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 the Department of Human Resources.
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 Department of Human Resources for confirmation.

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

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.

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. The official copy of Employee Handbook is located in the Department of Human Resources, with copies available at the Cook and Cox Libraries and online at: http://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/facultystaff-policy.

It is the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources to maintain this handbook.

CHANGES IN THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, June 2014

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.

Linda Rasmussen, Director of Human Resources
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Administrative Structure

0001 The University Mission and Goals
  Vision
  Mission
  Values

0002 Office of the President
  Functions

0003 Provost
  Functions

0004 Vice President for Advancement
  Functions

0005 Vice President for Finance and Administration
  Functions

0006 Vice President for Research
  Functions

0007 Vice President for Student Affairs
  Functions

0008 Vice President Gulf Park Campus
  Functions

0009 Vice President for External Affairs
  Functions

0010 The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning
  Organization
  Institutional Funding
Chapter 1 - Employment Policies

1001 Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
   To Comply with the University Affirmative Action Program

1002 Pre-Employment
   Recruitment
   Selection
   Employment Eligibility Verification

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

1004 Types of Employment Status
   Regular Employee
   Temporary Employee
   Contracts and Grant Employee
   Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees

1005 Responsibility of all Employees

1006 Work Schedules and Rest Periods
   Work Schedules
   Rest Periods
   Flex-Time Work Schedules

1007 Outside Employment or Consulting
   Outside Employment
   Outside Consulting
   Staff Employees Teaching Classes
   Political Participation as a Candidate

1008 Changes in Employment Status
   Promotions
   Transfers
   Transfers From Other State Agencies

1009 Personnel Records

1010 Identification Cards
### Termination Policy and Requirements
- Terminations
- Arrests
- Notice Requirements
- Clearance Requirements
- Maximum Leave Allowances

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

### Re-Employment

### Employment of Minors, Students, and Foreign Nationals
- Employment of Minors
- Employment of Students
- Employment of Foreign Nationals

### Nepotism

### Creating and Staffing New Positions

### Discipline Policy

### Performance Review and Evaluation

### Performance Appraisal Review Process

### Drug Testing Policy

### On-Campus Consulting Policy

### Employment Contracts

### Selective Service

---

**Chapter 2 - Payroll and Budget**

### Salaried Staff Employees

### Wage Employees

### Deductions

### Fair Labor Standards Act
- Exemption
- Minimum Wage
Recordkeeping Requirements
Violations

2202 **Standard Workweek and Pay Periods**
- Standard Workweek
- Rest Periods
- Meal Periods
- Flextime Work Schedule
- Pay Periods

2203 **Exempt and Nonexempt Employees**
- Classification
  - Nonexempt Employees
  - Exempt Employees

2204 **Equal Pay and Child Labor**

2205 **Overtime**
- Policy
  - Advance Notice
  - Compensatory Time
  - Recordkeeping
  - Workweek
  - Paid Absences
  - Use of Compensatory Time

2206 **Recordkeeping Policy of Hours Worked**
- Retention of Records
- Accessibility of Records
- Nonexempt Employees
- Exempt Employees
- Records of Compensatory Time
- Posting Requirements

2207 **Compensatory Time**
- Nonexempt Employees
- Use of Compensatory Time
- Holiday Pay
- Recordkeeping Requirements

2208 **Emergency Callback Pay**

2210 **On-Call/Call-Back Status and Pay**

2211 **Holiday Pay**
Chapter 3 - Fringe Benefits

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

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

3003 **Family and Medical Leave Act**
Purpose
Effective Date of Policy
Eligible Employees
Definitions
Leave Charges
Intermittent Leave or Reduced Work Schedule
Employee Responsibility
Certification
Employment and Benefit Protection
Interference with Rights
Enforcement

3004 **Leave of Absence Without Pay**
Reinstatement
Employee Benefits
Employment Requirements

3005 **Holiday Leave**
Holidays
Eligibility
Religious Holidays

3006 **Military Leave**
Maximum Leave Time

3007 **Compulsory Leave**

3008 **University Declared Leave**
3009 **Leave Balances and Corrections**
   Leave Abuses

3010 **Use of Leased Employees**

3101 **Scholarships for Children of Faculty and Staff**
   Qualifications
   Additional Terms or Conditions

3102 **Faculty/Staff Academic Tuition Waiver Policy**
   Eligibility
   Courses
   Fees
   Procedures

3103 **Compensation for Staff Employees who attain Advanced Degrees or Certificates**

3201 **Insurance**
   State of Mississippi Health Insurance Program
   Dependent Coverage
   Administrator
   Open Enrollment

3203 **Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)**

3204 **Tax Exempt Benefit Program (Cafeteria Plan)**

3206 **Additional Group Policies Available**
   Group Life Insurance
   Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance (AD&D)
   Supplemental Hospital Insurance
   Hospital Intensive Care
   Cancer Insurance
   Accident Insurance
   Medical Reimbursement Plan
   Group Dental Insurance
   Group Vision Insurance
   Dependent Child Car Reimbursement Plan
   Tax Sheltered Annuities
   Short Term Disability

3207 **Workers' Compensation**

3208 **Social Security**
3209  **State Retirement**
   - Exemptions
   - Temporary Employees
   - Contributions and Withdrawals
   - Retirement Eligibility
   - Optional Retirement Plan

Chapter 4 - Classification System Policy

4001  **Classification System**
   - Factors
   - Determination of Wage or Salary Rates
   - Procedures for Position Evaluation
   - Area Reorganization Procedures
   - Performance Review and Evaluation Program
   - New Position Evaluation

Chapter 5 - Grievance Policy

5001  **Grievance Policy and Procedures**
   - General Policy
   - Definition
   - Time Frame
   - General Procedures
   - Specific Procedures

5002  **Grievance Committee**
   - Meeting Agenda
   - Briefing Committee Members
   - Presentation of Grievance
   - Recommendations
   - Final Decision
   - Form

5003  **Sexual Misconduct, Assault, and Harassment Policy**
   - Policy Statement
   - Procedures

Chapter 6 - Academic Policies

6001  **Academic Policies**
Chapter 8 – Financial Policies

8002 Charitable Requests to the University or Foundation

Chapter 9 - Other University Policies

9001 University Events, Committees and Awards
  Convocation
  Service Pin Awards]
  25-Year Service Award
  Staff Excellence Awards
  Jessie Hagler Morrison Staff Excellence Award
  Retiree Recognition
  University Committees
  Staff Council

9002 Services, Facilities and Privileges Available
  Credit Union
  Recreation Facilities
  Food Services
  Library Service
  Bookstore
  Post Office
  University Forum

9003 Drug Free Workplace Policy

9004 Policy on Smoking
  Policy
  Guidelines
  Enforcement
  Review

9005 Campus Crime Awareness Act
  Class A Crimes
  Class B Crimes
Policy on HIV Infection and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
  Transmission Information
  Guidelines

The Americans with Disabilities Act
  Policy
  Essential Functions
  Reasonable Accommodations
  Undue Hardship

Loss Prevention Policy
  General
  Scope
  Management Responsibility

Safety
  Injury Reports
  Use of Electric Heaters
  Asbestos-Containing Building Materials

Campus Solicitation Policy

Parking Regulations

Sign and Speaker Policy
  Sign Policy
  Speaker Policy

Jury Duty and Voting
  Jury Duty

Policy on Retirees
  Privileges

Policy Formation - Employee Handbook

Signature Authority for Contracts

Posting of Office Hours
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: The University Mission and Goals

Our Vision
The University of Southern Mississippi will emerge as the premier research university of the Gulf South -- engaging and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities.

Our Mission
Our primary mission is to cultivate intellectual development and creativity through the generation, dissemination, application and preservation of knowledge.

Our Values
Our mission is supported by the values that have been formed through the history and traditions of our institution. These values are widely and deeply held beliefs of our faculty, staff, students, and administrators:

- Education provides opportunities to improve the quality of intellectual, social, economic, and personal well-being. These opportunities should be available to all who are willing and able to meet our standards of excellence.

- Our success is reflected by the degree to which our students become well-read, articulate, and creative and critical thinkers. It is measured by their display of specialized knowledge and abilities suitable to the pursuit of a career and life in our complex, ever-changing world.

- We cherish innovation in the creation and application of basic and applied research findings, creative and artistic expression, meaningful learning experiences, the scope of services provided to our students and the broader community that we sustain, and the continuing evolution of degree programs that both respond to and anticipate the evolving demands of our society, employers, and the labor market.

- Education encourages and advances the ideals of a pluralistic democratic society: civic responsibility, integrity, diversity, and ethical behavior.

- Academic freedom and shared governance are long-established and living principles at the university. We cherish the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals’ assumption of responsibility.

