



University of Alabama System

Individually Distinct. Altogether Stronger.

Employee Handbook

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FORWARD

This handbook provides important information on employment policies, practices, procedures, and resources for the University of Alabama System Office (UA System Office) employees. Because some policies and procedures require periodic updating, the UA System Office reserves the right to change, eliminate and supplement the information in this handbook as deemed necessary to meet the business needs of the UA System Office.

This handbook is not the only document containing personnel-related and other policies of the UA System Office. Departmental policies, procedures, or guidelines may exist and must be followed by employees as appropriate.

Additionally, although this handbook intends to reflect the current policies or rules of The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama referred to or incorporated herein, users are cautioned that changes or additions to such policies or rules may have become effective since the publication of this material. In the event of any conflict, the current statements of Board policy contained in the Bylaws, Rules, official minutes and other pronouncements of the Board or Chancellor, or superseding law shall prevail.

If there is ever a conflict or ambiguity involving the language of this handbook and the official language of any UA System Office guideline, policy, regulation, or rule referenced herein, the official language of the guideline, policy, regulation, or rule will control and supersede the language of this handbook.

Neither the information contained or referenced herein nor any other communications by a management representative, either written or oral, made at the time of hire or during the course of employment, is intended in any way to create an employment contract with any employee or to alter the at-will status of an employee.

The UA System Office requires that all employees sign an Employee Handbook Acknowledgment. The completion of the acknowledgment is processed through Human Resources.

If you have questions concerning interpretations of the policies contained in this handbook, please contact the Human Resources Department (HR Department) at 205-348-9506.

Core Principles

1. Assure that everything we do is for the purpose of improving the lives and health of the citizens of the State of Alabama.
2. Make higher education accessible and diverse, prepare our students for success, and meet the workforce needs of the State.
3. Be accountable for every dollar we receive while maintaining the highest standards of excellence in every program and endeavor.
4. Work to lead a unified approach to improving education at every level in Alabama.
5. Work to help lead a unified approach to improving the economy, opportunities, and comprehensive health care for all citizens of Alabama.
6. Elevate the status, stature and influence of the University of Alabama System so that we can call on all people devoted to the University of Alabama, UAB, UAH, and the UAB Health System to unite for common purposes.

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SYSTEM

The University of Alabama was created by statute in 1820 and opened its doors on April 18, 1831, as The University of the State of Alabama. The University was elevated to constitutional status in the Constitution of Alabama in 1868. Its statutory corporate existence, under the name “The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama” appears in the 1975 Ala. Code §§ 16-47-1 to 16-47-204, and its constitutional status is recognized in the Alabama Constitution, article XIV, §264 as amended and Amendment 399. Until 1969, the University, with branch campuses and extension centers around the State, was headed by a single president on the Tuscaloosa campus. In 1969, The Board of Trustees established separate campuses in Birmingham and Huntsville whose presidents, along with the president of the Tuscaloosa campus, reported directly to the Board. In 1974, The Board of Trustees appointed a University of Alabama System staff and in 1976 appointed a Chancellor as chief executive officer of the System.

Governance

The University of Alabama System (the System) consists of The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, The University of Alabama in Huntsville, and The UAB Health System and is governed by The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama. The Constitution of the State of Alabama states that the Board is composed of three members from the congressional district in which The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa) is located and two members from each of the six remaining districts. The Governor of the State serves ex-officio. Those members who are not ex-officio are elected by the Board, and subject to confirmation by the State Senate. If the Senate rejects a name of any person submitted to it by the Board, then the Senate elects a person in place of the one rejected. Elected Trustees may serve up to three consecutive, full six-year terms.

The purpose of the Board is to ensure the effective leadership, management, and control over the activities of the institutions within the System in order to provide for a definitive, orderly form of governance, and to secure and continue responsive, progressive, and superior institutions of higher education. The primary functions of the Board are to determine the major policies of the System which includes the review of existing policy; to define the mission, role, and scope of each campus; and to assume ultimate accountability to the public and political bodies of Alabama. Rules, policies, and procedures are promulgated to ensure that, through the UA System Office, the necessary flow of information for such accountability takes place.

UA System Office Administration Organization

The **Chancellor** is appointed by the Board and serves as the chief executive officer of the System, exercising such executive powers as are necessary for the appropriate governance of the System. The Chancellor is the principal link between the Board’s responsibility for policy and each President’s responsibility for operations. The Chancellor reports the current affairs of all System components directly to the Board, and discusses basic issues, new directions, and policy recommendations. The Chancellor directs the planning, development, and appraisal of all System activities, and is responsible for their coordination and implementation. The Chancellor is also the liaison between the System and various components of state government, as well as other educational groups and organizations.

The **Secretary** of the Board of Trustees is appointed by the Board and serves at its pleasure. Duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) provide Board and committee meeting notices to the members; (2) prepare and distribute agendas; (3) attend Board meetings; (4) make, record, and retain complete records and minutes of all official actions of the Board and its committees; and (5) maintain all other deeds, contracts, books, documents, and records of the Board and its committees. The Secretary is custodian of the corporate seal.

The **General Counsel** is appointed by the Chancellor with the approval of the Board. The General Counsel represents the System in all legal matters and is responsible for the delivery of all System legal services, its three campuses and related organizations, including the conduct and resolution of litigation, the prosecution and settlement of all claims, and for the legal review of all significant transactions. To fulfill these responsibilities, the General Counsel staffs, organizes, and manages the Office of Counsel of the University of Alabama System, which is comprised of attorneys and support staff strategically located throughout the System. The General Counsel retains and manages all engagements of outside counsel performing legal services for the campuses of the System.

The **Chief Audit Officer** is appointed by the Board and reports administratively to the Chancellor. The Chief Audit Officer is responsible for the reliability and integrity of administrative information; compliance with policies, procedures, plans, and laws; safeguarding of assets; economical and efficient use of resources; and determining whether stated administrative goals are achieved. To fulfill these duties, the Chief Audit Officer staffs, organizes, and administers the Offices of Internal Audit programs on each campus.

The **Senior Vice Chancellor for Communications and Community Relations** is appointed by and reports directly to the Chancellor. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Communications and Community Relations is responsible for internal and external communications and media relations on behalf of the Board, the Chancellor and the senior administrative team of the System. The Sr. Vice Chancellor for Communications and Community Relations works with the Board, the Chancellor, and administrative staff for each campus to coordinate media relations, crisis management, strategic planning, community outreach, executive recruitment, and joint initiatives.

The **Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs** is appointed by the Chancellor, and serves as the chief liaison officer to academic, student, institutional research, and planning officials at UA, UAB, and UAH. The Sr. Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs advises the Chancellor on academic and student policy matters and provides primary leadership in program planning, development, and review. The Sr. Vice Chancellor is the System's liaison to the Alabama Departments of Education, Postsecondary, and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

The **Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration** is the senior fiscal officer of the System. The position is appointed by, and reports directly to, the Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor is the principal advisor to the Chancellor on policy matters regarding fiscal affairs and related areas, and works closely with campus fiscal officers to provide the leadership necessary to develop and maintain a strong and viable financial program throughout the System. The Vice Chancellor is responsible for managing System-wide investment activities including the pooled endowment fund, the long term reserve pool, and the short term liquidity pool. Other areas of responsibility include physical property and construction oversight and serving as a liaison between the campuses and the Board.

COMPLIANCE AND FRAUD HOTLINE

High ethical standards are vital to workplace morale and productivity, and maintaining them is a core value for the University of Alabama System. For that reason, the UA System maintains the Compliance and Fraud Hotline, which enables members of the UA System Office and its campus community to inquire about or report actual or potential unethical or unlawful work-related behavior in a safe, anonymous way. The hotline is designed for use by all members of the University of Alabama System community. You may report your concerns anonymously by contacting the telephone number below or by visiting the website noted below.

Telephone: 1-866-362-9476

Online: <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/55675/index.html>

The hotline is not a 911 or emergency service. Do not use this site or the toll-free number to report events presenting an immediate threat to life or property. Reports submitted through this service may not receive an immediate response. If you require emergency assistance, please call 911.

This hotline should not be used for routine human resource matters. These matters should be reported directly to your supervisor and/or the UA System HR Department at 205-348-9506.

CODE OF CONDUCT

In adopting Board Rule 106.2, the Board of Trustees sought to promote ethical conduct through the UA System Office, including staff, student workers, volunteers, contractors, agents, affiliates, and others providing services to or on behalf of the UA System Office (hereinafter collectively referred to as “community members”). This Code of Conduct shall at all times be interpreted to be consistent with Board Rule 106.2.

