Welcome to The University of Southern Mississippi!

To those of you who are presently members of the faculty and staff of the University, we extend our sincere appreciation for your past loyalty and devoted service. To those of you who are joining our staff - Welcome!

We are pleased that you have become a member of The University of Southern Mississippi family and are confident that you will contribute much to our continued growth. A growth-oriented university requires the cooperation of everyone associated with it. Your position on the campus is important to our total effort, and your personal success will be determined by how well you understand and accept this challenge.

This handbook has been prepared to assist you in carrying out your duties and to inform you of privileges and responsibilities that are yours as an employee of the University. A variety of information has been assembled here. If you have specific questions that are not covered in the following pages, please contact your department director or University Human Resources.

Sincerely,

Rodney Bennett
President
AT WILL EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT
Employment shall be "at will" and shall be terminable "at will" by the University or staff member with or without cause. Any oral or written statements or promises to the contrary, other than contracts issued by the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning, are not binding upon the University. Should such a statement be made, the employee should contact the University Human Resources for confirmation.

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER
The employee handbook is maintained by University Human Resources and is the official employee handbook for all faculty and staff of the University. Policies and procedures in this handbook take precedence over any and all other policies that might exist throughout the University and will be the policies consulted in any dispute.

The University of Southern Mississippi retains the right to alter, revoke, or amend any provisions of the Employee Handbook at any time without notice. Neither this handbook nor any supplements thereto replace, amend, abridge, or anticipate federal or state law, or the Policies and Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. This edition of the Employee Handbook repeals and supersedes all previous editions. The procedures in “Policy for the Management of University Policies and Procedures” do not apply to the policies and procedures contained within the Employee Handbook.

These policies are intended only to be guidelines for employment at USM, and they do not give rise to any contractual rights. The Employee Handbook provides selective information about The University of Southern Mississippi for prospective and current employees.

CHANGES IN THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, July 2017
The employee handbook has been updated to reflect changes in organizational structure, policies as approved by Executive Cabinet, and Federal and State law. Additionally, clarification to some policies is provided which reflect current practice and process.
TABLE OF CONTENTS
Section: Administrative Organization

0001 The University Vision, Mission and Values
0002 Office of the President
0003 Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
0004 Vice President for Finance and Administration
0005 Vice President for Research
0006 Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost
0007 Vice President for External Affairs
0008 Vice President for Gulf Park Campus
0009 Director of Intercollegiate Athletics
0010 The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning
Section 1 - Employment Policies

1001 Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

1002 Pre-Employment
  Recruitment
  Selection
  Hiring Process

1003 Terms and Conditions of Employment
  Terms of Employment
  State of Mississippi Employment Conditions
  Briefing a New Employee
  Probationary Period

1004 Types of Employment Status
  Regular Employee
  Temporary Employee
  Contracts and Grant Employee
  Exempt and Non-Exempt Employee
  Foreign Nationals
  Students/Graduate Assistant
  Work Study
  Adjunct
  Re-employed Retiree
  Affiliate
  Volunteer

1005 Standards of Conduct

1006 Outside Employment or Consulting
  Outside Employment
  Outside Consulting
  Staff Employees Teaching Classes
  Political Participation as a Candidate

1007 Changes in Employment Status
  Promotions
  Transfers
  Transfers from Other State Agencies

1008 Personnel Records

1009 Identification Cards
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

1010 Termination Policy and Requirements
   Terminations
   Arrests
   Notice Requirements
   Clearance Requirements
   Maximum Leave Allowances

1011 Reduction in Force Policy
   Policy
   Appeal
   Rights of Laid-Off Employees

1012 Re-Employment

1013 Employment of Minors, Students, and Foreign Nationals

1014 Nepotism

1015 Discipline Policy

1016 Performance Review and Evaluation

1017 Drug Testing Policy Commercial Driver's License

1018 On-Campus Consulting Policy

1019 Employment Contracts

1020 Selective Service

1021 The Americans with Disabilities Act
   Policy
   Essential Functions
   Reasonable Accommodations
   Undue Hardship
Section 2 - Payroll and Budget

2001   Salaried Staff Employees
2002   Wage Employees
2003   Deductions
2004   Standard Workweek and Pay Periods
   Standard Workweek
   Rest Periods
   Meal Periods
   Flextime Work Schedule
   Pay Periods
   Paycheck Distribution
2005   Overtime
   Policy
   Advance Notice
   Recordkeeping
   Compensatory Time
   Exempt Employees
2006   Emergency Callback Pay
2007   On-Call/Call-Back Status and Pay
2008   Holiday Pay
   Eligibility
   Religious Holidays
Section 3 - Fringe Benefits

3001 Personal Leave
   Regular Staff Employees
   Terminal Leave Policies
   Vacations
   Illnesses
   Death
   Re-employment
   Payment of Leave
   Terminal Leave Pay
   Jury Duty
   Voting

3002 Major Medical Leave
   Retirement Credit
   Terminal Leave Pay
   Policy on Grant Employees
   Terminal Leave Payments

3003 Family and Medical Leave Act
   Policy
   Procedures
   Eligibility
   Qualifying Reasons
   Leave Period
   Call in and time off Procedure
   Proper Notice of FMLA by Employee
   Certification
   Departments’ designation and Approval of FMLA
   Military Caregiver Leave
   Sanctions

3004 Leave of Absence without Pay
   Reinstatement
   Employee Benefits
   Employment Requirements

3005 Military Leave

3006 Compulsory Leave

3007 University Declared Leave

3008 Leave Balances and Corrections

3009 Scholarships for Children of Faculty and Staff
   Qualifications
Section 3 - Fringe Benefits (cont.)

3010 **Faculty/Staff Academic Tuition Waiver Policy**
   Eligibility
   Courses
   Fees
   Procedures

3011 **Education Enhancement**

3012 **Insurance**
   Dependent Coverage
   Administrator
   Open Enrollment
   COBRA

3013 **Tax Exempt Benefit Program (Cafeteria Plan)**

3014 **Workers' Compensation**

3015 **Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS)**
   Exemptions
   Temporary Employees
   Contributions and Withdrawals
   Retirement Eligibility
   Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)
Section 4 - Grievance Policy

4001 **Grievance Policy and Procedures**
- General Policy
- Definitions
- Time Frame
- General Procedures
- Specific Procedures

4002 **Grievance Committee**
- Meeting Agenda
- Briefing Committee Members
- Presentation of Grievance
- Recommendations

4003 **Sexual Misconduct, Assault, and Harassment Policy**
- Policy Statement
- Procedures

4004 **Procedure for the Resolution Discrimination Complaints**
- Confidentiality
- Retaliation
- Procedures
- Mediation
- Procedures for Review by Appeal Panel
Section 5 - Other University Policies

5001 University Events, Committees and Awards
   Convocation
   Staff Excellence Awards
   University Committees
   Staff Council

5002 Services, Facilities and Privileges Available
   Credit Union
   Southern Miss Ticket Office
   Library Service
   Post Office
   Payne Center
   Audiology and Speech Language Services

5003 Alcohol and Drug Policy

5004 Policy on Smoking
   Policy
   Definitions
   Enforcement

5005 Policy on HIV Infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
   Purpose
   Policy
   Guidelines

5006 Loss Prevention Policy
   General
   Scope
   Responsibility

5007 Safety
   Policy
   Injury Reports
   Use of Electric Heaters
   Asbestos Containing Building Materials

5008 Campus Solicitation Policy

5009 Parking Regulations

5010 Sign and Speaker Policy
   Sign Policy
   Speaker Policy
Section 5 - Other University Policies (cont.)

5011 Retiree Privileges

5012 Signature Authority for Contracts – Negotiation of Contracts
Vision
The University of Southern Mississippi aspires to be a model student-centered public research university that prepares students to thrive in a global society by providing high quality programs and transformative experiences in a community distinguished by inclusiveness.

Mission
The University of Southern Mississippi is a community of engaged citizens, operating as a public, student-centered, doctoral-granting research university serving Mississippi, the nation, and the world. The University is dedicated to scholarship and learning, integrating students at all levels in the creation and application of knowledge through excellence in teaching, research, creative activities, outreach, and service. The University nurtures student success by providing distinctive and competitive educational programs embedded in a welcoming environment, preparing a diverse student population to embark on meaningful life endeavors.

Values
The mission of the institution is supported by the following values:

1. Research and instructional excellence focused on student success at all teaching sites and through campus-based and distance education
2. Student engagement that fosters personal growth, professional development, and a lifelong commitment to wellness
3. An inclusive community that embraces the diversity of people and ideas
4. Institutional governance that respects academic freedom and faculty inclusion
5. A campus culture characterized by warmth and mutually-supportive connections among students, faculty, staff, and alumni
6. An approach to academics, research, and personal conduct based on integrity and civility
7. An evolving curriculum that fosters lifelong curiosity and critical thinking
8. Community participation that promotes social responsibility and citizenship

Institutional Strategic Goals

1. Support student success to foster retention, progression and graduation
2. Promote teaching, research, and creative excellence
3. Strategically expand undergraduate and graduate enrollment
4. Strengthen economic and community partnerships
5. Invest in faculty and staff to maximize their potential
6. Promote a culture of inclusiveness of people and ideas
7. Enhance physical, technological, and financial infrastructure to support our mission, vision, and values
8. Improve efficiency and effectiveness of institutional processes and systems
Functions

Appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), the President of The University of Southern Mississippi is charged with serving as both the chief executive officer and principal educational officer. In general terms, the President is responsible to the Board of Trustees for every facet of institutional operations.

Specifically, the IHL Board delegates to its university presidents administrative control of the universities over which they preside. This includes responsibility for the administration of the divisions and departments of each institution and for keeping its expenditures strictly in harmony with the budget authorized by the IHL Board.

The President also must take the initiative in shaping the university's educational policy and academic standards in cooperation with the State Commissioner of Higher Education. The President has final authority over all employees. The President also is charged with the responsibility of maintaining appropriate standards of student conduct.
Functions

The provost is the chief academic officer and the senior university officer next to the president.

The provost is the president's principal adviser in all matters pertaining to the development of a well-conceived and organized curriculum, administered and taught by a faculty of the highest qualifications.

The provost oversees planning for the university's educational programs and works with the vice presidents and deans in accomplishing the university's educational objectives. The provost oversees budget development by the colleges and monitors these budgets throughout the academic year.
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President Finance and Administration

Functions

The vice president for finance and administration is the University’s chief financial officer and is responsible for the management of the University’s financial operations, facilities planning and management, human resources, procurement, information technology, bookstore, parking management and dining services.
The vice president for research serves as the University’s chief research officer and is responsible for leading and overseeing USM’s research enterprise. The vice president is the executive director of the USM Research Foundation and oversees operation at the University’s technology incubator, the Accelerator.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President for Student Affairs

Functions

The vice president for student affairs and vice provost holds supervisory responsibility for a wide range of activities, programs and services that enhance the quality of life of the university community. These include:

- disability accommodations
- community and civic engagement
- Greek life
- multicultural programs and services
- Payne Center and recreational sports
- housing and residence life
- student conduct
- student counseling services
- student health services
- student ombudsman services
- student union operations
- summer conference coordination and services
- University Police/public safety
- all programs and services that promote student welfare, development activities and special events
- collegiate recovery program
- health education, including drug prevention and prevention
- facility reservations for student organizations (event services)
- student-faculty relations
- student government association
- student leadership programs
- student programming
- student organizations
- volunteer opportunities
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President for External Affairs

**Functions**

The Vice President for External Affairs has management and oversight for the following areas:

- Center for Military Veterans, Service Members & Families at Southern Miss
- Southern Miss Alumni Association
- USM Foundation
The University of Southern Mississippi Employee Handbook

Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President Gulf Park Campus

Functions

The vice president for The University of Southern Mississippi’s Gulf Park campus is responsible for the Gulf Park campus in Long Beach.
Functions
The Director of Athletics is responsible for the development, management, coordination and supervision of a competitive intercollegiate athletics program. The Director of Athletics ensures that all department programs and initiatives are in alignment with the educational mission, goals, strategic priorities and objectives of The University of Southern Mississippi.

The Director of Athletics provides leadership, strategic planning and policy development for the athletics program; raises funds for the department; administers the overall athletic budget; recruits and manages all department personnel; ensures academic support and programming are provided for student-athletes; and ensures compliance with all university, CUSA and NCAA policies, rules, and regulations.
Organization
The University of Southern Mississippi is one of eight institutions operating under the authority and control of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, a body created by constitutional amendment in 1944 to separate state-operated universities and colleges from direct political influence. The Board consists of twelve members appointed by the Governor with the approval of the Senate for terms of twelve years, but with the terms staggered so that no one governor can gain appointive control of the Board. One member is named from each of the seven congressional districts as constituted in 1914, one from each of the three state Supreme Court districts, and two from the state at large. Administrative offices of the Board are in the Research and Development Center, Jackson.

Function of the Board
The Board has complete responsibility for all functions of the institutions under its governance except for the power over building and construction, which is exercised by the Bureau of Building. The pertinent section of the Mississippi Code reads as follows:

\[\textit{The Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of all the institutions of higher learning; the departments and schools; the power in their discretion to determine who shall be privileged to enter, to remain in, or to graduate therefrom; the conduct of libraries and laboratories; the care of dormitories, buildings, and grounds; the business methods and arrangement of accounts and records; the organization of the administrative plan of each institution; and all matters incident to the proper functioning of the institutions. The Board shall have the authority to establish minimum standards of achievement as a prerequisite for entrance into any of the institutions under its jurisdiction, which standards need not be uniform between the various institutions and may be based upon such criteria as the Board may establish.}\]

Institutional Funding
State funds for higher education are appropriated not to the separate institutions but to the Board of Trustees; and the Board divides the available funds among several institutions by equitable formulas providing for levels of instruction, research, administration, maintenance, libraries, etc., according to the Board's approved budget practices which guide institutional requests.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Policy

It is the policy of the University of Southern Mississippi that every employee has the right to work in an environment where each individual is treated with respect and dignity. Consistent with this policy, the University is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of discrimination, bias, prejudice and harassment.

The University 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 is also pledged to develop and support an environment of affirmative action towards this policy.

This policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment and those individuals seeking jobs with the University. This policy provides equal employment opportunities in all aspects of employment including advertising, recruitment, background checks, hiring, probationary period, training and professional development opportunities, classification, compensation, benefits, leave usage, work assignment, supervision, discipline, promotion, transfer, layoff, recall, retirement, and termination.

It is the responsibility of all persons making employment decisions to support this policy and ensure the work environment is free from discrimination as established in the University’s Affirmative Action Plan. The University also recognizes its obligation to provide reasonable accommodation to all employees and applicants for employment regardless of position or source of funds. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be made to the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity.

Additional information on reasonable accommodations can be found at http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo. Any questions regarding affirmative action or equal employment opportunity can be directed to the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Pre-Employment

Recruitment

The University is committed to a program of recruitment and retention of excellent staff employees. Recruiting the best candidate for the position vacancy is accomplished by:

1. Posting: The position vacancy must be posted on campus for a period of five (5) working days for non-exempt positions and ten (10) working days for exempt positions. Faculty positions will also be listed on the web page. If a holiday falls within the posting period, it will not be considered in the minimum required period. A department head may extend an on campus posting past the minimum period by simply requesting the extension from University Human Resources.

2. All advertisements will be approved by applicable university offices and University Human Resources and will be posted by Human Resources in at least one contracted external source at no cost to the department. In the event the recruiting department wishes to post in additional outside sources, all costs will be borne by the department. Departments must follow University purchasing Procedures for paid advertisements.

3. To ensure consistency in advertising vacant positions, all ads posted to external publications must include the exact language from the PeopleAdmin approved job postings. Size may be shortened by lifting specific text; making sure not to change the verbiage. You are encouraged to include only the summary statement. Please refer applicants to the active link to apply and to learn more about the position. Currently, all PeopleAdmin postings are listed in HigherEdJobs at no cost to the departments. All fees associated with other vendors are the responsibility of the hiring department, and a copy of the ad must be submitted with your PO request or uploaded to your Resolve transaction if utilizing the p-card.

Selection

All staff position selections are the final responsibility of the recruiting budget authority.

Hiring Process

All department heads recruiting for staff positions should follow these procedures:

1. The department notifies University Human Resources that an employee will terminate by submitting a Termination/Leave Form.

2. All positions will be posted on the Human Resources website. The AVP of Human Resources is authorized to waive or shorten the posting period requirement in extenuating circumstances when the operation of the institution would be adversely affected.

3. All candidates must formally apply for employment through the university online application.

4. Once the budget authority has made a selection, the official offer of employment must be made in
writing including language that the offer of employment is conditional upon completion of a background check.

5. A completed Employment Form on the selected applicant and completed Interview/Selection Report must be completed in the university online application system. All appointments to faculty and specific administrative positions must have the approval of the Board of Trustees before official appointment letters and/or contracts can be issued.

6. Salary commitment will depend upon experience of the applicant and budget for the position. New employees with little or no experience should begin employment at the entry rate of their level, regardless of the amount of money in the budget.

7. All offers of employment for staff positions requiring degrees will be made contingent upon receipt of official college or university transcript(s) from the selected applicant, all necessary administrative approvals, and signatures have been obtained.

8. If the individual hired to fill a vacancy decides not to accept the job or works in the position for a period not to exceed one month, then the department does not have to re-advertise the job and may select another qualified applicant from the previous applicant pool.

These employment procedures will be followed for all administrative and staff positions, whether funded by the State of Mississippi, federal agencies, auxiliary enterprise, or any other source of funding.
Terms of Employment

The University of Southern Mississippi is an equal opportunity employer and makes a diligent effort to select the best matched individual for the position based upon job-related qualifications, regardless of race, age, color, religion, sex, national origin, veteran status, physical and/or mental disability, or political affiliation.

Employees will understand and agree that:

1. Any material misrepresentation or deliberate omission of a fact in the employment application may be justification for refusal of, or if employed, termination from employment.

2. USM may make a thorough investigation of the entire work history and may verify all data given in the application for employment, related papers, or oral interviews. In addition, background checks are conducted on all new employees as a condition of employment. Employees will authorize such investigation and the giving and receiving of any information requested by USM and shall release from liability any person giving or receiving any such information. Falsification of data so given or other derogatory information discovered as a result of this investigation may prevent employment, or if employed, may subject the employee to immediate dismissal.

3. Employment may be terminated by USM for any reason or no reason at any time without liability for wages or salary except such as may have been earned at the date of such termination. This does not apply to employees under contract unless termination is for cause.

4. Although management makes every effort to accommodate individual preferences, business needs may at times make the following conditions mandatory: overtime, shift work, a rotating work schedule, or a work schedule other than Monday through Friday. Employees must understand and accept these as conditions of their employment.

5. It is the employee's responsibility to read the Policies and Procedures Handbook to familiarize him/herself with all policies and procedures of the University.

6. Institutions of Higher Learning Board policy Section 401.01 states by statute, the Board has the power and authority to contract with all deans, professors, and other members of the teaching staff and all administrative employees of said institutions. This group of employees must be submitted to the Board for approval, and upon approval contracts may be issued. Only these Board approved employees are to be given contracts. These contracts are for a maximum length of 12 months, unless specifically approved by the Board. Employment of all others is for no definite period of time and USM can change wages, benefits, and conditions at any time.
State of Mississippi Employment Conditions

The following conditions of employment apply to all staff employees:

- The employee must participate in the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi, unless classified as a "temporary" employee or is employed less than 80 hours per month. An exception to this policy is when an individual who works part time for the University (regardless of the number of hours or length of service) and are members of PERS at their regular place of employment must participate in PERS as a condition of employment with the University. Administrators of recognized departments, teaching faculty, coaches, librarians with academic rank, post doctoral fellows, or research assistants with or without academic rank have the option of joining the Optional Retirement Program (ORP).

Briefing a New Employee

University Human Resources: All new employees are required to attend an in-processing/orientation session conducted by University Human Resources. University Human Resources will notify the employee to ensure their attendance. At this time, employees will be assisted in completing the necessary payroll and benefit forms. The University policies and procedures and fringe benefits will be explained.

The Department: The supervisor is responsible for introducing a new employee to his/her co-workers. This orientation is important and cannot be accomplished in one or two days. A good introduction requires an extended period of gradual orientation and should answer questions on matters such as the following:

- Specific duties and responsibilities of the job
- The work standards and progress expected in the job
- Hours of work
- Operation of equipment required to do the job
- Reporting absences to the supervisor
- Permission to leave the work area
- Immediate safety precautions
- Security measures
- Attendance rules
- Supplies and requisition procedures
- The policy for overtime and/or compensatory time
- Leave time policy and proceedings for completing the monthly Attendance and Leave Record
- Coffee breaks, or any time considered "break" time

This listing is not meant to be a comprehensive "orientation" check list. Each area supervisor should use this listing to create a more comprehensive listing, tailored to the area's specific needs and circumstances.

The supervisor should make every effort to explain clearly the job responsibilities and their relationship to the department and to the University.
Probationary Period

The probationary period shall be utilized by the department head for observing closely the employee's work and for securing the most effective adjustment of the new employee to the position, to the persons with whom the employee comes in contact, and to unfamiliar surroundings. It serves as a means of rejecting an employee whose performance does not meet required standards. All staff employees are required to serve on a probationary basis that consists of ninety (90) days of employment. Supervisors are responsible for initiating termination if a staff member's performance is not acceptable. The employee will be given a written notice from the supervisor if probationary termination is necessary.

The University may terminate probationary employees without the usual two weeks’ notice and without cause. All University policies and conditions of employment, except the grievance procedure, shall be applicable during the probationary period.

A probationary period of ninety (90) days will be resumed for an employee who transfers on a lateral move from one position to another or who is promoted to a higher classified level position or who is placed in a lower classification level.

The AVP of Human Resources is authorized to extend the ninety (90) day probationary period up to one hundred eighty (180) days upon the recommendation of a department manager. The employee should be made aware, in writing, by the department head that the probationary period is being extended.

An employee successfully completing the probationary 90-day period remains employed at will, but is entitled to 10 working days notification prior to termination of employment if a wage employee and 20 working days’ notice if salaried unless terminated for cause.
Regular Employment

Full-time employee: Employed in a regular, full-time (40 hours per week) position. This full-time status entitles the employee to all University benefits programs (40 hours = maximum benefit).

Part-time employee (with benefits): Employed in a part-time (at least 20 hours, but less than 40 hours per week) position. This status entitles the employee to all University benefit programs on a pro-rated basis. Holiday, sick, and annual leave are pro-rated proportionately according to the number of hours worked.

