UNIVERSITY HOLIDAYS
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Who determines the holiday/closing schedule for the University?
The Chancellor approves the University holidays and closing schedule, based on input from the executive officers, as well as University Human Resources, Facilities, and other units. University Human Resources drafts the options and recommendations for consideration and communicates the final decision to the campus community.

2. Who determines the number of holidays observed each year?
The number of holidays is set by the State Legislature. Details can be found in the state statutes: NCGS 126-4(5)

3. How many holidays are provided to University employees each year?
In accordance with state statutes, ECU employees receive either 11 or 12 holidays each year, depending on what day of the week Christmas falls. In years when Christmas falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, employees receive 12 holidays. If Christmas falls on a Sunday, Monday, Friday, or Saturday, there are 11 holidays. The breakdown for 2011-2013 is as follows:
   
   2011: 11 holidays  2012: 12 holidays  2013: 12 holidays

4. Why is ECU closing for additional days during the winter holiday?
In 2011 the winter holiday schedule falls in such a way that the University is only 2 days short of being able to offer a 10 day break for most employees. Since the end of December is a time when students are away from campus and most faculty and staff are already taking time off, it was determined that closing for the last two days of the month would benefit the majority of employees. In addition, the University has the potential of saving thousands of dollars in energy and administrative costs over the 10 day period. The closing is intended to boost morale, save money, and add to the University’s efforts to be an actively “green” eco-conscious organization.

5. Do other campuses in the UNC system close for part of the winter break?
Yes. Several other campuses in the system have observed this practice for many years. For instance, NC State has observed an extended winter break since 2004.

6. Why can’t the University simply close for the winter break and designate the extra 2 days off as additional holidays for employees?
The State Legislature establishes the allowable number of holidays, and the University currently does not have the authority to increase the number of paid holidays for employees.

7. What happens to recently hired employees who haven’t earned enough leave time to cover a winter break closing?
Employees hired on or before November 14th should have sufficient leave time accrued to cover the winter break days. Relatively few leave-earning employees are hired in December. In such situations, departments may consult with University Human Resources to discuss alternatives. In some cases, for example (and depending on departmental needs and resources), employees may be able to work extra time during the period leading up to the break in order to use accrued comp time during the closing. In other cases use of advance leave may be possible. Contact Employee Relations for more information on flexible alternatives.
8. What if employees do not have leave to cover these days?
Employees must plan ahead in order to have the necessary leave accruals to cover the
days. Current 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. To avoid this situation, supervisors are
encouraged to contact Employee Relations to discuss flexible alternatives for
employees who have exhausted all usable accruals (vacation, bonus, or compensatory
leave).

9. What types of leave can employees use to cover the closing days?
Employees can use annual vacation leave, bonus leave, or accrued compensatory time
to cover the closing day absences. Sick leave cannot be used. Employees who do not
make a designation by the payroll cutoff date of December 8th will have leave charged
in this order: 1) compensatory time (if any); 2) annual vacation; 3) bonus leave.

10. Will some departments be open on days that are designated as holidays and
closings?
Yes, some departments have work that must be performed (patient care, research,
safety, required end-of-month or end-of-year processing, etc.). Employees performing
work will be paid in accordance with University policies, rules, and regulations
appropriate for their work status. Employees who work during the closing should note
that the university will be lowering thermostats in some buildings over the
holiday/closing period and should dress accordingly.

11. If employees want to work on days that the University is closed, can they do this
instead of using their leave?
Work options are limited since the intent is for most University operations to be shut
down. However, supervisors may require employees to work to perform critical
functions. Work schedules need to be set and approved in advance of the winter
break. The appropriate Vice Chancellor must review and approve schedules of work
during the closing.

12. Can employees be required to work on holidays? Is so, do they get extra pay?
Yes, supervisors can require employees to work on designated holidays. For instance,
SPA 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. (Note that the days which
require use of leave time are not official holidays—see answer below). EPA and CSS
employees are paid according to the policy for their group. Supervisors should make
every effort to rotate staff who are required to work during the winter break to allow all
employees to take advantage of the time off.

13. Can employees get additional pay for working on days designated as non-holiday
closings?
No, however, employees will be provided normal pay for working and will retain the
leave they would have had to use if they had not worked during the closing.

Example: An employee works 8 hours on December 28 that is designated as a holiday
and 8 hours on December 29 that is designated as a closing. The employee would be
paid holiday premium pay for the hours worked on December 28 and receive 8 hours of
compensatory time. The employee would be paid regular pay for the hours worked on
December 29 and would not use any leave for that day.

14. Where can I get additional information?
Please contact Employee Relations @ 328-9848.