The UA System Office Code of Conduct is general and aspirational in nature, and is not intended to serve as a set of detailed rules, regulations, or a checklist. The Code of Conduct includes the following standards which embody Board Rule 106.2, and expand upon it as noted.

1. **Provide quality administrative services in furtherance of the mission of the Board and the constituent campuses to provide high quality education, research, and healthcare services in the State of Alabama.**
UA System Office community members should act ethically, professionally, honestly, and conscientiously, with an appropriate awareness of one’s responsibilities, and with personal accountability.
2. **Treat others with respect.**
UA System community members should display tolerance, diversity, respect, fairness, and equal opportunity for all members of our community. UA System Office community members shall avoid illegal harassment, discrimination, threats, and violence.
 - Inherent within this expectation is that the UA System Office will not tolerate any instance of bullying behavior in the workplace by any of its employees. Such behavior, although not necessarily unlawful, may impair the physical and psychological health of its victim(s), be it a fellow employee, student worker, volunteer, or student. Bullying behavior is considered to be repeated and on-going inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, by one or more persons against another or others. Bullying may be intentional or unintentional, examples of which include, but are not limited to:
 - Verbal bullying
 - Physical bullying
 - Non-verbal bullying
 - Cyber bullying
 - Exclusion
3. **Comply with applicable laws, regulations and policies.**
UA System Office community members should learn and follow governing rules, be proactive to prevent and detect violations, properly report suspected violations, and act to ensure proper resolution of issues and conflicts related to the same.
4. **Use confidential information responsibly.**
UA System Office community members should be wise custodians of confidential, proprietary, and private information.

5. **Acknowledge and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.**
 - UA System Office community members should be loyal to the Board’s mission and its institutions; should behave objectively and impartially in exercising their duties and discretion; and follow applicable ethical standards.
 - UA System Office community members must not use public offices or resources for private or other improper gain, or otherwise act under an improper conflict of interest related to their duties.
6. **Safeguard and accurately account for resources.**
 - UA System Office community members should be responsible stewards of and appropriately account for resources under their control, including property, equipment, finances, material, electronic and other systems.
 - UA System Office employees should prevent waste and abuse by adopting and following appropriate protocols, exhibiting sound practices, and should seek efficiency in operations.
7. **Promote a safe environment.**

UA System Office community members should promote personal safety, good practices, and security.
8. **Document, code, bill, and collect in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.**

Compliance with the applicable law and regulations is a priority in all operations. Recordkeeping should be performed in accordance with such goals.

Suspected violations of the UA System Office Code of Conduct should be reported in accordance with appropriate rules and procedures. All employees are expected to cooperate with investigations.

If employees see or suspect unethical, illegal, or inappropriate behavior that might otherwise violate this Code of Conduct, they should report their concerns to the UA System Office Human Resources Department. All information will be treated and maintained in a confidential manner, and any complaint information will be disseminated only on a need-to-know basis.

If an employee wishes to make such a report anonymously, they may do so via the [Compliance and Fraud Hotline](#).

It is a violation of this policy for any person to engage in reprisal or retaliation against an individual because that individual, in good faith, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any process under this Code of Conduct or attempted to do so.

1. GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

1.1 EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

Employment with the UA System Office is employment at will. This means the employment relationship may be terminated for any or no reason, with or without cause or notice, at any time by an employee or by the UA System Office. Nothing in this handbook, any UA System Office policy, or in any other document or oral statement shall alter or limit the right to terminate at will.

With the exception of employment at will, all terms and conditions of employment with the UA System Office may be modified at the sole discretion of the UA System Office at any time.

Any modifications to the employment-at-will policy must be in writing and signed by the Chancellor or approved by the Board of Trustees.

1.2 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

A pre-employment investigation will be performed by an outside vendor on all final candidates for all positions hired at the UA System Office. This includes hires for all regular and temporary positions, as well as student workers, law clerks, law fellows, and graduate assistants. Volunteers working with students and minors will also be required to have a pre-employment investigation performed.

A pre-employment investigation may also be requested by the hiring department on final candidates for positions not listed above. Candidates for all positions will be subject to a criminal background check, as well as a review of any information that is publically available on the internet and social media accounts. Depending on the type of position applied for (such as positions with degree requirements, access to financial/sensitive information, records/databases, security/safety positions, and positions handling cash and checks), a pre-employment investigation must also include one or more of the following components, as applicable:

- Modified credit check for employment purposes
- Department of Motor Vehicle history
- Education verification

Pre-employment investigations should be completed prior to an offer of employment. Job postings will contain notification to applicants that, prior to hiring, final candidates must successfully pass a pre-employment background investigation.

Current UA System Office employees applying for a new position with the UA System Office who have not been subject to a pre-employment investigation within one year of applying for a position will be subject to applicable pre-employment investigations. A pre-employment investigation of a candidate who is a current UA System Office employee may impact the employee's current employment, particularly if the applicant fails to make a full self-disclosure in the application process including such instances where an employee fails to comply with an employee's requirements under Mandatory Disclosure of Post-Employment Criminal Conviction.

Pre-employment investigations are required for former UA System Office employees with a break in service of more than one year.

As applicable, all pre-employment investigations and the disclosure of any reports obtained by such checks shall comply with the guidelines set forth in the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). The cost for pre-employment investigations will be borne by the UA System Office.

Exceptions to this policy may be approved only by the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee.

1.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The UA System Office is committed to compliance with all applicable laws regarding the concept and practice of equal opportunity, affirmative action, and non-discrimination (including anti-retaliation and reasonable accommodation) in all aspects of employment practice. All supervisors are required to take an active part in ensuring that all qualified applicants and employees who are women, minorities, disabled, and/or have protected veteran status are considered and treated in a non-discriminatory manner with respect to all employment-related decisions.

1.3.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The UA System Office provides equal opportunity in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, age, genetic or family medical history information, disability, protected veteran status or any other legally protected basis. The UA System Office makes employment decisions based only on valid job-related requirements. UA System Office does not discriminate on the basis of physical or mental disabilities or an individual's status as a disabled veteran or any other protected veteran with regard to application for employment and any terms or conditions of employment, provided the individual is qualified, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform the essential functions of the job. Refer to the UA System Office's [website](#) for the complete Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action Policy Statement, or contact the Department of Human Resources to request a copy of the UA System Office's Affirmative Action Plan.

1.3.2 NON-DISCRIMINATION

The UA System Office complies with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination, harassment and retaliation. The UA System Office prohibits discrimination on the basis of genetic or family medical history information, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other legally protected basis in admission or access to, or treatment of employment in, its programs and services. These prohibitions against discrimination apply to recruitment, application, selection, hiring, appointment, transfer, demotion, promotion, tenure, job assignments, classification, compensation, benefits, leaves of absences, sick leave or any other leaves, job training and development, tuition assistance, participation in UA System Office sponsored educational, social, and recreational programs, discharge, layoff, and/or any other term, condition or privilege of employment.

Refer to the UA System Office's [website](#) for the complete Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action Policy Statement, or contact the Department of Human Resources to request a copy of the UA System Office's Affirmative Action Plan.

The UA System Office complies with Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in certain University health care programs and activities, and the UA System Office's group health plans and wellness programs.

Refer to the Department of Human Resources webpage for more information on ACA 1557.

1.3.3 ANTI-RETALIATION

Consistent with applicable laws and UA System Office policies, employees and applicants will not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion, discrimination, reprisals and/or adverse actions because they have engaged in activities identified in the UA System Office's Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action Policy.

Refer to the UA System Office's [website](#) for the complete Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action Policy Statement, or contact the Department of Human Resources to request a copy of the UA System Office's Affirmative Action Plan.

1.3.4 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The UA System's three campuses are federal government supply and service contractors subject to the affirmative action requirements of Executive Order 11246, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Section 4212. To further ensure the System's commitment to equal employment opportunity, the UA System Office has taken and will continue to take, consistent with applicable laws, affirmative action to recruit, employ, advance and not discriminate against qualified women, racial and ethnic minorities, qualified individuals with disabilities and protected veterans. The UA System Office prepares annual affirmative action plans (AAPs) for women and minorities and for protected veterans and individuals with disabilities. Those plans are available for inspection upon request and during regular business hours in the Department of Human Resources. Refer to the UA System Office's [website](#) for the complete Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action Policy Statement, or contact the Department of Human Resources to request a copy of the UA System Office's Affirmative Action Plan.

1.3.5 VOLUNTARY REPORTING OF PROTECTED VETERAN AND/OR DISABILITY STATUS

The UA System Office is required to collect information each year identifying the number of its employees belonging to specified "protected veteran" or "individuals with disabilities" categories. The information disclosed on either of the forms below is requested on a voluntary basis and is used solely for affirmative action purposes.

