant, the UIA's default payment method for Work Share is debit card. EMU already

provided participating employee's home addresses to the State so an employee does not need to take any action in order to receive their Work Share payments from UIA via debit card.

5. What if I do not want a debit card but want direct deposit?

Payments are issued by either a UIA issued debit card from Bank of America or direct deposit to your financial institution of choice. The default method of payment is via debit card. If an employee does nothing, then they will receive their Work Share payments from UIA via debit card. Some EMU Work Share participants have successfully switched from debit card to direct deposit using the telephone number provided by the UIA, (866) 500-0017, and following the telephone prompts to choose the method through which they would like to receive payments.

EMU employees may also create an online account through MiWAM for Claimants at <https://miwam.unemployment.state.mi.us/CImMiWAM/>/. **If you create this online account, and it does not automatically recognize that you are participating in Work Share, DO NOT follow any prompts to file an unemployment claim.** As a reminder, Work Share is entirely employer-driven and you do not need to, nor should you, file an unemployment claim yourself. Rather, please wait until the State automatically connects your MiWAM login with your Work Share information. Once that happens, you should be able to use your login information to do things like change to direct deposit, update your address, and access your Work Share payment information.

6. Will my Work Share payment from the State also include the extra \$300 federal pandemic unemployment supplement from the federal PUA Act?

While EMU cannot guarantee any federal benefits, the State website currently states that an employee who participates in the Work Share program will also be eligible to receive an extra \$300 ~~\$600~~ per week payment through the federal PUA Act through September 1, 2021. The State website also states that the \$300 payment will come from the State.

7. Will taxes be taken from this payment from the State of Michigan?

Per the State of Michigan's website, taxes are not withheld from the payments and there is no option to request taxes to be withheld. You will receive a 1099 form at the end of the year with your earnings.

C. Work Hours and Recording Time

1. I was placed on the 80% Work Share Plan. How do I know what day or how many hours to take off?

You should discuss your work week schedule with your immediate supervisor, who will approve how your work hour reduction is carried out. For example, an employee whose appointment is temporarily reduced through Work Share from 100% to 80% will need to work 32 hours, instead of 40 hours, during a regular work week. With the approval of their supervisor, the employee can take an entire 8 hour day off during the regular work week or the employee can take 2 hours off per day for 4 work days. So long as the work hours in a regular work week equal the 32, and it is approved by your supervisor, your work week may look different each work week as well.

2. How do hourly employees record their time on their timesheet? Just record 32 hours?

You should be working with your immediate supervisor to record the hours that you work. As an hourly employee and under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), you must be paid for the time you work. If your schedule is reduced to 32 hours per week, the expectation would be that you work 32 hours per week and would record 32 hours per week.

3. How do salaried exempt employees track their time?

Salaried employees are not included in the work share program this summer.

4. Can I still work overtime while I'm participating in Work Share?

Employee overtime is governed by the terms of any applicable EMU Board Policy, collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract. Generally, there are two categories of overtime. First, an employee can work "overtime" in the sense that while they don't work a number of hours greater than their regular work hours, they work "overtime" hours in that such hours may be in the evening, on weekends or during a time that employee was supposed to not be working. Typically, this type of overtime is paid at an increased rate of pay. This first type of overtime is permitted under Work Share, so long as the employee doesn't exceed the total number of work hours they are permitted to work (ie, for an employee on a 20% reduction, that employee may not work more than 32 hours in a regular work week). The second type of "overtime" is work time in addition to an employee's regular work hours. For example, when a full-time, 40 hour a week employee works more than 40 hours during a week. This second type of overtime is prohibited under Work Share. An employee on a 20% reduction may not work any more than 32 hours in a regular work week. An employee on a 40% reduction may not work any more than 24 hours in a regular work week.

5. If I am on call or carry a pager, does this count as hours worked?

This depends on what the contract says and the contract will take precedence over the answer provided below. Generally, if someone is paid to be "on call" but they are not actually called in (and thus do not work) then that on-call pay does not count against the Work Share person's hour per regular work week ceiling.

