



# **INSTITUTE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES**

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

Welcome to the Institute for Disability Studies!

The Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) is Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Research, Education, and Service. Funding for the Institute is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD).

IDS is a part of The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) community. Our main office is located on the Hattiesburg campus, however we also have offices on USM's Gulf Park Campus in Long Beach, and in Jackson, MS. Since we are housed at USM, we adhere to USM policies and procedures. This employee handbook outlines internal departmental policies and procedures and highlights what each policy and procedure looks like in day-to-day operations at IDS.

We are delighted to have you as an employee of IDS and are confident that you will add much to our continued growth as we strive to serve the citizens of Mississippi. Please familiarize yourself with the university's employee handbook (a hard copy is located in the Hattiesburg front office) and this IDS specific handbook to assist you in carrying out your job duties and privileges as an employee.

Welcome and thank you.

Dr. Rebekah Young, Executive Director

Dr. Jerry Alliston, Associate Director

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## **Mission and Goals**

### Our Mission

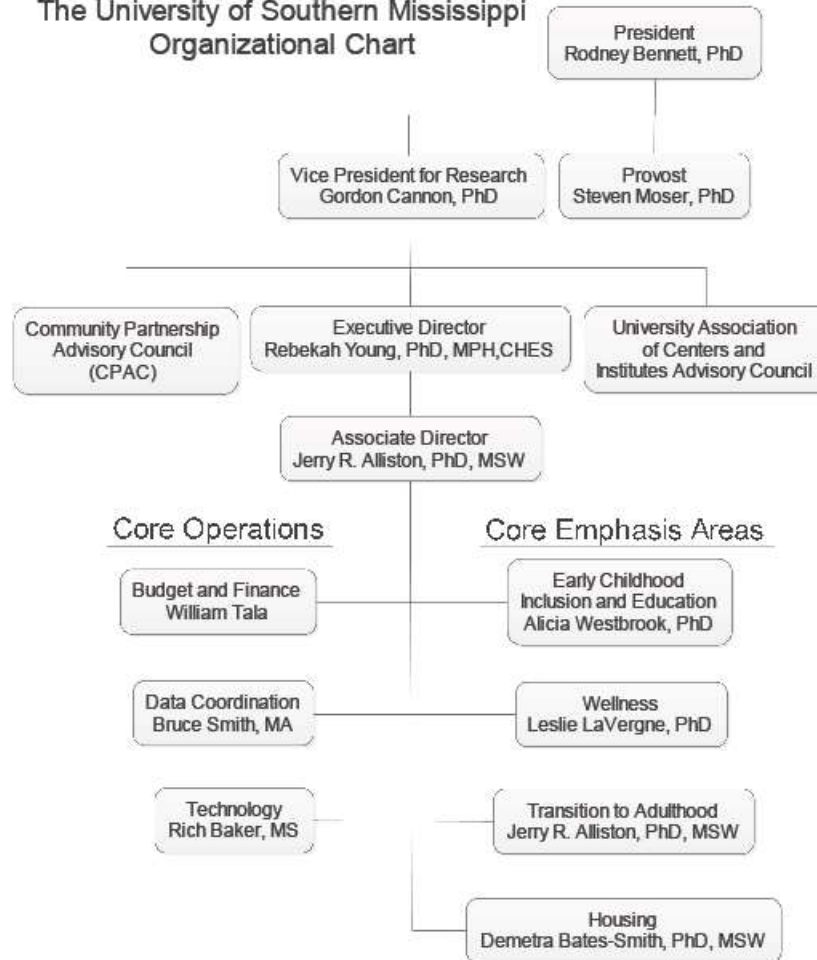
IDS (IDS) is Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities with foci in Education, Research, and Service. IDS is committed and works to enhance learning and quality of life for all Mississippians with disabilities, regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background through the promotion of inclusion at home, school, and work. Through supportive efforts to facilitate availability of community-based and culturally competent supports, IDS promotes the independence, productivity, and community integration of individuals with disabilities through interdisciplinary training; community service and outreach; model service demonstration; and dissemination of best practices based on applied research. IDS has a federal mission to enhance the quality of life across the life span for Mississippians with disabilities and their families, regardless of culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background.

### Our Beliefs and Values

Our beliefs and values are consistent with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (The DD Act). We believe that all lives, including individuals with disabilities are valuable and contribute to society. We believe and value their participation in the community, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all aspects of community living.

## Administrative Organization

### Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) The University of Southern Mississippi Organizational Chart



## **Emphasis Areas**

### Education and Early Childhood Inclusion

At IDS, we believe in and support high quality early care and education experiences for Mississippi's children. The Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC) provides cohesive education, outreach, and services based on scientific research, established best practices, and practical, hands-on approaches across the state. Additionally, MECIC offers training, on-site technical assistance, and an early childhood inclusion program to early childhood providers and educators who serve young children with special needs and those who are at-risk for later developmental delays.