- **Protected Veteran Status** - The UA System Office invites employees who believe they are protected veterans to identify themselves during Open Enrollment or at any time by completing the Veterans Self-Identification Form that is available on our [website](#). This information is submitted annually to the United States Department of Labor.
- **Protected Disability Status** - The UA System Office invites employees who believe they are individuals with disabilities to identify themselves during Open Enrollment or at any time by completing the Disability Self-Identification Form that is available on our [website](#).

1.3.6 PAY TRANSPARENCY POLICY STATEMENT

Federal contractors will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against employees or applicants because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their own pay or the pay of another employee or applicant. However, employees who have access to the compensation information of other employees or applicants as a part of their essential job functions cannot disclose the pay of other employees or applicants to individuals who do not otherwise have access to compensation information, unless the disclosure is (a) in response to a formal complaint or charge, (b) in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action, including an investigation conducted by the employer, or (c) consistent with the contractor's legal duty to furnish information. 41 CFR 60-1.35(c). Since the Systems three campuses are federal contractors, the UA System Office acknowledges this rule. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the UA System is a public institution of higher education in the State of Alabama and is required to establish and post on the Internet a database of state expenditures, including compensation paid to employees and contractors. Ala. Code §41-6-65.

1.3.7 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

The UA System Office is committed to non-discrimination, diversity and inclusiveness, and to supporting its employees, regardless of religious affiliation or non-affiliation, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The UA System Office will accommodate an individual's sincerely held religious belief and practice unless providing an accommodation would result in undue hardship to the UA System Office.

Religious accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Department of Human Resources for additional information.

1.3.8 PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATIONS

Contact the Department of Human Resources for additional information regarding pregnancy accommodations that may be available to you.

1.4 INITIAL EMPLOYMENT PERIOD

During the Initial Employment Period new employees will be introduced to the unique structure of the System, and become familiarized with the UA System Office's policies and benefits. This initial six-month employment period (the "Introductory Period") provides an opportunity for employees to demonstrate their ability and probability of successful performance.

Supervisors should complete a review at the conclusion of an employee's Introductory Period. In special circumstances, such as a change in supervisory or job duties during the Introductory Period, the Introductory Period may be extended. Supervisors should consult with the Department of Human Resources regarding the justification for any extension, and extensions shall not be granted for a period longer than ninety (90) days.

Either the supervisor or the employee may terminate the working relationship with or without notice during the Introductory Period.

1.5 EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

Employees of the UA System Office are hired into the following categories of positions:

Regular Full-time - These positions are 1.0 full-time equivalency (FTE), which require incumbents to regularly work 40 hours per week.

Regular Part-time - These positions are at least .5 FTE but less than 1.0 FTE, which require incumbents to regularly work a minimum of approximately 20 hours per week.

Temporary Full-time - These positions are 1.0 FTE, which require incumbents to regularly work 40 hours per week. Appointments to these positions have an expected termination date of less than one year from the initial date of employment.

Temporary Part-time - These positions are at least .5 FTE but less than 1.0 FTE, which require incumbents to regularly work a minimum of approximately 20 hours per week. Appointments to these positions have an expected termination date of less than one year from the initial date of employment.

Contingent/On Call - These positions require incumbents of less than .5 FTE to work schedules of no particular hours or duration. Employees who occupy these positions may also be expected to work an on-going but irregular schedule OR to work short-term temporary schedules OR to work on call. Contingent/on call employees may work any other schedule not meeting the requirements established above for regular or temporary employment categories.

Student Employee – These positions are occupied only by individuals who are enrolled at any System campus and who are appointed as Student Workers/Assistants, Graduate Assistants, Interns or Law Clerks. Student employees are not eligible for UA System Office benefits or for privileges of employment.

These definitions may be accessed on the UA System Office's [website](#).

1.6 EXEMPT AND NON-EXEMPT STATUS

At the UA System Office, the exemption status of employees is determined by the HR Department in accordance with criteria established by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The following are some general guidelines regarding exempt and non-exempt status at the UA System Office.

Exempt employees are:

- Compensated on a salary basis;
- Not subject for overtime pay for work performed in excess of 40 hours per week;
- Not eligible for compensatory time;
- Responsible for the satisfactory completion of their work and the work of others who may report to them, regardless of the time required to complete the work; and
- Paid monthly.

Non-exempt employees are:

- Paid at least the Federal minimum wage, or in accordance with the law of the State of Alabama;
- Are paid time and one half their regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 in a standard workweek;
- Paid bi-weekly; and
- Required to account for and be compensated for all time worked, as well as the use of sick, annual and other leave time, on an hourly basis.

1.7 SELF-DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

UA System Office employees are required to self-disclose to the HR Department all post-employment criminal convictions, other than minor traffic violations. Disclosure must be made within five (5) business days after the conviction and should be reported on the Disclosure of Post-Employment Criminal Convictions Form found on the UA System Office's [website](#).

Disclosure is required regardless of whether the crime(s) occurred in Alabama and is subject to review by Human Resources and the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee. Disclosure may also prompt an official background check being conducted on the employee. *Note: A conviction is not necessarily a bar to continued employment.*

This requirement applies only to post-employment criminal convictions that occur after August 1, 2019. Nothing herein changes the at-will status of any employee, nor prohibits the UA System Office from taking action before a conviction.

1.8 COMPLIANCE TRAINING

In order to meet state and federal requirements, as well as UA System Office policy, UA System Office staff and student workers may be required to take mandatory training on specific topics. Mandatory training topics may be required of all UA System Office staff and student workers, specific to an employee's job duties, or required only if the employee meets certain state requirements (e.g. the Alabama State Ethics Laws).

Many of the mandatory compliance training topics must have the course or a refresher course completed on an annual basis.

UA System Office employees are also given free access to Spark, an online learning system providing webinars and web-based courses, books, and other online learning assets designed to enhance professional development. UA System Office employees may also use Spark to register for instructor-led training on the UA campus in Tuscaloosa.

Additional information regarding Employee Training may be found on the UA System [website](#).

2. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

2.1 EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of all individuals who work for the UA System Office to keep their emergency contact information current. This includes accurate and up to date address, phone and email information for the employee and the same information regarding individual(s) who should be contacted in the event of an emergency concerning the employee.

When employees experience a change in their address, phone, or other relevant information, it is their ultimate responsibility to inform their supervisor and also contact the HR Department at the UA System Office to update their employee records.

Periodic requests may be made by the UA System Office HR Department and supervisors or department heads to employees to ensure that employee emergency contact information is current.

Emergency contacts will only be contacted in the event of a legitimate emergency concern.

2.2 STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Employees are expected to perform their work and conduct themselves in such a manner that reflects professionalism, is respectful toward others, brings credit to the UA System, and complies with all applicable laws and UA System policies. Poor performance or misconduct may result in disciplinary action under the UA System Office's Progressive Discipline Policy found in section 2.4 of this handbook, up to and including termination of employment.

To assure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the UA System Office from time to time establishes general work rules. Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of the types of infractions which can result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. In order to avoid such severe consequences, follow simple common sense, read and understand this list of examples, and ask a supervisor before engaging in any questionable activity. Some of these work rules may also be covered by other UA System Office policies.

- Insubordination or lack of cooperation.
- Failing to follow instructions of, or to perform work requested by, the supervisor.
- Violation of Equal Employment Opportunity, Harassment or Workplace Violence policies.
- Failing to meet reasonable standards of efficiency and productivity, or otherwise unsatisfactory job performance and/or repeated substandard work.
- Unauthorized or excessive absences from work (including failure to report for work, late arrival, early departure or unauthorized absence from duty).
- Excessive break time or repeatedly attending to personal affairs on work time.

- Sleeping or giving the appearance of sleeping on UA System Office property or during the time in which the employee is supposed to be working.
- Abusing, damaging, wasting, stealing or inappropriately removing or possessing UA System Office property, records, or the property of other employees.
- Falsifying your employment application or making misrepresentations on any other personnel records.
- Falsifying records or forms with reasons for absences or leave.
- Dishonesty or falsifying UA System Office reports or committing fraud with regard to any records (including time sheets, expense accounts, etc.).
- Failure to prepare and submit required reports and/or records in a timely manner.
- Fighting, threatening violence, or otherwise starting a disturbance on UA System Office premises or while performing job duties, including, but not limited to, assaulting or intimidating a UA System Office employee or non-employee.
- Unauthorized possession of firearms, knives, weapons, explosives, or dangerous substances while performing job duties or on UA System Office premises.
- Reporting to work in a condition unfit to perform your duties, including reporting to work with measurable amounts of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances in your system or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances.
- Possessing, consuming or selling alcohol, illicit drugs or controlled substances on UA System Office premises or while performing your job duties. The only exception to this rule is if the UA System Office authorizes that alcohol may be served at a UA System Office approved function.
- Violating a UA System Office safety, fire prevention, health, or security rule, policy or practice; or creating or contributing to unhealthy or unsanitary conditions.
- Smoking.
- Acting in conflict with the interests of the UA System Office.
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace.
- Conduct leading to damage of UA System Office owned property.
- Disclosing confidential UA System Office information without authorization.
- Unauthorized solicitation or distribution on UA System Office property.
- Performing work other than UA System Office assignments during working hours.