If they are on-call and actually get called in and actually work and get paid for it, then those hours count against the Work Share participant's hour per regular work week ceiling.

D. Vacation and Holidays

1. If I am taking the entire week off and using vacation or other time to keep myself paid am I still eligible for Work Share?

No, if an employee does not work a single hour for an entire work week they are not eligible for Work Share benefits for that week. In order to coordinate vacation days to ensure continued Work Share benefits each week, employees should ensure they work at least one hour each work week by discussing with and getting approval from their immediate supervisor regarding their vacation day plan. If employees are unable to work at least one hour during a work week, they need to ensure they receive approval from their immediate supervisor and notify, in advance of the full week of vacation, Dwayne Zuhlke, Director, Labor Relations at dzuhlke1@emich.edu

2. If I am taking the entire week off of work and I am reduced to 80% does that mean I only have to ask for 4 days (32 hours) of time off in order to get the entire week off?

Yes, for the time that you are on a reduced schedule you will only need to request the time off at the reduced amount. In this example, you would only need to request 32 hours off in order to be off for the entire week. As a reminder, however, if you do not work at all during an entire work week you will not receive Work Share benefits for that week. In order to stay eligible for your weekly Work Share benefit, you need to work at least one hour during the work week.

3. Will July 3rd holiday (Independence Day Observed) be paid?

For those employees who are eligible, yes, the holiday will still be paid. For hourly employees you should record Monday July 5th as a holiday. As an hourly employee, if your typical agreed-upon Work Share day off is Monday July 5th you will still be paid for the holiday and you should re-adjust your schedule pursuant to FAQ D.4 immediately below.

4. How does the July 5th holiday (Independence Day Observed) impact Work Share?

Holidays, like vacation, are not counted toward the work hours used to calculate the weekly Work Share benefit. Therefore, the work week that includes July 5th will be counted as a 32 hour work week, not a 40 hour work week. Bargained-for hourly employees who are only required to work 8 hour, consecutive work days, may work a 24 hour work week (for a 20% reduction) or a 16 hour work week (for a 40% reduction). As an example: if you are scheduled to work 4 days (80%) you would get the holiday plus work three days for that week. If you are scheduled to work 3 days (60%), you would get the holiday plus work two days that week.

5. If I'm working fewer hours, does this mean my vacation accrual is less?

No, an employee's vacation accrual will not be affected by their participation in Work Share at this time. Vacation accrual is governed by the terms of any applicable EMU Board Policy, collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract. In particular, vacation accrual may be different for those who are considered "full time" employees versus those who are considered "part time" employees. Participation in Work Share will not affect an employee's "full time" or "part time" status in this regard. That is, if an employee is considered "full time" prior to their participation in Work Share then they will continue to be considered "full time" while participating in Work Share. Accordingly, an employee's vacation accrual will not be affected by their participation in Work Share.

E. Benefits

1. If I'm working fewer hours and my earnings drop, does this mean my EMU provided Life Insurance is less?

For eligible employees, Eastern Michigan University provides Basic Term Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance coverage at no cost to you. This amount is determined based on your annual earnings rounded to the nearest \$1,000 to a maximum of \$275,000. Yes, with the reduction in your annual earnings the amount provided would decrease. When your participation in EMU's Work Share plan ends, your appointment will increase to its pre-Work Share level and the amount of benefit will increase accordingly.

2. If I'm working fewer hours and my earnings drop, does this mean my Supplemental Life Insurance is less?

No, the Supplemental Life Insurance you enrolled in is at a set amount and is not based on your income, except in the case that the amount cannot be more than 5 times your salary.

3. If I'm working fewer hours and my salary drops, does this mean if I go out on Short-Term Disability my short-term disability benefit payments will be less?