Temporary Employment

- For an established work schedule for a period not to exceed 3 months of a given calendar year. It is the department director’s responsibility to ensure that no person hired in a temporary position works more than 3 months at 40 hours per week.

- For services on an hourly basis not to exceed 19 hours per week.

- Employees are not eligible to participate in any University benefit programs.

- A two week notice of termination is not necessary.

- Employee cannot be moved to a vacant regular budget position unless the position has been posted and the employee has met all the application requirements.

- Employee will not appear on a department's budget printout.

Contracts and Grant Employment

- Employees are hired for positions provided for by a contract with a funding source other than the University.

- Contracts and Grant employees are entitled to all University benefits according to their employment status of full-time, part-time, or temporary status.

- The University will adhere to the provision of O.M.B. Circular A-21.J.6.a., when hiring Contracts and Grant employees.

Exempt and Non-Exempt

University staff subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act are referred to as "non-exempt" (hourly paid) and employees not subject to such provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act are referred to as "exempt" (monthly paid) employees.

Volunteer Employees

Volunteer employees must complete a background check and sign a statement prior to commencement of work stating that they are volunteers and that they do not expect to be
compensated for their efforts on behalf of the university. Employees cannot volunteer and work in the same capacity. University Human Resources must be notified of any volunteer workers for the purpose of workers' compensation.

**Foreign Nationals**
Effective January 1, 1999, no international student, employee, visitor or independent contractor will be permitted to receive any university funds without first obtaining a U.S. Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Implementation of this policy will allow the university to properly report wage information to the IRS. Questions may be addressed to the Internal Auditing Department, Human Resources, or International Student Affairs.

**Students**
Students are enrolled full-time at the university engaged in learning. For services, students can be employed in any department as a student employee not to exceed 20 hours per week during the fall semester, spring semester, and all breaks. During the summer semester, hours students can work are variable according to their enrollment.

Student are not eligible to participate in any University benefit program.

**Graduate Assistant**
Graduate Assistants (GAs) are, first and foremost, graduate students pursuing an education. GAs at the university assist with instructional responsibilities as teaching assistants, or with academic research responsibilities as research assistants, or they may be employed by other university departments in an entry-level capacity. Assistantships provide much needed experience for graduate students as well as financial support while pursuing their education. GAs must be enrolled full-time to be defined as a GA and will receive a stipend and tuition waiver. GAs can work 20 hours per week, and are eligible to participate in the Graduate Health Insurance Program.

**Work Study**
Work Study program is a federally-funded program in the United States of America that assists students with the costs of post-secondary education. The Federal Work-Study Program helps students earn financial funding through a part-time employment program. FWS students are subject to all regulations as established by the federal government and enforced by the Financial Aid Office. Exceptions to these regulations must be requested in writing and addressed to the Financial Aid Office. FWS students work hours vary according to their work study award. For services, not to exceed 20 hours per week.

FWS students are not eligible to participate in any University benefit program.

**Affiliate**
A person who is affiliated, or associated with the university in some capacity such as a visiting scholar. Affiliates have access to university facilities such as the library and Payne Center. People affiliated with the university are not working for the university, and do not receive pay through the university.

Affiliates are not eligible to participate in any University benefit program.
Re-employed Retiree
A re-employed retiree is an employee who once worked as an employee with a state agency with benefits who has retired and now drawing a monthly check from PERS, and is now returning to work at the university in a Part-Time Temporary position. For services, not to exceed 20 hours per week. Re-employed retirees do not receive benefits. They do not contribute to PERS, but the department contribution is submitted.

Re-employed Retirees are not eligible to participate in any University benefit program.

Adjunct
In higher education, a term used to describe a teacher who is not tenure track, who is hired to teach one or more course and may or may not have a terminal degree or the credentials of a regular faculty member. Adjunct employees are considered part-time and are not eligible for employee benefits. Adjuncts can teach up to 6 credit hours. Time worked is calculated for every 1 credit hour taught, there is 3 hours of work associated.

Adjuncts who are employed at another state agency and contributing to PERS will also contribute to PERS as part of their part-time employment with the university.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Standards of Conduct

General Policy

University employees are expected to serve the University in an efficient and responsible manner. Extensive use of time for matters not pertaining directly to employment is not the University policy and is strongly discouraged. Being on time for work and notifying the supervisor in instances of tardiness or absences is also expected. Vacation and personal leave should also be arranged in advance with the supervisor.

The image of the University is presented by the employees who communicate with an individual, whether student, colleague, or guest. Employees are expected to uphold standards with the public and co-workers in a courteous, tactful, and cooperative manner.

The University does not maintain a formal policy on dress code. However, each staff member is expected to set a professional image regarding dress in the workplace. Each Budget Authority is responsible to ensure that all employees observe acceptable dress standards. Employees who are usually expected to wear professional clothing are allowed to dress a bit more casually in the summer months.

It is the responsibility of the employee to make arrangements for the care of their children during working hours. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to care for their children in the workplace.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Outside Employment or Consulting

Outside Employment
Staff members interested in pursuing approval to engage in outside employment must complete an "Application for Permission to Engage in Outside Employment or Practice of Profession." This form requires approval through the Office of the President. A copy of the completed form will be kept on file in University Human Resources.

In addition, employees will not engage in an outside business or profession that would in any manner compete with a similar business or profession over which he or she would have direct supervision, inspection, or purchasing authority within the University, such being a conflict of interest. Under no circumstances can university property be used for the outside employment.

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 must be completed even if no payment is being received.

Outside Consulting
Staff members who engage in consulting activities and who are paid a fee from an outside agency will be required to file an "Application for Permission to Engage in Outside Employment or Practice of Profession," prior to participating in this activity. All absences from work, during normal working hours, as a result of consulting, will be charged to the 12 month employee's personal (vacation) leave. If the employee does not have sufficient accrued personal leave to cover the absence, the employee will be required to report as leave-of-absence without pay for the period of time used in consulting.

Staff Employees Teaching Classes
Staff 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. It is the responsibility of the director to ensure the employee complies with these policies. If the employee does not have sufficient accrued personal leave to cover this time, the employee will be required to report the time taken as leave without pay.

Political Participation as a Candidate
Participation by employees in various community and public affairs is expected; however, it is expected that time given such activities will not interfere with the regular duties of the employees. Political activities by an employee will not be prohibited at such times as the employee would not be ordinarily required to render services to the institution or if the employee elects to take and the university grants a leave of absence without pay.

University employees may do the following:

- Vote on candidates and political issues without interference of any kind
- Make campaign contributions to candidates or parties, provided they are made voluntarily; but they may not advise fellow employees to make such contributions
- Express their personal opinions privately, openly, or in public meeting on political issues and candidates
University employees may not do the following:

- Use the influence of their official positions
- Put pressure upon anyone to persuade him or her to make a contribution to a campaign
- Advise anyone where to trade or not to trade as a political maneuver
Promotions
Opportunities for promotion at Southern Miss occur when a higher level position becomes vacant. Employees are encouraged to prepare for possible promotion by taking advantage of growth and educational opportunities available to them on campus and by performing current duties with excellence. When a vacancy occurs and is posted, employees are encouraged to investigate it, and if they are qualified, to apply for it, if interested.

Promotions are not automatic. When a vacancy occurs, it must be posted for the minimum required time. During that period anyone qualified for the vacancy can apply. The hiring authority is mandated to select the best candidate available. If the best candidate has applied from an on-campus position at a lower level, then a promotion can occur. If, however, a better candidate applies, the manager may select that person. No job or promotion is "guaranteed" at USM; each vacancy is considered an opening and is available to applicants who are interested and who qualify. Southern Miss does encourage supervisors and hiring authorities to consider University employees first for promotional opportunities.

Applications for a promotional opportunity are managed the same way as any opening or vacancy is handled.

Interested employees must complete an application. This serves as "official" notification of interest in the vacancy. No candidate will be considered for any staff position unless an application has been submitted.

Normally an employee can be considered for a transfer or a promotion only after he or she has been employed for at least six (6) continuous months. However, the AVP Human Resources may authorize a transfer for an employee before the six (6) month waiting period when the needs of the University warrant such action.

Employees will be provided an opportunity for promotional consideration without regard to race, age, color, religion, sex, national origin, veteran status, physical and/or mental disability, and/or political affiliation.

Transfers
A staff employee is eligible for consideration for a lateral transfer or reassignment to another University position after serving in a staff position for a period of six (6) months, provided the request can be justified. However, it is possible to be reassigned earlier than six (6) months if the transfer is made for the business necessity of the University. Early transfers, if in a different department, must have approval from the AVP of University Human Resources.

Transfers within departments or between departments must proceed according to Affirmative Action hiring guidelines. A vacancy cannot be filled "automatically" within a department or between departments.

Dates of transfer shall be arranged for a time mutually agreeable to both the receiving and releasing department, no less than two (2) weeks nor more than four (4) weeks from the date of acceptance by the staff member recommended.

The act of changing jobs may not warrant a pay change.

Transfers from Other State Agencies
Prospective USM employees who are currently employed by another state agency may transfer leave balances (both personal and major medical leave). A letter will be requested by the employee
indicating the balances at the time of termination. This letter shall be signed by a Human Resource Authority at the state agency and mailed directly to the USM Human Resources Department. The employee's leave records will be adjusted to incorporate the balances transferred and the employee will accrue leave based on years of service with the state.

Employee cannot receive payment for personal leave when transferring to another state agency except for the following situation. If the employee is transferring from a state agency where he/she earned personal and major medical leave but is eligible only for major medical leave at USM, the transferring agency should transfer to USM only the major medical leave balance. The employee should be paid up to 240 hours of personal leave by the transferring agency and the balance sent to the retirement system for credit by that agency.

Retirement records will transfer from state agency to state agency and will require only that the employee complete a new application when employed so that the current employer is noted on the employee's record.

Breaks in service exceeding thirty (30) days and/or withdrawal of retirement funds from the retirement system, would constitute a "termination" from state employment and transfer procedures would not be available.

The state community colleges are considered state agencies according to the Mississippi Code § 25-9-107 for transfer of leave balances and are members of the Public Employees' Retirement System.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Personnel Records

General Policy
University Human Resources keeps an individual record of personal and payroll data for each employee including personnel at Southern Miss, Gulf Park, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, and Stennis Space Center. Pertinent information is also maintained in a relational database for reports and statistical analysis. Since this information is frequently utilized for various reports, it is important that it be accurate.

Individual employees and their supervisors should keep University Human Resources informed of any changes in personal status. Changes such as births or deaths in an employee's family or a change in marital status may affect such things as income tax withholding, retirement, or the type of hospital insurance coverage. In emergency situations it is important that current information relating to the name, address, or telephone number of the employee be available. All changes should be reported timely to University Human Resources.

University Human Resources will not disclose an employee's personal information to any unauthorized person or agency. Authorized agencies, such as the State Tax Commission, a court of law, or the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, are supplied required information upon presentation of a proper request. Supervisors are obligated to abide strictly to this policy, and it is generally advisable to refer such requests to University Human Resources. An employee may have access to his or her personnel file by sending a written request, in advance, to University Human Resources receiving approval from the AVP of Human Resources. Once approved, employees may view their file in University Human Resources and with a Human Resource staff member present. There is a 25 cent per page charge to copy a file.
Policy
University Human Resources will issue a form for a photo-identification card to regular faculty and staff during the in-processing proceedings. The identification card serves to identify employees of the University, admission to or the purchase of tickets to certain University functions, and for other purposes.

Lost identification cards should be reported to University Human Resources, and arrangements will be made for a replacement card. Identification cards remain the property of the University. Upon termination, identification cards must be surrendered to University Human Resources.

Retirement identification cards are available to all retirees of the University upon their request.

There is no charge for a replacement ID card for faculty & staff.
Termination
All discharges of staff employees must have prior clearance through University Human Resources by completing the Termination/Clearance Form. The University is not required to give advanced notice when termination is the result of a discharge for cause. All other discharges, other than during the probationary period, should follow the notice requirements.

Non-renewal of Contracts of Administrative Staff
All employment contracts are of fixed duration, generally not exceeding one (1) year. Administrative staff contracts are renewable entirely at the discretion of the Board upon the recommendation of the University President. Non-renewal is the decision not to renew the existing employment contract of administrative staff. In the event of non-renewal, the University must inform the affected employee in writing not less than 30 days prior to expiration of the employee’s contract. Academic employment contracts are addressed in the Faculty Handbook.

Arrests
University employees charged with a felony or misdemeanor offense may be placed on a leave-of-absence. If the employee's actions or nature of the crime is determined to affect the image or operation of the University, then additional steps may be taken to prevent the employee from returning to the workplace. The Budgetary Authority will determine the employment status of each person arrested and not convicted of a crime in conjunction with University Human Resources.

Notice Requirements
Notice of ten (10) working days is requested from all non-exempt staff employees who wish to terminate. The resignation notice should be addressed to the employee's supervisor.

Notice of twenty (20) working days/1 month is requested from all exempt staff employees prior to termination.

The same notices are required to the employee by the department except as noted above.

Clearance Requirements
Staff employees must complete and file with University Human Resources a Termination Clearance form before the last payroll check will be released. This form is available in University Human Resources, and must accompany or be preceded by the Personnel Action Form. It is the responsibility of the department to assure that the out processing is complete on or prior to his/her last day of work. The paperwork should be submitted to University Human Resources prior to the payroll cut-off for that month so outstanding debts to the university may be recovered. University Human Resources will discuss any questions the employee has concerning his/her termination, including retirement refunds, continuation of insurance coverage, forwarding address, etc. The termination process will not be considered complete until the individual has completed the out-processing form including payment or payment arrangements of any and all outstanding debts to the university.
Final paychecks will be processed on the next scheduled payroll date for the employee. Payroll schedules prevent the payment of the employee's final paycheck on the day of departure unless that day coincides with the scheduled payroll date.

**Maximum Leave Allowances**

In order to avoid major disruptions in the work environment, employees may be granted a maximum of (30) days/240 hours personal leave within the six (6) month period immediately preceding termination. This leave can be taken only with approval of the employee's supervisor and may be denied if such leave causes a major problem in the workload distribution within the unit. Any exceptions to this policy must have approval by the President.

Upon termination of employment, employees shall be paid for unused leave in accordance with the leave policy.

Incomplete time and attendance records in SOAR will result in leave not being paid or certified to PERS.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Reduction in Force Policy of Staff

Policy
A reduction in force may be required in the event of reorganization of academic or administrative structures, programs or function; reorganization of a department or unit; changes in departmental organization or services; reallocation of resources or elimination or reduction in funding. When a reduction in force is necessary, the following policy is to be used. However, this policy is not applicable to employees who are members of the faculty or employees on grants and contracts when termination is a result of loss of external funding. A reduction in force of members of the faculty, if necessary, will be in accordance with the policies contained in Policies and Bylaws, Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning or thereafter, and the applicable The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Handbook.

Procedures for Department/Unit Reorganization
When an area or unit in the University has undergone considerable changes and the budget authority has determined that reorganization is necessary, the following procedures are recommended:

1. Examine organizational charts: Look at both the current chart and create a new one that would show the changes needed in the reorganization. These charts should show current titles and current reporting relationships. The chart for the reorganization should show any changes that will be needed in those areas, including the elimination of existing positions and the creation of new positions.

2. Review both organizational charts with University Human Resources. Consultation with Human Resources at this point will save time, effort, and misunderstandings as the reorganization progresses.

3. Incorporate suggestions agreed upon into the new organizational chart and prepare it for presentation to the appropriate Vice President.

4. Submit the reorganization chart to the Vice President for review and approval, who will gain additional approvals as appropriate. Please note that approval means that the "concept" has been approved, it does not constitute blanket approval for all changes.

5. The department/unit head should partner with University Human Resources in enacting the organizational changes (notification to employees, posting of new positions, transferring employees, termination of employment, etc.).

6. Written notification of layoff, typically a minimum of 30 days, including the reason for such layoff, shall be given to the employee, if a personnel reduction results from reorganization. Such notification shall include a copy of this policy and shall be delivered by the budgetary authority making the original recommendation for restructuring.
Procedures for Budget Reductions

When the budget authority has determined that budget reductions are necessary, which results in a decision to eliminate position(s) from the organization, the following procedures are recommended:

1. The President shall determine those units of the University whose budgets must be reduced. This determination shall be based upon a systematic allocation of budget reductions and shall be rationally related to the missions of the University.

2. If a reduction in personnel is necessary to meet the budget reductions for the unit, each budgetary authority will analyze and evaluate the necessity of each position within the unit in consideration of the mission of the unit, the mandated budget reduction of the unit, and the other positions within the unit. Each budgetary authority will determine which positions will be recommended for elimination.

3. The budgetary authority will consider the employees holding those positions within the unit and shall determine which employees will be recommended for layoff. The budgetary authority will consider the following criteria when making recommendations to layoff:
   - The overall personnel needs of the unit;
   - Possible combination of job responsibilities;
   - Employees’ skills;
   - Previous performance;
   - Protected employment status due to active military service by National Guard and armed service reservists; and
   - University affirmative action policies

If, after considering all of the above-listed criteria, two or more employees are rated the same or nearly so, the unit director will consider retaining the employee with the longest continuing period of service at the University.

Each budget director shall make recommendations for layoff accompanied by a written justification through the appropriate supervisory levels to the responsible Vice-President who shall review the recommendations.

4. The Vice-Presidents shall forward their recommendations to University Human Resources for review as to compliance with University affirmative action and employment policies.

5. Written notification of layoff, typically a minimum of 30 days, including the reason for such layoff, shall be given to the employee. Such notification shall include a copy of this policy and shall be delivered by the budgetary authority making the original recommendation for layoff.

Appeal Process

This appeal process is available to those employees who are laid off under this policy which includes those whose position is eliminated through a reorganization. Any employee laid off under this reduction in force policy may, within five (5) working days of receipt of notification of layoff, appeal the decision. Notice of appeal must be in writing and directed to the Associate VP of Human Resources. The Appeal Committee will be the Associate VP of Human Resources, the Chair or Chair-Elect of the Staff Council, and a Vice President to be chosen by the Employee. If the laid-off employee was employed in a unit of which any of the above-named Appeal Committee members are employed, the President of the University shall designate a substitute Appeal Committee member.
The Appeal will be either verbal or in writing, or both, at the selection of the laid-off employee, and shall be conducted as quickly as is reasonable. The Appeal shall be limited to a review for compliance with the procedures set forth in this policy and a determination of whether the layoff decision is arbitrary or capricious.

The Appeal Committee shall make its recommendation to the President, who shall make the final decision and notify the appropriate parties.

Rights of Laid-Off Employees

1. If the departmental situation changes and open positions become available, the department may rehire separated employees within twelve (12) months of the effective date of separation without following standard procedures for filling vacancies. Separated employees who are interested in being rehired will be selected for rehire based upon meeting or exceeding minimum qualifications for the position(s) to be filled, their overall rating in the most recent performance appraisal, and length of prior service.

2. If the separated employee is interested in employment in another department/unit of the University, standard procedures for filling vacancies will still apply and the separated employee must complete an application to express interest.

Employees laid off under this reduction in force policy shall have the right to enroll, free of charge, on a space-available basis in academic courses offered by the University. This right shall be limited to two semesters and one summer term beginning with the semester following receipt of the final notice of layoff, and shall exceed no more than a full academic load per semester. The former employee must maintain a semester USM 2.0 GPA to continue the tuition waiver. An employee who fails to maintain the required GPA will cease receiving benefits until such time as he or she successfully completes a semester with a 2.0 GPA at which time the tuition waiver can be reinstated the following semester. with a 2.0 GPA.
Policy
Former employees with a good work history are eligible for rehire at the discretion of the university.

To comply with the employer mandate in the Affordable Care Act an employee who was previously employed in a benefit eligible position is prohibited from returning to the University in a non-benefit eligible position, unless they have had a 26 week break in service. The ACA requires that the University offer employer sponsored insurance for the 12-month measurement period and the following 12-month stability period once they have reached 1,560 hours. The IRS requires the University to include all hours that were previously accumulated before the termination in addition to any new hours during the measurement period if there was not a 26 week break in service.

Any former employee who is rehired should consider the following:

- no vested seniority
- no vested benefits status
- any time that was previously served does not qualify for service awards
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Employment of Minors, Students, and Foreign Nationals

Employment of Minors

Minors, other than USM students, who have reached their sixteenth (16) birthday may be employed during the summer by the University.

Employment of minors in the following occupations is prohibited by law: occupations involving explosive components; occupations requiring the operation of a motor vehicle as driver; occupations involved in the operation of power driven circular saws, band saws, wooding machines, metal forming, punching, or shearing machines; occupations involving exposure to radioactive substances; occupations involved in wrecking and demolition; occupations involved in the operation of bakery machines, or any occupation found to be particularly hazardous or detrimental to the health or well-being of a minor.

Employment of Students

Students or prospective students seeking on-campus, part-time employment should contact Career Services. Part-time employment is available in many areas on campus. The student is selected on the basis of qualifications for the job and is paid in accordance with the established University student wage rates. A student is paid on an hourly basis, and is required to keep an accurate record of the hours worked each week on an Attendance and Leave Record Form.

The University policy regarding student employment states that a student must carry a full academic load and may not work more than twenty (20) hours per week. A student receiving a fellowship, scholarship, or grant who is paid on a salaried monthly basis shall not be eligible to work in a wage payroll position at the same time.

Other University policies regarding student employment are as follows:

- Federal guidelines set the pay rate for undergraduate students (including restricted fund accounts) at the minimum wage rate. If minimum wage increases, the hourly rate will be adjusted accordingly.

- Students will be employed for a maximum of twenty (20) hours per week.

- The pay rate for graduate work-study assistantship is set by the University for master's students and for doctoral students. In order for a student to receive the current graduate rate for work-study assistantships, work responsibility must be approved by the Graduate Dean's Office.

- Students will be limited to work on only one University account.

- Students must be currently enrolled and attending classes to be eligible for student employment. This will include employment during summer months.

- High school students or college students who do not attend The University of Southern Mississippi must be paid at least at the current minimum wage rate. Employment must be obtained through University Human Resources. Priority for employment on campus shall be given first to University enrolled students.
• Students receiving a fellowship, scholarship, assistantship, or grant who are paid on a monthly basis shall not be eligible to work in a wage position at the same time.