### Housing

At IDS, we believe that individuals with disabilities have the right to live in safe, stable housing and fully participate in their communities. Through technical assistance and training and collaboration with various local, state and national partners, IDS reaches out to many factions in the community to ensure individuals with disabilities and their families can access available resources for help or find permanent housing depending on their needs.

### Wellness

At IDS, we believe wellness is more than just physical health. IDS is committed to enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities through the provision of resources and services promoting overall physical, mental, and social well-being. IDS offers a variety of health promotion, risk prevention, adaptive sports, and recreational programming for individuals with disabilities of diverse backgrounds and ages. Through inclusive opportunities to participate in activities such as kayaking, Quidditch, gaming, and wheelchair basketball, IDS promotes socialization, fun, and overall well-being.

### Transition to Adulthood

At IDS, we believe that services and supports to assist with independent community living should be available and accessible for people with disabilities. This is especially true for those youth and young adults with disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood services. IDS provides technical assistance, training and direct service programs to youth/young adults with disabilities/self-advocates, families, educators, transition staff, policy makers, the business community, the general public and others to ensure that youth and young adults with disabilities have opportunities for competitive, integrated employment; post-secondary education; national service and volunteerism activities; leadership experiences; and community inclusion.

## **SECTION ONE**

**The policies and procedures outlined on the following pages are set in accordance with those of USM, but are specific to IDS.**

## **Data Entry-NIRS**

At IDS we use the web-based National Information and Reporting System (NIRS) for data entry purposes. All staff members are responsible for entering their data directly into this national database. NIRS is designed to describe the outputs and outcomes of the network, provide the public with access to the projects and products of the network, and assist all centers under the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) with complying with federal and other reporting requirements.

### **Accessing NIRS**

- All new employees are required to contact Bruce Smith, NIRS Coordinator, to obtain NIRS database login information with related documentation within the first week of employment.
- A training session for the NIRS data entry should be scheduled.
- Before resignation or termination of employment from IDS, employees are required to get clearance from the NIRS Data Coordinator in regards to their NIRS data entered. Additional information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/disability-studies/howto>.

### **Data Entry**

It is the responsibility of every IDS staff member to report relevant data in NIRS on a quarterly basis. Please follow the steps below to ensure that data is being entered/reviewed in a timely manner.

- Data from the previous quarter should be entered in NIRS (<https://www.aucd.org/nirs/db/>) by every January 15th, April 15th, June 30th, and October 15th.
- Supervisors will conduct a spot check at the **end** of each reporting month (January, April, July, October) to ensure that all project staff have entered appropriate data.
- Supervisors will notify IDS directors of staff not in compliance with this data entry policy.
- Non-compliance will be documented and repeated non-compliance will result in a formal write-up in the employee's personnel file.
- The NIRS Data Coordinator will review data entries periodically and provide feedback regarding the presence of errors and specific details on how to correct these.



## Flex Time

All full-time IDS staff are expected to complete 40 hours of work per week following a 5-day, 8 hours/day schedule. Due to the nature of the work at IDS, it is understood that evening and weekend work will occasionally be necessary. For those occasions, the use of flex time may be appropriate as follows:

- Flex time earned shall be defined as a minimum of one hour of work that exceeds an 8-hour day or 40-hour week.
- Flex time will be provided to allow schedule adjustments in a 1:1 ratio (1 hour of flex time earned = 1 hour of flex to be taken).
- Flex time should be used to adjust schedules to incorporate pre-scheduled/pre-planned activities into an 8-hour work day.
- Flex time requires supervisor approval for inclusion of pre-scheduled/pre-planned after-hours and weekend activities in staff members' work hours.
- Flex time will only be provided for activities that fulfill staff obligations for project-based scopes of work.
- Flex time may not be used prior to working the hours that result in flex time earned.
- Consistent need for flex time will require schedule adjustment.

**Flex time is not to be used to accrue time to avoid using other leave time (i.e. personal or medical leave).** Rather, it provides flexibility in scheduling that allows employees to meet work obligations during a 40-hour work week.

### **IDS staff shall be responsible to:**

- Document the need for flexible schedule for pre-schedule/pre-planned activities to obtain supervisor approval.
- Report flex time earned and taken in the IDS-RTO system (<https://ids.rocks/outahere/>) to receive and document supervisor approval.
- Report and document unplanned/unscheduled activities for which flex time will be requested to supervisor within 48 hours of the activity.
- Schedule activities/events of which you have prior knowledge accordingly to avoid the need for flex time. For example, if you have an evening/weekend meeting scheduled, you should work with your supervisor to deduct those additional work hours from another work day during the pay period, preferably the day of or the day after.
- Take flex time within the time frame approved by the supervisor or no later than the end of the same pay period in which it is earned.

### **Project supervisors shall be responsible to:**

- Collaborate with project staff to create flexibility of schedule to reduce the necessity for staff to exceed 40 hours of work/week. Activities/events for which prior knowledge exist should be included in the 40 hours of work/week for staff as much as possible.

