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HR Separation Resources - Home

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Impacted Employees

This FAQ is intended to support employees impacted by the reduction in force and to assist in navigating the coming weeks. This FAQ does not change or replace any individual notice, employment agreement, collective bargaining agreement, Faculty Handbook provision, benefit plan document, insurance contract, or applicable law. If there is a conflict, the applicable plan document, policy, agreement, or law will control. If you have questions that are not addressed here, please reach out to Human Resources (hr@illinoistech.edu) so we can support you appropriately.

About the Decision

Why is Illinois Tech taking this action?

These decisions are part of the university's response to ongoing financial and operational challenges, many of which are affecting higher education institutions across the country. In recent years, the university has experienced a significant decline in international graduate enrollment, resulting in lower tuition revenue. At the same time, other shifts in federal policy as well as domestic student demographic declines have limited critical sources of institutional support. Together, these external pressures have had a meaningful impact on the university's operating budget.

To address these challenges and position the university for long-term sustainability, the university is restructuring operations in several areas. While these decisions are difficult, they are intended to align resources with institutional priorities and help strengthen the university's long-term ability to advance its mission, serve students, and steward resources for the future.

Was this based on individual performance?

No. This action was not based on individual performance. These decisions are the result of broader institutional restructuring and financial challenges impacting the university. We recognize and appreciate the contributions of impacted employees to Illinois Tech.

How were decisions made about which positions would be eliminated?

These decisions were made through a comprehensive review process of the university's operational and financial needs, institutional priorities, and the roles needed to support the university's academic mission and student experience going forward.

What does this mean for the students I support or teach?

Illinois Tech's top priorities during this transition are to support students and maintain continuity in teaching, advising, and student services. In some areas, responsibilities and workflows may shift as teams adjust and as coverage plans are implemented. Academic and administrative leaders are working closely with all units to help minimize disruption and provide additional guidance as decisions are finalized. Our commitment to supporting students and their success remains central to this work.

What should I do if I'm contacted by media or external parties?

Please refer all media inquiries to Illinois Tech's communications team: press@illinoistech.edu

Employment Status

When is my last day of employment?

Your last day of employment is August 11.

What happens between now and August 11?

The period between notification and your last day of employment is expected to be a transition period. During this time, you may be asked to support handoffs of ongoing work where needed, help ensure continuity within your team, prepare for your next steps, and make use of available support resources. Specific activities may vary by role and unit. Please work with your team leader to determine your specific transition plan. During this period, you will remain on payroll and have access to benefits as outlined in your employment agreement.

Pay, Final Compensation, and Time Off

Will I receive severance?

Illinois Tech will be offering severance payments to impacted employees for six (6) weeks of pay regardless of years of service. Any employee impacted by the reduction in force, regardless of tenure, will be eligible to receive the severance payment upon the signing (and if applicable, non-revocation) of a severance agreement. Severance payments will be made as soon as administratively possible on the next regularly scheduled payroll cycle, bi-weekly for staff, monthly for faculty, following applicable consideration and revocation periods. Additional information is available in the severance agreement that you will receive.

When will I receive my final paycheck, vacation accrual and deferred pay (if applicable)?

Employees assigned to the bi-weekly payroll cycle will receive their regular earnings and vacation accrual on August 21, 2026. Employees assigned to the monthly payroll cycle will receive their regular earnings, vacation accrual and deferred pay, on August 31, 2026.

Can vacation or paid time off be used to extend employment beyond August 11?

No. Paid leave does not extend active employment beyond the separation date.

What happens to sick time or other leave balances?

Sick time and other leave balances will be handled in accordance with university policy and applicable law. Unless a policy, agreement, or applicable law provides otherwise, unused sick time is generally not paid out at separation.

Benefits and Coverage

How long will my medical, dental and vision benefits continue?

Medical, dental and vision insurance benefits run through August 31, 2026.

What are my COBRA options, and how do I enroll?

Employees, spouses, and dependents who lose group health coverage because of the reduction in force will generally receive information about continuation coverage through COBRA or any applicable continuation rights. The COBRA notice will explain available coverage, election deadlines, monthly premium costs, payment deadlines, and how to enroll.