• When school is not in session, a full-time University student may not work for more than eight (8) hours a day or more than forty (40) hours a week. Students will be paid at the current student rate.

• All student employment will be handled through the Career Services under established guidelines and rates as stated in this policy.

Employment of Foreign Nationals
The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) imposes a dual obligation on employers: to hire only those non-Americans authorized to work and to keep records evidencing the right to work of all new hires, both American and non-American, after November 6, 1986.

Verification of employment authorization is often difficult and confusing, as some non-citizens are automatically entitled to work according to the terms of their visa status, while others must request permission to work. All potential non-citizen hires, including faculty, must first receive clearance from University Human Resources before an offer of employment may be executed.

No later than the date of hire, all new employees, and re-hires, must execute an Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9, certifying that he or she has permission to work. The University representative also must sign the form, certifying that he or she has checked the potential employee's documents and that they appear to be genuine evidence of identity and authority to work.

Additional information and guidance in hiring non-citizens can be obtained from University Human Resources.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Nepotism

Policy
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.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Discipline Policy

Disciplinary Procedure
The purpose of the disciplinary action policy is to correct, or eliminate, improper employee behavior. In instances where the employee exhibits no interest in improving his or her behavior or the severity of the offense is significant, the employee may be terminated at will. Regardless of the existence of a disciplinary policy there is no intent to negate the employment at will policy.

If Disciplinary measures are imposed, it is essential that:

• each problem be investigated to determine the facts of the situation,

• any action taken must be primarily corrective rather than punitive and must be appropriate for the offense, and

• the dignity of the employee is respected.

The following acts may result in dismissal or disciplinary suspension pending investigation. The list is not meant to be all-inclusive and in no way compromises the at will employment.

Some common examples are:

• fraud in securing employment
• incompetency
• neglect of duty
• insubordination
• dishonesty
• drunkenness on duty
• use of narcotics or habit forming drugs while on duty
• noncompliance with University safety rules
• absence without leave
• convictions of felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude
• poor work performance
• gambling of any form on University property
• discourteous treatment of the public or other employees
• willful disobedience
• misuse of state property
• unprofessional conduct
• failure of good behavior either during or outside duty hours which is of such a nature that it causes discredit to the University
• sleeping on duty
• willful property damage
• physical fights
• tardiness
• unauthorized possession of firearms or explosive materials on campus
• unauthorized use of University identification cards
• refusal to obey security officers or other proper authority in emergencies
• threats or pressure or physical action against another employee
• dishonesty, theft, or commission of any crime on University property or removal of University property without proper authorization
• falsifying time records or any other University records
• refusal to accept instructions, including failure to perform work assigned
• careless performance of duties, including continued failure to maintain established standards or productivity
• failure of employees to report to their place of work at the beginning of the work period and leaving work prior to the end of their work period
• failure of absent employees to notify their supervisor on the first day of absence
• using University telephones excessively for personal calls or charging personal calls to the University
• falsifying application for employment
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Performance Review and Evaluation

Policy
The formal written evaluation program of The University of Southern Mississippi is established to provide a scheduled opportunity for the employee and supervisor to meet and mutually identify and document the demonstrated job performance and accomplishments of the employee during an annual rating period.

The evaluation is intended to achieve the following:

- Indicates where employee stands in relation to the expectations of the University, the department, and the immediate supervisor.
- Assures mutual understanding of responsibilities and work assignments.
- Serves as a source of assistance and guidance in improving and preparing for advancement.
- Helps identify an employee's performance level, growth potential, and developmental needs as measured by the standards of performance for the job.
- Provides an opportunity to recognize effective performance and to let employees know that their contributions have a direct impact on the overall goals of the University.
- Serves as a foundation to formulate with the employee a specific plan of action for achieving goals and improving job performance.
- Establishes the basis for better two-way communications.
- Serves as a major consideration in matters concerning employee development, promotion, transfer, retention, salary, and job performance improvement.

All staff employees should be evaluated annually. It is not mandatory that temporary employees be evaluated, but is advisable, especially in instances of unsatisfactory work performance of individual employees. Unscheduled performance evaluations may be conducted as often as necessary and are advisable when an employee's performance is less than satisfactory.

The employee's supervisor or manager is responsible for conducting the review and evaluation with the employee. Standard evaluation forms and additional instructions related to conducting a performance evaluation may be obtained from University Human Resources.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Drug Testing Policy
Commercial Driver’s License

Introduction
In compliance with the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 (OTETA), The University of Southern Mississippi shall conduct alcohol and controlled substances testing of all applicants for employment in positions requiring a commercial driver's license and current employees whose university employment requires them to possess a commercial driver's license. Testing will be conducted pre-employment, randomly, when there is reasonable suspicion, and post-accident, if driving a USM vehicle.

Employees whose test results confirm prohibited alcohol concentration levels or the presence of a controlled substance as defined by OTETA will be terminated. The university will provide affected employees and their supervisors with alcohol and controlled substances information, and, train supervisors with alcohol and controlled substance information. It will also train supervisors to determine reasonable suspicion of alcohol misuse/controlled substance use. The university will refer affected employees to substance abuse professionals, counseling centers, and/or treatment programs. Any costs for treatment, other than those covered by the State Employees' Health Insurance Plan, must be borne by the employee.

Records of required test results and annual reports to the U. S. Department of Transportation will be submitted by and maintained in University Human Resources. All records will be retained in a secure location with controlled access, as required by federal regulations.

Procedure
Initial Employment and Offer of Employment
Prior to beginning work in positions requiring a commercial driver's license, potential employees will be tested for controlled substances use and alcohol misuse. Offers of employment to affected new employees shall indicate that the offer is contingent upon completion of drug/alcohol tests that indicate an absence of drug use/alcohol misuse. Any potential employee who tests positive for alcohol/drugs will not be allowed to begin work and the offer of employment will be withdrawn. If documentation of justification of the presence of the alcohol/drug can be provided to the University's Medical Review Officer the offer will be reconsidered. The individual will be informed by the AVP of Human Resources of the positive alcohol/drug screen and will be informed about the risks involved in substance use/abuse and available counseling/treatment programs.

Continued Employment
After employment, employees required as a condition of university employment to have a commercial driver's license will be tested randomly; when there is reasonable suspicion; and post-accident.
Circumstances Requiring Drug/Alcohol Testing

- **Random Testing**
  Random tests for alcohol misuse/controlled substance use will be conducted utilizing a scientifically valid method to select employees for testing. A minimum of 50% of the drivers will be tested each calendar year for alcohol misuse and 50% of the drivers will be tested each calendar year for controlled substances use.

- **Reasonable Suspicion**
  Employees will be tested for alcohol/drug use when there is a reasonable suspicion of their alcohol misuse/controlled substance use. When an individual has a reasonable suspicion of alcohol/drug abuse by an employee, he or she must submit a written record to the Associate Director of Human Resources.

- **Post-Accident**
  Post-accident alcohol tests will be conducted within two hours following an automobile accident involving loss of human life or following an accident resulting in a citation due to a moving traffic violation. Drug tests will be conducted within 32 hours following an accident. It is the supervisor's responsibility to let Human Resources know of any accidents within the required time limits.

**Positive Test Results**
The AVP of Human Resources will review the positive test results with the employee's unit head and notify the appropriate administrator(s) of the termination of the employee.

**Result of Test Refusal**
Refusal to submit to testing procedures is treated as a positive test result. The employee's unit head and the AVP of Human Resources will notify the appropriate administrator(s) of the termination of the employee.

**Information**
Employees subject to testing required by this policy will be provided detailed information about alcohol misuse/drug use, the university's testing policy, and how and where they can get help for alcohol misuse/drug use.
Policy
Engaging University of Southern Mississippi employees to address specific needs often necessitates the redistribution of an employee’s responsibilities. The following guidelines are provided to ensure that deans and other appropriate administrators have the opportunity to ensure that an employee’s responsibilities to the University are met and that the additional compensation is earned in accordance with University policies.

Employees with Faculty Rank
The University of Southern Mississippi’s faculty are often requested to provide expertise based upon their specific scholarly disciplines. However, the faculty have a primary responsibility to the University to fulfill their commitments to the education of students and to their research, scholarly, and service roles. Prior to engaging in consulting activities within the University, each faculty member must have approval from their Chair, Dean, & VP. The timely approval provides the necessary documentation that a faculty member’s primary responsibilities in education and research will be met and will not be compromised by providing consulting services. A Personnel Action Form must be submitted for payment.

Individuals with Executive or Administrative Rank
Individuals who hold executive/administrative positions such as president, provost, vice president, associate vice president, assistant vice president, dean, director, department chair, or other executive/administrative titles, receive, as part of their compensation package, an administrative supplement. This supplement may be specifically stated in their contracts or may be incorporated into their base salaries. A part of this supplement is to compensate the employee for providing scholarship, research, and public service expertise to the greater University community. No additional compensation should be expected for providing such expertise to the University community.

Professional Staff
Employees who hold professional staff positions, such as programmer, accountant, auditor, or other highly technical positions, are often asked by units within the University to provide specific, short-term consulting services. These individuals are encouraged to provide such expertise to University units outside of their home departments. A Personnel Action Form must be submitted for the additional assignment. Under no circumstances will a professional staff employee receive additional compensation for work performed within his/her home department; all work assignments within the home department are assumed to be compensated for within the employee’s established base salary.

Compensation for Consulting Work
All payments for consulting work will be analyzed for reasonableness. Any additional payment for $2,500.00 or greater must have the employee’s respective Vice President and President’s approval. Once an employee has earned 10% of his/her annual salary in additional pay in a fiscal year, all future payments must have the employee’s respective Vice-President and President’s approval.
Policy
The president of the University has the authority to approve and execute contracts only with deans, professors, other members of the teaching staff and such categories of administrative employees as designated by the Commissioner of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) in accordance with state law and IHL Board policy. Administrative employees are defined as those administrators with budgetary authority. These contracts are for a maximum length of 12 months, unless specifically approved by the Board. The maximum Board approved contract length is for four years. The Board may consider Institutional Executive Officers and selected athletic personnel for multiyear contracts.

Employment contracts for administrative staff (excludes tenure-track or tenured employees) are for the term of the contract. Such contracts may be terminated as specified within the contract. In addition, the appropriate university official, with approval of the President, may provide notice that the contract will not be renewed. Such written notice must be provided to the employee not less than 30 days prior to the expiration of the contract.

The employee contracts are maintained on campus in University Human Resources. The contracts for the athletic department will also be provided to the Board office.

EEO Category 1
Employment contracts are issued for EEO-6 category. They are sent to the employee. The employee will sign the contract. After signing, Vice Presidents send their contract to the President for signature. After administrators sign their contracts, they send it to their Vice President for approval. Their Vice President will then forwards contracts to the President for signature. The President will sign the contracts and forward them to Human Resources.

EEO Category 2
Employment contracts are issued for EEO-6 category 2. They are sent to the faculty’s Dean for approval. After initialing the contract, the Dean will forward to the President for signature.

All contracts should be returned to University Human Resources within thirty days or prior to the first pay date in the new fiscal year, whichever occurs first. The failure of an academic faculty/staff member to return a duly signed contract prior to the first regularly scheduled class meeting of an academic term constitute abandonment of employment and of the privileges inherent in a status of continuing employment.

Once Human Resources receives the original signed contract, a copy of the contract will be sent to the employee. Any written changes made to the contract void the contract.

Employment for all other employees not receiving contracts is for no definite period of time and The University of Southern Mississippi can change wages, benefits, and conditions at any time.
Section 1: Employment Policies

Subject: Selective Service

Policy
With an exception of few, all male U.S. citizens and male immigrants residing in the U.S. between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-five (25), are required to register under the federal Military Selective Service Act, and is seeking employment, or is seeking a promotion to a higher position with the University, shall submit to the University satisfactory documentation of his compliance with the draft registration requirements of the Military Selective Service Act.
Subject: The Americans with Disabilities Act

The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment across all of its campuses/locations. Ensuring that all university community members have access to facilities, employment, employment opportunities, programs, benefits, university-sponsored activities, information, and information technology is critical to our educational mission and is among our highest priorities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and USM policy prohibit discrimination in employment and educational programs against qualified individuals with disabilities. University websites must also be accessible so that students, prospective students, employees, applicants for employment, individuals seeking employment, guests and visitors with disabilities have equal access to the information and functionality provided to individuals without disabilities.

The University must comply with all state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in all employment practices including advertising, recruitment, background checks, hiring, probationary period, training and professional development opportunities, classification, compensation, benefits, leave usage, work assignment, supervision, discipline, promotion, transfer, layoff, recall, retirement, and termination. The University must also provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities unless to do so would pose an undue hardship.

An individual is regarded as having a disability if that individual, has, has a record of, or have been regarded as having a substantial impairment that significantly limits one or more major life functions. This is known as a qualifying disability.

A qualified individual with a disability must also be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. This means the applicant or employee must:
• satisfy job requirements for education background, employment experience, skills, licenses, and any other qualification standards that are job related; and
• be able to perform those tasks that are essential to the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

It is the responsibility of the individual applicants for employment, students and employees to identify themselves as an individual with a disability when seeking a reasonable accommodation. It is also the responsibility of individual applicants for employment, students and employees to provide documentation for their qualifying disability (from an appropriately licensed professional) and to demonstrate how the disability limits their ability to complete the essential functions of their job or participation in programs or activities of the university.

Employees are not required to disclose a disability until and if he or she feels the need for an accommodation. However, requests for accommodations cannot be applied retroactively and the University is not required to rescind disciplinary actions administered prior to a request for an accommodation.

It is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policy to deny or fail to provide a reasonable accommodation for a documented qualified disability unless to do so do would pose an undue hardship. It is also unlawful to discriminate against an applicant or employee, whether disabled or not, because of the individual’s family, business, social or other relationship or association with an individual with a disability. Individuals who believe they may have been discriminated against based on their disability or denied a reasonable accommodation for a qualified disability should contact the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity.
Who is covered under this policy?
This policy applies to employees, applicants for employment, and candidates for employment with physical or mental conditions that substantially limit one or more major life functions.

Definitions
Applicant for employment
A person who has expressed interest in employment at the University, who satisfies the minimum requirements of a particular job and who has not indicated he/she is no longer interested in the position.

Essential Functions
The duties of a job or position that are so critical the job cannot be performed without them. Factors to consider in determining if a function is essential includes:

• Whether the reason the position exists is to perform that function;

• The number of other employees available to perform the function or among whom the performance of the function can be distributed; and

• The degree of expertise or skill required to perform the function.

Interactive process
Collaborative effort between the employee requesting an accommodation and the University representative to discuss the need for an accommodation as well as identify objective accommodation solutions. Both sides must communicate and exchange information.

Major Life Activities
May include, but are not limited to, bending, breathing, caring for self, concentrating, eating, hearing, interacting with others, learning, lifting, performing manual tasks, reaching, reading, seeing, sitting, sleeping, speaking, standing, thinking and walking and working. Major life activities also include the operation of a major bodily function, included but not limited to, the bladder, bowel, brain, cardiovascular, circulatory, digestive, endocrine, genitourinary, hemic, immune, lymphatic, musculoskeletal, neurological, reproductive, and respiratory systems; normal cell growth, operation of an organ, and special sense organs and skin.

Medical Documentation
The information provided from the employee’s treating physician or healthcare provider which will allow the University to determine whether an individual has a qualifying disability and the most appropriate reasonable accommodation.

Qualified Individual with a Disability
An individual with a disability who must also be qualified the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations. The applicant for employment or employee must:

• satisfy job requirements for educational background, employment experience, skills, licenses, and any other qualification standards that are job related; and

• be able to perform the essential functions for the job with or without reasonable accommodation.
Reasonable Accommodation
Any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that does not promote an undue hardship on the University and that permits an applicant for employment or employee with a qualifying disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of the job, or to enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities. For example, reasonable accommodation may include:

- acquiring assistive technology or modifying equipment or devices
- job restructuring;
- part-time or modified work schedules;
- reassignment to a vacant position;
- adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials and policies;
- moving to a different office/work space;
- providing a sign language interpreter;
- providing materials in alternative formats like large print or braille; and
- making the workplace readily available to and usable by people with disabilities

Undue Hardship
An accommodation that would be unduly costly, extensive, substantial or disruptive, or would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of the University, program or department. Undue hardship is determined on a case-by-case basis considering all factors including the nature and cost of the accommodation, the impact on the operations of the University, program or department. The University is not required to provide an accommodation that would impose an undue hardship.

Procedure for Reasonable Accommodation
Most accommodation requests are initiated by the applicant for employment, candidate or employee. However, all individuals with a qualifying disability may not want, nor are they required to request a reasonable accommodation. An individual may have a disability that does not limit the employee’s ability to perform the essential functions of the job or require a workplace modification. Each reasonable accommodation request will be handled on an individual basis.

In rare instances when a disability and associated need for an accommodation is obvious, such as a mobility-impaired employee unable to physically access a facility or inability or a visually-impaired applicant unable to access an applicant tracking system, the hiring manager or manager may initiate the reasonable accommodation process and begin the interactive discussion with the person with a disability. The University may also be able to address an employee’s disability-related needs outside the reasonable accommodation process.

Steps for Requesting a Reasonable Accommodation
1. The applicant for employment or employee requests a reasonable accommodation by submitting the USM Reasonable Accommodation Request Form and corresponding documentation to the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity. The employee may also notify his or her supervisor or manager of the need for a reasonable accommodation. The Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity should be contacted immediately for assistance. Forms can be found at the departmental website: http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo.

2. If medical documentation is not provided with the request, or is not sufficient to determine a qualifying disability, the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity will provide the employee with the USM Medical Inquiry Form to be completed by the treating physician. If additional medical information is requested, the time frame for completing the accommodation stops when the medical information is requested, and resumes on the day the documentation is received. The employee has ten (10) working days to return the form.
3. The Interactive Process is initiated among the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity, the employee and his or her direct supervisor or manager. This will include discussing options, pricing and implementation of the accommodation.

4. Once it is determined a reasonable accommodation is necessary, and an appropriate accommodation is selected, the accommodation request is approved. The employee is notified of the approval through the USM Reasonable Accommodation Approval Form. The employee’s supervisor is notified through the USM Reasonable Accommodation Notice to Supervisor Form.

5. Once approved, the accommodation will be provided within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request, or as short a period as reasonably possible depending on the accommodation. The Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity will work with the supervisor or manager to implement the accommodation including modifying policies or procedures, acquiring services and ordering equipment.

6. If more than one accommodation is acceptable, the supervisor or manager may choose an accommodation among the available options. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to communicate openly with the employee about available option. If the employee refuses the option offered by the supervisor, manager or the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity will record the employee’s rejection of the accommodation. The employee must submit a new request in order to receive an accommodation.

7. If it is determined a reasonable accommodation is not necessary, or cannot be granted, the employee will receive the USM Reasonable Accommodation Denial Form. The form will explain both the reasons for the denial and the process for appealing the decision.

Employees dissatisfied with the resolution of a reasonable accommodation request can submit an appeal using the USM Reasonable Accommodation Appeal form to the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity within ten (10) days or receiving the denial form.
Salaried Staff Employees

University Human Resources must receive all pertinent payroll information (additions, deletions, or other changes) before the payroll cut-off date for each pay period. The payroll cut-off date is recorded on the payroll calendars. Information completed, approved, and in the Human Resources' office prior to cut-off will be processed in the up-coming payroll period. Information received after this cut-off date will be processed in the next payroll period.

Salaried employees are paid on the last working day of each pay period. Your first payroll check will be mailed to the employees’ department box. Effective January 1, 2006, all new employees must sign up for direct deposit.

Salaried employees paid out of the Education and General fund of the University are included in the University budget as a line item. The budget contains the employee's name, classification level, title, rate of pay for the last fiscal year, and increases approved for this fiscal year. The information is listed in budget number order by departments. Copies of the University wage and salary budgets are available as a reference item in Cook Library.

When changes, additions, or deletions are made on a salaried position, all pertinent budget information must be listed. Budget authorities in each department are encouraged to check each form submitted for approval to assure that the information is correct and changes requested are in order.

Salaried employees paid on a designated or a restricted fund account (10-digit budget number) are not listed in the University budget. Grants and Contracts Accounting must approve changes to these positions prior to processing through University Human Resources. A new Personnel Action Form must be issued each anniversary date (the date the grant was funded) so that personnel will continue to be paid. The anniversary date marks the end of the grant period and the beginning of a new funded year.

All salaried employees must complete the Monthly Leave Record in SOAR. The supervisor will then approve the leave in SOAR. **Failure to complete the online time and attendance records could result in no leave payment or PERS leave certification.**
Subject: Wage Employees

Time and attendance forms must be submitted to Controller’s Office no later than noon Monday after the Friday payroll cutoff. In hiring a new employee or making any changes to a current employee, Personnel Action forms must be submitted to University Human Resources. Cut-offs vary from month to month. Please refer to the payroll calendar.

Wage employees are paid on a biweekly basis with pay being issued on Friday. Direct deposit is mandatory.

Wage employees who are paid from the Educational and General Fund of the University are included in the wage budget for their department as a line item. The wage budget contains the employee's name, classification level, title, rate of pay for the last fiscal year, and pay-rates approved for this fiscal year. The budget director for each wage account should have a current copy of the department's detailed wage budget.

When changes, additions, or deletions are made on a wage position, all pertinent budget information must be included on the Personnel Action Form. Budget directors in each department are encouraged to check each form submitted for approval to assure that the information is correct and changes requested are in order.

Wage employees paid from a grant or restricted fund account (10-digit budget number) are subject to the same approvals, anniversary date requirements, etc., as salaried employees. (See Salaried Employees section.)

Department budget authorities must complete and submit a biweekly Time and Attendance Report listing for each wage employee. A schedule for submittals is on the Controller’s Office or on University Human Resources website.

Any wage employee who is placed on payroll in the middle of the month will have health insurance coverage from the date of employment.
Subject: Deductions

New employees of the University, whether salaried or wage, are required to report to University Human Resources for in processing. The employee will complete and sign personnel and payroll forms necessary to begin the pay schedule and will be advised regarding fringe benefit and insurance packages available through the University. Federal and State laws require the following payroll deductions by the employer:

- Federal Withholding Tax
- State Withholding Tax
- Social Security Tax
- Retirement Contributions (Public Employees' Retirement System Mississippi) Some of the other deductions that may be made at the election of the employee include:
  - Medical Insurance
  - Life Insurance
  - Tax-sheltered Annuities
  - Cancer Insurance
  - Dental
  - Vision
  - Dependent Care Reimbursement
  - Medical Reimbursement

Premiums will be deducted from the payroll check. Insurance premiums for the state’s group health and life insurance coverage are deducted in advance, so that premiums paid in the current month pay for coverage in the next month.