- We make efficient and effective use of our resources, for we are accountable to our university communities, the Board of Trustees, and taxpayers.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/about/vision/vision-mission-values
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Office of the President

Functions

The President is charged with serving as both the chief executive officer and principal educational officer of The University of Southern Mississippi. 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.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/president
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/provost
Subject: Vice President for Advancement

Functions

The vice president for advancement, in addition to serving as the chief fundraising officer for the University, has management responsibility for the executive director of the Southern Miss Alumni Association and the executive director of the USM Foundation.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/about/administration/vice-president-advancement
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President for 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 operations.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/about/administration/vice-president-finance-administration
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President for Research

Functions

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.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/about/vice-president-research
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President for Student Affairs

Functions
The vice president for student affairs holds supervisory responsibility for a wide range of activities, programs and services that enhance the quality of life of the university community. These include campus housing, health services, public safety, and programs and services that promote student welfare and development.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/about/administration/vice-president-student-affairs
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.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/about/administration/vice-president-gulf-coast
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Vice President for External Affairs

Functions

Reserved
Section: Administrative Organization

Subject: Board of Trustees of State Institution of Higher Learning

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:

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: Employment Policies

Subject: Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Policy
The University of Southern Mississippi provides equal employment opportunities without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy, gender identity, genetic information, religion, race, color, national origin, and/or veteran status. The University also is pledged to develop and support an environment of affirmative action toward this policy.

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

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

Additional information can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo
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 the university employment website for a minimum 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 website. 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.

2. All advertisements will be approved by applicable university offices and the Department of 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.

Selection

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

Employment Eligibility Verification

An Immigration and Naturalization Service form, INS Form I-9, entitled "Employment Eligibility Verification," must be completed on each employee no later than the first day of work. Used in the verification process may be such documents as:

- United States Passport
- Certificate of Citizenship
- Alien Registration Card
- Certificate of Naturalization
- State-issued Drivers' License or Student ID card
- U.S. Military Card
- Original Social Security Card
- Certified Birth Certificate
At least two forms of identification will be required before employment. Therefore, new employees must bring with them original or certified copies of documentation in order to meet the INS I-9 certification requirements.

The university must complete the INS I-9 form and E-Verify employees within three (3) days of hire. It is the department’s responsibility to ensure employees complete the form at Human Resource Department designated areas no later than their first day of employment.
Section: Employment Policies

Subject: Terms and Conditions of Employment

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.

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 that the Board contracts with all Deans, Professors, and other members of the teaching staff and certain administrative employees. 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).

· All benefit-eligible employees receive (employee only) group health insurance free of cost. This state contribution may also be applied to a two-party or family coverage. An employee must sign a waiver if this benefit is not desired. The Department of Finance and Administration must approve the waiver before coverage can be revoked.

Hiring Process

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

1. The department notifies the Department of 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 Director 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 Department of Human Resources 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 web-based 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 amount of money budgeted for the position. New employees with little or no experience will 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.

**Briefing a New Employee**

The Department of Human Resources: All new employees are required to attend an in-processing/orientation session conducted by the Department of Human Resources. The Department of 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 of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

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 Director 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 two weeks notification prior to termination of employment if a wage employee and 30-day notice if salaried.
Section: Employment Policies

Subject: Types of Employment Statuses

Regular Employment:
1. 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).

2. 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:
1. Temporary Employee: Defined as one whose employment agreement is:
   - For an established basic work schedule for a period not to exceed four and one-half (4 1/2) months of a given calendar year.
   - For services on an hourly basis with no established basic work schedule as to hours each day, or days each week, for a period not to exceed four and one-half (4 1/2) months.
   - For services on an hourly basis not to exceed 18 hours per week.
   - Employees are not eligible to participate in any University benefit programs.

Contracts and Grant Employment:
1. Employees are hired for positions provided for by a contract with a funding source other than the University.

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

3. 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" and employees not subject to such provisions of the Act are referred to as "exempt" employees.

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that non-exempt employees be paid time and one-half (150%) of their "regular rate" for "hours worked" in excess of 40 hours per work week.

Volunteer Employees
Volunteer employees must 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.
The Department of Human Resources must be notified of any volunteer workers for workers' compensation purposes.

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.
Section: Employment Policies

Subject: Responsibilities of all Employees

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.

Animals in the Workplace
Animals are not allowed in the workplace unless the animal is a service animal or is work related (i.e. academic research).
Section: Employment Policies

Subject: Work Schedules and Rest Periods

Work Schedules:
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 12 noon, and from 1 p.m. 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 managers will arrange for alternate lunch periods for staff.

Rest Periods:
Rest periods or coffee breaks may be offered at mid-morning and mid-afternoon 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.

Flex-Time Work Schedule:
The normal operating hours at The University of Southern Mississippi are 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon and 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. All administrative offices must be open during those hours. However, 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 of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. 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 a salaried employee work less than eight hours and be compensated for eight hours work.
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 the Department of 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
Subject: Changes in Employment Status

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.

Classification levels are based on the "Level of Difficulty" of the position, not on the merit, education, longevity, experience, efficiency, or personality of the incumbent. Pay rates initially are based on the minimum for the established level. After initial employment, increases are based on the merit of the incumbent and usually on imposed budget constraints.

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 must, in good conscience, 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 and submit it online. 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 Director of 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.

If a current Southern Miss employee cannot be found who will qualify for the position, either in the immediate department or elsewhere on campus, then the manager can consider "off-campus" applicants.

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 must have approval from the Director of the Department of Human Resources.

Every effort will be made to assign an employee to an activity that will be commensurate with his/her background, training, and experience.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

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, but shall not be less than two (2) weeks nor more than four (4) weeks from the date of acceptance by the staff member.

Lateral transfers (moving from one position to another with the same level) may not carry a pay increase.

Transfers to positions at a lower classification level may carry a lower rate of pay. However, the employee shall not be paid less than the minimum of the new level.

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.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

Section: Employment Policies

Subject: Personnel Records

General Policy
The Department of Human Resources keeps an individual record of personal and payroll data for each employee including personnel at Southern Miss, Gulf Coast, and Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. 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 the Department of 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 immediately to the Department of Human Resources.

The Department of 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 Institute of Higher Learning Board of Trustees, 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 the Department of Human Resources. An employee may have access to his or her personnel file by sending a written request, in advance, to the Human Resources Department and receiving approval from the Director of Human Resources. There is a charge to copy a file.
Policy
The Department of Human Resources will issue an application 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 the Department of 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 the Department of Human Resources.

Upon retirement identification cards are issued to all retirees of the University.
Termination
All discharges of staff employees must have prior clearance through the Department of 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 same notice requirements required of employees.

Non-renewal of Contracts
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.

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 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 the Department of Human Resources a Termination Clearance form before the last payroll check will be released. This form is available in the Department of Human Resources, and must accompany or be preceded by the Personnel Action Form. It is the responsibility of the department to assure that the terminating employee reports to the Department of Human Resources for out-processing on or prior to his/her last day of work. The paperwork should be submitted to the Department of Human Resources prior to the payroll cut-off for that month so outstanding debts to the university may be recovered. The Department of 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 following 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 thirty (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.
**Subject: Reduction in Force Policy**

**Policy**
A reduction in force may be required in the event of reorganization of a department or unit; changes in departmental organization or services; 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, as amended through March 21, 1991, or thereafter, and the applicable The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Handbook.

**Step One:** 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.

**Step Two:** 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.

**Step Three:** The budgetary authority will consider the employees holding those positions within the unit and shall determine which employees will be recommended for layoff. The budget following criteria will be considered by the budgetary authority 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 services 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.

**Step Four:** The Vice-Presidents shall forward their recommendations to the University Affirmative Action Officer for review as to compliance with University affirmative action policies.

**Step Five:** Written notification of layoff, 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.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

APPEAL

This appeal process is available only to those employees laid off under this policy. 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 Director of Human Resources. The Appeal Committee will be the Director 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 election 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. Each unit director shall prepare a skills inventory for each laid-off employee. These descriptions shall be referred to the Director of Human Resources for possible reassignment to other units within the University. Any employee laid off under this reduction-in-force policy will be considered for reemployment for any position for which the employee is qualified that becomes available during the one-year period following the final decision of layoff. To qualify for such consideration, said laid-off employee shall:

   - maintain with the Department of Human Resources a current address and telephone number at which such laid-off employee may be located;

   - shall indicate in writing to the Director of Human Resources within five (5) calendar days of receipt of notification of a job opening of his or her intent to accept an offer of reemployment; and

   - shall report to work no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of an offer of employment.

Failure to comply with these requirements shall constitute a waiver of consideration for reemployment.

- 2. 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 not receive the benefit until such time as he or she successfully completes a semester with a 2.0 GPA.
Subject: Re-Employment

Policy

Former employees with a good work history are eligible for rehire. Every consideration will be given the application of a former employee who may wish to return to the University. A rehired former employee is rehired as a new employee with no vested seniority or benefit status.
Section: 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 the Department of Human Resources. Priority for employment on campus shall be given first to University enrolled students.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

- 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. Students are not eligible for overtime pay.