- Approve project staff requests for flex time earned and taken in the IDS-RTO system (<https://ids.rocks/outahere/>) to provide and document approval.
- Approve project staff to take flex time within a specific time frame that falls within the same pay period the time is earned.
- Assess and discuss project personnel needs if current staff frequently and consistently need to earn flex time in order to full fill programmatic/ project requirements.

*\*Compensatory leave is only available for employees who are paid biweekly. For more information, see the University's employee handbook.*

## **Handling of Received Mail/Packages**

All packages and letters (boxes, envelopes, tubes, etc., including those purchased using a departmental procurement card) received at IDS should be opened **only** by the individual to whom the package or mail is addressed. Packages/letters addressed only to IDS (the organization) will be opened by the office manager/front office staff in order to determine recipient. If the received package/letter contains items ordered using the departmental procurement card, it is the responsibility of the addressee (the person who ordered the items) to submit the invoice to the office manager. If you would like for front office staff to open packages/letters for you, please provide written consent which will be kept on file in the front office and can be revoked at any time.

## **Legislative Awareness and Lobbying**

As a member of the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) Network, IDS and its staff have a congressional mandate to educate policy makers. Efforts to educate do not violate laws regarding federal lobbying, because of the important differences between lobbying and educating. Lobbying is an attempt to influence any legislation by communicating with a policymaker and referring to or reflecting on specific legislation or regulation encouraging others to take action on a bill. Lobbying does not include non-partisan analysis, study, or research, or the communication of research findings to the general public, officials, or governmental bodies.

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) mandates UCEDD programs to advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities by educating, advising, and informing policymakers. Specifically, the DD Act calls upon UCEDDS to help build and strengthen state capacities to fulfill the purpose of the Act through the analysis of public policies that could and do affect people with developmental disabilities and their families. The DD Act further requires UCEDD staff to:

- Advise federal, state, and community policymakers,
- Provide training and technical assistance for policymakers,
- Conduct research, including the analysis of public policy,

- Disseminate information and serve as a national and international resource that include specific substantive areas of expertise, and
- Serve as a research-based resource for federal and state policymakers.<sup>1</sup>

As a recipient of federal grant funds, IDS and its staff are prohibited from using work time or resources in the act of “lobbying” as defined below. Any “lobbying” activities should occur **only** through staff member’s **personal** telephone, **personal** email, **personal** address, and on **personal** time.

Lobbying<sup>2</sup> may be defined as:

- (1) Attempts to influence the outcomes of any federal, state, or local election, referendum, initiative, or similar procedure, through in-kind or cash contributions, endorsements, publicity, or similar activity;
- (2) Establishing, administering, contributing to, or paying the expenses of a political party, campaign, political action committee, or other organization established for the purpose of influencing the outcomes of elections;
- (3) Any attempt to influence: (i) the introduction of federal or state legislation; or (ii) the enactment or modification of any pending federal or state legislation through communication with any member or employee of the congress or state legislature (including efforts to influence state or local officials to engage in similar lobbying activity), or with any government official or employee in connection with a decision to sign or veto enrolled legislation;
- (4) Any attempt to influence: (i) the introduction of federal or state legislation; or (ii) the enactment or modification of any pending federal or state legislation by preparing, distributing or using publicity or 39 propaganda, or by urging members of the general public or any segment thereof to contribute to or participate in any mass demonstration, march, rally, fundraising drive, lobbying campaign or letter writing or telephone campaign; and
- (5) Legislative liaison activities, including attendance at legislative sessions or committee hearings, gathering information regarding legislation, and analyzing the effect of legislation, when such activities are carried on in support of or in knowing preparation for an effort to engage in unallowable lobbying.

If you have any questions regarding lobbying and legislative matters, please consult with your direct supervisor first and then with IDS’ Directors. In addition, please note that a link to AUCD’s Disability Policy News In Brief is provided on IDS’ main webpage. This link will allow you to access weekly AUCD Disability Policy News In Briefs and other relevant policy and legislative awareness information. The In Briefs highlight federal legislative activities related to disability issues, including legislation moving through congress, initiatives in the President’s Administration, and policymaking activities in the AUCD network and the disability community.

<sup>1</sup> <https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/assets/files/ucedd/QuickStartGuide.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC\\_12492.pdf](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_12492.pdf)

## **Natural Disasters**

In the event of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado or other disaster, all IDS staff should follow the instructions made available through the Eagle Alert system or local authorities. Should a natural disaster occur near any of our office locations, no member of the staff should report to campus until after they have been notified it is safe to do so through the Eagle Alert system or proper authorities.