All deductions are shown on the payroll check stub that can be found in SOAR. Employees who have questions or who need assistance in understanding the deductions that are shown on the check stub should bring the check stub to University Human Resources and request assistance.

Employees desiring to change deductions or premium payments should contact University Human Resources. All tax changes and insurance benefit changes require completion of new forms and the employee's signature. The benefits or deductions that are part of the Cafeteria Plan (IRS Code Section 125) can only be made during open enrollment each year (October) except for changes in status as defined by the IRS Code Section 125. A change in family status is defined as marriage, divorce, death of spouse or child, birth or adoption of child, termination of employment of spouse or leave of absence without pay.
Section 2: Payroll and Budget

Subject: Standard Workweek and Pay Periods

Standard Workweek
The standard workweek is 12:01 a.m. Saturday through midnight on Friday. The established regular hours of work comprising full-time employment for staff employees of the University shall be forty (40) hours per week. All offices shall be open during the hours 8 a.m. to noon, and from 1 to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on official University holidays or administrative closings.

Certain University departments may be required to remain open during the noon hour. When this work schedule is necessary, the department manager will arrange for alternative lunch periods for staff.

Rest Periods
Rest periods or coffee breaks may be offered at midmorning and midafternoon and will not exceed fifteen (15) minutes per break. Such periods are a privilege and not a requirement and may be withdrawn by the supervisor or the budget authority and should be withdrawn if abused.

Time not used for rest periods cannot be substituted for time off at the end of the work period, extension of the lunch period, nor at the beginning or end of a vacation or sick leave period. It cannot be accumulated to provide for a prolonged time-off period. Scheduling of rest periods for individuals should not interfere with the department’s normal operations.

Meal Periods
If an employee works more than four hours the employee must be given a meal break of at least 30 minutes. Meals are an unpaid period and cannot be used to accumulate a prolonged time-off period. The meal period must be uninterrupted.

FlexTime Work Schedule:
All administrative offices must be open during those hours. Some departments may want to use a flexible work schedule to ensure that their work is conducted during the noon hour or before and after normal operating hours. When such an adjustment is desired, the total number of hours worked by the employee will be eight (8) hours per day. In no case should an employee work less than eight hours and be compensated for eight hours work. All flextime arrangements must conform to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Pay Periods
All nonexempt employees will be paid on a biweekly basis. Because of overtime and short-time calculations involved, nonexempt employees will receive their paychecks on a two-week delay after the close of the workweek on Friday. Because exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay, exempt employees’ paychecks will reflect to-date earnings on a monthly basis. See Payroll calendar on the Controller’s website.

Paycheck Distribution
Checks and advices are only to be distributed to the employee, not a third party. A department may ask for identification to release a paycheck if necessary.
Policy
If an employee is categorized as “nonexempt,” then overtime consideration is due for any hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours within a given workweek. The workweek is defined as Saturday 12:01 a.m. through midnight on the following Friday. Work in excess of eight (8) hours per day is not considered overtime. Each work week stands alone in calculating regular and overtime hours worked.

Supervisors must give prior approval for all overtime work. Supervisors should be aware that worked hours, even when not requested or approved by the supervisor, must be included in hours worked and paid as overtime as applicable. If an employee works overtime without permission, the department is still obligated to pay that employee overtime; however, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action including termination for failing to follow policy of prior approval.

Supervisors may adjust an employee’s schedule within a workweek to avoid or minimize overtime. Sick and/or personal leave or other non-worked hours do not count as FLSA hours worked for the purposes of calculating overtime with the exception of hours paid as holiday pay which do count as FLSA hours worked. The Budget Authority or Director needs to observe these additional regulations regarding computation and payment of overtime rates: Employees who work during lunch periods and before or after established work schedules must show the time as time worked. Such work time should not be allowed without prior authorization for the employee’s supervisor. Non-exempt employees may not “volunteer” to work off the clock.

Any work performed by a nonexempt employee for a unit or department at USM outside of his or her home department that exceeds 40 hours total within the work week will be compensated as overtime. The secondary appointment assumes the responsibility of paying overtime, regardless of what day of the week the overtime is actually incurred. The secondary appointment should not conflict with the primary job duties.

Advance Notice
Although sometimes not practical, generally supervisors should provide the employee with as much advance notice as possible and should assign and distribute overtime equitably among all eligible employees. Employees must understand that advance notice is not always practical.

Record Keeping
It is the responsibility of the budget authority or director to keep accurate records of time worked including hours in excess of forty (40) hours. See Record Keeping Policy for requirements.

The regular wage and overtime pay due an employee are computed on the basis of the hours worked by an employee in each workweek, and that compensation earned by an employee in a particular workweek is paid on the regular payday for the pay period in which the workweek ends. The University payroll system does not automatically calculate overtime pay for nonexempt employees; therefore, all hours worked over forty (40) hours must be submitted on a time sheet for nonexempt employees with standard hours. Nonexempt employees with nonstandard hours, temporary employees, and student employees will also report hours on a positive reporting basis.
All time records must be accurately kept. Falsification of university records may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Compensatory Time**
Compensatory time off may be provided in lieu of overtime compensation, at a rate of no less than one and one-half (1 ½) hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime worked. An employee may accrue up to 240 hours of compensatory time, which equates to 160 hours of actual overtime worked. Employees of the University Policy Department may accrue up to 480 hours of compensatory time. Overtime hours worked in excess of these maximum accruals must be paid as overtime.

The use of compensatory time must be in accordance with an agreement reached between the University and the employee prior to the performance of work. Accrual and use of compensatory time must be tracked on the appropriate form (Refer to the Record Keeping Policy #2009 for details).

- An employee shall be permitted to use accrued compensatory time within a “reasonable period” if such request does not “unduly disrupt” operations. Unduly disrupt is usually not interpreted as a normal staff shortage.
- The employee can be required to use comp time before using personal time.
- If an employee transfers to a different department all current comp time must either be taken or paid out by the current department before the transfer occurs.
- Any unused compensatory time must be paid out at the time of termination from the university.

**Exempt Employees**
Exempt employees, those who are paid a monthly salary, are not eligible to receive overtime or compensatory time off.
Policy
An emergency callback occurs when a nonexempt staff member is asked by management to return to work after leaving the University premises following his or her work shift to take care of some work-related emergency that cannot wait until regularly scheduled working hours. A staff member must be paid for a minimum of three (3) hours for each callback.

Only the hours actually worked will be accounted for in the calculation of overtime pay.
Policy
Certain members of the nonexempt staff are required to be available for work after normal working hours. These employees may be placed on on-call status and be eligible for on-call pay under the terms of this policy.

A staff member on on-call status must inform his or her supervisor where he or she can be reached and must report to his or her work assignment within 30 minutes of being notified. On-call status will end once the staff member reports to his or her workstation or when the on-call status schedule ends, whichever occurs first.

USM policy is that the employee will receive a courtesy payment, not to exceed (6) hours per pay period for on-call status. On-call pay is not included for overtime calculations. On-call pay is given if the employee does not have to report back to work. The respective department's Vice President must approve the practice of on-call pay for each department.

When an employee is actually called back to work, call-back status is implemented and on-call status is canceled. Call-back status will begin after the employee arrives on the campus for work and ends at the conclusion of the work. The employee will be paid for actual hours worked with a minimum of (3) hours to be paid.

The employee must be paid over-time for any hours worked which exceeds 40 hours per workweek.
IHL Policy 805.08 declares the following days as official holidays:

• New Year’s Day
• Martin Luther King Day
• Independence Day
• Labor Day
• Thanksgiving Day
• Christmas Day

Additionally, other days may be designated as holidays by the University President:

(not to exceed a total of 15 days a year)

• Good Friday
• Memorial Day
• Friday after Thanksgiving
• 6 additional days included in Christmas break

Full-time and part-time benefit eligible employees will receive regular pay for official holidays and those holidays specially designated by the University President, even though the employees are not required to work.

Benefit eligible non-exempt employees who are considered “essential personnel” (e.g., physical plant, student housing, etc.) that are required to work on holidays (official or designated) will not receive holiday pay, but will instead receive pay at one and one-half times his regular rate of pay per hour worked, or will receive compensatory time at the one and one-half times per hour worked. Paid time or compensatory time is at the discretion of the supervisor. (Example: If you work 4 hours the day after Thanksgiving you will get 4 hours at time and a half and 4 hours holiday pay.) A minimum of three (3) hours will be paid at time and ½ (or compensatory time and ½) for hours worked on a holiday.

This policy does not apply to Public Safety employees who are at all times considered essential personnel and are paid in accordance with regular pay and overtime pay policies per the State Department of Public Safety.
Eligibility
All full-time and part-time benefit eligible employees on the active payroll will be eligible for holiday pay listed above in accordance with the following provisions:

- Employees must work their normally scheduled work hours on the day immediately preceding and following the holiday. With the approval of the supervisor, the employee may elect to take personal leave days immediately prior to or following a holiday period. If the employee has an excused absence both such days, holiday pay will be authorized.
- Holiday pay will be at the employee's current rate of pay.
- Part-time benefit eligible employees will be paid holiday pay on a pro-rated basis according to the number of regularly scheduled work hours in a normal work day.
- Temporary employees are not eligible for holiday pay.
- Holidays falling on an employee's first or second regularly scheduled day off within the work week will be observed on a date chosen by the employee, with the supervisor's approval, within a reasonable time following the holiday.
- Terminating employees must return to work for a minimum of five (5) working days following the Christmas holidays in order to be eligible for holiday pay.
- Budget authority of areas requiring employees to work on holidays shall schedule such duty as fairly and equitably as possible among the available staff.
- An employee must work on his or her last official day of employment. Holidays falling within the terminal leave period for a terminating employee are charged to accumulated personal leave. (Example: An employee may not give a date prior to the Christmas holidays as the last day of employment and then use accrued personal leave as a basis for collecting Christmas holiday pay.)

Religious Holiday
Full-time or part-time benefit eligible employees who desire to observe a religious holiday not designated by the University may do so with their director’s approval. The time and attendance record should reflect time taken as personal (vacation leave). Such requests should be reviewed with Human Resources.
Subject: Personal Leave

Regular Staff Employees
Regular staff employees are entitled to personal leave benefits beginning on their first effective date of employment with the University. Part-time employees accrue leave on a pro-rated basis depending on the number of hours worked.

Accrual Rates for Full-Time Employees are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Time</th>
<th>Hours per Month</th>
<th>Days per Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 month to 3 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 months to 8 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 months to 15 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal leave can be taken only with approval of the employee's supervisor and may be denied if such leave causes a major problem in the workload distribution within the unit. For bi-weekly employees, personal leave taken is recorded on the Time and Attendance Report. For monthly employees, personal leave taken is recorded in SOAR.

Administrators on a 12 month contract who revert to a 9 month teaching position will no longer accrue personal leave. The personal leave accrued will be frozen and not available for use at any time unless resuming a 12 month position. For those enrolled in PERS the unused leave will be credited to PERS when employment with USM ends. For those enrolled in ORP personal leave has no value.

Terminal Leave Policies
In order to avoid major disruptions in the work environment, employees may be granted a maximum of thirty (30) days/240 hours personal leave within the six-month period immediately preceding termination. This leave can be taken only with approval of the employee's supervisor and may be denied if such leave causes a major problem in the workload distribution within the unit. Exceptions to this policy must have the President’s approval.

Upon termination or retirement from employment with the University a staff employee shall be paid for accrued personal leave time up to a maximum of 240 hours (30 days). **Administrators on a 12-month contract who revert to a 9-month teaching faculty position will not be paid thirty (30) days/240 hours terminal leave pay upon return to a 9-month position or at separation from the university.** As a PERS participant the leave will be certified to PERS upon retirement. Faculty shall be paid up to 240 hours of major medical leave ONLY upon retirement from active employment.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

Vacations
Vacations shall be scheduled by department heads with attention to the needs of the University but with consideration of an employee's continuous service credit and amount of personal leave accrued and unused. Within the requirement to maintain work schedules, each department of the University will do everything possible to accommodate the employee's personal schedule preferences.

Illnesses
The first eight (8) hours (or normally scheduled work day for part-time employees) of absence due to illness will be charged to personal leave. Absence due to the same illness in excess of 8 hours (or normal work day) will be charged to major medical leave. This does not have to be consecutive days. Provided, however, major medical leave may be used, without prior use of personal leave, to cover regularly scheduled visits to a doctor’s office or a hospital for the continuing treatment of a chronic disease, as certified in advance by a healthcare professional. Medical certification must be on file with Human Resources. For each absence due to illness of thirty-two (32) consecutive working hours (combined personal leave and major medical leave) major medical leave shall be authorized only when certified by a medical doctor. Medical certification is required for employees to return to work after 32 hours absent. A department head may require medical certification at any time if deemed necessary.

Employees with questions or problems related to leave time records should first contact their supervisor. If the problem remains unresolved, the supervisor should contact University Human Resources. Budget authority or directors are responsible for the accuracy and timeliness of leave records for employees under their supervision. Deficit leave balances should not be approved nor condoned by area directors. Employees with a negative leave balance will be contacted by Human Resources and pay will be docked.

Death
The wages or salary for the unused personal leave time shall be paid to the person designated by the employee, or to the beneficiary of such employee as recorded with the Public Employees’ Retirement System, should the employee die having accumulated personal leave credit. Only payment of 240 hours is subject to PERS.

Re-employment
When an employee is re-employed by the University after a break in service of thirty (30) days, personal and major medical leave time will be earned as a new employee. An employee rehired within 30 days of termination is not entitled to 240 hours of terminal leave pay. If the individual has received this payment and returns to work within the 30-day period, the payment must be returned to the university in order to continue earning leave at the prior accrual rates.

Payment of Leave
An employee terminating from service, and requesting lump sum payment for unused personal leave, will receive payment for up to a maximum of 240 hours for the leave time at the next scheduled pay period following his or her date of termination. (Please note that terminations submitted and approved prior to cut-off dates will be processed with the next scheduled pay period. Those terminations not received by cut-off will be processed and paid in the next subsequent payroll period.) This check will not go direct deposit. Checks will be mailed to the address provided by the employee on the university out processing form.

Terminal Leave Pay
Payment of accrued personal leave up to 30 days or 240 hours is permissible by State Statute only upon termination from state service. Change of status from 12-month employment to 9-month employment does not constitute termination nor does transferring to another state agency and payment of accrued leave will not be paid. Any money owed to the university will be taken from the leave payment.
Jury Duty
Jury duty is recognized as a civic responsibility. A regular employee who is called for jury duty or summoned to appear as a witness on behalf of any town, city, county, state, or federal government is allowed to be absent with pay. The payment granted to an employee for serving on a jury may be retained by the employee. When an employee has been granted leave for court attendance, he or she shall report immediately to his or her official place of duty during normal work hours whenever he or she is excused by the court.

Special leave with pay shall not be granted for court attendance when the employee is the defendant or is engaged in personal litigation. Personal leave shall be used for this purpose.

Voting
Most employees live or work close enough to the polls to vote before or after working hours. Should this not be possible, one may have time off to vote in county, state, or federal elections with the prior approval of his or her immediate supervisor.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Major Medical Leave

Regular staff employees are entitled to major medical leave benefits beginning on their first effective date of employment with the University. Part-time employees accrue on a pro-rated basis depending on the number of hours worked.

Accrual Rates for Full-Time Employees are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Time</th>
<th>Major Medical Accrual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours per Month</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12-Month Employees</td>
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<td>1 month to 3 years</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>37 months to 8 years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 months to 15 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first eight (8) hours, (or normally scheduled work day for part-time employees) of absence due to illness will be charged to personal leave. Absence due to the same illness in excess of 8 hours (or normal day) will be charged to major medical leave. This does not have to be consecutive days. Major medical leave should be taken at the rate of eight hours per day for faculty. For bi-weekly employees, major medical leave taken is recorded on the Time and Attendance Report. For monthly employees, major medical leave taken is recorded in SOAR.

When medical leave credits are inadequate to cover absences caused by the employee's illness, the time lost may be charged to personal leave. When the employee has exhausted all accrued leave time available, he or she must be placed on "leave-without-pay" status. When an employee returns to work after being placed on leave-without-pay status, a Personnel Action Form must be issued indicating the employee is again on "active" employment status.

Also major medical leave may be used for absences due to illness of the employee's immediate family after the first eight (8) hours is charged as personal leave. The immediate family is defined as spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling, child, step-child, grandchild, grandparent, son- or daughter-in-law, mother- or father-in-law, or brother- or sister-in-law. For each absence due to an illness lasting thirty-two (32) consecutive working hours (combined personal leave and major medical leave) major medical leave shall be authorized only when certified by a medical physician. Medical certification is required for an employee to return to work after 32 hours absent. A department head may require medical certification at any time if deemed necessary.

An employee may use up to three (3) days of major medical leave in any calendar year because of a death in the immediate family as defined above. Absences beyond three (3) days for emergency reasons will be charged to personal leave.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

Retirement Credit

Upon termination or retirement from the university, all employees enrolled in PERS will be given retirement service credit for unused personal and major medical leave based on the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days of Accrued Leave</th>
<th>Retirement Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 77 days</td>
<td>1 quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78 - 140 days</td>
<td>1/2 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141 - 203 days</td>
<td>3/4 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204 - 266 days</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267 - 329 days</td>
<td>1 1/4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330 - 392 days</td>
<td>1 1/2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>393 - 455 days</td>
<td>1 3/4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>456 - 518 days</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>519 - 581 days</td>
<td>2 1/4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>582 - 644 days</td>
<td>2 1/2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>645 - 707 days</td>
<td>2 3/4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>708 - 770 days</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please contact University Human Resources for additional years to the above conversion table.

Terminal Leave Pay
No terminal leave pay will be considered for accrued major medical leave. However, in accordance with 25-3-97 of the Mississippi Code, an employee who presents medical evidence that his physical condition is such that he/she can no longer work in a capacity of state government may be paid for not more than 120 days of earned major medical leave upon termination.

Policy on Grant Employees
In accordance with O.M.B. Circular A-21. J.6.a., all full-time faculty and staff employed at The University of Southern Mississippi are afforded all fringe benefits of the University. Benefits must be consistently applied to individuals who are in the employment of the University regardless of whether they are paid from the Educational and General (E&G) budget or external grants and contracts. All of our policies relative to personnel and leave time for which payment is received or leave taken by the employee must be consistent throughout the University.

All Contract and Grant employees will be afforded the same leave benefits as provided in this handbook.
Terminal Leave Payments
Terminal leave payments will be paid from grant fund sources when at all possible. These funds should be built into the fringe benefit costs at the inception of the grant. However, if the grant is unable to fund leave payments, then the leave will be paid from an account provided by the Dean, Chair or Director of the department.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Family and Medical Leave

A. Policy Statement

1. It is the policy of The University of Southern Mississippi to provide a leave of absence in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. Before designating FMLA leave, administrators should consult the FMLA Procedures.

   a. This policy information is only a general summary of the steps to follow when considering a request or need for family or medical leave. Refer to the complete FMLA procedures and required forms for necessary details.

   b. An employee may request a leave, or may provide a department with sufficient information to make the department aware of an absence that may be eligible for FMLA protection. In either case, follow the FMLA procedures to see if and how the FMLA applies to the employee. Human Resources may seek additional information from the employee to determine whether FMLA applies. If a department is aware that the reason for an absence from work qualifies under FMLA, the absence must be designated as FMLA leave, even if the employee does not request it. Complete the required forms, and provide copies as noted.

2. FMLA leave may be initiated by the employee or the department at any point in a calendar year when the need for the leave arises. However, if an employee is on FMLA leave that extends from one calendar year to the next, new FMLA forms must be processed at the beginning of the new calendar year in order to keep the leave in effect.

3. In accordance with the FMLA, eligible employees may receive up to a total of 12 weeks of leave in a 12-month period, defined as a calendar year. Employees will be entitled to return to the same or an equivalent position at the conclusion of the leave, if they are able to perform the essential functions of the position.

   a. Medical benefits will be maintained during the 12 week leave. Employees on FMLA leave continue to be responsible for paying their share of premiums for benefit plans.

B. Procedures

1. Eligibility

   a. To be eligible to take FMLA leave, an employee must meet all of these criteria:

      i. The employee must have been employed by The University of Southern Mississippi for at least 12 months. Any portion of a week that the employee is on the payroll counts as a full week for FMLA eligibility. Employment does not have to be continuous. Temporary employment with Southern Miss counts toward fulfilling this requirement.
(1) Separate periods of employment in which the break in service exceeds seven (7) years will not be used to determine FMLA eligibility.

ii. For the 12 months immediately proceeding the first day of the FMLA leave, the employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours. These hours must be actual work hours, not compensated hours. Hours using any type of paid time off benefits or holiday time do not count.

iii. The 1,250 work hours requirement also exists when an employee is reapplying for FMLA leave for a new calendar year. When the need for FMLA leave extends past December 31st, the employee must have worked at least 1,250 actual work hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the request for the leave in the new calendar year.

iv. The employee must not have already received 12 weeks of FMLA leave in the current calendar year.

b. Time in the military service covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) will count towards fulfilling the length of employment and hours of work requirements to be eligible for FMLA leave.

2. Qualifying reasons

a. The following reasons qualify an employee for FMLA:

i. Birth of a child and to care for a newborn child of the employee

ii. Placement with the employee of a child through adoption or foster care of a child

iii. Care for any of the following who has a serious health condition: the employee's spouse, the employee’s child under 18, or the employee’s parent

iv. Care for the employee's child 18 or older who has a serious health condition and is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability
v. A serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job

vi. A qualifying event which occurs while the employee’s spouse, child, or parent is on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty in the Armed Forces. The term covered active duty means duty during deployment to a foreign country. Qualifying events to manage the service member’s affairs are described on the form Certification of Qualifying Event for Military Family Leave.

b. A serious health condition for purposes of the FMLA means:

i. An illness or injury that involves an overnight stay in a health care facility and any subsequent treatment in connection with such stay.

ii. Continuing treatment by a health care provider including any one or more of the following:

(1) a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive, full calendar days and subsequent treatment by a health care provider in-person two or more times within 30 days of the first day of incapacity
(2) treatment by a health care provider in-person on at least one occasion which results in a regimen of continuing treatment
(3) pregnancy and prenatal care
(4) chronic condition which requires visits at least twice a year for treatment by a health care provider over an extended period of time and may cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity
(5) permanent or long-term conditions
(6) conditions requiring multiple treatments by a health care provider including recovery time

c. Time taken to care for a covered service member injured in the line of covered active duty may qualify for FMLA. The provisions governing these situations are covered in the Military Caregiver Leave section of this policy.