- Conducting a lottery or gambling on UA System Office premises.
- Using profanity.
- Failing to fully cooperate in any UA System Office investigation.
- Failing to notify the UA System Office of an accident as soon as possible.
- Abuse of phone or other communication systems for personal use.
- Violation of any other UA System Office policies.

2.3 HARASSMENT

The UA System Office is committed to providing an environment for employees, students, and visitors that is free from illegal harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic or family medical history, disability, veteran status, or any other protected class in its programs and services. Such illegal harassment violates federal civil rights laws and the UA System Office's nondiscrimination policy. All UA System Office employees must understand that harassment based upon one's protected class will not be tolerated, and that they are required to abide by the following policy. The UA System Office will take appropriate action to prevent, correct, and where warranted, discipline behavior that violates its Harassment Policy. Discipline could include discharge.

The UA System Office implements its Harassment Policy through preventive education and training and through procedures for investigating and resolving claims of harassment. Individuals who believe they are being harassed are encouraged to report the problem to appropriate administrative officials. Information about appropriate complaint channels and the procedures for resolution of claims of harassment follows and can also be obtained from the UA System Office HR Department.

The UA System Office encourages employees to report any problem or complaint of harassment. No one will be subject to, and the UA System Office prohibits, any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for good faith reporting of incidents of harassment of any kind, pursuing any harassment claim, or cooperating in related investigations. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for good faith reporting of incidents of harassment of any kind, pursuing any harassment claim, or cooperating in related investigations is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

The UA System Office is committed to enforcing this policy against all forms of harassment. However, the effectiveness of the UA System Office's efforts depends largely on employees reporting inappropriate workplace conduct. If employees feel that they or someone else may have been subjected to conduct that violates this policy, the employee should report it immediately. If employees do not report harassing conduct, the UA System Office may not become aware of a possible violation of this policy and may not be able to take appropriate corrective action.

This Harassment policy shall not, however, be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints against other employees. If a complaint has been made in bad faith, disciplinary action may be taken against the person bringing the complaint. In cases of alleged illegal harassment, the protections of the First Amendment must be considered if issues of speech or artistic expression are involved.

2.3.1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All UA System Office employees are prohibited from harassing employees and other covered persons based on that individual's sex or gender (including pregnancy and status as a transgender or transsexual individual) and regardless of the harasser's sex or gender.

Sexual harassment means any harassment based on someone's sex or gender. It includes harassment that is not sexual in nature (for example, offensive remarks about an individual's sex or gender), as well as any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any other conduct of a sexual nature, when any of the following is true:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel decisions affecting an individual; and/or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance as an employee or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Examples of behavior that could be considered sexual in violation of this policy include but are not limited to:

- Physical contact of a sexual nature, including touching, patting, hugging, or brushing against a person's body;
- Explicit or implicit propositions or offers to engage in sexual activity;
- Comments of a sexual nature, including sexually explicit statements, questions, jokes, or anecdotes;
- Remarks about sexual activity;
- Speculation about sexual experience;
- Exposure to sexually oriented graffiti, pictures, texts, posters, or materials; and/or
- Online postings in any social media platform, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. that include derogatory statements or contain sexually suggestive content.

This list is illustrative only, and not exhaustive. No form of harassment will be tolerated.

2.3.2 OTHER TYPES OF HARASSMENT

The UA System Office's Harassment Policy applies equally to harassment based on an employee's race, color, religion, national origin, age, genetic or family medical history, disability, veteran status, or any other protected class. Such harassment often takes a similar form to sexual harassment and includes harassment that is:

- Verbal (for example, epithets, derogatory statements or comments, slurs, or jokes);
- Physical (for example, assault or inappropriate physical conduct);
- Visual (for example, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons, drawings or making derogatory gestures); and

- Online (for example, derogatory statements or suggestive postings in any social media platform including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.).

This list is illustrative only, and not exhaustive. No form of harassment will be tolerated.

2.3.3 REPORTING OF HARASSMENT OR RELATED RETALIATION ALLEGATIONS

Persons who believe they have been targets of harassment or related retaliation should report the incident(s) immediately to appropriate administrative officials as set forth below. Delay in reporting to UA System Office officials makes it more difficult to investigate fairly and adequately the incident and may contribute to the repetition of offensive behavior.

The UA System Office will do everything consistent with enforcement of this policy and with the law to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure that the complainant and the accused are treated fairly. Information about individual complaints and their disposition is considered confidential and will be shared only on a “need to know” basis.

If you are subjected to any conduct that you believe violates this policy or witness any such conduct, you must promptly speak to, write or otherwise contact your direct supervisor or, if the conduct involves your direct supervisor, your Department Head. If Employees who believe for any reason that they cannot effectively communicate their concerns through any of these channels may consult the Office of the Chancellor or the Office of the General Counsel.

A conclusion that harassment in violation of UA System Office policy or the law has occurred shall subject the offender to appropriate disciplinary action and may result in suspension, discharge, expulsion, or dismissal. UA System Office disciplinary procedures and possible sanctions are described in the Progressive Discipline Policy. Sanctions imposed will be determined on the basis of the facts of each case and the extent of harm to the UA System Office’s interests.

The procedures available under this policy do not preempt or supersede any legal procedures or remedies otherwise available to a victim of sexual harassment under local, state or federal law.

2.4 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

It is the responsibility of each UA System Office employee to become familiar with the performance criteria for his or her particular job and with the rules and standards of conduct established by this handbook.

The UA System Office seeks to resolve conduct and job performance problems in an informal and positive manner when possible, such as through counseling, one-on-one conversations, coaching, additional training or supervision. However, in some cases it is appropriate to consider progressive discipline to warn employees of the seriousness of unacceptable job performance and/or behavior and the consequences if they continue.

Procedures are generally meant to be progressive. However, depending on the situation, any progressive discipline step may be repeated, omitted, or taken out of sequence. Nothing in this policy is intended to modify the at-will nature of employment, which means that either the employee or the UA System Office may terminate the employment relationship at any time. The UA System Office reserves

the right to immediately terminate any UA System Office employee if it deems such action is warranted or necessary.

Guidelines

- *Work Performance.* Work performance is to be judged by the supervisor's evaluation of the quality and quantity of work performed by each employee. Failure of an employee to maintain satisfactory work performance standards or to meet a reasonable and objective measure of efficiency and productivity may be grounds for progressive discipline. Work performance includes all aspects of an employee's work.
- *Unacceptable Conduct.* All employees are expected to maintain standards suitable and acceptable to the work environment. Progressive discipline, up to and including termination, may be imposed for unacceptable conduct.

Workplace Rules of Conduct

To assure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the UA System Office from time to time establishes general work rules. See Section 2.2, Standards of Behavior, in this handbook for examples of the types of infractions which may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Some of these work rules may also be covered by other UA System Office policies.

Progressive Discipline Process

Every situation is to be treated on its own merits and should take into account the seriousness of the matter, the nature of the circumstances, as well as the employee's position/status and work record. For example: during an individual's initial introductory period of employment, stronger progressive discipline may be appropriate.

Supervisors should consult with the UA System Office HR Department prior to taking corrective actions with employees. It is also advisable for supervisors to have a preliminary meeting with the employee to allow the employee an opportunity to understand the nature of the concern and to explain his/her position on the matter. Documentation should follow to summarize the issue and to take into account any additional information the employee may have provided during the preliminary meeting, and to note any progressive discipline taken.

Corrective actions include, but are not limited to:

1. **Verbal Warning** – to clarify the standards of acceptable conduct or performance and the consequences if the problem is not corrected. The supervisor may keep notes of verbal warnings in a departmental file, but shall forward a copy to UA System Office Human Resources for placement in the employee's personnel file.
2. **Written Warning** – to document more serious violations or violations that continue after a verbal warning has been given. A written warning may be given by an employee's supervisor for minor violations of policy after prior verbal warning. However, a written warning may be given instead of a verbal warning for first-time misconduct or other serious offenses. All written warnings should be addressed to the employee as a memorandum or on a corrective action form. If a prior verbal warning has been given to the employee, it should be referenced in the first written warning. The supervisor should ask the employee to sign the written warning as proof of having received it. A signed copy of all written warnings should be given to UA System Office HR and placed in the

employee's personnel file. If the employee refuses to sign the written warning, that should be noted, and the unsigned copy forwarded to the employee's file. An employee who receives three written warnings during an 18-month period (whether or not the first two written warnings resulted in probation and/or suspension) may be terminated without proceeding through the remaining steps in the disciplinary process. The misconduct or performance concerns should be followed up in writing and reviewed with the employee. The action(s) required to correct the problem(s) and the consequences if the problems continue should be clearly documented and communicated.