In the event of a hurricane developing and becoming a perceived threat to the Hattiesburg, Gulf Park and/or Jackson offices, local staff will be required to take all precautions within reason to protect office equipment from possible flood, water or other damage before leaving the office. If early warning is provided during the work week, all employees will be required, prior to leaving their offices, to unplug all electrical equipment; move computers, printers, and other technological devices such as iPads, to high surfaces away from windows; and close all windows and blinds. If sensitive client information is stored in office filing cabinets, the cabinets should be locked to protect client information. Only designated individuals should attempt to move large office equipment such as the copier or IDS vehicles (golf cart and van).

If an early warning is not issued during the work week and a hurricane will become a threat to campus prior to staff returning to work, the Executive and Associate Directors will designate able individuals at each location (Hattiesburg, Gulf Park, and Jackson) who will come to campus prior to the storm to shut off equipment and take necessary precautions to protect IDS property. These designated individuals may also be asked to return to campus before other staff to evaluate office conditions and determine if offices are safe for staff to return to work.

To expedite hurricane preparations, all staff should take time to shut down all IDS equipment in their offices and lock all filing cabinets containing sensitive client information at the end of each work day throughout hurricane season. Also, staff should securely shut all windows and close blinds before leaving their office each day. To prevent potential water damage in the case of storm occurrence, no electronic equipment belonging to IDS should be kept near windows. IDS will not assume responsibility for any damage to personal equipment or items kept in staff offices, nor will any designated individual be responsible for securing these items.

In the event of a hurricane becoming an imminent threat to the Gulf Park Campus. An email will be sent out to all staff notifying them of an expected state of emergency on the Gulf Park Campus and the immediate need to evacuate the IDS-GP facility. Volunteers will be needed from Hattiesburg to travel to Gulf Park and assist with the evacuation and transportation of priority items to the Hattiesburg office for storage. Volunteers will notify the IDS Executive Director by noon on the day the alert is sent out of their availability. Volunteers will be informed of departure location and time and any additional information as needed. See IDS-GP's emergency preparedness plan for further details and equipment priority list.

For the safety of staff, up-to-date contact information such as personal cellular phone numbers should be kept on file in the front office and with direct supervisors. In the event of a disaster, this will allow the Executive and/or Associate Director to contact direct supervisors and other

staff as necessary for communicating location, need for assistance and recovery information. **After a disaster has passed, each staff member should contact his/her direct supervisor via text, email or phone, if possible, to provide a safety update. The direct supervisor will then forward this information to the Executive and/or Associate Directors.**

## **Office Environment**

IDS has multiple sites, therefore offices located at the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning building in Jackson, MS or at the Gulf Park campus should abide by any specific building policies when appropriate.

All employees are encouraged to create and work in an environment that is most comfortable to them to promote productivity.

### **Open vs. Closed Doors**

IDS employees who need to minimize distractions by closing or partially closing their office doors may do so. When the office door is completely closed, the employee is responsible for indicating his/her presence in the office. If you work best with a partially closed or closed door, please use a sign to indicate you are present and working.

### **Lights On vs. Off**

IDS employees who are negatively affected by fluorescent lighting are permitted to use lamps and natural light through the windows to light their offices. Offices should not be completely dark and unlit during the work day.

## **Office Materials/Supplies**

### **Front Office Supply Closet**

Frequent use office supplies including manila folders, pens, pencils, and envelopes of various sizes are kept on hand in the front office storage closet. Minimal quantities of these supplies are generally procured using CORE funds. However, if large quantities of available supplies are being consumed by staff working on a particular project, it will be the responsibility of that project to replenish the supplies used. In order to assist the front office in ensuring that supplies are readily available, provide the requested information (name, supply removed, and project to be charged for replenishment) on the supply removal list in the front office when you remove an item (regardless of whether it is the first, middle, or last of that particular item) from the closet.

## Payroll

The University of Southern Mississippi's Department of Human Resources must receive all pertinent payroll information (additions, deletions, or other changes) before the payroll cut-off for each pay period. This payroll cut-off date is recorded on the payroll calendars. Information received after the cut-off date will be processed in the next payroll period.

Time and attendance forms must be submitted through SOARHR to the Controller's office no later than noon on Monday after the Friday payroll cut-off. Please refer to the payroll calendar at <https://www.usm.edu/controller/biweekly-pay-date-calendar> and the University's handbook for more detailed information regarding payroll and types of employees. **Prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks, time and attendance due dates will be adjusted according to the schedule provided by the Controller's office.**

**To assure compliance with the University's payroll cut-off, all IDS employees and student workers paid biweekly must submit work time in SOARHR by noon on the Friday pay end date.**

## Press, Media, and Creative Services

The Office of University Communications provides essential communication and creative services to The University of Southern Mississippi and assists all university units and affiliates with individual communication needs.

Employees should share all created materials (e.g. posters, flyers, manuals etc.) with their supervisor. In order to standardize IDS' materials and activities, all IDS staff **MUST** submit final drafts of materials to be disseminated to Dr. Rebekah Young for approval, after receiving their supervisor's approval. Dr. Young will work with staff and the Hattiesburg Office of University Communications to ensure that materials are appropriate and ready for dissemination.