- 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 Aliens are automatically entitled to work according to the terms of their visa status, while others must request permission to work. All potential non-American hires, including faculty, must first receive clearance from the Department of 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-Americans can be obtained from the Department of Human Resources.
Section: 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: Employment Policies

Subject: Creating and Staffing New Positions

Policy

A "new position" is defined as: A position that is not currently listed in either the wage or salary budget. The following procedures shall be used if a new position is needed in a department or area:

- Budget revision procedures will be cleared through the Budget Office.
- A Position Audit Request Form will be completed and submitted to the Department of Human Resources for grading of the position.
- The position will be assigned a level and a title by the Department of Human Resources.
- An Employment Form will be completed by the department adding the position to the budget, assigning the next sequential budget number to the position, indicating the minimum salary for the level, and requesting approval from the Administration by way of a justification for the addition of the position.
- The position will be posted and selection procedures will be followed as set out under "Affirmative Action Guidelines" after the Employment Form has been approved through the Administration.
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

Common examples continued:

- 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
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

- 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
Policy
The formal written evaluation program of The University of Southern Mississippi is established to provide annually, a planned, scheduled, opportunity for the employee and supervisor to meet and mutually identify, discuss, and document the demonstrated job performance and accomplishments of the employee during a specified rating period. The review helps to answer several basic questions that are of concern to all of us as employees: "How am I doing?", "Where do I go from here?", and "How will my supervisor support me in getting there?"

For the employee evaluation:

- Indicates where he/she 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.

For the supervisor the evaluation:

- Helps identify an employee's performance level, growth potential, and developmental needs as measured by the standards of performance for the job.
- Assures that the employee is fully aware of assigned duties and responsibilities.
- 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 University may initiate unscheduled evaluations.

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 the Department of Human Resources.
As stated in the IHL Board policy numbered 407.01 Performance Appraisals shall be done for all staff members of the University and copies must be placed in the personnel file in Human Resources. The appraisal will be done by the immediate supervisor (the rater) and will be reviewed at the next level of supervision (the reviewer). 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 a supervisor and an employee when an employee thinks a performance appraisal has been unfairly rated. "Days" in the policy statement shall refer to working days. The parties of the review, by mutual agreement, may extend any or all of the time periods established in this policy. Failure to process a request for a review within the time limits, or agreed upon extensions, shall constitute termination of the review. Review forms are available from the Department of Human Resources. Assistance in the completion and filing of the form is also available from the Human Resources Department. The following are the steps to be followed when filing a review.

**Step 1**
An employee who wishes to have his/her performance appraisal rating reviewed must submit in writing the reasons for disagreement with the rating to the rater within five (5) working days of the performance appraisal review meeting. The rater must then respond in writing to the employee within five (5) working days of receiving the review request stating the reasons for upholding or changing the rating. If the rater's decision does not satisfy the employee, the employee has the option of proceeding to Step 2. Copies of the employee's written request and the rater's response must be submitted to Human Resources.

**Step 2**
The employee must submit, in writing, the reasons for disagreement with the rating. These reasons must be submitted to the reviewer within five (5) working days of receipt of the rater's letter. The reviewer must then respond in writing to the employee within five (5) working days of receipt of the employee's review stating the reasons for upholding or changing the rating. If the reviewer's decision does not satisfy the employee, the employee has the option of proceeding to Step 3. Copies must be submitted to Human Resources.

**Step 3**
If the dispute cannot be successfully settled in Step 1 or Step 2, the employee may file a grievance according to the University policy stated in Retrieval No. 5001.
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 the Department of 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. New employees will be referred to the Department of Human Resources by the hiring authority to schedule the required tests. 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 Director 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. Individuals may re-apply for employment at the university at a later time but additional alcohol/drug screening will be administered at the individual's expense.

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. The Department of Human Resources will coordinate testing of employees.

Circumstances Requiring Drug/Alcohol Testing for All Employees
- 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
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

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. Supervisors of employees subject to alcohol/drug testing are required to participate in at least one hour of training on alcohol misuse symptoms and indicators used in making determinations for reasonable suspicion testing and one hour of training on the signs and symptoms of drug use. Training efforts are the responsibility of the department head.

- **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 Director 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**
Employees who refuse to submit to testing procedures when required will be forbidden to drive a university vehicle and will be terminated. The employee's unit head and the Director 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.
Subject: On-Campus Consulting Policy

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 complete and have approved the attached On-Campus Consulting Request. The completion of this form is specific to each on-campus consulting request, and a completed copy must accompany the Single Payment Approval Form. For multiple payments under one On-Campus Consulting Request, a copy of the request must accompany each payment form. The timely completion of this form 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.

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. As in the case of faculty, the On-Campus Consulting Request must be completed prior to commencement of the service for extra compensation, and a copy must accompany the Personnel Action Form 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.
Non-Exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees at The University of Southern Mississippi are subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and other federal and state regulations. To fully comply with the provisions of these laws and regulations, all work performed by a non-exempt employee for a unit or department outside of his/her home department will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times the base hourly rate in his/her home department. In the event the work is significantly different than that which is performed in their home department, a bona fide hourly rate may be used in the calculation of the overtime rate (1½). This rate must be approved by the Department of Human Resources. Positions that fall under this category include all clerical, support, custodial, and skilled trades positions, as well as numerous others. If there is a question concerning the Fair Labor Standards Act exempt status of an employee, please contact the Human Resources Department. As with faculty, the On-Campus Consulting Request must be completed prior to commencement of the service, and a copy must accompany the Personnel Action Form for the additional assignment.
**Subject: Employment Contracts**

**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. 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 employment contracts are maintained in the Department of Human Resources. The contracts for the athletic department will also be provided to the Board office.

Contracts are issued at the beginning of the fiscal year. All contracts should be returned to the Department of 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 staff member to return a duly signed contract prior to the first regularly scheduled class meeting of an academic term constitutes abandonment of employment and of the privileges inherent in a status of continuing employment.

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.

**Source of Policy:** IHL Board of Trustees Board Policy 401.01
Subject: Selective Service

Policy

Beginning July 1, 1999, every male between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty six (26), who is required to register under the federal Military Selective Service Act, 50, USCS App.453, 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.
Section 2: Payroll and Budget

Subject: Salaried Staff Employees

Salaried Staff Employees
The Department of 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. Checks may be mailed to a home or office address of the employee. 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 the Cook Memorial 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 the Department of 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.**
Section: Payroll and Budget

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 the Department of 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 the Department of 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.

Employees hired on a temporary basis:
- cannot be moved to a vacant regular budget position unless the position has been posted and the employee has met all the application requirements;

- cannot be offered University fringe benefits;

- cannot be paid for periods exceeding four and one-half (4 1/2) months; and

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

It is the department director’s responsibility to ensure that no person hired in a temporary position works more than 4 and ½ months.
Section: Payroll and Budget

Subject: Deductions

New employees of the University, whether salaried or wage, are required to report to the Department of Human Resources for in processing. The employee will be notified the time and the location of in processing by the Department of Human Resources. 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:

- Group Medical Insurance
- Life Insurance
- USM Credit Union
- Short Term Disability
- United Way Contributions
- Tax-sheltered Annuities
- USM Foundation
- Cancer Insurance

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. 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 the Department of Human Resources and request assistance.

Employees desiring to change deductions or premium payments should come to the Department of 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.
The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal law created in 1938 that sets a limit on the number of hours in a standard work week. It also addresses minimum standards such as minimum wage, overtime pay, equal pay, and child labor standards for employment. Recordkeeping requirements are established within the law. The University of Southern Mississippi is subject to the law and complies with the provisions of the FLSA.

Exemptions
The Fair Labor Standards Act addresses whether an employee is exempt or nonexempt. Nonexempt employees are subject to overtime pay, exempt are not. Both exempt and nonexempt are subject to recordkeeping requirements. The Department of Human Resources will assist the supervisor in determining whether an employee is exempt or nonexempt by interpreting and applying the provisions of the Act.

Minimum Wage
In compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the University will pay all employees at least the minimum wage. This policy includes student employees. The FLSA does not require extra pay for working on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays. Extra pay is only required for nonexempt employees if they work more than 40 hours in a standard workweek.

RecordKeeping Requirements
The Fair Labor Standards Act has very specific recordkeeping requirements. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that these records are maintained and are accurate and quickly accessible in the event of an audit. The requirements are listed in the RecordKeeping Policy.

Violations
A supervisor who signs a time record must have personal knowledge of the hours worked by the employee. An employee may not be asked to alter the record to record more or fewer hours than were actually worked. To do so will subject the supervisor to disciplinary and/or legal action up to and including discharge.
Standard Workweek
The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that a standard workweek be defined. 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.

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 which includes the period of 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or beyond 7:00 p.m., 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:
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 of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 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
The provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) cover all employees of The University of Southern Mississippi. The Act establishes rules for minimum wage, overtime pay, equal pay, child labor, and record keeping; and it defines exemptions from overtime pay regulations.