3. Leave period

a. An eligible employee may take up to 12 workweeks of leave during a 12-month period defined as a calendar year. Eligible employees are entitled to a new 12-week FMLA leave each calendar year. Unused portions of the 12-week FMLA leave may not be carried over between calendar years.

i. If the purpose of the leave is to care for a sick family member or one's own serious health condition, the employee may take the leave intermittently or by means of a reduced work schedule. Such leaves are subject to the qualifications and limitations set forth in the FMLA federal regulations.
ii. Under certain circumstances, departments may place employees who are on an intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule in another position with equivalent pay and benefits. This placement is considered to be a temporary transfer and should be discussed with the human resources office. Such employees must make a reasonable effort to schedule the intermittent leave so it does not disrupt operations.

b. For the purposes of determining the amount of leave taken by an employee on FMLA, the following days will be counted: (1) the employees scheduled shift; (2) holidays that occur within a week, if that entire week has been taken by an employee for FMLA; and (3) holidays that the employee was scheduled or expected to work.

c. When an employee is on an FMLA leave to care for a family member and the leave is terminated by the death of the family member, the employee will be granted the normal time off for funerals/bereavement as described in the respective policy.

4. **Call in and time off procedures**
   a. Employees must follow departmental procedures for requesting leave and calling in absences. Failure to do so may result in the time not being approved. In addition, if an employee simply calls in sick, does not follow the department’s call-in procedure, or does not provide sufficient information, the time off may not be designated as FMLA.

b. Beginning on the first day of the leave, staff must use all time off accruals as part of the 12-week FMLA leave.

   i. An employee’s compensatory time (if available) must be used prior to the use of any other time off accruals; after all compensatory time is used, the employee must then follow the leave policy guidelines. Time off accruals that must be used during FMLA leave include holidays, sick time, vacation.

   ii. The requirement that an employee must use time off accruals to cover FMLA leave applies to any FMLA leave, including a leave that is taken either intermittently or through a reduced work schedule.

   iii. All time missed in a work day due to FMLA must be charged to time off accruals.

c. When the time off accruals are exhausted, the remainder of the FMLA leave is without pay.

   i. If any of the 12 week period is without pay the department is to process the appropriate documentation to place the employee on a leave of absence for the balance of the FMLA leave.
5. **Proper notice of FMLA by employee**
   a. Employees must provide at least 30 days advance notice of an anticipated FMLA leave. It is understood that under some circumstances it is not practical to provide 30 days notice. In these cases, employees must provide notice as soon as practicable. In all cases, employees must provide the department with sufficient information and must cooperate fully with the department or risk having FMLA delayed or denied.

6. **Certification for Leave for Serious Health Conditions or qualifying event**
   a. Serious Health Conditions:
      i. In cases where an FMLA leave is to care for the serious health condition of the employee, spouse, child, or parent of the employee, the employee must provide medical certification on the applicable Medical Certification form #2E for Employee or #2F for Family. The department should request the certification at the time employee gives notice of leave or within five (5) business days thereafter. Once requested, it is the employee’s responsibility to provide the department with the medical certification within 15 calendar days.

         (1) If the certification is incomplete or unclear, the employee is to be given 7 additional calendar days to provide more complete information.

         (2) If the certification is still insufficient, the human resources office or a person designated by the human resources office may contact the employee’s health care provider for clarification and/or authentication of the employee’s medical certification.

         (3) Employees may be asked to recertify the need for the FMLA after 30 days from receipt of past medical certification, in less than 30 days in certain circumstances such as a change in the employee's condition, or every six (6) months.

         (4) All medical certifications and related information that describe the health or medical history or condition of the employee or family members must be handled as confidential medical information. Such information must be stored in a locked file separate from the personnel file.

         (5) When certification is requested, it is the employee’s responsibility to provide the employer with timely, complete, and sufficient certification and failure to do so may result in delay or denial of FMLA leave.
b. Qualifying exigency:

i. In cases where FMLA leave is for a qualifying exigency, the department should provide the employee with a copy of the form Certification of Qualifying Event for Military Family Leave to be completed by the employee. The completed form along with the documentation that the employee provides will be used to determine if the leave request qualifies and the length of the leave.

(1) The human resources office is responsible for coordinating all requests for leaves taken under this provision for a qualifying exigency.

ii. When certification is requested, it is the employee’s responsibility to provide the employer with timely, complete, and sufficient certification. Failure to do so may result in delay or denial of FMLA leave.

7. Department's designation and approval of FMLA

a. It is the responsibility of Human Resources to designate any absence that meets the eligibility requirements of the FMLA as family/medical leave. The designation of FMLA will occur either as a result of an employee request for FMLA leave, or when the department becomes aware that the employee's absence qualifies as FMLA leave, even though the employee may not have requested FMLA leave.

b. An employee's rights to FMLA may be denied or delayed only for the following reasons:

i. timely advance notice of foreseeable leave is not given
ii. timely submission of required and sufficient medical certification is not made by the employee
iii. the employee fails to provide required fitness to return to work certification
iv. the employee expresses an intention not to return to work
v. the employee fraudulently requests or obtains FMLA
vi. the employee is employed elsewhere while on FMLA leave without the written approval of the department head

8. Military Caregiver Leave

a. Military Caregiver Leave is FMLA leave to care for a covered service member who has suffered serious injury or illness in the line of covered service duty. The term covered active duty means duty during deployment to a foreign country.

b. A covered service member means a current member of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, therapy, is in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disabled list for a serious injury/illness or is a veteran undergoing treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury/illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves at any time during a period of 5 years preceding the date in which the veteran undergoes that medical
c. For purposes of this section, the term ‘serious injury or illness’ means:
   i. In the case of a member of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves, an injury or illness that was incurred in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces (or existed before the beginning of active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces) and that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank or rating.
   ii. In the case of a veteran who was a member of the Armed Forces, National Guard, or Reserves at any time during a period described in paragraph (c) (i) above, a qualifying (as defined by the Secretary of Labor) injury or illness that was incurred in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces (or existed before the beginning of active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces) and that manifested itself before or after the member became a veteran.

d. An employee who has a qualified family relationship with a covered service member may take up to 26 weeks of leave during a single 12 month period. A qualified family relationship is a spouse, parent, child or next of kin. Contact the human resources office to determine if a qualified family relationship exists.
   i. The leave entitlement described in this paragraph applies on a per-covered service member, per-injury basis, such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one leave if the leave is to care for a different covered service member or to care for the same covered service member with a subsequent serious illness or injury.
   ii. An employee may have FMLA leave for up to 12 weeks for one of the qualifying reasons covered in the paragraph above in the same 12 month period in which FMLA leave is taken to care for a covered service member.
   iii. No more than 26 weeks total FMLA leave may be taken within any single 12 month period.

e. The department should provide the employee with a copy of the form titled Certification for Serious Injury or Illness Covered Service Member for Military Leave to be completed by the employee and an authorized military health care provider of the covered service member. The employee may present certain military such as “Invitational Travel Orders” or “Invitational Authorizations” for purposes of certification that must be accepted by the department.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

i. Recertification and second or third opinions are not permitted.

ii. If the certification is incomplete or unclear, the employee is to be given 7 additional calendar days to provide more complete information.

iii. The human resources office may contact the covered service member’s health care provider for clarification and/or authentication of the medical certification.

f. In all instances when the certification is requested, it is the employee’s responsibility to provide the employer with complete and sufficient certification and failure to do so may result in delay or denial of FMLA leave.

g. The human resources office is responsible for coordinating all requests for leave taken to care for a covered service member.

C. Sanctions
An employee who fraudulently obtains FMLA leave is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Leave of Absence without Pay

Policy
In no instance are leaves of absence granted automatically. All leaves of absence require a written request from the employee, approval and support of the employee's supervisor, and the final approval of the AVP of Human Resources.

- No leave of absence without pay in excess of one year's time will be granted to an employee.

- Leave of absence without pay may be granted to staff employees for the following reasons:
  - Necessary absences due to illness or for emergency reasons when such absences extend beyond available personal and major medical leave accruals.
  - Approved professional development in the areas of education, research, and advanced training. This reason must be justified as being "in the best interest of the University" and, therefore, be job and profession related.

Reinstatement
Leaves of absence will be granted with the assurance of reinstatement to the same or comparable position within the University unless circumstances make it clearly impractical. Personal and major medical leave time will not accrue during leaves of absence without pay; however, earned leave credit may be carried forward.

Employee Benefits
When on leave of absence without pay, an employee may continue to participate in certain employee benefit programs, such as the group health insurance plan. The total cost of participation in a benefit program while the employee is on leave without pay must be paid by the employee. The employee is responsible for making arrangements with University Human Resources so that benefits can continue during his or her absence. Failure to do so within 30 days will result in termination of the insurance.

Employment Requirements
Leaves of absence without pay will not be granted to any employee with less than one year's previous service with the University. A Personnel Action Form will be required on all employees returning from leave of absence without pay status. This form will re-activate the employee and place him or her back on "active" pay status.
Policy
Employees of the University who are called to active military duty on short notice as the result of national emergencies may be granted military leave of absence without pay beginning on the date of the call to military service.

Maximum Leave Time
Each calendar year a leave of absence with pay, not to exceed fifteen (15) working days annually, may be granted to regular employees, who, as members of the National Guard of Mississippi or members of any of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, are ordered to active duty.

When a University employee, who is a member of the National Guard or Reserve, is ordered to active duty for a period in excess of fifteen days the employee is entitled to a leave-of-absence, continuation of insurance benefits, and use of accrued personal leave. The employee is required to provide a copy of their military papers when the active military leave is extended in order to be eligible for this payment. The employee may not use accrued major medical leave during this absence.

Approval for any military leave must be secured in advance from University Human Resources. A copy of the military orders shall be filed with University Human Resources.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Compulsory Leave

Policy

If, in the opinion of the University, an employee is incapacitated for work due to illness or injury or poses a direct threat to themselves or others, such an employee may be required to submit to a physical examination by a physician named by the University. If the medical examination indicates the employee is unable to fulfill job duties effectively, the University may require the employee to take such leave without pay as is sufficient, by medical determination, to restore him or her to normal health. This leave without pay will begin after accumulated personal and major medical leave have been exhausted.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: University Declared Leave

Policy
In the event that the University must close due to inclement weather or a declared holiday by the University President, employees will be given time off with pay for those hours. Individuals who are on personal or major medical leave during these closings will not be charged for the official absence.

Employees who are considered “essential personnel” in areas that are required to work, such as: physical plant, student housing, etc., will be provided pay at a one and a half rate or provided compensatory time at the same rate of time and a half in lieu of holiday pay. Paid time or compensatory time is at the discretion of the supervisor.

This policy does not apply to Public Safety employees who are at all times considered essential personnel and are paid in accordance with regular pay and overtime pay policies.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Leave Balances and Corrections

Policy
All faculty and staff employees are required to complete a Monthly Attendance and Leave Record reflecting Personal and Major Medical leave used during the month. These leave and attendance records are recorded in SOAR.

Leave balances are reflected on an employee's paycheck. The employee has 30-days from the date of most current paycheck to report any errors in account balances. University Human Resources will not correct errors after the 30-day reporting period.

Leave Abuse
Employees who falsify leave records or misrepresent absences due to leave are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Failure to complete attendance records in a timely fashion may result in adjustments to leave accruals. Failure of managers to approve attendance records in a timely fashion may be reflected in performance evaluations and result in disciplinary action.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Scholarships for Children of Faculty and Staff

Qualifications: The 100 percent tuition remission policy applies to all children of full-time faculty and staff employed prior to July 1, 1977. The 100% does not apply to faculty and staff who were employed prior to July 1, 1977 and then terminated and then were subsequently rehired after July 1, 1977. The parent or legal guardian must be employed by the last day of late registration in order for dependent to be eligible for the tuition remission. Proof of birth, tax documents, legal guardian papers, etc… are required and should be attached to the form when submitted to Human Resources.

The 50 percent tuition remission policy applies to all children of full-time faculty and staff employed after July 1, 1977. If both parents are employed with USM, the child receives 100% tuition remission.

In order to receive the tuition remission, children must gain admission to the University where the parent(s) or legal guardian is employed. The application for the Scholarship for Children of faculty and staff must be obtained from University Human Resources or at: http://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/forms/dependentchildtuitionwaiver.pdf and then must be returned to University Human Resources with proper documentation and for verification/data entry.

Consistent with the continued employment or retirement of the parent or guardian a child may receive undergraduate tuition remission. It will be continued until the degree requirements for the first baccalaureate degree are met or until the child's attainment of his/her 25th birthday. The scholarship is renewable on a semester-to-semester basis, provided the child remains in good academic standing. A new waiver is required each academic year.

In order for the child to be eligible and retain the faculty/staff scholarship, he/she must be enrolled at the University at least one-half time. Those who drop below the one-half time status will not be eligible to continue the scholarship at their next term of enrollment. A dually enrolled high school student is eligible for the scholarship, regardless of hours taken.

Children of faculty and staff whose parent(s) or guardian terminate employment with the University prior to mid-term of a semester, will be required to pay tuition. It is the employee’s responsibility to provide relationship evidence and proper documentation to University Human Resources.

Additional Terms or Conditions
- Because this award is intended to defray the cost of tuition, students who receive full scholarships or awards that grant full tuition will not be eligible for this tuition remission award.
- The expenses of special assessed fees, books, food, housing, etc., are to be paid by the recipient.
- This program also applies to children of retired faculty and staff of the University and children of faculty and staff who deceased while actively employed at the University.
- In order to ensure tuition remission is posted timely to student’s account, application must be returned to University Human Resources no later than five (5) working days prior to the beginning of the semester.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Faculty/Staff Academic/Tuition Waiver Policy

In order to participate in the tuition waiver benefit, the University employee must first complete admissions requirements through the Department of Admissions (be admitted or re-admitted to the University) prior to registering for courses.

Eligibility

- All full-time benefit-eligible University faculty, staff, CRNA Nursing and Military Science and Aerospace personnel are eligible for up to six credit hours, per semester, at no cost to the employee.

- All part-time (less than 40 hours) benefit-eligible University employees are eligible for up to three credit hours, per semester, at no cost to the employee. Part-time employees will not be eligible to take the free course during their normal work schedule.

- Retired faculty and staff are eligible for the course benefit up to six semester hours per semester. University Human Resources will be responsible for approving retired participants.

- University employee must maintain a semester 2.0 GPA to continue the tuition waiver. An employee who fails to maintain the required GPA will not receive the benefit until such time as he or she successfully completes a semester with a 2.0 GPA.

- Employees must be employed prior to the start of the semester in order to receive the scholarship.

- In accordance with Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 132, all graduate level course work must be job-related or taken on a space-available basis.

- Tuition for graduate coursework exceeding $5,200 is taxable and will be payroll-deducted.

- Appeals regarding the tuition waiver should be directed to the AVP of Human Resources.

Course(s)

- Employees are expected to enroll in evening classes whenever possible. A full-time employee may take up to six (6) semester hours per semester, but only one course may be taken during normal working hours. Employees taking week-long intensive courses must take annual leave while they are away from the office taking these courses. Only one eight week course per semester may qualify for day classes, not both during the same semester. Normal working hours are defined as 8 AM - 5 PM.

- The department chair or manager must approve all courses taken during normal working hours. The nature of the employee's job and the workload of the area will be the determining factors in approving class attendance during working hours. Classes taken outside of an employee’s normal work schedule do not require supervisory approval.

Only six (6) semester hours can be taken per semester under this policy. Additional coursework beyond this is the responsibility of the employee.

- An employee may also be permitted to take one of their courses under this policy during the noon hour. The noon hour is from 12 noon to 1 PM. The following policies and procedures will be used in allowing the additional class to be taken during the lunch hour:
1. The faculty/staff member must have approval of his or her immediate supervisor.

2. The faculty/staff member may not take longer than one hour to complete the class and return to work.

3. The faculty/staff member may not take additional time for a lunch break since he or she forfeits this time to attend a class.

4. The faculty/staff member may not work through the noon hour and take a class at a later time during the day and charge this absence to the lunch break.

5. The immediate supervisor is charged with the responsibility of enforcing this policy and will allow no exceptions.

- There may be a point in time during the final year of study, before attaining a degree, whereby more than one required course is taught during a semester. When an employee is required to take both courses during working hours, a letter of request will be submitted to the Department, with a copy to University Human Resources. Attached to this letter of request will be a copy of the employee's Application for Degree. The employee will be charged personal leave for all absences during normal working hours to attend the second course.

- Mini session courses are not covered by faculty/staff tuition waiver if the employee has already taken six (6) hours that respective semester.

- Mini session schedule:
  - May mini session is attached to Summer semester
  - August mini session is attached to Fall semester
  - January mini session is attached to Spring semester

- Employees must use personal leave for the entirety of the course time if enrolled in mini session courses.

**Fees**

- Employees are responsible for paying late fees attached to registration or drop-add.

- Employees who are enrolled in a free course and terminate employment with the University prior to mid-term, but continue the class, will be required to pay tuition. Reimbursement of tuition fees, paid by the department, will be in accordance with established refund percentage policies.

- Employees are responsible for paying all fees and purchasing textbooks and other required supplies.

- If an employee drops a course, but continues employment at the University, the employing department's budget will be reimbursed at the established refund percentage.

- All faculty and staff waivers are audited each semester. Employees who take more than three (3) credit hours during normal working hours will be identified and disciplinary action will be taken. Individuals who violate these policies will also be denied continuation of the tuition waiver benefit.
Procedures

- The employee must first complete admission requirements of the University. The employee may then fill out a faculty/staff scholarship form for the tuition waiver from University Human Resources. Human Resources will verify employment status.

- The employee must have the permission to take courses approved by his or her supervisor. The supervisor must ensure that the absence from the work place does not cause an undue burden on the department. Once signed by the area budget authority, the permission form is returned to University Human Resources for processing before registration can begin.

- The employee then takes his or her Registration Appointment Form to registration or uses SOAR.

- In order to ensure that tuition is timely posted to the employee’s account, the permission form must be returned to University Human Resources no later than five (5) working days prior to the start of the semester.

- Employees must be employed prior to the start of the semester in order to receive the scholarship.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Education Enhancement

The following schedule of payments will be made to all University staff employees who attain an advanced degree or successfully complete the Professional Standards Program (PSP) Certification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate or Diploma</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(PSP) First Certificate</td>
<td>$ 600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(PSP) Each succeeding Certificate (excluding Bachelor's or Master's)</td>
<td>$ 500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Public Accountant (CPA)</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Engineer or Architect</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>$ 800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Personnel Action Form with copies of the certificates, official transcripts, and/or diplomas will be forwarded to University Human Resources for processing. Monetary adjustments to the employee's salary will be made effective the date the PAF is received in HR as long as the degree has been conferred and/or dissertation successfully defended. The increase in salary will become a part of the employee's annual base salary. The education enhancement will in no case be retroactive.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Insurance

State of Mississippi Health Insurance Program
The State of Mississippi offers all full-time benefit eligible employees coverage in the statewide Health Plan. The University is the liaison to the Plan, which is self-funded by the State of Mississippi. Claims are administered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. (NOTE: Coverage is NOT with Blue Cross/Blue Shield.) Rules are decided via the Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Insurance, in Jackson, Mississippi, and the ultimate authority lies with the Department of Finance and Administration. Retired employees who retire under the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi may continue coverage by making appropriate contributions.

The State of Mississippi pays a portion of premiums for health insurance coverage for employee only. Dependent coverage is available; premiums will be at the employee's expense. Dependent coverage is offered only to those employees who are covered by the plan. Application must be made within sixty (60) days of acquiring an eligible dependent.

Employees will be covered on the first day of employment when they enroll during the "in-processing" procedures at University Human Resources.

Dependent Coverage
If an employee chooses not to enroll dependents at the initial employment enrollment, then dependents can only be added during open enrollment in October with an effective date of January 1 unless a job status or family change occurs. A change in family status is defined as: marriage, divorce, death of spouse, or child, birth or adoption of a child, leave of absence without pay and termination of employment of spouse.

Administrator
The State of Mississippi Comprehensive Self-Insured Group Health Plan is administered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The plan is also monitored by Active Health Management. In order to obtain maximum benefits under the state medical plan, employees are required to call Active Health Management (1) at least 5 days prior to a non-emergency hospitalization, (2) within 48 hours following emergency admission to a hospital and (3) within the first trimester of pregnancy. Some outpatient pre-certifications are also required. The toll-free number for Active Health Management is 1-866-939-4721. For more information concerning this requirement for pre-certification of admission, contact University Human Resources at 266-4050.

Open Enrollment
The State of MS Health Plan allows for an "open enrollment" to occur one time during the calendar year. Generally, October is designated as the time in which changes can be made to benefit plans. Employees may:

- add or drop dependent coverage
- add or drop any University offered pre-tax insurance benefit
- elect to participate in Dependent Care Reimbursement or Medical Reimbursement Plans
Employees are cautioned that "open enrollment" occurs once a year and this is the only time that changes can be made to insurance programs, unless a "Change in Family Status" occurs. A "Change in Family Status" is defined as: marriage, divorce, death of a spouse or dependent child, birth or adoption of a child, and termination of employment of a spouse.

NOTE: All participants in the Dependent Care Reimbursement or Medical Reimbursement Plan MUST complete the online enrollment process each year.

**COBRA**

The federal law known as Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) became effective for the State of Mississippi Group Health Plan January 1, 1987. All employees and employee family members who are covered under the group health plan are entitled to "continuation coverage" required by federal law. Continuation coverage under our group health plan will be made available to covered persons in the event of employment termination, divorce, separation, or death and in certain other instances. Detailed information concerning COBRA can be obtained from Blue Cross Blue Shield of MS.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Tax Exempt Benefit Program (Cafeteria Plan)

The University of Southern Mississippi offers a pre-tax program called a cafeteria plan that is permitted under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. It is referred to as a cafeteria plan because the employee may select from a variety of benefits available. This program allows certain benefits to be paid with before-tax dollars rather than with after tax dollars, increasing the amount of take home pay and lowering tax liability.