## Responsibilities of All Employees

Employees and student workers are representatives of IDS. Therefore, it is expected that all uphold standards that represent the image of the Institute, and The University of Southern Mississippi by being respectful, courteous, and cooperative with others. Extensive use of time for matters not pertaining to employment is strongly discouraged.

### **Dress code**

Due to the fact that IDS is made up of various programs serving different populations, there is no formal dress code policy. However, each program is expected to set a professional image regarding dress in the workplace specific to their job duties. As per university tradition, casual Fridays will be observed so casual wear, including jeans, is allowed, work activities permitting.

From Mondays to Thursdays, casual wear is also allowed if scheduled work activities require a more casual attire.

As a result of being housed on a university campus, IDS provides employment opportunities for college and graduate students in the form of work study assignments, assistantships or fellowships. Student workers are also expected to dress professionally. Student workers are not allowed to wear extremely short shorts, oversized t-shirts, pajama pants, etc. All student workers should adhere to the dress code guidelines set by their direct supervisor.

### **Children in the Workplace**

Employees are responsible for making arrangements for the care of their children during work hours. Employees are not allowed to provide habitual care for their children in the workplace at any time during the year. Yet, IDS understands that unexpected circumstances and emergencies arise. In these instances, the employee should contact the supervisor and the executive director to identify potential arrangements. In instances when a child is in the workplace, the parent is responsible for keeping the child within their office and supervising their activities. It is completely unacceptable to care for sick children e.g., fever, flu etc. in the workplace.

### **Reporting Leave**

All IDS staff are expected to report medical and personal leave in accordance with their biweekly or monthly pay status.

- Monthly time and attendance should be reported in SOARHR by **5:00 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the following month.**
- Biweekly time and attendance should be reported on biweekly time sheets and submitted to the Budget Manager (Billy Tala) by **noon** on the Friday pay end date.

Leave reported on biweekly timesheets and in SOARHR should reflect the number of hours of leave requested in IDS' internal leave system (<https://usmids.org/outahere>). **Inaccurate timesheets and SOARHR time and attendance reports will not be approved and will be viewed as incomplete. Failure to accurately complete time and attendance records may result in no leave payment or PERS leave certification.**

### **Smoking**

IDS abides by USM's tobacco-free policy. IDS staff are NOT allowed to smoke or use tobacco on campus or in University/IDS owned facilities, buildings, and vehicles. Smoking is also prohibited in vehicles rented with University funds.

## **Social Media**

IDS employees are responsible for what they post on-line. Any conduct that adversely affects employee's job performance and the performance of fellow employees, or adversely affects clients, the university or other state agencies, may result in disciplinary action, including termination. IDS employees are encouraged to avoid posting pictures of those we serve on their personal accounts that could be considered controversial. For more information on Social Media guidelines, please review USM's guidelines at the following link

<https://www.usm.edu/provost/guidelines-instructional-use-social-media-usm>.

## **Taking Classes-IDS Employees**

Regular full-time or regular part-time employees of The University of Southern Mississippi, may request approval from their supervisors to take up to either six (6) semester hours or (3) semester hours, depending on employment classification, without fee payment. Regular full-time employees, may only take three (3) semester hours during day classes. Personal leave may be used upon approval from supervisor. Regular part-time employees may not take classes during their regular work schedule.

Additional Information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/facultystaff-policy>.

## **Teaching Classes-IDS Employees**

Employees who teach classes during their normal working hours, and who receive additional compensation above their normal salary, will charge this time to personal (vacation) leave. Employees also have the option of using their lunch hour to teach, with approval from their supervisor, if the class time is one hour (60 minutes) or less. Employees whose supervisor approves use of the lunch hour option are expected to be in the office from 8:00-5:00 with exception of the one-hour class period.

## **Technology**

During work hours, use of technology, particularly cell phones, for personal reasons should be limited as much as possible. While it is permissible to use personal cell phones and other technology while during work hours, these items should **not** interfere with your job performance or take priority over your job responsibilities.



## Time Off Requests

IDS appreciates the valuable contributions of all staff, and recognizes the need for staff to take time off to recharge or to deal with illness and health-related issues. Requests for time off should be processed through the IDS-RTO system (<http://www.usmids.org/outahere/>). **Please note that employees should not request time off in excess of what they will have accrued by the time the leave will occur.** After your request for time off has been entered, an email will be sent to your supervisor asking him/her to approve your request. Once your supervisor has approved/denied your request, you will receive email notification with the approval decision.

**If your request for leave is not approved due to lack of available leave time, but your supervisor allows you to be off, you will be taking unpaid leave.**

\*Special circumstances exist for those with chronic health conditions or facing lengthy medical leave. Please refer to the University's employee handbook or contact HR to discuss these circumstances, medical certification, and FMLA.