For eligible employees, Eastern Michigan University provides Short-Term Disability Insurance coverage at no cost to you. This amount is determined based on the annual earnings. Yes, with the reduction in your annual earnings the amount provided would decrease. When your participation in EMU's Work Share plan ends and your earnings increase, the amount will change as well.

4. If I'm working fewer hours and my income drops, does this mean the EMU provided retirement contribution is less?

Your participation in any EMU-provided retirement plan is governed by the terms of any applicable EMU Board Policy, collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract. Generally, for eligible employees, EMU provides an automatic contribution to your retirement account even if you personally do not save any money for your retirement. If your paycheck is less, the contribution made by EMU is less. When your participation in EMU's Work Share plan ends and your income increases the amount of EMU's contribution will increase as well.

5. If I'm working fewer hours and my salary drops, does this mean my personal annual retirement savings goal amount might not be met?

You should always watch your personal retirement savings goals and if you are on track to meet them. If your income drops, your contributions to your retirement account will drop. You may want to make an adjustment to ensure you are going to meet your retirement savings goal. Please reach out to HR_Benefits@emich.edu if you need instructions for how to make these changes.

6. Does this impact Tuition Reimbursement?

No, there will be no negative impact for eligible employees who had a 100% Full-time appointment prior to their participation in EMU's Work Share plan.

F. Disability

1. I'm currently out on disability, am I eligible for Work Share?

No, individuals who are not working due to disability, paid sick leave or other paid leave are not eligible to participate in Work Share.

2. I'm currently out on disability, will my disability payment be reduced?

Any employee currently on an approved FMLA or disability leave at the start of Work Share is not eligible for the Work Share Program. You are being paid by the disability carrier, not EMU, and this will not be reduced.

If your leave is expected to last through the duration of the Work Share program period, then you would not be eligible during this period for Work Share participation.

However, if you are on an FMLA or disability leave and are returning to work at some point during the Work Share period, you may be included in a Work Share plan that begins after you return to work. Please notify your immediate supervisor before or upon your return, so your supervisor can determine whether you should be placed in a Work Share plan similar to the one your colleagues have been included in Work Share.

3. I'm going out on a continuous disability leave during the Work Share time period. What happens?

If someone is participating in EMU's Work Share plan and then goes out on a continuous FMLA or disability leave while the plan is in place that person is no longer eligible for Work Share while on continuous FMLA or disability leave. You are eligible to take other paid time off to cover your reduced schedule consistent with EMU paid time off policies, however, you will not receive Work Share payments.

4. I'm currently out on intermittent FMLA, what happens?

Someone who is working on an intermittent or reduced FMLA leave schedule, but who is still working at least a portion of each work week, remains eligible for Work Share.

G. Office Administration

1. I feel that I cannot complete all my job duties in the reduced time, what do I do?

Each employee should discuss any issues related to the fulfillment of their job duties with their immediate supervisor.

2. Should I do an out of office message for the time I'm out? If so, what should that message look like?

Each employee should discuss this issue with their immediate supervisor, with an eye toward how employees can best serve the needs of the people with whom they work.

H. Miscellaneous

1. How does Work Share affect the federal student loan forgiveness program?

The United States Department of Education has issued guidance for borrowers related to federal student loans and the different loan forgiveness programs it administers:

<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus#borrower-questions>

2. How do I notify the UIA of changes to my personal information (such as my address) or get additional information about my account through the UIA?

EMU employees may create an online account through MiWAM for Claimants at

<https://miwam.unemployment.state.mi.us/CImMiWAM/>. **If you create this online account, and it does not automatically recognize that you are participating in Work Share, DO NOT follow any prompts to file an unemployment claim.** As a reminder, Work Share is entirely employer-driven and you do not need to, nor should you, file an unemployment claim yourself. Rather, please wait until the State automatically connects your MiWAM login with your Work Share information. Once that happens,

you should be able to use your login information to do things like change to direct deposit, update your address, and access your Work Share payment information.