Eligible employees, spouses, and dependents will receive the COBRA Continuation Coverage Notice from Illinois Tech's COBRA administrator, Benefits Resources of Inspira Financial Solutions ("BRI"), typically within two weeks of the loss of coverage date (August 31, 2026). Elections must be submitted within 60 days of the loss of coverage date (August 31, 2026). COBRA coverage, if elected and timely paid, is generally retroactive to the date that the active coverage would otherwise have ended so that there is no gap in covered periods. For example,

coverage that ended on August 31 will be retroactive to September 1 to ensure no gap in coverage. Employees should follow the election notice instructions carefully. You can contact BRI's Customer Service Department at 866-996-5200 with any questions.

What happens to life insurance, disability coverage, and other voluntary benefits?

Life insurance, disability coverage, and other voluntary benefits will end as of the last day worked. Employees enrolled in the Basic or Supplemental Life insurance plans administered via MetLife may be eligible to convert these policies within 31 days of their employment end date. Please contact 1-800-638-5433 to request the conversion application form.

What happens to retirement plan contributions?

Employee and employer payroll contributions will stop with the final eligible paycheck. Existing retirement account balances remain subject to the terms of the retirement plan and the recordkeeper's rules. Employees may be able to leave funds in the plan, roll funds over to another eligible retirement account, or request a distribution, depending on plan terms and tax rules. If you use TIAA as your recordkeeper, contact 1-800-842-2252 for questions. If you use Fidelity as your recordkeeper, contact 1-800-343-0860 for any questions.

What happens to tuition remission or other education benefits?

Illinois Tech will honor tuition remission or exchange benefits through the 2026-2027 academic year (excluding summer 2027) for eligible employees and dependents who are already enrolled at the time of separation. Tuition remission will not extend beyond the current academic year, and no new tuition remission benefits will begin after the employment end date. Employees with questions about their specific situation, including enrollment status, dependent eligibility, or timing, should contact Human Resources.

Flexible Spending Accounts, HSA, and Other Accounts

What happens to a Health Care FSA?

Health Care FSA payroll deductions stop with the final eligible paycheck. Eligible claims are generally limited to expenses incurred while the employee was an active participant in the Health Care FSA, unless the employee elects any available COBRA continuation for the Health Care FSA. Employees should submit all eligible claims by the plan's run-out deadline. Unused amounts that are not eligible for reimbursement or continuation may be forfeited under the plan's use-it-or-lose-it rules. If you have any questions, please contact Wage Works Customer Service at 1-877-924-3967.

Can a Health Care FSA be continued through COBRA?

In some circumstances, a Health Care FSA may be offered through COBRA for the remainder of the plan year. The COBRA election materials will state whether Health Care FSA continuation is available, the cost, and how it works. Employees should review the COBRA packet before deciding whether to continue the Health Care FSA.

What happens to a Dependent Care FSA?

Dependent Care FSA payroll deductions stop with the final eligible paycheck. COBRA does not generally apply to Dependent Care FSAs. Employees may submit eligible dependent care claims in accordance with the plan documents and run-out deadline, generally up to the available account balance and subject to plan rules. If you have any questions, please contact Wage Works Customer Service at 1-877-924-3967.

What happens to an HSA?

An HSA is employee-owned and portable. Payroll contributions stop with the final eligible paycheck, but the account remains with the employee. Employees may continue to use HSA funds for eligible expenses and may be able to make direct contributions after separation if they remain HSA-eligible under IRS rules. You can contact our HSA vendor, HSA Bank, at 1-800-357-6246 if you have any questions.

What should I do about my FSA, HSA, and reimbursement accounts?

To manage your FSA, HSA, and any reimbursement accounts, take time to review your current balances and any recent claims. Submit eligible expenses as soon as possible and keep all receipts and supporting documentation. Be sure to watch for information about runout deadlines and COBRA materials and contact your benefits administrator directly if you have questions about your specific accounts.

Unemployment, References, and Transition Support

What protection do I have under the WARN Act?

The *Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act* requires employers to provide advance notice of certain large-scale workforce reductions when specific statutory thresholds are met. This employment action does not meet those thresholds, so the WARN Act's advance notice requirements do not apply.

May I apply for unemployment benefits?

Yes. Employees separated because of a reduction in force may apply for unemployment insurance benefits after separation. Eligibility and benefit amounts are determined by the [Illinois Department of Employment Security \(IDES\)](#), not by the university. Employees should not apply for unemployment until after their separation date on August 11. Filing a claim while still receiving wages from the university may delay or affect eligibility of a claim and may require restarting the process.