\*It is your responsibility to be aware of your available leave balance. Exceeding your available leave balance may result in unpaid work time.

## Travel

### **As Work Time**

All **non-commuting** work related travel that occurs **outside normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm)** is considered part of IDS staff members' work time. Travel work time begins when the IDS employee departs home and ends upon arrival at the specified destination concluding the travel. Travel work time does not include stops for meals or extended breaks (longer than 15 minutes). The tables below provides examples of work-related travel that constitutes work time. It is expected that travel will be planned in advance, therefore travel time will be reflected as flex time and provided to staff in a 1:1 ratio. In accordance with policies detailed on page 9 of this manual, IDS staff are responsible for documenting flex time earned as a result of travel work time and working with their supervisors to arrange for its use during the pay period it was earned.

*Example 1: Sunday flight from Jackson to Washington, DC for Monday morning meeting*

Activity	Start Time	End Time	Total Work Hours
Travel from home to airport	8:00 am	10:00 am	2
Clear security screening, arrive at gate, board plane	10:00 am	11:30 am	1.5
Flight	11:30 am	3:30 pm (ET)	3
Securing and taking transportation from airport to accommodation	3:30 pm	4:30 pm	1
			Flex Earned = 7.5 hours

*Example 2: Travel for 8:00 meeting in Jackson that lasts until 5:00 pm*

Activity	Start Time	End Time	Total Work Hours
Travel from home to Jackson	6:00 am	8:00 am	2
Meeting in Jackson	8:00 am	12:00 pm	4
Lunch	12:00 pm	1:00 pm	0
Meeting continues	1:00 pm	5:00 pm	4
Travel from Jackson to home	5:00 pm	7:00 pm	2
			Total = 12 hours
			Flex Earned = 4 hours

*Example 3: Travel for 8:00 meeting in Jackson that lasts until 12:00 pm*

Activity	Start Time	End Time	Total Work Hours
Travel from home to Jackson	6:00 am	8:00 am	2
Meeting in Jackson	8:00 am	12:00 pm	4
Lunch	12:00 pm	1:00 pm	0
Shopping at Outlet Mall	1:00 pm	4:00 pm	0
Travel from Jackson to home	4:00 pm	6:00 pm	2
			Total = 8 hours
			Flex Earned = 0 hours

## **Reimbursement**

IDS employees are generally subject to the University's travel policies outlined at the following link <https://www.usm.edu/procurement-contract-services/travel-policies-and-procedures>.

**IDS staff will only receive mileage reimbursement for work-related travel IF the travel exceeds twenty (20) miles roundtrip and prior supervisor approval has been obtained.**

## **Treatment of Confidential Information**

IDS employees must not misuse confidential information. All employees with job duties that require them to handle such information are required to safeguard any confidential information and only use it or disclose it as expressly authorized, or specifically required in the course of performing their job duties.

Misuse of confidential information can be intentional or a product of negligence or carelessness, for example, discussing an individual's information in the restroom and a visitor overhears.

To ensure information remains confidential, employees are required to use locked file cabinets to store their documents. Staff should provide supervisors with a key to the cabinets or be made aware of where the key is located in case information is needed while the staff member is not in the office. Disposing confidential information is also significant. Please use a paper shredder to dispose all confidential documents.

Any questions or concerns regarding what qualifies as confidential information among individuals are employees can be directed to the executive director.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics/>.

## **Working from Home**

On occasion, circumstances (minor illness/injury, home-related repair, need for minimal distractions, etc.) may arise for which IDS staff may request to work from home rather than taking personal or medical leave. Generally, migraines, injuries requiring prescription pain medications, surgical recovery, hospitalization, sick children, and severe gastrointestinal illnesses would not qualify as circumstances approved for working from home.

Working from home is **not** an option to avoid using leave time and, thus, **must be requested and approved** by one's supervisor prior to exercising this option. It is expected that staff members who are granted permission to work from home will maintain the same level of productivity and phone and email accessibility as would have been available while in the office. Supervisors may request specific details regarding the need to work from home to inform their approval decisions.

## Work Schedules

University offices, including those at IDS, operate on an 8:00 am - 5:00 pm work schedule and are closed from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm for lunch. IDS employees are expected to be in their offices between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, unless they are working in the field. All IDS employees are eligible for a one-hour lunch break.

Staff and students responsible for providing front office coverage must be available between 8:00 am and 12:00 pm and from 1:00-5:00 pm to ensure that visitors are greeted and signed in. When full coverage is unavailable, the front office will be closed (and locked) for lunch between 12:00 and 1:00 pm.