3. **Suspension** – time off without pay, usually not to exceed 10 working days, is normally the next step if the offense(s) is not serious enough to warrant termination or if progressive discipline has not been successful. Suspensions, with or without pay, may also be appropriate if further investigation is needed to reach a decision. After review by Human Resources, all suspension notices should be given in writing to the employee. No annual leave, holiday, compensatory time, or sick leave will be paid or accrued during a suspension.
4. **Termination/Dismissal** – may occur with or without notice when the decision is reached to end the employment relationship. Unsatisfactory job performance, attendance, misconduct, or other serious offenses that continue after prior warning may result in dismissal. Dismissal may occur without notice and/or without pay in lieu of notice. The recommendation for dismissal must be approved by the department head and reviewed by the UA System HR Department for proper documentation and compliance with policy. In cases of involuntary termination, the employee's last day of employment will be designated by the Supervisor with the consent and approval of the HR Department. An employee who receives three (3) written warnings during an 18-month period may be terminated without any other steps in the progressive disciplinary process. A termination notice should be given in writing to the employee and the date of the notice is the employee's last day of employment with the UA System Office.

All employees (except temporary staff) who have completed their initial six-month introductory period may appeal the corrective actions (except verbal warnings) noted above. Please see the "Dispute Resolution Policy" for more information.

2.5 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Successful resolution of a dispute requires an open and honest exchange of information, a willingness to see a situation from a different perspective, an appreciation for the challenges and expectations for the jobs of both the employee and the manager, and an understanding of the needs of the organization and the employee.

All employees of the UA System Office have a responsibility to cooperate in complaint and grievance procedures in an ethical and professional manner. All employees have a right to have a good faith complaint heard and considered. Doing so does not bind the UA System Office to a particular outcome nor does it limit the organization's discretion to determine an appropriate course of action.

No employee will be penalized, disciplined, or incur retaliation for pursuing, or participating in the pursuit of, a grievance provided such action is taken in good faith.

2.5.1 ELIGIBILITY AND USE OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

- a) All employees (except temporary staff) who have completed their initial six-month introductory period are eligible to use the dispute resolution process. The process may be used to appeal actions involving formal disciplinary written warnings, suspensions,

and terminations of employment. It may also be used to allege a misapplication of a policy, procedure, or practice of the UA System Office.

- b) This process does not apply to decisions or actions that are governed by The University of Alabama System Board of Trustees' Rules, policies, or practices.
- c) Also excluded are appeals related to employee performance evaluations, pay raises, job titles, work assignments, and organizational changes.
- d) This procedure should not be used for discussing concerns and/or receiving complaints regarding any type of illegal harassment, discrimination, or other unlawful actions. Concerns of this type should be directed to the UA System Office HR Department.
- e) Employees utilizing this process may seek guidance from external advisors. However, such advisors may not attend any of the internal proceedings, nor may a recording device be utilized. Participants who are disruptive of the process (e.g. using threatening behavior) or who refuse to abide by the guidelines established within the Dispute Resolution Process will forfeit their opportunity to participate in the internal process.

The deadlines outlined herein are intended to ensure the process is carried out in an efficient and timely manner. Both the employee and the UA System Office have an interest in making decisions as early as is practicable. While it is expected that these deadlines will be observed, the fact that an action is late shall not support a claim that the process is inadequate or flawed unless the employee can show the delay was unreasonable in terms of duration or cause or that it caused serious prejudice or disadvantage. No such delay shall result in a decision "by default."

The UA System Office shall also have the right to modify the stated deadlines and the general procedures in a particular case when, in its sole discretion, it deems such modifications appropriate.

When employees have concerns in the workplace they are always encouraged to first talk directly with their immediate supervisor or department head. The conversation between the employee and his supervisor should include the issue being addressed and the employee's desired outcome.

If the discussion does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the employee may contact the UA System Office Department of Human Resources. Depending on the situation, Human Resources may recommend that the employee follow a formal process to have the concern(s) addressed. This process may include, but not be limited to the following:

1. The employee should schedule an appointment with his or her immediate supervisor to formally address the complaint or concern. Nothing said during such discussion shall prejudice any party in subsequent stages of the process. If discussion with the supervisor is not considered feasible or desirable, the employee shall have the option of taking the matter up with the supervisor's immediate supervisor.
2. If the complaint involves a third party, Human Resources will be alerted that a complaint has been filed and will be given an opportunity to provide input to the complaining employee's supervisor, and to any other supervisor involved in this process.
3. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved within 14 calendar days from the day the complaint was first discussed with the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee may then submit the complaint in writing to the person at the next supervisory level. The letter of complaint shall state the nature of the problem, the pertinent facts, and the

remedial action desired. Within seven working days after receipt of the letter of complaint, the next level supervisor shall investigate the matter; meet with the employee and any other personnel involved, if deemed necessary or appropriate; and respond in writing. The next level supervisor's response shall summarize what was done in investigating the complaint, what findings and/or conclusions were reached, and what action is being taken, if any.

4. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at this level, the employee may elect to take the problem to the person at the next higher supervisory level, following the same procedure outlined in step 3 above. If the problem is not resolved at that level, the employee may continue this procedure upward through successive levels of authority.
5. The last level of appeal shall be to the Chancellor of The UA System or his designee, whose decision will be final. Review at the level of the Chancellor may be made solely on the basis of the letter of complaint, the supervisors' responses, and any other writings or documents which have been identified in the course of processing the complaint.

All materials generated in the above process are the property of the UA System Office. At the conclusion of the dispute all related materials will be held in a confidential file in the appropriate UA System Office location. This file will be separate from the official employee file(s).

All materials generated in the above process or any resulting lawsuit will be stored and maintained in accordance with the UA System Office's Department of Finance and Administration's Document Retention Policy.

2.6 CONSENSUAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Consensual intimate relationships exist when employees mutually and consensually become romantic and/or sexual in nature. Consensual intimate relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances are inappropriate when they occur in the workplace between a supervisor and a subordinate. In such situations, the integrity of employment decisions may either be compromised or appear to be compromised. In addition, consensual intimate relationships between parties of unequal power may increase the possibility that the individual in the greater position of authority will abuse his/her power, or be accused of the same.

Further, it must be recognized that a subordinate employee's implied or explicit consent to a consensual intimate relationship does not preclude an assertion at some future time that the presumed consent was based on a perception of intimidation or some other compromise of free choice based on a disparity of authority. Even when both parties have consented to the relationship, it is the supervisor who may be held accountable for unprofessional behavior.

Others who are not involved in the consensual intimate relationship may also be adversely affected by such behavior because it places the supervisory individual in a position to favor or advance the other individual in the relationship at the expense of others, or can have the appearance of having such bias.

This does not apply to employees who are married to each other or who live in the same household. Those situations are addressed by the Nepotism Policy.

It is the responsibility of the parties who are, or have been during either party's employment with the UA System Office, involved in a consensual intimate relationship to take steps to ensure immediate compliance with this policy. This includes, but may not be limited to the following actions:

1. Any individual in authority who is, or has been during either party's employment with the UA System Office, involved in a consensual intimate relationship with a person who they may be called upon to supervise or evaluate at any point, must promptly report this fact to his/her superior and must remove himself or herself from any evaluative or supervisory activity.
2. The individual's superior will then arrange that the individual in authority does not evaluate nor participate in discussions and decisions that affect the compensation, performance reviews, employment conditions, etc. of the subordinate involved.
3. Any person, including but not limited to any third party, who believes a conflict of interest exists or that he or she may be or may have been disadvantaged by virtue of a consensual intimate relationship may file a complaint with the Director of Human Resources at the UA System Office or via the UA System Office hotline. The complaint will be investigated and both the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) will have opportunities to be heard.

The UA System Office reserves the right to take appropriate action when disruptive conduct, job performance problems, or actions that reflect poorly on the UA System Office result from **any** amorous relationships between employees.