Classification
Exempt employees generally fall into three major categories: executives, administrative, and professional. The FLSA regulations on exemption address the actual job duties of the employee and are not concerned with job titles. For clarification on whether an employee’s job is exempt or nonexempt, the supervisor should contact the Department of Human Resources.

The chart below shows a general determination of the FLSA status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Type</th>
<th>FLSA Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive/Administrative</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Exempt/Nonexempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>Nonexempt/Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Paraprofessional</td>
<td>Nonexempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Craft</td>
<td>Nonexempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service/Maintenance</td>
<td>Nonexempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Nonexempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nonexempt Employees
Nonexempt employees must be paid one and one-half (1½) times for all hours worked more than forty (40) hours in a workweek. The workweek is defined as Saturday 12:01 a.m. through midnight on the following Friday. Leave time and holidays do not count as time worked. In compliance with state law, compensatory leave will be accrued if the employee is required to work on a holiday.

The nonexempt employee should seek a supervisor’s advance approval to work overtime. Under all circumstances, any verifiable hours worked beyond forty (40) hours must be paid at one and one-half (1½) times the hourly rate.

Supervisors may adjust an employee’s schedule within a workweek to avoid or minimize overtime payments. Each workweek stands alone in calculating regular and overtime hours worked.

Exempt Employees
Exempt employees are not paid overtime, nor do they receive compensatory leave. Recording leave for partial days does not prohibit employees from being considered exempt.
Policy
The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was enacted as an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The Equal Pay Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender for work requiring equal skills, effort, and responsibility when it is performed under similar working conditions. The act applies equally whether the employee is classified as an exempt or a nonexempt employee regardless of gender.

The act prohibits an employer from complying with the provision by reducing the wage rate of any employee.

Child Labor
The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulates the minimum age and maximum hours of employment of minors. The FLSA cites different standards for employment of minors who are between the ages of 14 and 16 and between the ages of 16 and 18.

Minors between the ages of 14 and 16 are permitted to work in any nonagricultural occupation not deemed hazardous by the Secretary of Labor as long as the employment does not interfere with their school, health, or wellbeing.
Subject: Overtime

Policy
The U. S. Supreme Court, in a 1985 ruling, required state and local government agencies to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This Act establishes minimum wages and standards for covered employment relating to maximum hours, overtime hours, overtime pay, equal pay, and child labor.

In order to comply with this Act, determination must first be made as to any given employee’s category (exempt or nonexempt). 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.

All work performed by a nonexempt employee for a unit or department outside of his or her home department will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times the base hourly rate in his or her home department. It does not matter if the outside appointment is a regular or temporary basis. The secondary appointment should not conflict with the primary job duties. In the event the work is significantly different than that which is performed in their home department, a bona fide hourly rate may be used in the calculation of the overtime rate (1½). This rate must be approved by the Department of Human Resources. Positions that fall under this category include all clerical, support, custodial, and skilled trades positions, as well as numerous others.

The Act does not limit the number of hours that an employee may work, but simply requires overtime payments for any hours worked over forty (40) hours in a standard workweek. Overtime pay must be paid at a rate of not less than one and one-half (1½) times the nonexempt employee’s regular rate of pay for each hour worked in a workweek in excess of the maximum hours (40 hours). Supervisors must give prior approval for all overtime work. Employees doing work for another department that might result in overtime hours for the employee during a workweek must have the work approved by the supervisor prior to doing the work.

Supervisors should be aware that under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), work not requested by the supervisor, but that an employer permits to occur, even if performed on a voluntary basis, must be included in hours worked. If an employee works overtime without permission, the department is still obligated to pay that employee at an overtime rate. The employee may be subject to disciplinary action including termination for failing to follow policy.

Holidays, sick days, vacation days, or other days off do not count as FLSA hours worked.

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 among all eligible employees. Employees must understand that advance notice is not always practical.

Compensatory Time
In some cases, compensatory time may be authorized rather than overtime pay. See Compensatory Time Policy for details.
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.

Workweek
The FLSA requires that both the regular wage and overtime pay due an employee be computed on the basis of the hours worked by an employee in each workweek, and that the compensation earned by an employee in a particular workweek be 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.

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.

All time records must be accurately kept. Falsification of university records will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Paid Absences
Paid absences in the form of vacation or sick leave or any form of leave with pay are not considered hours worked for the purpose of calculating overtime. Work in excess of eight (8) hours per day is not considered overtime.

Compensatory Time
The FLSA allows flexibility for public employees regarding compensation for statutory overtime hours. Please see Retrieval 2207, Compensatory Time.
Subject: Recordkeeping Policy of Hours Worked

Policy
The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that employers keep certain records for all covered employees, including those who are exempt from minimum wage and overtime provisions. The records must be detailed enough to permit recalculation for each pay period. It is the employee’s supervisor’s responsibility to maintain these records in accordance with federal law as described below.

Retention of Records
The records must be maintained in the department for a period of at least three (3) years. Grant employee records may be required to be kept for a period of ten (10) years beyond the end of the original grant. For example, if a grant was issued in 1980 and lasted for ten years until 1990, the payroll records could not be destroyed until 2000.

Accessibility of Records
The regulations require that each department keep the required records in a safe place. The records must be made available within 72 hours of a request by an authorized representative of the University or the Department of Labor.

Nonexempt Employees
The following records are required to be kept on nonexempt employees:
- Name in full as it appears on the social security card
- Home address including zip code
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Job title
- Time of day and day of week on which the employee’s workweek begins (Saturday at 12:01 a.m.)
- Regular hourly rate of pay
- Hours worked each workday
- Total of hours per week
- Straight-time earnings during the workweek
- Amount of overtime pay
- Total additions to or deductions from wages paid each pay period
- Total wages paid each pay period
- Date of payment
- Pay period covered by payment

Exempt Employees
The regulations also require supervisors to maintain similar records on exempt employees with the exception of payment and hours worked. Special information is required for employees with special or unusual pay arrangements or those who have board, lodging, or other facilities as part of their compensation package.
Records for Compensatory Time

In addition to general record keeping, special recordkeeping requirements are necessary for compensatory time. The following records must be kept on compensatory time:

- the number of compensatory hours **earned** each workweek (at overtime rate if over forty (40) hours per workweek and a nonexempt employee),
- the number of hours of compensatory hours **used** each workweek, and
- the number of hours of compensatory hours **paid** in cash.

According to University policy exempt employees are not eligible for compensatory time.

Posting Requirements

Each building housing employees who are subject to the FLSA may want to post the required poster for Federal Minimum Wage information explaining the requirements of the FLSA. A copy of the poster may be obtained by accessing the following site on the Web:


**NOTE:** The willful falsification of records may subject the supervisor to criminal action.
Subject: Compensatory Time

Policy
The FLSA allows flexibility for public employees regarding compensation for statutory overtime hours. The law authorizes a public agency to provide compensatory time off in lieu of monetary overtime compensation, at a rate of not less than one and one-half (1½) hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime worked. An employee may accrue up to 240 hours of 1½ compensatory hours, which is 160 hours of actual overtime worked. Employees of the University Police Department may accrue up to 480 hours of compensatory time. Overtime hours accrued beyond these limits must be paid in cash.

Nonexempt Employees
If a nonexempt employee of the University works more than forty (40) hours in a given workweek, that employee may receive compensatory time off at a rate of not less than one and one-half (1½) hours for each hour of overtime worked. There is no provision in the University policy for compensatory time or overtime pay for exempt employees.

Use of Compensatory Time
The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provides that any employee of a public agency who has accrued compensatory time off and requested use of this compensatory time shall be permitted to use such time off within a "reasonable period" after making the request, if such use does not "unduly disrupt" the operations of the agency. Unduly disruptive is usually not interpreted as a staff shortage.

The use of compensatory time must be in accordance with an agreement reached between the University and the employee prior to the performance of the work. Compensatory time received by an employee, in lieu of cash, must be at the rate of one and one-half hours of compensatory time for each hour of overtime work, just as the monetary rate for overtime is calculated at the rate of not less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay.

Recordkeeping Requirements
Records must be maintained and preserved for compensatory time. See the Record Keeping Policy for details.
Subject: Emergency CallBack Pay

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.
Subject: On-Call/Call-Back Status and 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.

FLSA generally does not require compensation for being on on-call status. However, 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, as well as the Director of Human Resources 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.
Subject: Holiday Pay

Policy
Mississippi State Legislation requires that employees required to work on University holidays will earn compensatory time rather than be paid for the holiday. This code section is Mississippi Code Ann. § 25-1-98. The code reads as follows:

Employees required to work on legal holidays shall earn compensatory leave under the provisions of § 25-3-92. No employee shall receive additional vacation or sick leave benefits for working on a legal holiday, nor shall this section be construed to authorize any additional compensation as an alternative to the accrual of compensatory leave except as specifically provided for in a legislative appropriation.

Section 3: Fringe Benefits

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Time</th>
<th>Hours per Month</th>
<th>Days per Year</th>
</tr>
</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.