### **Out of Office During Work Hours Notification**

With the exception of a generally expected departure corresponding to the University's recognized lunch hour from 12:00 – 1:00 pm, employees are responsible for providing **written notification** to their supervisor and a second point of contact identified below (via email or text) of their departure and expected return when leaving the office during normal business hours (8:00 am – 5:00 pm) whether for work in the field or for other matters. Similar notification is expected from any employee who will not be arriving in the office by 8:30 am or leaving for the day before 4:30 pm. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO INDICATE THE WORK DAY IS 8:30-4:30. Rather, the 30 minutes at the beginning and ending of the work day should be viewed as a grace period to be used occasionally when running late or needing to leave early. Abuse of the grace period may result in its termination for all staff.**

\*Note: IDS staff are not required to take lunch from 12:00-1:00. Staff may take lunch breaks earlier or later than the University's observed lunch period of 12:00-1:00, but these breaks should correspond with the period of the day generally considered as lunch hours.

Hattiesburg Office: All Hattiesburg employees should notify their direct supervisor and Cassandra Powell, Office Manager, ([cassandra.powell@usm.edu](mailto:cassandra.powell@usm.edu); cell number may be found in IDS staff directory) of their departure and expected return time. If Chandra is not in the office to receive the notification, employees should also verbally notify the student worker or other front office staff on duty in the main office.

Jackson Office: All Jackson employees should notify their direct supervisor and Bruce Smith, Management Assistant for Program Services ([bruce.smith@usm.edu](mailto:bruce.smith@usm.edu); cell number may be found in IDS staff directory) of their departure and expected return time. Employees should also note their departure and expected return time on the white board in the hallway near Bruce's office.

Gulf Park Office: All Gulf Park employees should notify their direct supervisor and Devin Bellman, Management and Volunteer Service Specialist ([dbellman@usm.edu](mailto:dbellman@usm.edu); cell

number may be found in IDS staff directory) of their departure and expected return time. If Devin is not in the office to receive the notification, employees should also note their departure on the calendar in the conference room and verbally notify the student worker on duty.

## Vehicle Usage

### Golf Cart Usage

The golf cart is available for use by all IDS staff, student workers, and AmeriCorps members (must receive approval from AmeriCorps program staff) who have a valid driver's license. Keys to the golf cart are kept in the front office and must be signed out and in for each use. Based on weather, the plastic curtains on the golf cart may need to be adjusted. Do **not** attempt to adjust the curtains yourself. Please contact Chandra Harper (6-5030) for assistance with curtain adjustment. In addition, please follow the steps when using the golf cart.

- Provide all requested information, including expected return time on check-out sheet in front office to obtain keys.
- Do **NOT** drive on sidewalks.
- Only take cart to appropriate **ON** campus areas.
- Always park in an accessible parking spot on the first floor of the garage upon return.
- Ensure that the parking spot is **NOT** marked as van accessible.
- Remove all trash and other objects from the golf cart when you return.
- Return key to front office and sign golf cart in.

### Van Usage

The van is available for use by all IDS staff who have a valid driver's license. Select student workers and AmeriCorps members with valid drivers' may also receive permission through their supervisors and IDS directors to use the van. General usage of University owned vehicles, including IDS van, is subject to the vehicle use policies outlined at <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-adma-pur-018>.

Keys to the van and the fuel card are kept in the front office and must be signed out and in for each use. Please follow the steps to reserve and use the van.

- Request van reservation using the online Google calendar (follow the steps below)
  - Go to <https://calendar.google.com>.
  - Log into account (Account name: [usmids@gmail.com](mailto:usmids@gmail.com); password: see Rich Baker).
  - Review desired date and time on calendar to ensure van is not already reserved.
  - Click on the "Create" button towards the upper left side of the calendar page to open the reservation page.

- Enter the date and time of requested reservation in appropriate spaces near the top of the page.
- Click on “IDS Shared Calendar” dropdown menu next to calendar and scroll down to select “Van Reservation”.
- Click on “Save” at top of page.

### **IDS Driver Responsibilities:**

- Provide all requested information, including project to be charged for fuel, on check-out sheet in front office to obtain keys and fuel card. If use of the van will occur outside normal business hours (before 8:00 am and after 5:00 pm Monday-Friday, please contact Chandra Harper, office manager, to make arrangements for key check-out and check-in.
- Fill up van with gas before returning to campus. **Make sure you get a receipt!**
- Park van in one of the accessible spaces immediately to the right upon entry into the first floor of the garage (if available) upon return. If one of these spaces is not available, please park in any available handicap space.
- Remove all trash and other objects from the golf cart when you return.
- Return key, fuel card, and receipt to front office and sign-in.
- In addition to contacting University police, notify your supervisor and primary office contact (Bruce Smith-Jackson, Chandra Harper-Hattiesburg, or Devin Bellman-Gulf Park) **immediately** if you have been involved in an accident or have damaged the vehicle. Appropriate University protocol will then be followed.
- Notify your supervisor and primary office contact (Bruce Smith-Jackson, Chandra Harper-Hattiesburg, or Devin Bellman-Gulf Park) **immediately** if you are experiencing automotive trouble. Appropriate University protocol will then be followed.