It is important to avoid conflicts of interest resulting from consensual intimate relationships. It is equally important to recognize that malicious accusations of inappropriate consensual intimate relationships have the potential to severely damage a person's career and reputation. Therefore, the UA System Office prohibits false accusations that an unreported amorous relationship exists or existed between two individuals who are in a supervisory or evaluative relationship. Any employee who knowingly reports or spreads false information about a relationship between two individuals who are in a supervisory or evaluative relationship may be subject to the System Office's Progressive Discipline Policy.

2.7 **NEPOTISM**

The UA System Office permits the employment of qualified relatives of an employee's household or immediate family as long as such employment does not create actual conflicts of interest. Employees may not appoint to any position or enter into any service contract with a member of their immediate family or other UA System Office employee who resides in the same household or is an immediate family member. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" is defined as a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, first cousin, corresponding in-law, and "step" relation or any member of the employee's household. The UA System Office will use the following guidelines in evaluating potential nepotism:

- Individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or reside in the same household are permitted to work in the same department, provided no direct reporting or supervisor-to-subordinate relationship exists. That is, no employee is permitted to work within "the chain of command" when

one relative's work responsibilities, salary, hours, career progress, benefits or other terms and conditions of employment could be influenced by the other relative.

- Related employees may have no influence over the wages, hours, benefits, career progress and other terms and conditions of the other related staff members.
- Employees who marry while employed, or become part of the same household are treated in accordance with these guidelines. If a conflict arises as a result of the relationship, action regarding employment may be required for one or both of the employees.
- Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Office of the Chancellor.

2.8 ON-THE-JOB INJURIES AND ILLNESS

The UA System Office provides and pays for an On-the-Job Injury/Illness Program (hereafter referred to as "OJI Program" or "OJI") to cover an employee's approved medical expenses and lost wages incurred as the result of an OJI.

The OJI Program is administered by the HR Department of the UA System Office. The OJI Program also has oversight from an OJI Benefits Review Committee.

The Review Committee consists of one representative from each of the following System Office areas: Human Resources, Office of Counsel, and Risk Management. The Committee may review OJI claims at the request of the claimant and may refer claims to the State of Alabama Board of Adjustment for consideration. The committee may also recommend and submit OJI Program policy changes.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will apply:

Accident shall mean an unexpected and unforeseen actual, identifiable event, happening suddenly or violently, with or without human fault and directly producing at the time objective findings of an injury which is more than simply a gradual deterioration or progressive degeneration.

On-the-Job Injury is defined as an injury resulting from an accident arising out of and in the course of one's employment, and shall not include an on-the job illness, except as provided for in this policy.

On-the-Job Illness is defined as an illness resulting from the continuous and repeated exposure to hazardous materials documented to be dangerous to humans when the exposure is determined to be excessive or above permissible limits established by the manufacturer of the material or other credible sources such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health or American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists.

An on-the-job illness shall have the same meaning as an occupational disease. An on-the-job illness does not typically include communicable diseases or infections transmitted by human contact. Alleged work-related stress, anxiety, depression or other mental illnesses are not covered under this program unless proximately caused by an on-the-job physical injury to the body. No mental injury or illness shall be compensable under the OJI Program unless the mental injury or illness is diagnosed by a licensed

psychiatrist or psychologist and the diagnosis of the condition meets the criteria as established in the most current issue of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders presented by the American Psychiatric Association.

Guidelines for Covered or Compensable Expenses

Medical expenses related to an OJI are compensable under the OJI Program only if the OJI is sustained in the course of, and arises out of, employment by the System Office. This policy does not cover employees except while they are engaged in or about the premises where their services are being performed or where their presence is required at the time of an accident.

OJI's that occur in the course of employment, but away from an employee's normal work site, may also be covered under the OJI Program as long as the employee was acting within the scope of employment and was engaged in an activity related to his or her assigned duties and the general scope of the position.

OJI benefits generally are not payable for injuries sustained while traveling to/from the work location or while engaged in an activity that is personal in nature and not incidental to employment including, but not limited to, meal breaks, running personal errands, participating in fitness activities unrelated to the position, etc.

General Information

UA System Office employees in all employment categories are eligible for on-the-job injury/illness benefits. This includes student employees.

Accidents that occur while an employee is traveling on System Office business (defined as travel for which expenses are reimbursable by the System Office) will be considered to have occurred in the course of one's employment. If the accident occurs during a deviation for personal reasons (e.g. a sightseeing trip or a visit to relatives or friends) from the described route, the accident will not be considered to have occurred in the course of employment.

No OJI benefits shall be provided for an OJI resulting from an intentional injury/illness (including death) or an injury incurred while intentionally harming another except in cases of self-defense during the course and scope of employment. The UA System Office may also limit, restrict or deny OJI benefits if an employee is injured while engaged in an illegal activity or in an activity that is a violation of System Office policy.

Willful failure of an employee to abide by physician-directed physical activity restrictions arising from an OJI, or willful misrepresentation by an employee of his or her physical activities while under physical activity restrictions may result in termination of OJI benefits.

As a condition to seeking any benefits for treatment for an on-the-job injury, an employee must be willing to submit to a post-accident/incident drug test. Such test will be conducted at a time and place and in a manner determined by the HR Department of the UA System Office and will be at its expense. OJI benefits for any employee who tests positive for illegal drugs or alcohol will be denied and the employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

Abuse of the OJI Program or misrepresentation of facts in connection with a claim for benefits will not only jeopardize an employee's eligibility for OJI benefits, but, will also subject the employee to disciplinary action up to, and including, discharge from employment.

Procedures

All OJI's, regardless of their severity, should be reported by the employee to the employee's supervisor within two (2) working days from the date of the injury. Supervisors should immediately contact the HR Department of the UA System Office. A completed Incident Report Form, which can be obtained from the HR Department, will be required for all incidents reported to HR. Forms should be completed and submitted to HR as soon as possible following an OJI incident.

If the employee's injury is life-threatening or otherwise requires emergency medical attention, the employee should immediately seek medical assistance and treatment at the nearest appropriate medical facility. Otherwise, the HR Department will give guidance to the supervisor regarding medical treatment for the employee.

The decision to delay or forego medical treatment does not change the requirement that employees should report an OJI to their supervisor within the two working days from the date of the OJI and that the supervisor should contact the HR Department of the UA System Office.

Unless the situation is outside of the employee's control, the employee is expected to keep all scheduled medical appointments. Failure to keep scheduled appointments may result in the termination of OJI benefits.

If treatment by the initial or current approved attending physician is not possible or is outside of the field of expertise of the treating physician, the HR Department of the UA System Office will coordinate the designation of another attending physician.

If an employee aggravates a pre-existing OJI, the approved attending physician must certify the need for treatment and/or absence from work. The OJI benefits described herein are awarded for each separately approved OJI. A recurrence or aggravation of a previous OJI, with or without a separate incident, is not considered a separate OJI.

Failure to comply approved physician-directed rehabilitation and approved follow-up care, which may include, but is not limited to, subsequent physician visits, referrals to specialty physicians, referrals for second-opinions, diagnostic testing, disability evaluation testing, physical or occupational therapy, work hardening programs, or to follow the dosage and frequency of physician prescribed medications, may result in termination of OJI benefits.

Medical Records

The UA System Office retains the right to access all relevant medical and other records of employees injured on the job and employees shall sign and deliver such consents, authorizations or permissions as may be requested to obtain such records. The System Office may also require employees to undergo or submit to additional examinations and tests as it deems necessary.

Off-Site Injuries

An employee who suffers an OJI while traveling on UA System Office business or while working away from their regular employment location should seek emergency medical treatment from the nearest healthcare provider. The employee should advise the healthcare provider that he or she has been injured on the job. The healthcare provider should contact the HR Department of the UA System Office regarding payment for services rendered.

Supervisors should contact the HR Department of the UA System Office within two (2) working days of receiving the employee's report of the OJI, and all follow-up treatment should be coordinated through and authorized by the HR Department of the System Office.

Payment for OJI Expenses

Employees who are covered by the System Office's medical insurance are eligible to have all reasonable OJI-related medical expenses paid by the Blue Cross medical insurance plan. This includes any applicable co-pays or deductibles.

Employees who are not covered by the System Office medical insurance, but are covered by other medical insurance plans must inform the healthcare provider that the UA System Office is not covered by the Alabama Workers' Compensation Law. The healthcare provider must submit the charges to the employee's insurance carrier and any applicable deductibles or co-pays must be paid by the employee. Employees should submit their requests for reimbursements for out-of-pocket deductibles, co-pays, prescriptions, etc. to the HR Department of the System Office.

Lost Time/Wages

The OJI Program generally will compensate an employee for time lost as a result of an approved on-the-job injury or illness in excess of four calendar days. Time lost on day one (i.e. day of the on-the-job injury or the day the on-the-job illness is discovered) will be paid through the employee's department and should be charged to administrative leave with pay. The next three calendar days are considered a waiting period during which no OJI wage benefits will be paid.