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 may be certified to PERS upon retirement. Faculty shall be paid up to 240 hours of major medical leave upon retirement from active employment.

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 medical doctor. 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 may be requested by the Department Head at any time.

Employees with questions or problems related to leave time records should first contact their supervisor. If the problem remains unresolved, the supervisor should contact the Department of 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.

Death
The wages or salary for the total unused personal leave time, up to 960 hours, 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 refunded 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.)

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.
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>12-Month Employees</th>
<th>9-Month Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 month to 3 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 months to 8 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 months to 15 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 15 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.00</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 the employee’s attending physician. 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.
Retirement Credit
Upon termination or retirement, an employee 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 the Department of 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 through Contracts and Grants 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 to Contract and Grant Staff or retiring Faculty 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 Terminal leave payments, then the Terminal leave will be paid from the University's designated account.
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. Reason for Policy

The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 as amended is a lengthy, complex law with over a hundred pages of federal regulations written to explain and aid in the application of the act. This policy summarizes the key points of the act and its regulations to provide University of Southern Mississippi managers and employees with the tools necessary to administer the law.
C. 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 have been 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 treatment, recuperation or therapy.

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.
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.

D. Sanctions
An employee who fraudulently obtains FMLA leave is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
Section: 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 Director 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 the Department of Human so that benefits can continue during his or her absence.

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.
Subject: Holiday Leave

Policy
The objective of this policy is to establish a uniform number of holidays and to define payment of holidays for all University staff employees.

The University will recognize the following days as holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Third Monday in January)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (Fourth of July)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day and a Christmas leave period, to include the last seven working days of December as designated by the University President

Additional holidays may be designated by the President of the University, not to exceed a total of 15 days per year. All holidays are subject to change if there is a conflict with the academic schedule and those changes will be at the discretion of the University President.

Eligibility
All regular full-time or part-time 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.

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The University of Southern Mississippi
Part-time 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 employees who desire to observe an "official" religious holiday, in accordance with their religious preference, may do so with their director's approval. The time and attendance record should reflect time taken as personal (vacation) leave.
Section: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Military Leave

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 the Department of Human Resources. A copy of the military orders shall be filed with the Department of Human Resources.
Section: 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: 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 his closing will not be charged for the official absence.

Employees who are considered “essential personnel” in areas that are required to work, such as: food services, student housing, etc., will be provided pay at a one and a half rate or provided compensatory time as the same rate of time and a half. If compensatory time is chosen by the employee the time will be given within a reasonable time period. 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.
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. The Department of 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.
Subject: Use of Leased Employees

Policy

Section 71-5-11 was amended, for purposes of unemployment compensation, to provide that: “...all entities utilizing the services of any leasing firm shall be considered the employer of the individuals leased from the employee leasing firm...”

Source of Policy: Mississippi State Code Section 71-5-11
Section: 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.

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 the Department of Human Resources or at: http://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/forms/dependentchildtuitionwaiver.pdf and then must be returned to the Department of Human Resources for verification and 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 automatically renewable on a semester-to-semester basis, provided the child remains in good academic standing.

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 to the Department of Human Resources.

Additional Terms or Conditions:
1. 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.

2. The expenses of special assessed fees, books, food, housing, etc., are to be paid by the recipient.

3. 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.

4. In order to ensure tuition remission is posted timely to student’s account, application must be returned to the Department of Human Resources no later than five (5) working days prior to the beginning of the semester.
Section: 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 (be admitted or re-admitted to the University) prior to registering for courses.

Eligibility

• All full-time benefit-eligible University faculty, staff, 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. The Department of Human Resources will be responsible for approving retired participants.

• If a University employee is seeking a degree, he or she must maintain a semester USM 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.

• 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.

• For newly hired employees to receive this benefit they must be employed prior to the last official day of late registration of the semester. There are no exceptions to this policy.

• No application fee is required.

• Appeals regarding the tuition waiver should be directed to the Director 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.

- All full-time faculty and staff employed at Gulf Coast campuses and GCRL are eligible to enroll in a maximum of eighteen semester hours per academic year (maximum of six (6) hours per semester or term) at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, if the classes are not offered at USM. The courses must be taken toward a degree. The University will pay the tuition fees. All part-time employees are eligible to take nine (9) semester hours per academic year (maximum of three (3) hours per semester or term). The employee must complete a Course Benefit Request Form obtained from the Assistant Dean for Support Services, Gulf Coast campus. The employee may be away from the office for a maximum of three hours per week. Additional time must be charged to annual leave.

- 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 Department, with a copy to the Department of Human Resources. Attached to this letter of request will be a copy of the employee's Application for Degree. The employee will be given three (3) hours toward the free course scholarship and will be required to pay the additional tuition fees for the second course. The employee will also 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 maintaining out-of-state residence must pay out-of-state tuition 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 laboratory 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 the Department of Human Resources. Human Resources will verify employment status.
- The employee must have the permission to take courses approved by his or her area budget authority. The budget authority 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 the Department of Human Resources for processing before registration can begin.
- The employee then takes his or her Registration Appointment Form to registration or uses SOAR. (Registration instructions and procedures are contained in the Class Schedule Guide).
- In order to ensure that tuition remission is timely posted to the employee’s account, the permission form must be returned to the Department of Human Resources no later than five (5) working days prior to the beginning of the semester.
- Employees must be employed prior to the start of the semester in order to receive the scholarship.
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</td>
<td>$ 500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excluding Bachelor's or Master's)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certified Public Accountant (CPA)</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Engineer or Architect</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>$ 800.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Diplomas and certificates earned by University faculty and staff prior to the effective date of this policy will not receive retroactive payments except those attained through the Professional Standards Program of the Association of Office Professionals.

A Personnel Action Form with copies of the certificates, official transcripts, and/or diplomas will be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources for processing. Monetary adjustments to the employee's salary will be made effective the date the certificate or diploma is conferred or in the case of doctoral degrees when the dissertation is successfully defended. The increase in salary will become a part of the staff employee's annual base salary.
State of Mississippi Health Insurance Program
The State of Mississippi offers all full-time employees coverage in the statewide Comprehensive 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 thirty (30) days of acquiring an eligible dependent. Pre-existing conditions require a waiting period for that particular condition unless the employee can show evidence of prior coverage.

Employees will be covered on the first day of employment when they enroll during the "in-processing" procedures at the Department of Human Resources. A group insurance booklet can be found at http://www.usm.edu/hr/onlineforms/Benefit_Summary.pdf.

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, 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 the Department of Human Resources at 266-4050.

Open Enrollment
The State Comprehensive Group 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:
The University of Southern Mississippi
Employee Handbook

- add or drop dependent coverage
- add or drop any University offered insurance benefit
- elect to keep insurance benefits as they presently exist
- 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 sign a new Election Form each year during "open enrollment."
Section: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)

Policy
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 the Department of Human Resources by calling 266-4050.
Section: 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 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: Fringe Benefits

Subject: Additional Group Policies

If an employee chooses not to enroll themselves or their dependents in the optional group policies at the initial employment enrollment, with the exception of after tax premiums and group automobile insurance, then they can only be added during open enrollment in October with an effective date of January 1. The effective dates of coverage will be the first day of the month following the deduction of the first premium except for Aetna Life, which is effective on the first day of employment.

1. **Group Life Insurance**: Eligibility is determined by the same criteria as the State Comprehensive Health Plan. The amount of insurance will be an amount equal to the lesser of $100,000 or twice the insured employee's annual earnings rounded to the next highest $1,000 provided, however, that in no case will the amount of insurance on the life of any one insured employee be less than $30,000.

   Retired employees may be insured for life insurance in increments of $5,000, $10,000, and $20,000.

   Employees interested in obtaining coverage will be enrolled on their first day of employment and provided with a booklet outlining policy coverage and provisions. The University will provide 50 percent of the premium with the employee responsible for the remaining 50 percent.

2. **Cancer Insurance**: The cancer plan offers coverage for employees and their dependents. Some of the benefits offered are diagnosis of skin cancer, anesthesia, reconstructive surgery, and experimental treatment and more. The employee may select coverage for individual, one parent family or family with dependent children.

3. **Medical Reimbursement Plan**: This plan is designed to allow an employee to set aside pre-taxed dollars to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses, not paid by group health insurance benefits that occur during the plan year.

   The Internal Revenue Service has established strict guidelines for monies not used by the end of the plan year. If one contributes dollars to a medical reimbursement account and does not use all of the monies contributed, he/she will lose any remaining balance in the account at the end of the plan year. For more information regarding the Medical Reimbursement Plan, contact the Department of Human Resources.

4. **Group Dental Insurance**: Group rates are available for employee and dependent dental care. Coverage is available for preventive and diagnostic treatment, basic benefits for fillings and extractions, major benefits to include oral surgery and, orthodontic benefits for children under age 19. The employee is responsible for total premium payments to this program. Waiting periods do apply.
5. **Group Vision Insurance**: Group rates are available for employee and dependent vision care. Coverage is available for routine eye exams, frames, lenses, and contact lenses. The employee is responsible for total premium payments to this program. Waiting periods do apply.

