EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK JULY 2018 REVISION
A July 2018 revised version of the employee handbook is now posted on the HR website. The first thing you will notice is a very different format, which was recommended by our new Employee Handbook Advisory Group. Additionally, we have added a new feature that identifies which policies apply to which employee groups. For instance, some policies, such as those regarding benefits, only apply to benefit-eligible employees; while other policies may apply to staff but not faculty, such as progressive discipline or performance evaluations (faculty policies on these subjects are addressed in the faculty handbook). Also, all of the policy updates described in this newsletter are included in this revised version of the handbook - a summary of changes is included in the front of the handbook.

HUMAN RESOURCES WEBSITE
While we’re at it, we have also updated the HR website. On the left-hand side of our page, you will find seven new links that all information is now categorized under: About Us, Employment, Benefits, Compensation & Payroll, Forms & Resources, Supervisors and AA/EEO. Please note that the Supervisors link contains forms and resources that are used primarily by managers, such as the hiring toolkit, fringe benefit costs, and disciplinary forms. We have cleaned out a lot of outdated information, added new information, and reorganized so that hopefully you can better find what you are looking for. Feel free to send us feedback.

NEW PRE-EMPLOYMENT POLICIES
As part of our ongoing policy review, we have made the following updates to the Pre-Employment policies (policy 2.2 in the revised employee handbook) effective July 1:

- **All positions** must now be posted through the Applicant Tracking System (ATS, Cornerstone) with the exception of student workers, which will continue to be posted in Handshake. The previous policy did not specify which positions were required. The posting requirement includes internal-only postings.
- All positions are minimally required to be posted for 5 working days. The previous policy required non-exempt to be posted 5 days and exempt 10 days.
- Offer letters are now required for all hires, even temporary. Templates are available in Cornerstone. The previous policy did not require offer letters.
- Any staff position that requires a college degree must have that **degree verified**. This verification will be done through the ATS and instructions are included in the “offer letter” section of the guide. Please note that the new hire must submit this verification in order for HR to clear him/her as part of the background check.
STAFF HIRING TOOLKIT

University Human Resources is pleased to announce the release of a new staff hiring toolkit! This toolkit contains guides and resources for everything a hiring manager needs to know about the hiring process. Here's a peek at the table of contents:

I. Posting a Job
   a. Steps
   b. Posting Considerations
      a. To Post or not to Post?
      b. Internal or Department-Only Postings
      c. Posting Timeframes
      d. Affirmative Action Considerations
   c. Applicant Tracking System Training Guide

II. Screening/Selection
   a. Steps
   b. Committee or Not?
      i. Sample Committee Training Agenda
      ii. Implicit Bias
   c. Establishing Criteria
   d. Screening Applicants
      i. Sample Screening Matrix
      ii. Application Red Flags
      iii. Social Media Searches
   e. Phone Screens/Skype Interviews
      i. Sample Phone Screen Evaluation
   f. International Hires
   g. Reference Checks
      i. Sample Internal Reference Check
      ii. Sample External Reference Check
   h. On-Site Interviews
      i. Interview Notifications
      ii. Questions & Topics to Avoid
      iii. Types of Questions
      iv. Sample Competencies with Example Questions
      v. Job Auditions
   i. Evaluations
      i. Sample Interview Evaluation
   j. Selection
      i. Sample Selection Documentation Form

III. New Hire Processing
   a. Steps
   b. Offer Letter
      i. Welcome Letter
      ii. Benefits Highlights
   c. New Hire Processes
   d. Onboarding
The new hiring toolkit is now available on the HR website, complete with links to all applicable policies, forms, training guides and templates. In addition, University HR will be holding the following training sessions to review the new processes:

- Gulf Park  Wednesday, July 25, 2018  10:00a-12:00p  FEC303  
  GCRL- IVN- Cedar Point Research Bldg. Rm 1  
  Stennis- IVN- Bldg 1022, RM 112  
- Hattiesburg  Wednesday, July 25, 2018  2:00p-4:00p  Cook 123  

Due to space limitation, this training is reserved for those in a hiring manager role for full-time and part-time staff. Please register in advance with Krystyna Varnado at Krystyna.varnado@usm.edu.

**INTERNAL REFERENCE CHECKS**
As part of the new hiring toolkit, internal reference checks are now recommended for current USM employees applying for USM positions. This is a change from our previous practice. The new toolkit gives further explanation as well as provides sample reference forms. This topic will be discussed in the Progressive Discipline open forums being held this month (see dates/times in this newsletter).

**CORNERSTONE UPDATES**
Remember that user guides are available on the HR website https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/applicant-tracking-system-hiring-manager-resources

- **Moving a candidate to “Hired” status** – Remember this should be the very last action you take in a requisition. If the requisition was set to only have 1 opening, moving an applicant to Hired status will automatically close the requisition and you will no longer be able to see it on your hiring dashboard. Before moving an applicant to the Hired status, you should be sure that you have completed all actions in the status steps prior to Hired (Offer Letter & Background Check) for your selected applicant as well as set final dispositions on all other applicants. Moving an applicant to Hired should not take place until you have final clearance and confirmation of a start date.

- **LinkedIn** – Cornerstone now allows applicants to use their LinkedIn profiles when applying for positions. You may see the LinkedIn icon next to an applicant’s contact details. This is a new feature that was turned on in late June.

- **Reason for Leaving** – We have also added a section to the application for applicants to provide a “Reason For Leaving” in the experience section. Please note that you will see this section on all applications, however it was not available for applicants to provide that level of detail until 7/2/18.
NEW PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

Effective July 1, the current policies “Standards of Conduct” and “Discipline” will be replaced by a new “Progressive Discipline” policy for staff. Please note that the policy was reviewed with both the Employee Handbook Advisory Group and Staff Council, and their feedback was incorporated into the final draft. Some highlights of the new policy include:

- Our guiding document is the Code of Ethical Conduct, which can be found on our website [https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-gc-003](https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-gc-003).
- Provides guidance for addressing minor behavior and performance issues; progressive discipline is not intended to address egregious actions.
- Involves a series of progressive steps:
  - Informal coaching & counseling
  - Written Warning
  - Final Written Warning (may include a suspension)
  - Termination
- Standardized forms have been created for documenting all stages of the process.
- Recommends the additional use of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to more effectively address performance-related issues.
- Provides an appeal option through the grievance policy.
- This policy is specifically for staff but is consistent with a faculty progressive discipline policy currently under review.
- Requires all termination decisions to be reviewed by University HR in advance.

The new policy is 7.1 in the revised Employee Handbook now posted on the HR website.

In addition, HR will be holding open forums in July to review the policy and answer questions for both leaders and staff. All live sessions. Dates and times are as follows:

- Monday, July 9  2:00p  Gulf Park  Hardy Hall 316
- Tuesday, July 10  10:00a  Hattiesburg  Cook Library 123
- Tuesday, July 10  2:00p  Hattiesburg  Cook Library 123
- Wednesday, July 11  10:00a  Hattiesburg  Cook Library 123
- Wednesday, July 11  2:00p  Hattiesburg  Cook Library 123
- Wednesday, July 11  2:00p  GCRL  Cedar Point Research Bldg, Rm A
- Stennis to be scheduled in August

MOFFETT HEALTH CENTER-MEDICARE

Moffett Health Center asked us to share that they are not credentialed for Medicare and cannot serve the needs of current or retired faculty/staff who have Medicare as a primary insurance. The center is able to provide a local Medicare provider call number to assist you with finding a Medicare provider, if needed.

Whew! HR has been busy! Hope we didn’t make you dizzy!

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, please contact your HR Partner or our main line at 6-4050 for more information.