During the three calendar day waiting period, the employee may elect to use his or her accrued sick leave, annual leave, or compensatory time (hereafter "accrued benefit time") or to take leave without pay. However, if the employee remains out of work (or on reduced time or lower wages) due to the OJI for a period of 21 calendar days from the date of the OJI, one of the following will occur: (i) Accrued benefit time used for the first three days after the day of the OJI will be replaced at the same rate and maximum as outlined below or (ii) if accrued benefit time was not used, the OJI Program will pay the lost wages at 66 2/3% of the employee's regular rate of pay but subject to the weekly maximum outlined below.

Beginning with the fourth **calendar** day following the day of the OJI, the OJI Program will pay a wage benefit at the rate of 66 2/3% of the employee's regular rate of pay which, on a weekly basis, shall not exceed the annually adjusted weekly maximum wage established by the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations (the "weekly maximum"). The OJI Program wage benefit will continue until the employee is released by the designated physician to return to full duty or until the 180th calendar day from the date of the OJI, whichever occurs first. This 66 2/3% wage benefit is charged to the employee's department. OJI Program wage benefits shall be subject to all payroll deductions required by law, policy,

or authorized by the employee, such as applicable taxes, insurances, parking fees, and credit union withholdings.

The following is an example of how the lost time/wages process works:

- (a) Employee reports to work at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday and is injured at 9:00 a.m.
- (b) Employee goes to an authorized physician and is advised that he or she may not return to work for two weeks.
- (c) Department pays employee for a full day on Thursday (regular time for time worked and paid administrative leave for remainder of day).
- (d) For Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (the three calendar day waiting period), the employee may use accrued benefit time if previously scheduled to work on any of these days or may take leave without pay.
- (e) Employee is eligible for OJI Program wage benefits beginning on Monday (the fourth calendar day after the day of the OJI).

Sick leave and annual leave will continue to accrue while OJI Program wage benefits are being paid. Employees off on OJI's will be given the same holidays and holiday periods as other employees are given.

Employees may use accrued benefit time in addition to the OJI Program wage benefit of 66 2/3% of regular pay (subject to the weekly maximum) to result in the employee receiving his or her full regular rate of pay. The accrued benefit time used to supplement the OJI Program wage benefit may exceed 33 1/3% of the employee's regular rate of pay only if the employee's 66 2/3% OJI Program wage benefit is capped by the weekly maximum described above. No combination of the OJI Program wage benefit plus accrued benefit time may exceed 100% of the employee's regular rate of pay.

The employee must notify his or her department of the request for OJI Program wage benefits and the request to use eligible accrued benefit time as a supplement. The employee is responsible for keeping the immediate supervisor or department/unit head and the HR Department of the System Office apprised of his or her status and projected date for return to work. The department/unit is responsible for submitting time records to Payroll for processing.

If there is lost time resulting from an OJI, the employee may also have the lost time from work counted as time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), see Section 4.6 Family Medical Leave, and the application of FML may be retroactive to the date the OJI occurred. If the reason for the employee's OJI absence is due to a qualifying serious illness or injury, the UA System may notify the employee in writing that the leave will be counted as FML leave. In such a case, FML will run concurrently with the employee's receipt of OJI Program benefits. Employees injured on the job who are eligible for FML should also complete an FML Medical Leave Request Form. Forms are available on the UA System Office's [website](#).

The 180 day benefit period runs from the date of the OJI, regardless of the date medical treatment is sought.

An employee who terminates employment with the System Office (voluntarily or otherwise) is not eligible for OJI Program lost wage benefits following his or her employment termination date.

Employees with serious OJI's are also expected to apply for benefits under the System Office's Long-term Disability (LTD) Insurance Program. It is the sole responsibility of the employee to determine the estimated length of disability and to make application for LTD benefits in a timely manner.

The HR Department will monitor the status of employees who are unable to work as a result of an OJI. Employees who are unable to return to full duty or to modified duty, if it can be accommodated by his or her department, within 180 days from the OJI may be discharged from employment.

Any job status protection afforded by the Family Medical Leave Act or other System Office policy will be recognized in the administration of the OJI program.

In coordination with the HR Department of the System Office, the employee's supervisor, department manager or other designated manager/director will determine if the department will be able to reasonably accommodate any modifications imposed by the authorized treating physician.

OJI Benefits after 180 Calendar Days

The length of time that an employee is entitled to receive OJI Program wage benefits shall not exceed 180 days from the date of the OJI. Employees who are unable to return to full duty or to modified duty, if it can be accommodated by his or her department, within 180 days from the OJI may be discharged from employment.

If it reasonably appears that, based upon the nature and severity of the OJI, the OJI will not be healed or otherwise resolved and the employee will not be released to full-time work status within 180 days, then on or about the 60th day from the date of the OJI the employee should contact the HR Department to discuss long term disability (LTD) benefits.

If, on the 180th day from the date of the OJI, the employee is not on approved LTD benefits, they may be required to provide to the HR Department documentation from an approved physician to confirm the employee is unable to return to work due to physical limitations. If an employee fails to apply for LTD benefits, the UA System Office's monetary obligations under this policy shall cease after 180 days following the date of the OJI. Any claims by the employee must be filed with the State of Alabama Board of Adjustment within the statute of limitation of one year from the date of the OJI.

If an employee qualifies for and receives LTD benefits and is terminated from employment after 180 days from the date of the OJI, then the employee should contact the HR Department regarding possible continuation of healthcare and other benefits.

If the former employee is approved for Social Security Disability benefits, he or she may be eligible for Medicaid (or state equivalent) or Medicare. The former employee should contact the Social Security Administration for information about Medicare or the appropriate state agency regarding Medicaid eligibility.

The former employee shall provide updates to the HR Department regarding the status of his or her application for Social Security Disability, Medicare or Medicaid benefits at the time of the application and whenever a determination, request for additional information or change in benefits occurs.

Death Benefits

If the death of an employee results proximately from, and occurs within 365 days of, an accident arising out of and in the course of employment, a death benefit may be paid to the dependent(s) of the deceased employee. In addition to a spouse, dependents may include others such as a child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, or a sibling of the employee who was wholly supported by the employee at the time of death and had been so supported for at least six months previously thereto.

Death benefits may be subject to and reduced by other offsets as deemed applicable by the HR Department of the UA System Office.

(1) *Offsets.* The System Office may offset against the death benefit and reduce it by the amount of the proceeds received or to be received by the employee under any life insurance plan(s) and any accidental death and dismemberment insurance plan(s) to the extent that the premiums for such plan(s) were paid by the UA System Office or by a third party, such as the Alabama Teachers' Retirement System. In addition, payments previously made to the employee as compensation for the injury under this policy shall be deducted from the death benefit due, in a manner consistent with the relevant provision in the Alabama Workers' Compensation Act.

(2) *Burial Expense Benefit.* Where an employee's death has resulted proximately from, and occurs within 365 days of, an accident arising out of and in the course of employment, the UA System Office will pay a portion of the burial expenses up to the amount provided in the Alabama Workers' Compensation Act.

Subrogation

If the injured employee, or in case of death, the employee's spouse and/or dependents, recover damages against another party for an OJI, the amount of the damages recovered and collected shall be credited to the UA System Office to the extent the OJI Program has paid benefits. If the damages recovered and collected are in excess of the benefits payable under the OJI Program, there may be no further obligation on the part of the UA System Office to pay benefits on account of the injury or death. UA System Office shall be entitled to subrogation for benefits expended by the employer on behalf of the employee.

2.9 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND CONSULTING ACTIVITIES

The primary responsibility of an employee of the UA System Office is the accomplishment of all duties and responsibilities assigned to his or her regular position. Outside employment and consulting activities are defined as any services performed for an organization outside the UA System Office, or primarily for an internal organizational unit within the UA System Office other than the one in which an individual is employed. Outside employment also includes self-employment.

Outside employment and consulting activities should be compatible with the interests of the UA System and must not detract from the performance of the employee in his/her regular position. Outside employment and consulting cannot create any conflict of interest, violate any ethics standards, or discredit the UA System Office in any way. Employees should not use their association with the UA System Office to acquire outside employment and consulting activities.