This program does not affect the state retirement contributions nor in any way changes benefits available to employees when they retire. However, because social security is deducted after the tax exemptions, it does affect social security contributions. Research shows that the resulting difference in social security benefits at retirement are insignificant especially when compared with the savings available during employment careers.

An employee can only drop or add a benefit during the year within 60 days of the qualifying event for the following changes in family status:

- marriage
- divorce
- death of spouse or child
- birth or adoption of a child
- termination or employment of spouse
- leave of absence without pay
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Workers’ Compensation

Policy
The University provides standard workers' compensation coverage under a self-insurance program in accordance with Mississippi State laws that, in general, prescribe the amounts of indemnity payable for the degrees of disability, temporary or regular, and for death if the injury or disability occurs on the job. These laws also provide for medical care, hospitalization, and weekly compensation for the period of disability. All on-the-job injuries should be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor and University Human Resources. A first report of injury must be completed for claim purposes and sent to Human Resources.

The University pays the entire cost of the program on behalf of its employees.

Employees who have accrued sick or personal leave benefits are entitled to these benefits should they request them, along with payment from Workers' Compensation. Payment from worker’s compensation and the university cannot exceed 100% of the employee’s regular salary.

On-the-Job Injuries
All on-the-job injuries should be reported to the department supervisor and Human Resources immediately on occurrence. Each injury is treated through the "Healthworks" facilities of the Hattiesburg Clinic, Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Emergencies should be sent to the emergency room at Wesley Medical Center or Forrest General Hospital. The attending physician will determine the extent of the injury and provide University Human Resources with a written prognosis of recovery. Follow-up treatment will be prescribed as necessary and a return-to-work date will be issued.

Additional information concerning benefits can be obtained from University Human Resources.

NOTE: Workers' Compensation fraud is a felony with a minimum fine of $5,000.
Section 3: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Public Employees’ Retirement System

Policy
The Public Employees’ Retirement System of Mississippi enacted by the 1952 Legislature requires participation of all state employees who work twenty (20) hours per week or more for a state employer. The State of Mississippi mandates participation in the retirement system as a condition of employment.

Exemptions
Employees who are classified part-time, who work less than 15-days a month or who work less than the equivalent of 1/2 of a normal work load for their position and receive less than 1/2 of the normal wages for the position are exempt from participation. An exception to this policy is if a part-time employee is a member of the Public Employee’s Retirement System at another agency, then the employee must be a member at the University. Also, students of any state educational institution employed by an agency of the state for temporary, part-time, or intermittent work may not enter membership into the system.

Temporary Employees
Persons whose employment is temporary in nature or intermittent, who work less than 20 hours each week, and who are not employed for at least four and one-half months in a fiscal year shall not be covered by the State Retirement System.

Contributions and Withdrawals
Contributions are taken in payroll deductions under a pre-tax arrangement so that funds contributed are taxable only at retirement or termination. Employees who terminate from state service may choose to withdraw contributions they have made to the system in a lump sum amount, or they may leave the contributions in the retirement system until retirement or transfer to another state agency.

Retirement eligibility
Members may retire and receive full retirement allowance: (1) if they are age 60 and vested in the PERS system (hired June 30, 2007 or earlier—4 year vesting period and hired July 1, 2008 or later—8 year vesting period) or, (2) they have Appropriate years of service, regardless of age (hired June 30, 2011 or earlier—25 years of service or hired July 1, 2011 or later—30 years of service)

More detailed information on the retirement system is available in University Human Resources or by contacting the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi, 429 Mississippi Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201-1005, telephone (601) 325-3589 or 1-800-444-7377.

Because of laws prohibiting release of private information without the employee's consent, the Retirement System will not release current balances, options on retirement specific to an individual, or current status of an employee's account without a written request from the employee.

Optional Retirement Program (ORP)
An optional retirement program is provided to all faculty, administrative faculty, and administrators heading recognized departments who were employed on or after July 1, 1990; librarians with academic rank and coaches who were employed on or after August 1, 1998; and post doctoral researchers or research scientist without academic rank who were employed on or after July 1, 2001. These members may direct their retirement contribution to selected investment accounts for management of their retirement funds. Information on options is available in University Human Resources.
Section 4: Grievance Policies

Subject: Grievance Policy and Procedures

General Policy
It is the policy of The University of Southern Mississippi to provide an immediate and fair method by which to settle disputes that may arise between the University and its employees.

Definitions
The General Grievance
A general grievance is a work-related problem or a condition that an employee believes to be contrary to policy or is a barrier to his or her effective conduct of employment.

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:

- The Human Resources Director
- The Employee's Immediate Supervisor
- The next level of management in their respective unit

Time Frame
Days in the policy statement shall refer to working days of the Grievant or complainant except where noted. The parties of the grievance, by mutual agreement, may extend any or all of the time periods established in this policy.

Failure to process a grievance within the time limits, or agreed upon extensions, shall constitute termination of the grievance.

At each level, the grievant assumes responsibility for advancing the complaint to the next higher level within five (5) working days of an answer that is unsatisfactory to him/her. Similarly, the budgetary authority to whom the grievance is addressed assumes the responsibility for answering the grievance, in writing, within five (5) working days of receipt of the unresolved grievance.

General Procedures
Grievance forms are available from University Human Resources. At the outset of this process, the Grievant is invited to the Human Resources Director's office for procedural guidance and determination if the grievance process is applicable to the situation. Assistance in the completion and filing of the form is available from the Human Resources Department. Every effort should be made to settle the grievance or concern by mutual consent at the lowest administrative level possible.

The number of required steps in this procedure may vary depending on the department involved and/or the number of supervisors above the employee.
Employees may use the following procedures to seek the redress of grievances. These procedures consist of:

1. An informal attempt to resolve the grievance through a meeting with the Grievant's immediate supervisor.
2. A formal written statement of the grievance submitted through administrative channels stating the nature of the complaint and the desired adjustment.
3. Chain of Command should be used to resolve the complaint.
4. The convening of a Grievance Committee to hear the case and make recommendations to the President.
5. A final review and decision by the President.

**Specific Procedures**

**Step 1**
If a grievance arises from the application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the University, the Grievant should first seek to resolve the difficulty informally through his/her immediate supervisor. This First Step must be made within ten (10) working days of the incident, and the Grievant must state to his/her immediate supervisor that a grievance is being initiated. The written grievance should state the nature of the complaint and the action requested to resolve the grievance. The immediate supervisor must render a response to the written grievance within five (5) working days of the initial complaint.

**Step 2**
If resolution cannot be accomplished informally in Step 1, the grievance will be forwarded to the next budgetary level of supervision until resolution is reached. This level is generally the director or academic dean. At each level the Grievant assumes responsibility for advancing the complaint to the next higher level within one week of an answer that is unsatisfactory to him or her. Similarly, the supervisor to whom the grievance is addressed assumes the responsibility for answering the grievance in writing within one week of receipt of the unresolved grievance. A copy of the written grievance and a copy of each answer should be sent to the Director of Human Resources.

**Step 3**
If an answer from the director or academic dean is unsatisfactory to resolve the complaint, the Grievant may, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the answer, submit to the appropriate vice president of his/her area a written request to review all materials related to the complaint. The vice president will evaluate all facts presented and conduct a meeting with the grievant to attempt to resolve the grievance. The vice president will, within five (5) working days of the meeting, render a decision regarding the complaint.

**Step 4**
If the answer from the vice president (or the level directly below the President) is unsatisfactory, the Grievant may, within two weeks of receipt of the answer, submit to the Director of Human Resources a written request to conduct a hearing. The University Grievance Committee will be convened to hear the grievance.

**Step 5**
The decision and recommendations of this Committee will be forwarded to the President within five working days after the hearing. Upon evaluation of all facts presented, the President will render a final decision in the case. Copies of the final decision will be transmitted to the Grievant, the department director, the dean, the vice president of the area in which the grievant is employed, and the Director of Human Resources.
Section 4: Grievance Policies

Subject: Grievance Committee

The Director of Human Resources shall appoint an appropriate Chair of the Grievance Committee. The Committee will be comprised of a minimum of five voting members, appointed by the Chair, one non-voting recorder, and one voting member named by the Grievant. The Director of Human Resources shall serve as a non-voting adviser to the Committee. The Grievance Committee shall not be a standing committee, but will be named as grievances arise. Members will be selected who will be representative of each major University area, including each Vice Presidential area, the Athletic Department, and the President's Office. Selection criteria will also be given to members who exhibit a fair and impartial attitude and who are peers of the Grievant.

Committee hearings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order; a non-voting parliamentarian may be appointed to assist the Chair in conducting the hearing.

Grievance Committee Meeting Agenda

The Chair shall set the time of the Grievance Committee meeting, which shall be as soon as possible, but not more than ten (10) working days after the request is received. The meeting shall follow Robert's Rules of Order to assure orderly conduct of the proceedings. The parliamentarian appointed by the Chair shall rule on all matters of procedure deemed essential by the Chair.

The agenda for the meeting shall be agreed upon by the Grievant, the University Representative, and the Chair prior to the meeting. The following procedures are recommended for consideration of agenda planning.

Briefing the Committee Members

A. The Chair shall brief Committee members on their duties and responsibilities as voting members.

B. The Chair will distribute copies of the agreed-upon agenda to each voting member of the Committee. A copy of the agenda will also be made available to the secretary/recorder.

C. The Chair will entertain questions from the Committee regarding rules, policies, and/or procedures to be followed in the conduct of the meeting.

Presentation of the Grievance

A. The Grievant shall present the issues and actions precipitating the grievance along with the history of Steps 1 through 5 in the grievance procedure.

B. The University Representative shall present the University's reply to the grievance.

C. The Chair shall request exhibits and/or evidence to be presented to substantiate the grievance and the reply. However, no evidence, statements, or witnesses may be presented at this meeting which have not been either previously submitted in Steps 1 through 3, or specifically requested by the Chair.

D. The Grievant shall present exhibits, call forth witnesses, and present proper evidence supporting the grievance.

E. The University Representative shall respond to evidence presented, present and/or question witnesses, and answer the grievance.

F. The Grievant may have the opportunity to clarify issues brought forth.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

G. The University Representative may have the opportunity to clarify issues brought forth.
H. The voting Committee members may have the opportunity to clarify issues brought forth.
I. The Chair shall call for questions from the voting members.
J. The Chair shall dismiss all non-voting members of the Committee except the parliamentarian and the secretary/recorder. The Committee shall then go into deliberation.

Recommendations
A. The Committee shall forward their recommendations to the University President, in writing, within five (5) working days following the meeting.
B. The recommendations may be held and the meeting reopened by the Chair on his or her own motion or upon application of a party for good cause shown and approved by the Chair at any time before the final decision is made.
Section 4: Grievance Policies

Subject: Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment Policy

Policy Statement
The University of Southern Mississippi prohibits sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual assault or sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and other forms of nonconsensual sexual conduct. The University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy sets forth the resources available to students and employees and describes prohibited conduct. Sexual misconduct is inconsistent with the standards and ideals of our community and will not be tolerated. The University is committed to fostering an academic, work, and living environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and sexual misconduct including sexual harassment and sexual assault. Additionally, federal law prohibits all forms of sexual harassment under Title IV, Title VII and Title IX. This policy assists the University in complying with federal and state legal mandates and University policies in relation to such misconduct and applies to all members of the University community. The full Sexual Misconduct Policy (Policy No. PRES-AA-001) can be accessed on the University’s Institutional Policies webpage at www.usm.edu/institutional-policies.

Procedures
In conjunction with the Sexual Misconduct Policy, the University has adopted Procedures for the Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment which sets forth the University’s obligations and methods for responding to sexual misconduct incidents that include sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other unwelcome behaviors as set forth in the Sexual Misconduct Policy. This procedure implements the University’s commitment to comply with federal and state mandates and University policies in relation to such misconduct and apply to all members of the University community. The full Procedures for the Resolution of Allegations of Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment (Policy No. PRES-AA-002) can be accessed on the University’s Institutional Policies webpage at www.usm.edu/institutional-policies.
Section 4: Grievance Policies

Subject: Procedure for the Resolution of Discrimination Complaints

Any University of Southern Mississippi employee, student, applicant for admission or employment, or other participant in the University’s programs or activities who believes s/he has been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, and/or veteran status by a University employee may file a complaint with the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity, in accordance with the procedures described below.

Students or employees who wish to file complaints against students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

Federal law, as well as University policy, prohibits any form of retaliation against a person who files a discrimination complaint in good faith.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Complaints filed with the University will remain confidential to the extent allowed by law, while also allowing for a complete investigation. University personnel involved in or responsible for any aspect of a complaint, including the appeals process, shall maintain confidentiality throughout the processing of the complaint. All persons involved in the complaint process are expected to maintain confidentiality, both during the process and afterward.

RETALIATION: The University seeks to create an environment where students and employees are free to explore the possible violation of their civil rights without fear of reprisal. Retaliation is illegal and will not be tolerated by the University. Similarly, persons who use this process to bring bad faith allegations against an employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees and students are encouraged, where feasible, to reach an informal resolution to complaints through the administrative reporting structure of the academic or employment unit. However, if the complainant wishes to access a formal process instead, the following procedures apply:

PROCEDURES:

Step 1: Complaints must be received in writing in the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity within a reasonable period of time from the most recently alleged discriminatory act. “Reasonable” will be defined as 30 calendar days from such alleged action. [Note: at the discretion of the Office of AA/EEO, in certain situations complaints filed outside of this time limit may be investigated despite stated timelines.] Complaint forms may be obtained in the Office of AA/EEO, 221 Weathersby Hall, or at the departmental Web site: http://www.aa-eeo.usm.edu. The written complaint must include the complainant’s name and signature, and must include a brief written description of the alleged discriminatory act[s], as well as the name[s] of the person[s] who allegedly are responsible for such act[s].

Step 2: The director of the Office of AA/EEO will meet with the complainant and subsequently will determine if the written and verbal description of the alleged discriminatory act warrants further investigation into the allegations as presented. If it is determined that no potential violation of civil rights related University policy is being presented, the Office of AA/EEO will notify the complainant of such in writing within fifteen [15] working days of written receipt of the complaint. This notification will explain why the complaint does not state a possible violation of civil rights law or policy and may inform the complainant of other avenues of redress, as appropriate.
Step 3: If the Office of AA/EEO determines that the complaint as presented may involve a violation of civil rights related university policy, the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing of such. If determined appropriate by the Office of AA/EEO, the complainant will be given the option to pursue mediation as resolution to his/her concerns. SEE “MEDIATION” BELOW.

If the nature of the complaint is such that mediation is inappropriate and/or the complainant or respondent declines mediation or if mediation fails, the director of AA/EEO or his/her designee will investigate the allegation[s]. The director of the Office of AA/EEO will inform the following parties that a complaint has been filed and that an investigation will be conducted: the complainant, the respondent, the respondent’s immediate supervisor and department head, dean, vice president, and the president.

A typical investigation will involve meeting with the complainant, the respondent[s], and with other persons who may have knowledge relevant to the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the director of the Office of AA/EEO will issue a written report in which the findings of the investigation will indicate either sufficient or insufficient evidence to support the allegation[s]. This determination will be based upon information obtained as a result of the investigation process. The complainant and the respondent will receive written notification of the findings. Written notification of the findings will also be sent to the administrators listed above.

In the event that there is a finding of a violation of University policy, the director of the Office of AA/EEO will recommend to the appropriate vice president that a directive be issued to stop the discriminatory behavior and make recommendations concerning disciplinary action against the respondent. Additionally, corrective action, when appropriate, will be recommended to eradicate the effect of the discriminatory behavior.

The vice president to whom the report is sent will issue written notification of disciplinary action within fifteen [15] working days of receipt of report from the Office of AA/EEO. Details of the disciplinary action will not be shared with the complainant, nor may the complainant appeal the disciplinary action itself. The respondent may, however, appeal the disciplinary action.

In the event that there is a finding of insufficient evidence of a violation of University policy, the director of the Office of AA/EEO will notify the complainant, respondent, and above named administrators.

Step 4: Should the complainant or the respondent wish to appeal the decision[s] of the Office of AA/EEO and/or the decision of the vice president made at Step 3, s/he may do so in writing to the Office of the President, within fifteen [15] working days from the date of receipt of written decisions made at Step 3. The president will appoint a panel and will name a panel convener. The panel will be comprised of three employees, with at least one tenured faculty employee and one non-faculty employee.

The complainant or respondent may request an appeal panel review based on any of the following grounds:

a. that the complaint procedure was not followed;

b. that new information is to be presented, or which could have had a material effect upon the findings;

c. that the investigation was conducted in an arbitrary or capricious manner.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

The appellant will provide a written request to the Office of the President for an appeal, citing at least one of
the bases listed above, within fifteen [15] working days from the date of written receipt of the decision made
at Step 3. The appellant must provide a detailed written rationale for why s/he believes the appeal basis has
been met. The president will appoint the panel as described above. The panel will determine if at least one
of the grounds for appeal has been met. If its determination is that none of the grounds has been met, the
appellant will be notified of such in writing.

If the panel determines that at least one of the grounds for appeal has been met, the panel convener will notify
both the complainant and the respondent in writing that the appeal panel will meet and review the information
provided by the appellant. The panel will share with the other party the information provided by the appellant.
Both parties will be invited to present information to the panel, at a date decided upon by the panel convener.

Once the appeal panel has reached a determination, it will recommend, in writing, that the Office of the
President reverse, amend, or uphold the finding and/or the disciplinary action. The panel is empowered to
make recommendations only. The decision of the president is final.

MEDIATION

Mediation is a process by which the University attempts to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all
involved parties without reaching a formal finding regarding a violation of the University’s non-
discrimination policy. Mediation seeks to protect the confidentiality of all involved parties to the extent
allowed by law. At any time during the mediation process, either party may choose to terminate the process,
and the complaint will then be investigated by the Office of AA/EEO per procedures listed above.

Generally, mediation will involve only the complainant, the respondent, and the mediator. If the complaint is
successfully resolved through mediation, each party will sign a document that describes the mutually agreed-
on terms. Any deviation from the terms of the agreement allows either party the right to re-file formal
charges with the Office of AA/EEO.

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW BY APPEAL PANEL

- Appellant makes request in writing to the Office of the President within 10 working days of receipt of
determination letter.

- President appoints a three-person panel to review the request, designating a convener from that group.
The panel will consist of at least one tenured faculty member and at least one staff member.

- Panel reviews request and determines if ground[s] for appeal have been satisfied. If not, panel indicates
such in writing to appellant.

- If panel determines that appropriate grounds have been established [from the bases listed in the complaint procedures], it will determine a date/time for the panel to hear the appeal and will notify both parties of such. Information provided by the appellant will be shared with opposing party. The panel may request involvement in the hearing from any member of the University whom it believes may have information pertinent to the appeal. These persons include the AA/EEO officer and any witnesses that either party may recommend to the panel. Witnesses are invited to participate at the discretion of the panel.
Hearing will be conducted as follows:

1. Chair will invite appellant to give a brief overview of the reason[s] for appeal.
2. Panel members will be invited to question appellant.
3. Opposing party will be allowed to respond to ground[s] on which appellant appealed.
4. Panel members will be invited to question other party.

The panel will reach a determination either supporting the findings and/or disciplinary action, or supporting the appeal of the appellant. The panel will forward their findings and any recommendations to the president for his review. Within fifteen [15] working days of receipt of the panel’s findings, the president will inform all involved parties of his decision in writing, based on input from the appeal panel. The decision of the president shall be final.
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: University Events, Committees, and Awards

Convocation

It has been the long-standing policy of the University President to hold a Fall and a Spring Convocation to address issues and concerns affecting the operation of the University. The traditional "State of the Union" message is a time for faculty, staff, and students to be informed of goals, accomplishments, and long-range plans of the University. The announced meetings are generally held in Bennett Auditorium. University faculty and staff who have completed 10-, 20-, 30-, and 40-years of service to The University of Southern Mississippi are honored on this day.

Staff Excellence Awards

The Staff Excellence Awards Committee is comprised of seven (7) staff employees serving on a rotating basis with one representing each of the Vice Presidential areas of responsibility. The committee distributes nomination forms, reviews the eligibility of recommended staff, evaluates, and selects outstanding staff employees to receive the Staff Excellence Award. Monetary awards and certificates are presented to those staff selected in the categories of Professional; Office Personnel; Service Maintenance/Skilled Craft/Technical; and the Jessie H. Morrison Award which an employee must have 20 consecutive years of service to be eligible.

The criteria for selection includes: full-time employee with three (3) years of service at USM, attendance, job performance, good deeds, participation in on-campus committees and organizations, and community activities.

The Staff Excellence Awards Committee is responsible for seeking nominations and selecting the recipient. Recipients of the Staff Excellence Awards are recognized each December at the Staff Council Holiday Reception.

University Committees

The University Committee on Committees is responsible for reviewing the function, membership, and chairs of all University standing committees. The membership of University committees is categorized into three groups: ex-officio membership, general membership, and student membership. University committees and councils are an integral part of the decision making process in the University. Detailed listings of each committee are contained in the University Committees publication from the Office of the President.

Staff Council

The University of Southern Mississippi Staff Council is organized to provide an operational framework for discussion of issues, policies, and activities relating to the staff of the University and to make recommendations as appropriate. The Council shall provide for enhanced communication among the staff, faculty, and administration and shall promote excellence in service. Membership on the Council is composed of elected representatives from the full-time staff of the six major Equal Employment Opportunity Commission categories, two members to be elected at large from the USM-Gulf Coast campuses and two members from the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, and one member from Stennis Space Center.
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Services, Facilities, and Privileges

Credit Union
The University of Southern Mississippi Credit Union was organized November, 1956, under the Mississippi State Credit Union Act. Employees of the University and their families may join the Credit Union by paying the membership fee of $10.00 and subscribing for at least one $5.00 share.

Services include checking accounts, savings accounts with dividends paid quarterly, and loans available to members and their families upon approval of the Credit Committee. Other services include notary services, direct deposit, and payroll deductions.

Employees are encouraged to contact the Credit Union between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM Monday through Friday for a complete listing of services available. The Credit Union is located at 3318 Hardy Street, telephone number 601-450-4114.

GCRL employees are eligible to join Keesler Federal Credit Union.

