



April 14, 2021

DIRECTIVE: JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 20-18

TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
 ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
 ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
 ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
 ALL FOREST SERVICE JOB CORPS CENTERS
 ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
 ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS CONTRACTORS
 ALL CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES CONTRACTORS
 ALL CENTER USERS

FROM: DEBRA A. CARR
 Acting National Director **Debra Carr**
 Office of Job Corps
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Date: 2021.04.14 12:07:42 -04'00'

SUBJECT: Amended Unauthorized Absence Flexibility During Virtual Operating Status for COVID-19

1. Purpose. To provide revised guidance and instruction on unauthorized absences in distance learning during Job Corps’ virtual operating status for COVID-19.

2. Background. On August 20, 2020, Job Corps issued Program Instruction Notice (PIN) 20-05, providing flexibilities for unauthorized absences under Job Corps’ Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) Section 6.1 and Exhibit 6-1, as Job Corps remained in virtual operating status in response to COVID-19 pandemic with the majority of students engaged in distance learning off campus. As explained in PIN 20-05, under pre-COVID 19 circumstances the PRH provides that a student accrues an unauthorized absence (UA) if the student fails to return or report within two hours after the student’s required attendance time, whether on or off-center (e.g. the start of a training day). The PRH further explains that if a student accrues unauthorized absences in excess of six consecutive unauthorized absence training days or in excess of 12 nonconsecutive unauthorized absence training days in the prior 6 months, the student will be separated from the Job Corps program.

PIN 20-05 also acknowledged that during virtual operations, students are not located at Job Corps Centers and, as a result, many of the methods used by Center operators to track student attendance in the program are not presently feasible. In virtual operations, students engage in distance learning online or via mailed correspondence, and they have individualized learning schedules that begin at different hours of the training day to accommodate family and work demands.

The challenges faced by Job Corps students outlined in PIN 20-05 remain as the program continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Job Corps requires, as explained in PIN 20-17, that students engage in 20 hours per week of distance learning activities. In the distance learning environment, Centers are unable to employ many of the normal means for tracking attendance of students used when residing on campus/Center (e.g., morning attendance checks, nightly bed checks, etc.). Similarly, the present methods of tracking unauthorized absences also requires revision. Job Corps has determined that a model for tracking attendance and unauthorized absences using an hourly approach rather than by day will be more effective and is adopting the framework described below.

3. Action. Centers will delete existing UAs for all students in distance learning and re-start UA tracking under the hourly approach described below.

Student Participation, Failure to Complete, and Unauthorized Absences during Virtual Operating Status

Job Corps is providing the following guidance regarding unauthorized absences and minor infractions for failure to complete course assignments while in a virtual operating status. This guidance sets forth the manner in which unauthorized absences will be identified and tracked, while balancing the necessary flexibilities of a distance learning environment. Distance learning includes both online and correspondence learning opportunities:

- Online distance learning category: online web-based courses, mobile learning, webcasts, podcasts, video learning, computer-based instruction for those students who have access to the Internet.
- Correspondence distance learning category: mailed correspondence and lessons for those students who do not have access to the Internet.

Consistent with the need to provide flexibility during this challenging time, students in distance learning may complete their required hours or coursework at any point during the week, calculated from the preceding Monday through Sunday evening. Center Information System (CIS) will be updated to fully address the needed flexibilities of virtual operating status. Centers must conduct a weekly assessment in CIS of the number of hours that each student participated in distance learning.

For example, a weekly student schedule may include online math class for three hours, essay writing for two hours, independent reading assignments for two hours, Career Technical Training (CTT) virtual classes for eight hours, independent living skills activities for two hours, and three hours of other specific instruction. The student can complete these requirements during regular intervals each day (similar to on campus instruction), or they may exercise flexibility and complete requirements at irregular hours or irregularly throughout the week. Job Corps has adopted this approach in distance learning instruction to afford students maximum flexibility during virtual operation status.

Unauthorized Absences: Nonparticipation in Academic Training and CTT during Virtual Operating Status

On each Monday, Centers must assess participation for each student for the preceding week. Centers will utilize the Distance Learning Participation Tab in CIS to conduct this assessment on Monday of the following week and make the appropriate entries in CIS. For Centers to conduct an accurate assessment every Monday and make the appropriate entries in CIS, Center staff must maintain accurate, written records of the number of hours of student participation and contact.

Based on this assessment, the Center must take the following steps in tracking unauthorized absences **starting from the date of the issuance of this PIN:**

- After conducting the assessment on Monday, the Center will record the number of hours during the prior week that a student failed to participate or make contact as required in the student’s individualized learning plan using the table below.

Number of Hours Missed	Equivalent Number of UA Days
Up to 5 hours missed	1 UA
6-8 hours missed	2 UAs
9-11 hours missed	3 UAs
12-15 hours missed	4 UAs
More than 15 hours missed	5 UAs

- Because Job Corps’ approach to distance learning allows for weekly completion of required instruction in a nonconsecutive day format, the consecutive-day UA tracking provisions in PRH Chapter 6.1, i.e., separation after more than 6 consecutive UAs, are not applicable. As discussed above, students are afforded flexibility to complete their 20 required weekly hours at any time from Monday through Sunday. The distance learning environment does not facilitate consecutive-day UA tracking for the purpose of separation. All UA days accrued during distance learning will be considered “non-consecutive” for the purpose of PRH Chapter 6.1.
- Once the Center finds, after conducting a Monday assessment, that a student in distance learning has accrued the equivalent of thirteen UA days, the Center will separate the student on that Monday.

If a student contacts the Center with a credible and verifiable explanation for the hours missed, the student’s status may be changed to the appropriate leave category for those hours, effective the date of the emergency if the emergency prevented the student from contacting the Center in a timely manner.¹ Centers must document attempts to make contact with the student for each unauthorized absence counted and make the appropriate case notes entry in CIS.

¹ See PRH Chapter 6, Administrative Support Services, 6.1. Leaves and Absences, R4.b.

Centers still have an obligation to maintain contact with students, beyond documenting participation in distance learning for UA purposes, to determine their general welfare and identify any need for additional Center services and support, and utilize the flexibilities provided by Administrative Separation with Reinstatement where appropriate.

4. Effective Date. Immediately until rescinded or superseded. The Office of the Senior Procurement Executive will issue a Change Order simultaneously with this Job Corps PIN.
5. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to the appropriate Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and Contracting Officer (CO).