## SECTION TWO

**The policies and procedures listed on the following pages are set by USM and should be followed by all IDS employees. Specific details regarding these policies and procedures may be found at the URLs provided.**

An electronic copy of the complete USM employee handbook may be found at [https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/employmenthr/pdf/employee\\_handbook\\_june\\_2014.pdf](https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/employmenthr/pdf/employee_handbook_june_2014.pdf).

# **University Employment**

## **Benefits**

Information regarding benefits available to University employees may be found at <https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/benefits>.

## **Changes in Employment Status: Promotion, Transfers, and Termination**

IDS is bound by USM's policies on promotions, transfers, and termination. As allowed by grant funding and university policies, merit-based raises will be considered. Please review USM's Employee Handbook and consult IDS's executive director for detailed information regarding employment status policies and requirements.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy>.

## **Compensation**

Information regarding compensation and payroll deductions may be found at <https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/compensation>.

## **Conflicts of Interest and Nepotism**

Section 25-1-53 of the Mississippi Code, 1972, specifically prohibits nepotism in state agencies and institutions of higher learning. A department or unit of the University may not employ any person in any capacity if such a person is related by blood or marriage within the third degree to any other employee in the same department or unit if either one of the two related employees in the same or different units will have direction or supervision of the other. A relation within the third degree is defined as a person related by blood or marriage which would include parents, children, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, grandparents, great-grandparents, and step relatives. The nepotism policy applies to employees paid through contracts and grants. Student employees are also covered under this policy.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy>.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

As a part of the USM community, IDS adheres to the University's equal employment opportunity policy. The policy reads as follows:

The University of Southern Mississippi provides equal employment opportunities without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic



information, religion, race, color, national origin, and/or veteran status. The University also is pledged to develop and support an environment of affirmative action toward this policy.

The University recognizes its obligation to provide reasonable accommodation to individuals with disabilities and any requests should be made to the Department of Human Resources. The policy applies to all employees and applicants for employment regardless of position or source of funds.

It is the responsibility of all persons making employment decisions to support this policy as established in the University's Affirmative Action Compliance Program. Any questions regarding Affirmative Action or Equal Employment Opportunity can be directed to the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo/aaeeo-complaint-procedure>.

## **Grievance**

A grievance is a work-related problem or a situation that an employee believes to be contrary to policy or is a barrier to his or her effective conduct of employment. IDS will generally follow USM's grievance procedures, particularly with chain of command. IDS employees may file a grievance or complaint without penalty or fear of reprisal. The employee may, prior to, or instead of filing a grievance or complaint, seek the assistance of:

- Human Resources Director,
- Immediate Supervisor, and
- Next level of management in their respective unit.

Please refer to the university's employee handbook at the following address for detailed information regarding grievance procedures.

[https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/employmenthr/pdf/employee\\_handbook\\_june\\_2014.pdf](https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/employmenthr/pdf/employee_handbook_june_2014.pdf).

## **Incident and Accident Reporting**

All accidents or incidents involving physical injury to an individual or physical damage to the property of the University or some other party should be reported **immediately** to the University Police Department. More information may be found at <https://www.usm.edu/police/whom-call-emergency>.

The University Police Department's contact information relating to each campus is listed below:

Hattiesburg	Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach
911 (emergency)	911 (emergency; directed to Long Beach PD)
601-266-4986 (non-emergency)	601-266-4986 (non-emergency)
Bond Hall, First Floor West	138 Beach Park Place

## **Leave**

Information regarding leave for University employees may be found in the employee handbook at [https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/employment-hr/pdf/employee\\_handbook.pdf?v=1](https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/employment-hr/pdf/employee_handbook.pdf?v=1).

## **Outside Employment**

IDS employees interested in pursuing approval to engage in any form of outside employment **must** complete an “Application for Permission to Engage in Outside Employment or Practice of Profession” located on the Human Resources website page. This form must be approved through the Office of the President. A copy will also be kept on file in HR.

Employees will not engage in an outside business that would in any matter compete with a similar business over which they would have direct supervision, inspection, or purchasing authority within the University, such being a conflict of interest.

The “Application for Permission to Engage in Outside Employment or Practice of Profession” must be completed or updated at the end of each fiscal year or each time the outside employment changes. Applications are required to be completed even if no payment is being received.

**Note:** This form should be completed for any form of outside employment or business, including multi-level marketing companies such as, Mary Kay, It Works etc.

## **Standards of Conduct**

The University emphasizes the necessity for and responsibilities of all employees to be aware of and perform their duties and responsibilities in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, policies, and rules of the Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning.

Additional Information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics/standards-conduct-guide>.

## **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

As a part of the USM community, IDS is an equal opportunity employer and selects the best matched individual for positions based on their job-related qualifications, regardless of their race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, veteran status, physical disability, intellectual disability or political affiliation.

Please review the Terms and Conditions of Employment under the Employment Policies Section in USM’s Employee Handbook for further details.

Additional Information can be found at <https://www.usm.edu/employment>.