Southern Miss Ticket Office
Tickets to athletic events are available to faculty, staff, and retirees at reduced rates on season tickets. They may be purchased from the Southern Miss Ticket Office. The phone numbers for the Ticket Office are 601-266-5418 and 1-800-844-TICK. You can also find information at www.southernmisstickets.com.

Library Service
The library structure at USM is organized into five major units: the Joseph Anderson Cook Memorial Library; the William David McCain Library and Archives; the Instructional Resource Center on the Hattiesburg Campus; the Richard G. Cox Library at Gulf Park, and the Gunter Library at Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. The libraries serve students, faculty, and staff. Books can be checked out by faculty and staff for 6-months (180 days). Other services include reference assistance, interlibrary borrowing, database searching, bibliographic instruction reserves, and library orientations.

The Instructional Resource Center has a two-fold mission:

1) To aid in facilitating teaching and learning throughout the University; and

2) to support the University community by providing services related to the facilitation of teaching and learning. This mission is accomplished by offering faculty development, graphic services, instructional design, and learning resources. The Resource Center is located on the ground floor of McCain Library. For more information, please call 266-4356.

Post Office
The University of Southern Mississippi operates a post office that provides full postal service, an outgoing mail center, incoming mail distribution to box holders, and campus distribution. Faculty, staff, and students are eligible to rent personal mail boxes. Departments and approved campus organizations may also rent boxes for their official mail and campus distribution. A nominal fee (non-refundable) is charged for box rent. Computerized box assignment, mail redirect, and forwarding give box holders rapid, reliable mail delivery. Account billing for outgoing official mail is also computerized. To avail yourself of any of these services or to obtain more information, come by the USM Post Office between the hours of 9 AM and 4 PM Monday through Friday except on holidays.
Payne Center
The Payne Center offers a variety of fitness and recreational programs in a 133,000 square foot, fully air-conditioned building. The facility includes swimming pool, indoor volleyball and basketball courts, and squash and racquetball courts. Membership fee is required. For more information, call Recreational Sports, 266-5405.

Audiology and Speech-Language Services
All full-time, part-time, and retired faculty and staff members, students, alumni, and respective family members are eligible for services at NO CHARGE from the USM Speech and Hearing Clinic. The clinic offers screening, assessment, and management for children and adults with a variety of articulation, fluency, hearing, language, and voice problems. The clinic serves as a training facility for graduate student completing their professional requirements in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

Individuals may request an appointment by calling 266-5216 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
Policy
The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989, Public Law 101-226, requires that, as a condition of receiving funds or any other form of financial assistance under any Federal program, an institution of higher education must certify that it has adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by faculty, staff, and students. Thus, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, use, or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs or of controlled substances by University employees or students in the workplace, in classrooms, on University premises, at official University functions, on University business, in University vehicles or related to any University sponsored activity is prohibited. In addition, employees and students shall not use alcohol or illegal substances or abuse legal substances in a manner that impairs work performance, scholarly activities, or student life. Conduct involving prescription drugs which have not been prescribed by a physician to the person using or in possession of them will be treated as a violation of this policy.

Annually, each employee and student will be provided with a written statement concerning:

(a) the applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law regarding unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol,

(b) the health risks associated with use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol,

(c) the available drug or alcohol counseling, treatment, and/or rehabilitation programs, and

(d) the disciplinary sanctions that will be imposed on employees and students for the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol.

1.1. Violations by Employees. Employees found to be in violation of this Policy, including student employees if the circumstances warrant, may be subject to corrective action, up to and including dismissal, under applicable University policies, or may be required, at the discretion of the University, to obtain an assessment or evaluation to determine whether the employee may have a substance or alcohol abuse issue, and/or may be reported to authorities for criminal prosecution or other appropriate action.

The University reserves the right to inspect the workplace for alcohol, controlled substances, illegal drugs or paraphernalia relating to alcohol, controlled substances or illegal drugs and to question any employee when it reasonably suspects that this policy or any procedure under this policy has been violated.

1.2 Violations by Students. The University of Southern Mississippi’s Code of Student Conduct, in conjunction with this policy, prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of alcohol and other drugs by students and student organizations, as well as any other alcohol-related misconduct.

1.3 Residence Life. In accordance with residence life and housing policy, alcohol is not permitted inside student housing. Any possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages of any kind in plain
view shall be considered a violation of this policy. The concepts of “private space” or “private gatherings” in this policy do not condone underage or excessive drinking in private spaces. Rather, the policy arises from the reality that, while police officers enforce state laws, they may not have a need or legal reason to enter students’ private living spaces unless a problem is apparent or a large gathering requires investigation. However, privacy rights of students in their residential space will be respected, but any public nuisance coming from private space related to the consumption of alcohol shall bring the full force of this policy and applicable state law into play. The concealment of illegal alcohol consumption from plain view does not preclude the enforcement of state laws or this policy.

1.4 All traditional freshmen, sophomores, and other students under the age of 21 are prohibited from the possession and consumption of alcohol. All students are prohibited from the use and possession of illegal drugs. In addition, student organizations sponsoring events where alcohol is present are subject to the additional requirements and guidelines of the University’s Social Events policy and registration form. Students or student organizations found to be in violation of this Policy may be subject to corrective action, which may include alcohol and/or other drug education, mandated evaluation and treatment, community service, suspension, and dismissal. Individuals may also be reported to authorities for criminal prosecution or other appropriate action.

1.5 All student or student organization violations of the University Alcohol and Drug Policy will be handled by the Office of the Dean of Students and follow the adjudication, sanctioning and appeal processes for alcohol violations contained in the Code of Student Conduct.

1.5.1 Community/common source alcohol. Except as may be otherwise specifically authorized by this Policy, community alcohol, common sources of alcohol and “tap” systems are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, kegs, beer balls, punch bowls used to mix or serve alcohol, mixed drinks/cocktails, and/or beer/wine provided on behalf of a student organization to other persons at a social event. Drinking games and rapid consumption techniques and devices (e.g., flip cup, beer pong, quarters, funnels, power hour, whoop juice, card games, shots, etc.), mixed drinks/cocktails and beer/wine provided to other persons are strictly prohibited and violate this policy.

1.5.2 Penalty for providing community or common source alcohol. The University has determined that students or student organizations that provide “community alcohol” or “common source alcohol,” in any of its forms, constitutes a clear and present danger to others and is strictly prohibited. A violation of this policy by an individual or organization, as adjudicated under the Code of Student Conduct, may result in the most severe sanctions or penalties, up to and including expulsion or dismissal of an individual, and complete suspension or dismissal of a student organization. The penalties shall be determined by the sanctioning official in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. Further, a violation of this Policy may also result in an interim suspension in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

1.5.3 Sanctions are appealable as provided in the Code of Student Conduct.

1.5.4 The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) has given colleges/universities the option to notify parents or guardians about specific types of information from a student's conduct record. The office of the Dean of Students may notify parents/guardians the first time and any subsequent time a student is found to have violated Code of Student Conduct policies
on the use or possession of alcohol or other illegal substances if he/she is under the age of 21.

1.6 Amnesty -- Student health and safety are primary concerns in cases of possible alcohol intoxication, alcohol-related injury or drug overdose. If a student on campus becomes endangered by alcohol or drug use, students should contact Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the duty of which is to provide medical assistance, not to report violations of policy. In these situations, the University is most concerned that students who need care receive medical attention. Any student may seek emergency medical assistance or University Police Department (UPD) assistance or bring an intoxicated or drug impaired person to University Health Services. Neither the impaired student nor the student providing assistance will face disciplinary action for the possession, use, or provision of alcohol (see exception below) or the possession or use of other drugs, if the student seeking amnesty completes a mandatory follow-up with the Dean of Students (or his/her designee, which may include The University of Southern Mississippi Counseling Center or Wellness Center). Amnesty does not apply to other prohibited conduct, such as assault (physical or sexual), violence, property damage, provision of alcohol to persons under 21, or distributing dangerous substances (whether legal or illegal). Failure by a student, student organization, or responsible University entity to call EMS or UPD when faced with an alcohol or other drug related emergency is a serious violation and may be sanctioned with restrictions, suspension, or expulsion. To receive amnesty, a student must initiate a request for assistance before being confronted by The University of Southern Mississippi for possible alcohol or drug violations. Students may receive amnesty on more than one occasion. Because cooperation is crucial during emergency responses, any interference with EMS, UPD or others trying to provide care to an injured person is unacceptable and will be severely sanctioned. An intoxicated or drug-impaired student who is belligerent towards emergency responders will not receive amnesty.

1.7 Additional Regulations. Any alcohol served and consumed on any University of Southern Mississippi campus must be done in a safe and responsible manner subject to the following additional regulations.

1.7.1 Driving Under the Influence. Driving under the influence is strictly prohibited on any University of Southern Mississippi campus or in any University owned, leased or borrowed vehicle by students, employees or visitors of The University of Southern Mississippi.

1.7.2 Alcoholic beverages shall not be provided under any circumstances to any person under the age of 21 or to anyone who is disorderly, visibly intoxicated, or known to be a habitual drunkard. Groups are considered in violation of this policy if they facilitate the consumption or acquisition of alcohol by anyone under the age of 21.

1.7.3 No person under 21 years of age may misrepresent her/his age for the purpose of obtaining alcoholic beverages, nor may a person assist another in such a misrepresentation.

1.7.4 Proof of age must include presentation of a valid American driver's license or non-driver identification card, a valid passport, or a valid identification card issued by the United States Armed Forces. No person under 21 years of age shall provide false or written evidence of age for the purpose of attempting to consume or purchase alcoholic beverages.
1.7.5 No person under the age of 21 may possess any alcoholic beverage with the intent to consume it.

1.7.6 Actions or situations that involve forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization are prohibited.

1.7.7 Alcohol may not be brought in glass containers to on-campus Bring Your Own Beverage ("BYOB") events. BYOB events may include only beer, sparkling wine and wine coolers. Hard liquor, as defined herein, is specifically prohibited under any circumstances. No individual may possess more than six cans at a BYOB event. Each can may not exceed 12 ounces.

1.7.8 Alcoholic beverages may not be served (sale of drinks, admission charged, donations solicited, etc.) without the appropriate license or permit.

1.7.9 Alcohol that is not specifically manufactured for human consumption may not be offered, served, or consumed in any form (e.g., diluted or undiluted, or as an ingredient in punches or other admixtures) under any circumstances.

1.7.10 The theme of all events where alcohol is allowed must be primarily social, cultural, or educational, and not the availability of alcohol. Language stating that double proof of age is required for consumption of alcoholic beverages must appear in all promotional material. No other mention or depiction of alcohol is permitted.

1.7.11 Ample quantities of food and appealing nonalcoholic beverages must be continuously provided and visibly displayed during the event.

1.7.12 There may be no games of chance, drinking games, contests, "happy hours," or other activities that induce, encourage, or result in the consumption of alcohol.

1.7.13 Kegs or other bulk containers of alcoholic beverages are not permitted. The possession, use, or storage of such containers is considered “community alcohol” and is strictly prohibited.

1.7.14 Those who serve alcohol under an appropriate license or permit, and those who check proof of age for any student-organization sponsored social event, may not consume alcohol during the event. Additionally, prior to the event, the sponsoring organization must designate an additional non-drinking individual to serve as a proctor and who will be present during the event to assist in its management.

1.7.15 Those who serve alcohol (with an appropriate license or permit) or those who consume alcohol at any University event must be at least 21 years of age.

1.7.16 Application for approval of events where alcohol is to be consumed must be made by an appropriately authorized representative of the sponsoring organization or group. This person must be at least 21 years of age.
1.7.17 All student events where alcohol is to be consumed require written approval by student organization advisers, student activities officers, or other recognizing body. The approving officer must meet with the organizer(s) of the event prior to approving same and discuss in detail the applicable provisions of this policy including: proctoring, health issues related to alcohol consumption, availability of food and alternative nonalcoholic beverages, event management, and any requirements relative to the location of the event or the policies and procedures of the recognizing office. Signature of approval will constitute an assertion of compliance with this provision.

1.7.18 Student events where alcohol will be consumed may not be publicized until the event is approved by the appropriately recognized adviser or sponsor of the organization.

1.7.19 Where there is reason to believe that attendees may include persons under 21, individuals must present double proof of age before being served alcoholic beverages. A valid University of Southern Mississippi ID card may constitute the second proof of identification. Such events require proctors as directed by the University in § 1.5.14.

1.7.20 Officers of student organizations are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of these policies. Officers are also responsible for educating their membership, guests, alumni, and incoming officers about these policies. Violations will result in disciplinary action against the responsible individuals and the organization, up to and including loss of University recognition, suspension, expulsion and loss of housing status.

1.7.21 Recognized student organizations may not serve or provide a common supply of alcohol by purchasing alcohol with organizational funds or facilitating the purchase of alcohol in any other manner (i.e. bar tabs, use of personal checking accounts, pooling of funds, giving one or more members a break on organizational dues and expenses, etc.).

1.7.22 Off-campus alcohol use. Students who violate federal, state and local laws off campus may still be held accountable by the Dean of Students Office in appropriate circumstances.

1.7.23 Consumption of alcohol at events sponsored by a Greek-letter organization is governed additionally by these specific provisions, as well as by any additional requirements as directed by the Director of Greek Life:

1.7.23.1 Alcohol of any kind is not permitted at any new member event.

1.7.23.2 Student organization funds may not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages, nor are members allowed to pool money or resources to purchase alcoholic beverages.

1.8 Violations by Invitees/Visitors. Any invitee or visitor who engages in prohibited conduct may be barred from further work for the University, access to the University or from participating in other University-related activities as may be permitted by law. Further, such entity may be reported to authorities for criminal prosecution or other appropriate action.
1.9 Special Requirements for Employees Engaged in Federal Contracts and Grants. The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-690, Title V, subtitle D) and HR Employee Policy Retrieval Number 9003 require that University employees directly engaged in the performance of work on a federal contract or grant shall abide by this Policy as a condition of employment and shall notify the University within five days if he/she is convicted of any criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace or while on University business. The University is required to notify the federal contracting or granting agency within ten calendar days of receiving notice of such conviction and to take appropriate corrective action or to require the employee to participate satisfactorily in an approved drug-abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

2. Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing

2.1 Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers. Persons employed as commercial motor vehicle operators who are governed by the United States Department of Transportation and/or Mississippi Department of Transportation regulations are subject to drug and alcohol testing under procedures developed by the Department of Human Resources in compliance with the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, (OTETA).

2.2 Maritime Vessels. Persons employed as licensed operators or crewmembers of a maritime vessel are subject to drug and alcohol testing in compliance with Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 4 and 16.

2.3 Testing. The University of Southern Mississippi shall conduct alcohol and controlled substances testing of all applicants for employment in positions requiring a commercial driver's license and positions as a licensed operator or crewmember of a maritime vessel and current employees whose university employment requires them to possess a commercial driver's license or are employed as a licensed operator or crewmember of a maritime vessel.

2.4 When Testing Conducted. Testing will be conducted pre-employment, randomly, when there is reasonable suspicion, and post-accident, if driving a University vehicle or operating a maritime vessel.

2.5 Penalty. Employees whose test results confirm prohibited alcohol concentration levels or the presence of a controlled substance or an illegal drug as defined by OTETA will be terminated.

2.6 Defense Contracts. Department of Defense regulations require the University to establish programs to test employees and final applicants for illegal drug use if they will work in sensitive positions on Department of Defense contracts. The University will determine appropriate tests based on the nature of the work being performed, the employee's duties, the efficient use of University resources, and the risks to public health and safety and national security that could result if the employee fails to perform the duties of the position adequately.

2.7 Intercollegiate Athletics. Student-athletes who participate in intercollegiate sports will be subject to drug and alcohol testing under National Collegiate Athletic Association regulations in testing programs developed by the University's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics as set forth in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Drug Testing and Intervention Program which can be found in the Student-athlete Handbook.
2.8 Employee Reasonable Suspicion Drug and Alcohol Testing. Any employee of the University may be subjected to reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol testing under procedures developed by the Department of Human Resources and approved by the President of the University or his or her designee which may include a testing program pursuant to Sections 71-7-1, et seq., of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Ann., entitled “Drug and Alcohol Testing of Employees” (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”), and you are hereby advised of the existence of said Act.

2.9 Procedures. These procedures must, at a minimum, provide that the decision to conduct reasonable suspicion testing will be made jointly by a supervisor who believes reasonable suspicion exists and a representative of the Department of Human Resources. Further, in all cases, reasonable suspicion testing must be authorized by an appropriate University employee or other individual designated by the University who has been trained to recognize physical or behavioral symptoms commonly attributed to the use of drugs or alcohol.

2.10 Testing based on reasonable suspicion of drug and alcohol use means drug and alcohol testing based on a belief that an employee is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of this policy drawn from specific facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts, and may be based upon, among other things:

2.10.2 Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug or alcohol use while working or while on the University premises;
2.10.3 A report of drug use provided by reliable and credible sources and which has been independently corroborated;
2.10.4 Evidence that an individual has tampered with a drug and alcohol test during employment with the University;
2.10.5 Evidence that an employee is involved in the use, possession, sale, solicitation or transfer of drugs while working or while on the University premises or operating a University vehicle, machinery, or equipment.

2.11 An employee to be tested shall be given (1) a medication disclosure form to permit the employee to disclose any non-prescription or prescription medications that have been taken within the last forty-five (45) days which may result in a positive test result, and (2) a statement that the form shall be submitted directly to the laboratory in order that the University has no access to the information disclosed on the form. The procedure for submission of the form shall ensure that no person other than the laboratory has access to the information disclosed on the form.

2.12 Public Safety Employees. Employees performing public safety duties may be subject to drug and alcohol testing procedures as authorized by the President of the University or his or her designee and developed and implemented by the Chief of the University Police Department. This testing may include, but is not limited to, pre-employment testing, post-accident testing, return-to-duty testing, random and follow-up testing.

2.13 Confidentiality. The University will take reasonable measures to ensure individual privacy under this policy including, but not limited to, keeping all drug and alcohol test results confidential to the maximum extent possible. To that end, all information, interviews, reports, statements, memoranda, and test results, written or otherwise, received by the University through its drug and alcohol testing program relative to Sections 71-7-1, et seq., of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Ann., entitled “Drug and Alcohol Testing of Employees” are confidential communications and may not be used or received in
evidence, obtained in discovery, or disclosed in any public or private proceedings, except in accordance with the Act and this policy. Any information obtained by the University pursuant to the Act and these regulations shall be the property of the University. The University shall not release to any other person other than the applicant, or employer medical, supervisory or other personnel, as designated by the University on a need to know basis, information related to drug and alcohol test results unless:

(a) the employee or job applicant expressly, in writing, granted permission for the University to release such information;

(b) it is necessary to produce a confirmed test result into an administrative hearing under applicable state law or local law, or a judicial proceeding, provided that information is relevant to the hearing or proceeding, or the information must be disclosed to a federal or state agency or other unit of the state or United States government as required under law, regulation or order, or in accordance with compliance requirements of a state or federal government contract, or disclosed to a drug abuse rehabilitation program for the purpose of evaluation or treatment of an employee; or

(c) there is a risk to public health or safety that can be minimized or prevented by the release of such information; provided, however, that unless such risk is immediate, a court order permitting the release shall be obtained prior to the release of the information.

(d) The confidentiality provisions provided for by the Act shall not apply to other parts of an employee’s or job applicant’s personnel or medical files. If an employee refuses to sign a written consent form for the release of information to persons as permitted by the Act, the University shall not be barred from terminating or disciplining the employee.

Review
The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost are responsible for review of this policy every four years, or when circumstances warrant.

Definitions
Alcohol means the intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol, ethyl alcohol, or other low molecular weight alcohols including methyl or isopropyl alcohol.

BYOB or BYO is an initialism meant to stand for "bring your own bottle", "bring your own booze", "bring your own beer" or "bring your own beverage". BYOB is often placed on an invitation to indicate that the host will not be providing alcohol and that guests are welcome to bring their own.

Community Alcohol refers to common source and "tap" systems. This includes, but is not limited to, kegs, beer balls, punch bowls used to mix or serve alcohol, mixed drinks/cocktails and beer/wine provided to other persons.

Consumption of alcohol refers to the act of drinking or ingesting any amount of an alcoholic beverage.
Controlled substances (or "illegal drugs") refers to any drug or substance whose use is legally prohibited including, but not limited to, marijuana (THC), cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), amphetamines (including methamphetamines) and any others contained or identified in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 United States Code section 812, as amended and by regulation at 21 Code of Federal Regulations section 1308.

Distribution of drugs refers to the sharing of illegal drugs/controlled substances with or giving them to others.

Employee(s) means faculty, staff, or student employees.

Facilitating the possession/use of alcohol or drugs refers to the act of allowing others to possess, consume, or use alcohol or illegal drugs/controlled substances in one’s residence or automobile.

Hard Liquor/Alcohol includes any distilled beverage, spirit, liquor, hard liquor or hard alcohol which is produced by distillation of grains, fruit, or vegetables that have already gone through alcoholic fermentation. The term “hard liquor” applies to all alcohol and alcohol-containing beverages except beer, wine, champagne, and pre-made alcoholic drinks not made from distilled spirits; the alcohol content of beverages not considered hard liquor/alcohol must be below 20%; distilled spirits of any kind are considered hard liquor/alcohol.

Invitee(s)/Visitor(s) means any person authorized by the University to engage in University-related activities on University premises or University controlled property including, but not limited to, independent contractors, consultants, volunteers, individuals employed by outside employment agencies, conference attendees, and persons taking or auditing educational programs.

Possession of alcohol or drugs refers, but is not limited, to holding, no matter the duration, alcohol or illegal drugs/controlled substances in hand or, having them in one’s clothing, purse/book bag (or similar case), automobile, or residence.

Sale of drugs refers to the exchange of illegal drugs/controlled substances for money or other forms of compensation (sale).

Student(s) means anyone admitted to the University and registered for, taking, or pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies or academic courses at the University, both full-time and part-time, as well as persons attending classes on-campus, off-campus or online.

University premises/University controlled property means any building, structure, vehicle, improved land, or unimproved land, in whole or part, which is owned, used, or occupied by the University or for the use and benefit of the University.

Use of drugs refers to the act of ingesting, inhaling, drinking, eating, and/or any other method of introducing an illegal drug or controlled substance into one’s body.