How should I describe the separation?

The separation may be described as a reduction in force, position elimination, or restructuring-related separation. It should not be described as a termination for cause unless you have received a separate notice stating that the employment action was for cause.

Will employment verification be provided?

Employment verification will be handled through the university's standard process. Unless otherwise authorized, employment verification typically confirms dates of employment, position held, and other information permitted by policy and law. Human Resources and our vendor, The Work Number, do not provide the "reason" for end of employment.

How do I request a copy of my personnel file?

Employees may request a copy of their personnel records in accordance with Illinois law. Requests should be submitted to Human Resources. Due to the volume of requests, responses may take longer than usual.

Do I have access to outplacement services, and how and when will they begin?

Illinois Tech is offering access to one (1) month of outplacement services (career transition support) through a third-party provider. These services typically include resume support, interview coaching, and job search assistance. Access to these services will begin after the signed agreement is received and any applicable consideration and revocation periods have passed. Illinois Tech will notify the outplacement provider on a rolling basis, typically in weekly groups, and the provider will then contact eligible employees directly.

Career and Future Employment

Can I apply for other jobs at Illinois Tech?

Yes. Impacted employees may apply for open positions for which they meet the required qualifications; this includes positions funded by external research funds. Selection decisions will be based on the needs of the role, qualifications, experience, and applicable hiring procedures. Applying for another role does not change the August 11 employment end date unless the

employee is selected for and accepts another position before that date, or the university confirms a different arrangement in writing.

An employee rehired within 30 days will have no lapse in benefits and will be enrolled in the 403b match without a waiting period.

University Property and Access

How and when should I return Illinois Tech equipment and vacate my offices?

You are expected to make arrangements with your direct manager or Human Resources. There will be more information to come.

What happens to email, systems, and building access?

System, email, and building access will end on or after the employment end date unless earlier access changes are needed for operational, security, or administrative reasons. Employees should transition work-related files, records, and institutional materials before August 11 and should not forward confidential or university records to personal accounts unless specifically authorized.

What if an employee has questions after August 11?

Questions after separation should be directed to Human Resources or Illinois Tech's benefits administrator (Blue Cross Blue Shield), depending on the issue. Employees should keep their mailing address, personal email, and phone number current, so they receive final pay, tax forms, COBRA notices, and other post-employment materials. If you change any of this information after your last day, please contact hr@illinoistech.edu immediately.

Individual Circumstances

What should I if I'm working in the U.S. on visa?

You will receive written communication in the days following your notification. At that time, if you have any questions, please reach out to the Office of Global Services (global@illinoistech.edu).

What does this mean for tenured and tenure-track faculty?

We recognize that faculty appointments carry specific considerations and shared governance. Decisions impacting faculty roles have been made within the framework of institutional policies

and applicable academic governance processes. Faculty with questions about their individual circumstances should contact Human Resources (hr@illinoistech.edu) and/or the Office of the Provost (1-312-567-3163) for guidance.

What should I do if my mailing address changes?

If your mailing address changes before December 1, 2026, please email hr@illinoistech.edu to ensure your future W2 tax documents are mailed to the correct address. Any address updates arriving later than December 1, 2026, may delay processing and delivery of important tax documentation.

Supporting Yourself and Each Other

How do I talk to my team about this?

Start with what is clear and factual and recognize that this is a difficult moment. Acknowledge the impact, avoid speculation, and refer to the provided FAQs and information that has been shared by leadership. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is appropriate to say so and direct colleagues to Human Resources for support.

What should I do if I feel overwhelmed or uncertain?

If you need support, you are encouraged to speak with your team leader or to reach out to available employee support resources. You can access further information through the [Separation Resource Center](#). In addition to other resources, the FAQ contains detail on the Illinois Tech's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that remains available to you and provides confidential, no-cost access to short-term counseling and online support resources. (Access the Employee Assistance Program via <https://app.one.telushealth.com>; Illinois Tech's code: ill502 | password: lifeworks).

Contact List

Employees should contact [Human Resources](#) at hr@illinoistech.edu for employment, pay, transition, or policy questions. Employees should contact the applicable vendor for account-specific questions about COBRA, FSA, HSA, retirement, insurance conversion, or reimbursement deadlines.