6. **Dependent Child Care Reimbursement Plan**: This plan is designed to allow an employee to set aside pre-taxed dollars to cover dependent child care expenses that occur during the plan year.

   The Internal Revenue Service has established strict guidelines for monies not used by the end of the plan year. If one contributes dollars to a dependent child care reimbursement account and does not use all of the monies contributed, he/she will lose any remaining balance in the account at the end of the plan year. For more information regarding the Dependent Child Care Reimbursement Plan, contact the Department of Human Resources.

7. **Tax Sheltered Annuities**: Under provisions of Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954, as amended, employees are offered certain tax advantages when they exclude part of their gross income for purchase of an annuity for retirement benefits. Annuity investments are taxed at the time the annuity matures and payment is made to the individual.

   Employees interested in the purchase of tax-sheltered annuities should secure competent advice of an approved underwriter licensed to do business in Mississippi or from a representative of a company approved by the University to market annuities on campus.

   Salary deductions may be authorized for the purchase of annuities but the University does not contribute to the purchase. Several companies have been approved to sell annuities on campus. For information on approved companies, please contact the Department of Human Resources.

8. **Short Term Disability**: This program is designed to provide income for an injury or illness sustained while either at work or off the premises of the worksite. For more information, contact the Department of Human Resources.
Section: 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 the Department of 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 the Department of 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 the Department of Human Resources.

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

Subject: Social Security

Policy

The Federal Government requires contributions from both the employee and the employer under the Social Security Act. All University employees are required to pay social security premiums. For information regarding social security benefits, employees should contact the local Social Security Administration Office.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

Section: 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 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 the Department of 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 the Department of Human Resources.
Section 4: Classification System Policies

Subject: Classification System

Policy
The Classification System is a method of analyzing the relative worth of a position as compared with others in an organization. The Classification System involves listing positions by levels:

- Levels 01-13 are non-exempt positions (clerical, technical/paraprofessional, skilled craft, and service maintenance)
- Levels 10-20 are exempt positions (professional, executive and administrative)

The Rating Factors that are used for the Classification System are:
1. Complexity of Duties
2. Educational Requirements
3. Experience
4. Latitude
5. Accuracy
6. Contacts
7. Physical Application
8. Job Conditions
9. Supervision of Others

Position Audits
University positions are established through position audits. A position audit uses the classification system for the University to place a numeric value on nine compensable factors. Each factor is weighted in terms of its complexity and/or accountability. Each factor score is totaled to give an overall position score. This score is then related to a table of 20 leveling bands, where each band contains a point spread. The matching of the score to the point spread results in a position level. Only the tasks associated with the position are evaluated, not the person performing the tasks. The audit process does not include any achievements or accomplishments of the incumbent. The position audit looks at the relative worth of the position to the University and not at the worth of the particular person in the position. Employees are evaluated through the performance evaluation system.

Determination of Wage or Salary Rates
- Rate Structure: Once a job level has been determined by evaluating the difficulty of the job by the nine factors in the system, a rate of pay can be decided. The rate structure for the University is published and revised on a periodic basis. The rate structure is divided by classification levels 01 through 20 and provides a minimum starting salary. Any position that receives an increase in level due to changes in job duties will receive an increase in pay effective July 1 of the following fiscal year in which the rate change occurred unless funds are unavailable. This raise is normally 5% for one level change, 7 1/2% for two level changes, and 10% for all others. On occasion technical and professional (non-faculty) personnel are hired based on the regional or national market value for that position without regard to the classification...
system. Effective July 1, 1995, any changes in levels for these personnel may not be eligible for an increase in pay due to level changes.

Procedures for Existing Position Evaluation
The budget authority who has determined that a position requires an evaluation or re-evaluation because of changes in duties and responsibilities should contact the Department of Human Resources. A Position Audit Request Form will be forwarded for the employee and the budget authority to complete and send forward for approvals. This form will describe the duties of the job and serve as the basis for evaluation. The time frame for evaluations of filled positions is November 1 to January 31 of each year. Vacant positions may be audited outside the open window provided it has not been reviewed within the past two-year period.

Once the Position Audit Request Form has been completed and approved, the Human Resources representative will contact the employee to arrange for a desk audit. The information generated in the Audit Form and the desk audit will be considered and a recommendation made regarding change or retention of the current level and title of the position.

The Department of Human Resources will determine the appropriate classification level. Appeal procedures are available for all recommendations made by the Department of Human Resources representative. If a budget authority is dissatisfied with recommendations made and would like to appeal, he or she must contact within the stated time frame, in writing, the Human Resources representative.

Procedures for Area 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 sketch one that would show the changes needed in the reorganization. These charts should show current levels, current reporting relationships, and current titles. The chart for the reorganization should show any changes that will be needed in those areas.

2. Bring both organizational charts to the Human Resources Department. 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. Please note that approval means that the "concept" has been approved, it does not constitute blanket approval for all changes.

5. Proceed with re-evaluation requests as outlined previously in this section.

Procedures for New Position Evaluation
Newly created jobs are to be reviewed by the Department of Human Resources prior to recruitment and hiring. The department head should request a Job Analysis Questionnaire, which should be completed by the newly created position’s supervisor, reviewed by the department head, signed and dated by each, and returned with a cover letter to the Department of Human Resources. The Manager of Compensation and Classification will analyze the position to determine the proper level and title. If it becomes necessary to employ an individual prior to the classification of the position, a temporary title and salary may be used with the approval of the Director of Human Resources.
Section 5: Grievance Policies

Subject: Grievance General Policy

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 the Department of 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 University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

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.

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: Grievance Policy

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.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

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.

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.

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.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

Section: 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.
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.

**RETAIATION:** 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:

**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](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 University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

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 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-upon 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
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

- 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 6: Academic Policies

Subject: Academic Policies

Policies and procedures only applicable to faculty members are addressed in the Faculty Handbook. Examples of such policies are provided below. Policies which are not addressed in the Faculty Handbook, but are applicable to faculty and all employees are addressed in the employee handbook and Institutional Policies.

- Faculty Personnel Procedures
- USM Terminal Degrees
- Adjunct Instructors in USM Bulletin
- Teaching Loads/ Special Assignments
- Summer Session
- Teaching Fellows
- Tenure and Promotion
- Faculty Evaluations
- Grievance Policy and Procedures
- Administrative Policies
- Organization for the Administration of Research
- Center for Business Development and Research
- Ethics in Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity
- Extended Educational Services
- University Library Services
- Governing Bodies and Committees relating to Faculty
Section: Financial Policies

Subject: Charitable Requests to the University or Foundation

Policy
The University is prohibited from using public funds for the purpose of sponsoring events, being listed as supporters in golf tournaments, or supporting charitable causes. The Foundation also follows a policy that prohibits it from contributing to charitable organizations. This policy would not prohibit key individuals from personally attending such events or from making personal contributions, but reimbursement should be limited to the actual cost, not the charitable portion of an event.

The full policy ADMA-FIN-003, can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-adma-fin-003
Section 9: 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.

Service Pin Awards
University faculty and staff who have completed 10-, 20-, 30-, and 40-years of service to The University of Southern Mississippi are honored annually during Founder’s 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: 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 Traveler's Cheques and Cashier check availability, 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.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

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.

University Forum
Each semester, the Honors College offers programs combining presentations in humanities, science, and social science. These evening sessions feature such things as nationally known speakers, outstanding films, panels, and other enrichment programs.

This series is offered on a one-hour, pass-fail basis to students of the University. Employees may also attend these enlightening sessions that are generally held in Bennett Auditorium. For more information, contact the Honors College at 266-4533.
Subject: Drug Free Workplace Policy

Policy
The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989, Public Law 101-226, require 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. The following is the official substance abuse policy for all University employees and students:

"The University of Southern Mississippi prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on The University of Southern Mississippi property or a part of any of its activities."

The University of Southern Mississippi will maintain a drug free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession use or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs or a controlled substance, as defined in the Mississippi Code, Title 41, Chapter 29, Article 3, "Uniform Control Substances Law," or under Title 21, Section 812, United States Code (and further defined at 21 CFR 1300.11-15) is prohibited on University property. 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.

Employees found to be in violation of this Policy, 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 participate in and satisfactorily complete an Employee Support Program or may be reported to authorities for criminal prosecution or other appropriate action.

The University makes available to all its employees an employee assistance program which includes drug counseling and rehabilitation. The services are provided in a confidential manner.

Employees having substance abuse problems:

· Are encouraged to seek assistance voluntarily on a confidential basis by contacting the person's immediate supervisor.

· Have a right to accept or refuse help as they choose; however, individual work performance must always meet acceptable standards or be subject to existing personnel procedures for below standard performance.