Workplace means any University premise or other location where an employee is engaged in University business.
Subject: Policy on Smoking

Smoking Policy
According to a report released in 2006 by the Surgeon General, exposure to secondhand smoke causes an increased risk of disease and premature death in children and non-smoking adults. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that exposure to secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths per year in nonsmokers. In light of this information and the University’s mission for healthy minds and bodies, The University of Southern Mississippi will limit smoking to designated areas with a goal to eventually go entirely smoke free.

Smoking on The University of Southern Mississippi’s campus is limited to designated smoking areas which are marked by tobacco receptacles and signs. Tampering with, moving or damaging receptacles and signs is prohibited. Any littering of tobacco related products is also considered a violation of this policy. Tobacco use is also banned inside all University owned facilities, buildings and vehicles. Greek Life Houses are responsible for designating their own outdoor smoking area at least 15 ft. from entries. Advertisement, distribution and sale of all tobacco products and companies is banned from all University campuses and publications. This policy will be temporary as the University attempts to move towards a tobacco-free campus in the coming years.

Definitions
University buildings and facilities – any facility or building owned or leased by the University including stadiums, covered parking areas and off campus buildings owned by the University.

University Vehicle – any automobile, truck, van, bus or golf cart owned or leased by the University

Designated smoking use areas – predetermined areas made by University officials, marked by tobacco receptacles where smoking is allowed.

Littering of tobacco – disposal of any tobacco or tobacco related products including butts, tobacco packaging and spit cups onto campus grounds.

Enforcement
Cooperation between tobacco users and non-tobacco users is necessary to ensure implementation of this policy. Members of the University of Southern Mississippi community including faculty, staff and students are expected to observe the provisions of this policy. Anyone in violation of the smoking policy is subject to a fine of up to $50 through the University Police Department and other designated authorities. Repeat offenders may be subject to receive further appropriate disciplinary actions, to be detailed by administration. Visitors should be politely reminded of our policy and asked to leave if they fail to comply.
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Policy on HIV Infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

Purpose
To provide guidelines to ensure that individuals identified as having Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) will be protected from discrimination, to protect the University community from unnecessary risks, and to protect the confidentiality of medical information within the guidelines established by state and federal law.

Policy
The University of Southern Mississippi recognizes that infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which causes the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), is a serious public health threat and is committed to encouraging an informed and educated response to questions raised by faculty, staff, and students. These guidelines have been developed to assist members of the University community in responding to the medical, educational, legal, administrative, social and ethical issues involved. These guidelines are derived from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention about HIV infections and AIDS and are applicable to students and employees with HIV infection. These guidelines comply with national and state disability and antidiscrimination requirements as mandated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state and local statutes.

HIV Transmission Information Relative to The University of Southern Mississippi Policy
Current knowledge indicates that students and employees with any form of HIV infection do not pose a health risk in the academic setting. HIV is not transmitted through casual contact. HIV is transmitted through intimate sexual contact, by exposure to contaminated blood and blood product and from mother to fetus. Fluid splashes to intact skin or mucous membranes are considered to be extremely low risk of HIV transmission. The U.S. Public Health Service states that there is no risk created by living in the same place as an HIV infected person, eating food prepared by an infected person, being coughed or sneezed on by an HIV infected person, casual kissing, or swimming in a pool with an HIV infected person. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and confidentiality as well as to provide for the health of both the individual infected and other members of the University community.
Guidelines

1. Educational: The primary response to HIV infection on campus must be education. It is appropriate for faculty and staff to incorporate information about HIV infections into academic classes and into employee training.

   - Even though individuals may not have symptoms, persons with HIV/AIDS may transmit the virus to others through intimate, unprotected sexual contact or exposure to blood.

   - Among people who choose to be sexually active, the consistent and conscientious use of condoms and spermicides containing nonoxynol-9 greatly reduces the chance of transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus. Abstinence is the only certain preventative behavior.

   - The sharing of needles used in the injection of illicit drugs is an efficient way to transmit HIV/AIDS. It is also possible that needles used to inject steroids may transmit HIV/AIDS as well.

   - Persons with documented HIV/AIDS, and those with behavioral risk factors for HIV/AIDS, should not donate blood, plasma, sperm, organs, or tissues.

   - People with HIV/AIDS pose no risk of transmitting the virus to others through ordinary, casual interpersonal contact.

   - It is possible that certain interventions and medication therapies may help limit the consequences of HIV/AIDS among people already infected. People who know they have been infected will benefit from regular medical evaluation and treatment.

2. Disabling Condition: Persons with AIDS and possibly those with other manifestations of HIV infection will be considered as having a disabling condition.

3. Admissions and Employee Hiring: Consideration of the existence of HIV infection will not be part of the admission decision for prospective students or the hiring decision for prospective employees.

4. Class Attendance and Access to University Facilities: Those with HIV infections will be allowed to attend class and perform their usual duties as long as they are physically and mentally able to do so. HIV infected persons may have unrestricted access to the Union, swimming pools, gyms, restaurants, snack bars, and other recreational facilities.

5. Residence Life (Housing): Students infected with HIV will not be excluded from living in the residence halls. However, in any group living area where students are exposed to contagious diseases, students with HIV infection or AIDS may be assigned a private room in the interest of protecting their health. A decision regarding the type of living accommodation required for a student with AIDS or AIDS-related illness will be made with the assistance of the Executive Director of USM Student Health Services at Moffitt Health Center.
6. Medical Care: The following recommendations pertain to the provision of clinical services to members of the University community with HIV infection.

- **Medical History:** The University will not routinely ask students or potential students to respond to questions about the existence of HIV infection, nor should interviewing personnel ask job applicants about the existence of HIV infection during the application process. However, students and staff with HIV infection are encouraged to inform the physicians/health care providers at Moffitt Health Center of the above infection in order to obtain appropriate medical care, counsel, and education.

- **Medical and Psychological Care:** FREE HIV screens are offered at Moffitt Health Center. Counseling for students with HIV infection will be available at Moffitt Health Center and Student Counseling Services. Referrals will be made for services beyond the scope of care available on campus if needed.

- **Immunizations:** In general, people with HIV should not get live-virus vaccines unless the benefit outweighs the risk. Thus, individuals with HIV/AIDS may be excused from institutional requirements for certain immunizations on a case-by-case basis.

7. HIV Testing:

- **Mandatory Testing:** Students, faculty and staff will not be required to undergo mandatory screening for HIV/AIDS.

- **Voluntary Testing:** Moffitt Health Center offers confidential and free voluntary HIV screening. Positive HIV screening results must be confirmed by a second blood test. All individuals with positive HIV antibody confirmed by a second blood test must be reported to the Mississippi Department of Health. This reporting of positive HIV results is mandated by the Department of Health for contact tracing.

8. Confidentiality of Information: Understanding the potential for discrimination and mistreatment of individuals known or suspected of HIV infection, The University requires that confidential information about any aspect of HIV infection be handled with extraordinary care.

- **Release of Information:** Specific information about patient’s health concerns or diagnosis will not be released to faculty, staff, administrators, parents, or any other parties without a written consent to release information signed by the patient. This Privacy Rule standard is supported by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and is in effect to protect individuals’ protected health information.

- **Legal Liability:** All confidential information is protected by statutes and any unauthorized disclosure of such information may create a legal liability.

- **“Need to Know”**: The number of people who need to be made aware of the existence of and/or the identity of University students or employees who have HIV infection will be kept to a minimum. This effort is to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the HIV infected person(s) and to avoid unnecessary fears among fellow students and employees.

- **Informing Other Students or Employees:** There is no medical reason to advise other students of the identity of a student with HIV infection. The University will make every effort to provide a safe living and working environment for HIV infected persons.
Secondary Lists: Neither health officers nor administrators will keep lists which identify patients tested for HIV or known HIV infection. The potential for compromise of confidential information far exceeds any benefit of such listings.

9. Safety Precautions: The University health care providers and other employees who handle blood and body fluids follow guidelines as established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s standard on blood borne pathogens. “Universal precautions“ are required when handling blood or body fluids of any University student or employee. These same precautions must be followed in teaching and research labs where human blood and body fluids are handled. Education programs regarding safety and universal protection must be provided to employees and students who handle such products.

10. Harassment: Physical or emotional abuse of a student or employee known or suspected to have HIV infection will not be tolerated by the University.
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Loss Prevention Policy

General
The University of Southern Mississippi will maintain an internal control environment which will minimize loss and help identify losses and fraudulent acts. All employees are responsible for reporting possible losses and/or fraudulent activity. Any employee found to have caused the University loss in relation to the University's financial affairs is subject to disciplinary action including termination and investigation by law enforcement agencies when warranted.

Scope
Loss and fraudulent activities may include but is not limited to the following:

- Forgery or alteration of documents (checks, promissory notes, time sheets, independent contractor agreements, purchase orders, budgets, etc.)
- Misrepresentation of information on documents
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies or any other asset (including furniture, fixtures, or equipment)
- Improprieties in the handling or reporting of money transactions
- Authorizing or receiving payments for goods not received or serviced not performed
- Authorizing or receiving payments for hours not worked
- Any apparent violation of Federal, State, or local laws
- Any similar or related activity causing undue loss to the University

Responsibility
Although fraud detection is not solely the responsibilities of management, management is responsible for detecting loss and fraudulent activities in their areas of responsibility. Each manager should be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur in his or her area. Managers should also be alert for any indication that loss or fraudulent activity is or was in existence in his or her area.

When an improper activity is detected or suspected, the employee should contact his/her supervisor. If the supervisor is suspected, the next level supervisor should be notified. The Vice President for the area along with the supervisor will discuss the situation with the Internal Auditor, if appropriate. If an employee does not feel comfortable discussing the situation with his/her supervisor, he/she may contact the department of Internal Audit. All information will be held in strict confidence by the auditors. The issue should not be discussed with any other individuals. Internal Auditing along with the University Police (when applicable) will conduct an investigation of any suspected loss or fraudulent activity. Management is responsible for taking appropriate corrective actions to ensure adequate controls exist to prevent continued occurrences.
Care should be taken in dealing with suspected dishonest or fraudulent activities to avoid the following:

- alerting suspected individuals that an investigation is under way
- incorrect accusations
- making statements that could lead to claims of false accusation or other offenses Employees may contact University Human Resources to determine the appropriate action to be taken.

EthicsPoint, provides an easy way to discreetly and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal, unethical or otherwise inappropriate violations of University policies.

Although the Southern Miss Hotline is not a substitute for established channels of responsibility, it does provide opportunities for reporting behavior when those mechanisms are not suitable. The Southern Miss Hotline is operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be accessed either through the following web page https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/31502/index.html or by calling 1-877-310-0424
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Safety

Policy
The Safety Department provides a comprehensive and continuing accident prevention and environmental health effort compatible with the functions of the administration of the University. The program is designed to create a safer and more healthful atmosphere for study, research, service, and employment, and to promote good health and safety practices by the student body, the faculty, and the staff.

The Safety Department has the following responsibilities:

- Commitment of the University to accident and injury prevention
- Establishment of standards of safety practices for equipment and facilities
- Accident investigation involving serious injuries
- Preventive investigation: an on-going program of surveillance of the entire campus environment to disclose safety hazards and to promote improvements
- Safety promotion: a continuous safety education program, conducted to orient and train students and University personnel in safety policies and practices

Injury Reports
Injury Reports should be completed immediately by contacting Human Resources and obtaining the Workers' Compensation or tort forms required, completing those forms, and processing them with the assistance of the Human Resources Department. Injury on campus is a proper concern of students, faculty, and staff alike, and its control should enjoy the cooperation and attention of all personnel of the University. More detailed information on the Workers' Compensation Program may be obtained from University Human Resources.

Use of Electrical Heaters
The use of portable electric space heaters or any other portable heating devices in University buildings is prohibited. Plugging portable heaters into outlets overload the circuits causing nuisance tripping of protective equipment. These overload conditions create a potential fire hazard which can endanger the safety and welfare of building occupants.

Asbestos Containing Building Materials
The presence of asbestos in buildings and houses poses a widespread concern for everyone. It was used extensively in construction from 1946 through 1973 for insulation and acoustical purposes. As a government-approved building material, it was considered almost a miracle substance because of its fire retardant and insulating properties. However, airborne asbestos fibers are a potential health hazard because they have been linked with different types of abdominal and lung cancers. We are therefore committed to taking corrective measures. Our asbestos control efforts will be based on the advice of experts knowledgeable in asbestos abatement techniques.

An environmental consulting firm has completed a study to determine the presence and location of asbestos materials in all buildings located at The University of Southern Mississippi Hattiesburg campus. The buildings were inspected in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for asbestos-containing materials.

The University of Southern Mississippi has undertaken asbestos control techniques which will drastically reduce the potential risk associated with airborne asbestos fibers. It is advisable not to disturb any materials found to contain asbestos as doing so will cause asbestos contamination of the air. Warning posters to alert users of the potential hazards have been placed at all locations on the campus where asbestos has been found.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of Physical Plant, Asbestos Program Coordinator, Room 107 of the Physical Plant Building.
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Campus Solicitation Policy

Policy
Solicitation on campus is regulated. Solicitation shall be defined as any advertisement or promotional effort through any means of communication or sale of tickets, products, services and giveaways. Any faculty/staff member or non-university affiliate promoting a business or selling items is required to comply with this policy.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Parking Regulations

Policy
The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to regulate the use of all vehicles on the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses and at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL), including the Halstead Road and Cedar Point locations, and to forbid the use of a vehicle by any person not complying with the regulations on its campuses or teaching/research sites under applicable Mississippi law and policies of the Mississippi State Institutions of Higher Learning. The Department of Parking Management (DPM) is responsible for implementing and enforcing the parking regulations.

The University has placed in operation, a license plate recognition (LPR) system, which is now being used with a virtual parking permit on all University-controlled properties. Physical permits will no longer be issued. License plates will be used to verify that a vehicle can park on campus. Faculty and staff are allowed to have two vehicles assigned to their virtual permit; however, both vehicles are not allowed to park on campus simultaneously. If a third vehicle is needed, remove one of the two vehicles and add the third vehicle to your parking permit number.

Parking registration and the purchase of a parking permit is an individual responsibility. Parking permit numbers are issued to individuals, and ownership is nontransferable. By purchasing a permit number, the permit holder agrees to become familiar with and abide by the rules and regulations.

To register a vehicle, purchase a parking permit and view the Traffic and Parking Regulations, please visit Parking Management’s website at www.usm.edu/parking
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Sign and Speaker Policy

Sign Policy

Students, student organizations, faculty, staff, and departments commonly post signs on university buildings and inside buildings as a means of informing the university community of events that they are sponsoring or merely of their opinions. The university allows this practice within regulations designed to reasonably govern the time, place, and manner for the protection of the students, university property and the appearance of the campus. Official signage of The University of Southern Mississippi – building designations, regulatory and traffic control, etc. – is not governed by this policy.

Staff employees engaging in such activity will follow the established University guidelines for posting of signs. Detailed information can be obtained from policy STUA-UNA-006 at: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-una-006.

Speaker Policy

The University of Southern Mississippi will provide a speaker's corner on the Union Plaza, located at the south end of the R.C. Cook University Union. Individuals or organizations may utilize the speaker's corner for speech purposes on a first-come, first-served basis and without making reservations. However, no amplification equipment may be used and no structure(s) may be erected. The free expression of views and opinions either by individuals or groups must not violate any rights of others, disrupt the normal function of the University, or violate any of the provisions specified in the University Code of Conduct. Staff employees engaging in such activity will follow the established University guidelines for speakers.
Section: Other University Policies

Subject: Retiree Privileges

Policy

Employees of The University of Southern Mississippi are provided a number of special privileges upon official retirement from the University. These special privileges are over and beyond benefits provided by the Public Employees’ Retirement System and other outside organizations such as AARP.

1. Permanent Retiree Photo Identification Card:
   - Description - Each USM retiree is entitled to receive a permanent retiree photo identification card.
   - How to obtain this benefit - The permanent retiree photo ID card may be obtained by completing the application form in the Office of Human Resources; McLemore Hall Room 301.
   - Cost to retiree – None
   - Additional information - None

2. Permanent Retiree Parking Decal:
   - Description - Each USM retiree is entitled to receive one permanent parking permit number, which permits parking in all zones except for reserved areas, no parking areas, service areas, fire lanes, fire hydrants, handicap parking, handicap curb cuts, sidewalks/grounds and visitor parking on campus.
   - How to obtain this benefit - These decals are available in the Department of Parking Management; McLemore Hall 1st Floor. Retiree must show university photo ID card to obtain decal. Register online at www.usm.edu/parking
   - Cost to retiree – $75 onetime fee
   - Additional information - Contact the Department of Parking Management at 601.266.4943 or 601.266.5447; or visit the web site.

3. Credit Courses:
   - Description - Each USM retiree may take up to six hours each semester as long as the retiree satisfies admission or readmission requirements.
   - How to obtain this benefit - A retiree must be admitted by the Admissions Office or readmitted by the Registrar’s Office (both of these offices are located in Kennard-Washington) and then obtain the necessary permit from University Human Resources located in McLemore Hall Room 301.
   - Cost to retiree - Tuition is waived. However, the retiree must supply textbook(s) and all other necessary supplies and fees for each course.
   - Additional information - The retiree must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average to continue this benefit.
4. Use of Libraries:
   - Description – All retirees of the university may use the libraries on the same basis as currently employed faculty and staff.
   - How to obtain this benefit - Retiree must show university retirement ID card.
   - Cost to retiree - None
   - Additional information – None

5. Scholarships for Children of Retirees:
   - Description - Undergraduate tuition remission is available for children (who have not reached their 25th birthday) of retirees as well as the children of current faculty and staff. The amount of the tuition remission is discounted at 50%.
   - How to obtain this benefit - An application for the tuition remission scholarship is available in University Human Resources and also on the HR website. The application must be verified by Human Resources before being process by Financial Aid.
   - Cost to retiree – 50% discount on tuition. However, the retiree must supply textbook(s) and all other necessary supplies and fees for each course.
   - Additional information - Once the scholarship is awarded, it is continued automatically on a semester-by-semester basis as long as the student remains in good academic standing.

6. Use of Health Services:
   - Description - All university retirees may use the University health clinic located on campus.
   - How to obtain this benefit - The retiree’s permanent photo ID card is required to verify eligibility for this benefit.
   - Cost to retiree - The retiree must pay the same charges as current faculty and staff. The charges must be paid by cash or check at the time of service.
   - Additional information - The Clinic does not file for Medicare or Medicaid. Office hours are 8:00 P.M. weekdays during the Spring and Summer semesters.

7. Use of the USM Post Office Box:
   - Description - All university retirees may rent a mailbox at the university Post Office
   - How to obtain this Benefit - The retiree’s permanent photo ID card is required to verify eligibility for this benefit.
   - Cost to retiree - The charge to the retiree is the same as that charged to a current faculty or staff member. Payment is due at time of rental. Cash or check only.
   - Additional Information – None

8. University Fitness Center (Payne Center)
   - Description - Exercise programs and equipment are available to all university retirees.
   - How to obtain this benefit – All retirees should visit the Payne Center to fill out membership application and for a tour of the facility.
   - Cost to retiree - Reduced cost memberships are available to all university retirees.
   - Additional information - All retirees must show university retirement ID card.
9. Season Tickets for Athletic Events:
   - Description - All university retirees may purchase two season tickets at the faculty and staff discounted rate for the sports of football, men’s and women’s basketball and baseball.
   - How to obtain this benefit - Contact the Pat Ferlise Center, located at the intersection of Fourth Street and Sunset Drive or call the Southern Miss Ticket Office at 601-266-5418.
   - Cost to retiree - The tickets are available at the current faculty/staff rate of 20%.
   - Additional information - Discounts are not available for single games.

10. Tickets to USM Cultural events:
    - Description - All university retirees may purchase reduced price tickets.
    - How to obtain this benefit - Tickets may be purchased at The Pat Ferlise Center, located at the intersection of Fourth Street and Sunset Drive or call the Southern Miss Ticket Office at 601-266-5418.
    - Cost to retiree - Reduced price tickets are available at the faculty/staff rate.
    - Additional information - Many of the University cultural events are free.

11. The DMA (Don’t Mention Age) Club:
    - Description - The purpose of DMA is to promote fellowship, fun, and information-sharing. All USM retirees are eligible for membership in DMA.
    - How to obtain this benefit - Letters of invitation for membership are mailed to USM retirees in the early fall each year.
    - Cost to retiree - Cost includes the annual dues and the costs for luncheons.
    - Additional information - DMA luncheons are held four times annually.

12. OLLI – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute:
    - Description - The program is available to all persons who are seeking stimulating learning experiences while developing new friendships.
    - How to obtain this benefit – For more information regarding membership please call 601-264-2780.
    - Cost to retiree – OLLI membership carries an annual fee and also costs for specific courses, seminars, and other activities.
    - Additional information – OLLI is a member of the Elderhostel Institute Network.

13. Annual Retirement Luncheon:
    - Description - This luncheon is an annual event associated with the end of year DMA business meeting.
    - How to obtain this benefit - An invitation is sent to each official retiree.
    - Cost to retiree - None
    - Additional information - None
14. USM Credit Union:
- Description - Memberships are available to all university retirees
- How to obtain this benefit - Contact the Credit Union to apply for membership. The Credit Union is located at 3318 Hardy Street.
- Cost to retiree – There is a fee to start an account. Contact the Credit Union at 601-450-5373
- Additional information – None

15. Assistance with Insurance, Social Security and Retirement:
- Due to HIPPA and confidentiality rules the staff in Human Resources are limited to what they can actually help a retiree with. Human Resources can provide retirees with contact phone numbers for assistance.

16. Listener’s License:
- Description – All university retirees are eligible to obtain a listener’s license
- How to obtain this benefit – listener’s license are distributed by the University Registrar’s Office located in Kennard-Washington
- Cost to retiree – $50.00 per course
- Additional information - None
Section 5: Other University Policies

Subject: Signature Authority for Contracts - Negotiation of Contracts

Policy
According to the policy number 707-01 of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning only the Commissioner of Higher Education and the President of the University have the authority to obligate The University of Southern Mississippi for the purchase of land, personal property, and services.

The IHL Board Policy states: The Institutional Executive Officer of each institution, or a designee as evidenced in writing, is authorized to sign all official documents for and on behalf of the institution for which he is responsible. The president may delegate in writing, signature authority to designated individuals for specific types of contracts or services. Anyone signing a contract without written authorization from the president is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, any person without authority who signs a contact on behalf of the University may be held personally liable for the contract.

This policy covers all types of configurations of purchase agreements, service arrangements,