Implementation of this policy will not interfere with, or negate, any other University practices, policies, or procedures. Employees whose performance on the job is unsatisfactory remain fully subject to discipline or termination on the same basis as all employees.
It is the responsibility of the University students, faculty, and staff (and a condition of employment of faculty and staff) to:

- Abide by the terms and provisions of the Drug Free Workplace policy.
- Notify the University of any criminal drug conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than 5 days after such conviction.

The University has the responsibility to:

- Notify any pertinent federal granting agency within 10 days after receiving notice of a workplace drug conviction from an employee or student or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.
- Impose sanctions or require the satisfactory participation in an approved drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program by any employee or student who is convicted of a drug related violation in the workplace.
- Conduct periodic training and counseling for faculty, staff, and students concerning the hazards of drugs in the workplace.
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.

The policy STUA-HS-001 can be found at: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-hs-001
Subject: Campus Crime Awareness Act

Policy
The purpose of Phase I of the Campus Crime Awareness Act is to provide timely reports to the campus community for murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft.

The Dean of Student Development has been designated by the University President to work in conjunction with the Chief of University Police to determine when crimes have occurred on the University campus which fall within the duty to make timely reports to the campus community. The designated administrator shall make preliminary determination as to whether the crime shall be classified as a "Class A" or "Class B" potential threat to members of the campus community.

Class A crimes are defined as those of such a nature as to pose an immediate and dire threat to the health and safety of individuals. Class B crimes are defined as those that, though they could occur again, are not of immediate threat to the lives and personal well-being of those on and about the campus. Typically, Class A crimes would include murder, rape, aggravated assaults and other crimes where weapons have been involved, especially when the offender(s) are considered to be "at large." Class B crimes would include some occurrences of robbery, burglary, and auto theft, and crimes where the assailants have clearly been apprehended.

It shall be the responsibility of the Chief of University Police to notify the designated administrator immediately of the occurrence of a murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary or motor vehicle theft, so that the classification and response to the crime might begin at the earliest possible time.

In general the timely reports to the campus community shall occur in the following manner, in regard to the two classifications (A&B) of the crimes.

CLASS A CRIMES The University Crime Awareness Committee will be convened as soon as reasonably possible to determine a specific customized strategy to inform and protect the campus community with due speed. Strategies that will likely be deployed would include immediate area-wide media releases (radio, newspaper, television); direct mail, residence hall meetings; other student and staff meetings; as well as other means which will be used routinely under "Class B" below.

CLASS B CRIMES The designated administrator in conjunction with Director of Public Relations will act within a reasonable time to inform the campus community of these crimes in the following ways:

- Exclusive pre-designated public posting in residence halls and other high use buildings.
- Immediate news release to the campus newspapers and radio station.
- Inclusion in campus electronic mail.

The dissemination of these crimes will not only include notice of their occurrence, but also prevention tips when appropriate. For more information regarding the Campus Crime Awareness Act, contact the Dean of Student Development, University Union Building.
Policy
The University of Southern Mississippi recognizes that infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which causes the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), as 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 best currently available medical facts about HIV infections and AIDS and are applicable to students and employees with HIV infection.

HIV Transmission Information relative to The University of Southern Mississippi policy
Current knowledge indicates that students or employees with any form of HIV infection does not pose a health risk in an academic setting. HIV is not transmitted through casual contact. HIV is transmitted through intimate sexual contact, by exposure to contaminated blood and blood products, and from mother to fetus. 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 infected person, casual kissing, or swimming in a pool with an infected person.

Guidelines
1. AIDS Task Force. The committee is made up of University officials appointed by the Vice President of Student Affairs to assist the University in policy decisions as they pertain to HIV infection and AIDS. The functions of this committee are three fold:
   - Evaluate individual cases of HIV infected students and employees as necessary.
   - Organize and oversee educational programs.
   - Amend AIDS policy as mandated by new medical information, state, or federal legislation.
2. Education Programs. 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.
3. Disabling Conditions. Persons with AIDS and possibly those with other manifestations of HIV infection will be considered as having a disabling condition.
4. 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.
5. 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.
Furthermore, HIV infected persons may have unrestricted access to RC Cook Union, swimming pools, gyms, restaurants, snack bars, and other recreational facilities.

6. **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 of 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 assistance of the Director of the USM Student Health Service Center.

7. **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 with HIV infection are encouraged to inform the physicians at the USM Student Health Service Center of the above infection in order for the health care providers to offer appropriate medical care, counsel, and education.

   - **Medical and Psychological Care.** Counseling for students with HIV infection will be available at the USM Student Health Service Center and University Counseling Center. Referrals will be made for services beyond the scope of care available on campus.

   - **Immunizations.** Persons known to have HIV infection should receive measles and rubella vaccine. Exemption from institutional requirements for vaccinations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

8. **HIV Antibody Testing.**

   - **Mandatory Testing.** The University administrators will not undertake programs or mandatory HIV antibody testing of either employees or students or potential employees or students.

   - **Voluntary.** The USM Student Health Service Center offers confidential but not anonymous HIV antibody testing. Anonymous testing is available through the local Health Department and referral can be made. The testing process at the USM Student Health Services Center mandates consent, and pre- and post-test counseling. Positive HIV antibody results must be confirmed by a second procedure. All individuals with positive HIV antibody confirmed by a second test must be reported to Mississippi State Health Department. The reporting process includes identification of the patient by name, social security number, address. This is done for contact tracing. The patient should be made aware of this during pre-test counseling.

9. **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.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

- **Release of Information.** Specific information about students health concern or diagnosis will not be provided to faculty, staff, administrators, or parents. This position, with respect to the medical record, is supported by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 that regards the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in minors.

  Also, no person, group, agency, employee, insurer, or institution will be provided with any medical information without prior written consent of the patient. The inclusion of HIV testing results within the medical record at the USM Student Health Services Center will be discussed with the patient prior to its entry in the record. Release of HIV antibody testing results or any HIV information requires a separate signed release of information from the patient.

- **Legal Liability.** All confidential information is protected by statutes and any unauthorized disclosure of such information may create 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 antibody or known to have HIV infection. The potential for compromise of confidential information far exceeds any benefit of such listings.

10. **Safety Precautions.** The University health care providers and other employees who handle blood and body fluids will adopt guidelines as proposed by U. S. Public Health Service for handling blood, body fluids, used needles, and equipment from all persons, not just those with potential of or known HIV infection. "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 human products.

11. **Harassment.** Physical or emotional abuse of a student or employee known or suspected to have HIV infection will not be tolerated by this University.
Americans With Disabilities Act Policy

After July 26, 1992, job discrimination against people with disabilities is illegal. The Act also makes it 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.

Under the ADA, a person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

To be protected under the ADA, an individual must have, have a record of, or be regarded as having a substantial, as opposed to a minor or temporary, impairment. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, caring for oneself, learning or working.

An individual with a disability must also be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations, in order to be protected by the ADA. This means that the applicant 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 those tasks that are essential to the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

The ADA does not interfere with the right to hire the best qualified applicant.

Essential Functions:
Factors to consider in determining if a function is essential include:

- 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.

Reasonable Accommodations:
Reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that does not promote an undue hardship on the employer that permits a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of a job, or to enjoy benefits and
The University of Southern Mississippi
Policies and Procedures

privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities. For example, reasonable accommodation may include:

- acquiring or modifying equipment or devices,
- job restructuring,
- part-time or modified work schedules,
- reassignment to a vacant position,
- adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials or policies,
- providing readers and interpreters, and
- making the workplace readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

It is a violation of the ADA to fail to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified individual with a disability, unless to do so would impose an undue hardship on the operation of your business. Undue hardship means that the accommodation would require significant difficulty or expense.

Undue Hardship:
Undue hardship means that an accommodation would be unduly costly, extensive, substantial or disruptive, or would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of the business. For more details regarding ADA, contact the Department of Human Resources.
Section: 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 the Department of Human Resources to determine the appropriate action to be taken.
Section: 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 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 the Department of 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.
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. Detailed information can be obtained from policy STUA-UNA-007 at: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-una-007.
Section: Other University Policies

Subject: Parking Regulations

Policy
Vehicle parking permits may be purchased by all University employees. Applications for permits and assignment of parking zones will be made through the Department of Parking Management. The employee may request a copy of the parking regulations when the permit is issued. It is expected that each employee will be familiar with these regulations and abide by them.

Should an employee wish to park off campus, then a parking permit is not required.
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. Detailed information can be obtained from policy STUA-UNA-008 at: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-una-008.
Subject: Jury Duty and Voting

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.
**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.

The following are a list of the special privileges:

- **Permanent Retiree Identification Card**
  The card is available through photo services with a form provided by the Department of Human Resources.

- **Retiree Parking Decal**
  These decals are available at the Department of Parking Management (McLemore Hall 1st Floor) at no cost upon presentation of retirement ID card from photo services.

- **Tuition Waiver for University Courses**
  Retired employees who meet admission or readmission requirements may take two free credit courses per semester not to exceed six semester hours. Those taking free courses are responsible for their own textbooks and supplies and must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0.

  To take advantage of free credit courses, retirees must first be admitted by the Admissions Office (Kennard-Washington, 110) or readmitted by the Registrar's Office (Kennard-Washington, 110) and then obtain a permit from the Department of Human Resources (McLemore Hall, 307).

- **Use of Library**
  Retirees of USM may use Cook Memorial Library on the same basis and under the same conditions as currently employed faculty and staff.

- **Scholarships for Children**
  The undergraduate tuition remission (scholarship) program that is provided for children of employees of the University is also available to the children of retirees of the University. The amount of the scholarship depends upon the employment date of the retiree. Children of those employed prior to July 1, 1977, may receive a 100 percent tuition remission. Children of those employed after that date may receive a 50 percent tuition remission.
An application for a scholarship for children of retirees is available in the Department of Human Resources. It must be verified by the Department of Human Resources. 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.

The scholarship is available at the undergraduate level only for students who have not reached their 25th birthday.

- **Use of Health Services**
  The charge, payable by cash or check at time of service, is the same as charges to active faculty and staff. The Clinic does not file for Medicare or Medicaid.

- **Use of Post Office Box**
  The University Post Office will rent mail boxes to retirees for the same rate that it charges active faculty and staff. Cash or check only.

- **Use of the Payne Center**
  A reduced cost membership fee is available to retirees.

- **Season Tickets for Athletic Events**
  Any retiree is eligible to purchase a maximum of two season tickets at the faculty and staff rate for the sports of football, men's and women's basketball, and baseball.

- **Tickets for Cultural Events**
  For those events that have admission charges, reduced-price tickets are available to retired USM faculty and staff.

- **The DMA (Don't Mention Age) Club**
  The DMA Club is comprised of all USM retirees who wish to join together for fellowship, fun, information about the University, and information about other things of interest to retirees. Membership is gained by paying annual dues at the September meeting. The club meets for lunch four times each year. Members pay for the costs of their meals. Letters of invitation for membership are mailed to USM retirees in the early fall each year. For further information, contact Mrs. Polly Odom (Administration Building, Room 106).

- **The ILR (Institute of Learning in Retirement)**
  The Institute of Learning in Retirement is an association of persons in retirement or semi-retirement who seek stimulating learning experiences while developing new friendships. Its membership is not limited to USM retirees. The program is self-directed and is run for and by the members. It draws on members' talents and experiences as instructors and facilitator.
Membership in ILR carries many benefits. An annual membership fee is required and nominal fees are charged for various courses and seminars. Further information is available from the Office of Continuing Education. For more information, please call 601-266-4210.

- USM Credit Union
  Memberships are available to retired faculty and staff as well as their families. For further information visit www.usmfedcu.com.
Policy

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. The policies and procedures contained therein are governed by the processes of the appropriate governance body. Regardless, links to the latest versions of the Employee Handbook will reside on the University’s Institutional Policies website.

The official version of the Employee Handbook will reside on the website of Human Resources. http://www.usm.edu/employment-hr

The Responsible University Administrator for the employee handbook is the Vice President of Finance and Administration. The Human Resource Director is the Responsible University Officer. The Responsible University Officer develops and administers the policy and procedures and will be accountable for the accuracy of its subject matter, its issuance, and timely updating.

The Director of Human Resources will submit new and revised policies to the Vice President of Finance and Administration for approval. The Vice President will then determine next steps in the approval process. Policies may either be approved by the Vice President, submitted to the President for approval, or presented to the Executive Cabinet for comment. Certain information within a University policy may become obsolete due to changes in legislation or other higher authority, organizational structure, or administrative initiative. When such information is not open for interpretation or debate, the proposed policy or policy change will not be subject to approval beyond the Vice President of Finance and Administration.

. The employee handbook that is maintained in the Department of Human Resources is the official employee handbook of the University and policies and procedures, for which the Department of Human Resources has responsibility, 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.

Procedure for Related Policies which Affect Employees

Upon completion of policies and procedures affecting the employees of the University that have been approved under the Policy for the Management of University Policies and Procedures, the Responsible Officer should send the completed copy to the Department of Human Resources. The following information should be included:

• the section of the handbook affected

Upon receipt of the policy and documentation, the Department of Human Resources will update the Employee Handbook.
Section: 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, and software agreements.

Source of Policy: IHL Board of Trustees Board Policy 707.01
Subject: Posting of Office Hours

Policy
The University is open during the hours of 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. Therefore, administrative offices should post their hours on their main doors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Absences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3009</td>
<td>Abuses of Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0003</td>
<td>Academic Affairs - Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6001</td>
<td>Academic Policies – Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3102</td>
<td>Academic Policy - Faculty/Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1009</td>
<td>Access to Personnel File</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2206</td>
<td>Accessibility of Records – Hours Worked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>Accident Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>Accrual Rates for Personal Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0004</td>
<td>Administrative Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3201</td>
<td>Administrator - Insurance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>AD&amp;D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2205</td>
<td>Advance Notice for Overtime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001</td>
<td>Affirmative Action Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5002</td>
<td>Affirmative Action Grievance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>Affirmative Action Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5001</td>
<td>Affirmative Action Time Frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1014</td>
<td>Alien Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9008</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Animals in the Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1012</td>
<td>Appeal of Reduction in Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>Appeals Committee - Classification System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1012</td>
<td>Appeals to Reduction in Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1007</td>
<td>Application for Permission to Engage in Outside Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1008</td>
<td>Applying for Vacant Positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>Area Reorganizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1011</td>
<td>Arrests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9101</td>
<td>Asbestos-Containing Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>Automobile Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9001</td>
<td>Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9001</td>
<td>Benefits Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9107</td>
<td>Benefits of Retirees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0009</td>
<td>Board Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0009</td>
<td>Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>Break in Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1008</td>
<td>Breaks in Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1003</td>
<td>Briefing a New Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0005</td>
<td>Business and Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3204</td>
<td>Cafeteria Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2210</td>
<td>Call-Back/On-Call Status and Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9006</td>
<td>Campus Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9102</td>
<td>Campus Solicitation Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Care of Children in Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>Catastrophic Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>Certification under Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3103</td>
<td>Certificate Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1009</td>
<td>Change in Personal Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1008</td>
<td>Changes in Employment Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8202</td>
<td>Charitable Requests to the University or Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Children in Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>CIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>Classification System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001</td>
<td>Classification System - Appeals Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1011</td>
<td>Clearance Requirements for Terminations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3203</td>
<td>COBRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1006</td>
<td>Coffee Breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9001</td>
<td>Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3103</td>
<td>Compensation for Degrees or Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2207</td>
<td>Compensatory Time Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2205</td>
<td>Compensatory Time – Use of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>Complying with Equal Employment Opportunity Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3007</td>
<td>Compulsory Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3101</td>
<td>Conditions for Scholarships for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1007</td>
<td>Conflict of Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3203</td>
<td>Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1021</td>
<td>Consulting – On Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1003</td>
<td>Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1022</td>
<td>Contracts - Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Contracts and Grant Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9202</td>
<td>Contracts Signatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3209</td>
<td>Contributions and Withdrawals - Retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3009</td>
<td>Corrections to Leave Balances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3102</td>
<td>Courses under Faculty/Staff Academic Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1016</td>
<td>Creating and Staffing New Positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9006</td>
<td>Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1011</td>
<td>Crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0009</td>
<td>Current Board Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3008</td>
<td>Declared Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2101</td>
<td>Deductions-Budget and Payroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001</td>
<td>Deficit Leave Balances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Definition of Contract and Grant Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Definition of Part-Time Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Definition of Regular Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Definition of Temporary Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>Definitions under Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3103</td>
<td>Degrees Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>Dental Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3206</td>
<td>Dependent Child Care Reimbursement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3201</td>
<td>Dependent Coverage - Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1017</td>
<td>Discipline Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3202</td>
<td>Discount - Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5004</td>
<td>Discrimination Complaints, Procedure for the Resolution of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Dress Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9004</td>
<td>Drug-Free Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1020</td>
<td>Drug Testing Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>Effective Date of Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9106</td>
<td>Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9101</td>
<td>Electric Heaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3102</td>
<td>Eligibility for Faculty/Staff Academic Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3005</td>
<td>Eligibility for Holiday Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3209</td>
<td>Eligibility Retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>Eligibility Verification for Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2208</td>
<td>Emergency Callback Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3004</td>
<td>Employee Benefits under Leave of Absence without Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1003</td>
<td>Employee Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Employee Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>Employee Responsibility under Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3003</td>
<td>Employee Responsibility under Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1022</td>
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<td>Evaluation of Positions</td>
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<td>Exclusions under Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
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<td>Exempt and Nonexempt Employees</td>
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<td>Exemptions - Retirement</td>
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<td>Faculty Employees on Grants</td>
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<td>Faculty/Staff Assistance Program</td>
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<td>Fair Labor Standards Act</td>
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<td>Final Decision - Affirmative Actions</td>
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<td>Flex-Time Work Schedules</td>
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<td>Office Hours</td>
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<td>Office Hours – Posting of Hours</td>
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<td>Retirees Policies and Benefits</td>
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<td>Retirement</td>
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<td>Retirement Credits - Major Medical</td>
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