Additional guidelines regarding outside employment and consulting activities include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. Prior to engaging in outside employment or consulting activities, employees must obtain approval from their supervisor.
2. Generally, outside employment and consulting should not be performed during regularly scheduled work hours without prior supervisory approval.
3. Those who pursue outside employment or consulting that conflicts with regularly scheduled work hours must charge the time to annual leave, personal holidays, or leave without pay.
4. Individuals who perform outside employment or consulting must abide by ethics law requirements not to use UA System Office property for private gain and should otherwise limit the use of UA System Office resources or facilities to a minimal amount.
5. If the outside employment consists of teaching, the maximum teaching load is normally limited to one course each academic term. Teaching more than one course per academic term requires advance approval by the employee's direct supervisor.
6. Consulting and the performance of duties for special fees within the UA System Office are limited in time and are subject to prior approval on a project-by-project basis by all supervisors involved.
7. Supervisors must decline the employee's request for outside employment or consulting if it is determined that the proposed outside employment would, or is likely to, violate one or more provisions detailed herein.

Questions regarding outside employment and consulting activities should be discussed with the employee's supervisor or referred to the HR Department of the UA System Office.

2.10 PERSONNEL FILE PRIVACY

It is the policy of the UA System Office to maintain a personnel file for each UA System Office employee. Employee files are confidential and are to be treated as such to the extent allowed by law. Access to personnel files is limited to the following:

- Each employee may review his or her own personnel file in the presence of an individual designated by the UA System HR Department. No material is to be removed except as specifically authorized by the UA System HR Department. Employees are requested to make an appointment in advance with an appropriate HR staff if they wish to review their file.

Other employees of the UA System Office may have access to personnel files only on a need-to-know basis. Access is normally limited to:

- Human Resources staff as they need access in the course of their normal duties;
- Supervisors and managers considering an employee for promotion or transfer into their department or location;
- Others as specifically authorized by the Director of Human Resources or his/her designee; or

- Individuals who are not employees of the System may not, except with specific authorization, have access to the files themselves. Generally, such access would be granted only upon advice of counsel (e.g., in response to a subpoena, summons, valid open records request or request for information from a federal administrative or law enforcement agency).

Without a written release from the current or former employee, the HR Department will give/verify only the following employment-related information.

1. Name of the employee;
2. Position(s) occupied during the course of the individual's employment at the UA System Office;
3. Dates of employment; and
4. Eligibility for rehire.

It is a violation of this policy and the UA System Office's expectations of confidentiality to extract, disclose, or release information from employee personnel files or to disseminate information to individuals who have no legitimate business need to know.

If a former or current supervisor or coworker is contacted regarding an employee reference, the request should be forwarded to the UA System Office HR Department.

2.11 EMPLOYEE SERVICE DATE

An employee's service date is defined as the date of initial employment within the UA System Office. If an individual has a break in service that is greater than one year or experiences a change in position (i.e. changes from a regular position to a temporary one, or vice versa), the service date may be adjusted. In those instances, the following guidelines will apply:

1. An individual who has a regular part-time appointment will retain their service date when changing to a regular full-time appointment.
2. An individual who has a regular full-time appointment will retain their service date when changing to a regular part-time appointment.
3. An individual who has a full-time temporary appointment will retain their service date when changing to a regular part-time or regular full-time appointment.
4. An individual who has a part-time temporary appointment and changes to a regular appointment will receive a new service date.
5. An individual who changes from an irregular/contingent/on-call or student appointment to a regular appointment, or vice versa, will receive a new service date.

Service dates for the UA System Office are not to be confused with any other date that determines benefit eligibility including the retirement service date calculated and maintained by the Teachers' Retirement System. Retirement and other benefit-related questions should be referred to the UA System Office HR Department.

For information regarding service date after a break in service, please refer to the UA System Office's Reinstatement of Service Date Policy found in section 2.12 of this handbook.

Exceptions may be approved only by the Administration of the UA System Office.

2.12 REINSTATEMENT OF SERVICE DATE

Regular full-time, temporary full-time, and regular part-time employees who voluntarily terminate employment with the UA System Office and who are reinstated within one year following their separation may have their original service date reinstated and may immediately begin to accrue benefits based on the number of years of employment at the time of their termination. Unused, previously accrued sick leave will be reinstated.

These guidelines apply only to the reinstatement of an individual's service date and leave accruals and are not intended to affect any other waiting periods, including, but not limited to, waiting periods related to other benefits, policies, or one's subsequent initial employment period.

Note: Service dates for the UA System are not to be confused with any other date that determines benefit eligibility including the retirement service date calculated and maintained by the Teachers' Retirement System. Benefit eligibility questions should be referred to the UA System Office HR Department.

Requests for exceptions to the guidelines outlined above shall be reviewed on an individual basis by the UA System Office Department of Human Resources.

2.13 REEMPLOYMENT OF RETIREES/REVOLVING DOOR

Whether a former UA System employee may be re-employed after retirement is subject to the approval of the appropriate UA System Office hiring authority and is dependent on whether or not a budgeted position is available.

Re-employment is also subject to the guidelines of other entities including (but not be limited to) the Retirement Systems of Alabama and the Alabama Ethics Commission. Specifically, it is the responsibility of retiring individuals to determine whether or not the *revolving door* provision of the Alabama Ethics law applies to them.

Individuals who retire from positions which may be subject to the *revolving door* provision as defined by the Alabama Ethics Commission should discuss their retirement/re-employment plans with the HR Department.

In general, the *revolving door* provision applies to individuals who retire from positions of authority. These are positions in which the incumbents have authority to hire, fire, make purchases, approve or grant contracts, etc. The HR Department will provide information and general guidance to individuals who need to determine whether their position is/was a position of authority. However, the ultimate responsibility for that determination is between the individual employee and the Alabama Ethics Commission.

If, after communicating with the HR Department and after going through a determination process with the Ethics Commission, it is determined that the former employee is/was in a position of authority, that individual will be barred from re-employment at the UA System Office for a period of two (2) years unless they choose to suspend retirement benefits from the Retirement Systems of Alabama.

If individuals are offered re-employment at the UA System Office and they choose to suspend their retirement benefits, they are advised to seek guidance from Human Resources in advance of being re-employed. Re-employment (after suspending retirement benefits) is subject to several other important restrictions.

Former employees who retire from positions which are NOT subject to the revolving door provision (i.e. retire from positions which are not positions of authority) are still subject to certain restrictions and limits, especially from the Retirement Systems of Alabama. Those individuals should also seek guidance from Human Resources well in advance of their proposed retirement date, or prior to being re-employed in the UA System Office.

2.14 STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The UA System Office employs student workers enrolled at all levels of study to assist in meeting the business needs of the UA System Office, to provide University students with financial support in pursuit of their academic goals, and to provide opportunities for academic or administrative and business-related job experience. For the purposes of student employment with the UA System Office, student workers are either undergraduate or graduate student assistants.

Undergraduate Student Assistant employees must be actively pursuing a degree program from a UA System institution and enrolled in at least six (6) semester hours of credit or equivalent work during a semester after the drop-add period.

Student assistants in summer and interim terms and seniors in their final semester may be allowed to work as Student Assistant employees without meeting the above enrollment criteria. Students who have completed their degree programs generally should not continue working as student employees beyond the end of the academic term in which they graduate.

Graduate Student Assistant employees, to include Law Clerks, must be actively enrolled in a graduate degree program from a UA System institution and enrolled in at least 4.5 semester hours of credit or equivalent work during a semester after the drop-add period.

During summer and interim terms, graduate students may be allowed to work as Graduate Student Assistants without meeting the above enrollment criteria. Students who have completed their degree programs generally should not continue working as student employees beyond the end of the academic term in which they graduate.

Employing departments are responsible for adherence to the above guidelines.

Limits of Employment

Student employment positions are temporary and/or part-time appointments and are not eligible for UA System Office benefits or privileges of employment. Student Assistant employees may work a maximum of 20 hours per week during Fall and Spring terms. However, Student Assistant employees may work up to 40 hours per week during academic year break periods. Note: These limits apply to the total hours worked for all combined on-campus jobs.

Due to tax considerations, students cannot be employed simultaneously as both a staff and student employee. If a Student Assistant continues to work in his or her position while not meeting the “student status” (i.e., working during the summer while not enrolled), the student may work up to 40 hours per week, but will not be eligible for the student exemption for tax purposes.

International students in lawful F-1 and J-1 status are eligible to work if enrolled in a full course of study. Eligible international students must not work in excess of 20 hours per week due to visa restrictions.

During summer and academic year break periods, international students may work up to 40 hours per week.

Student employee appointments are at-will employment. Student employee appointments are subject to a semester-by-semester renewal, and renewal to a position each semester is considered contingent and based on operational need and prior performance. In cases of gross misconduct or poor performance, employment may be terminated prior to the end of a semester. Such cases should be well-documented by the hiring department.

Recruitment Guidelines

All undergraduate student positions will be posted online via the UA System Office online portal at <http://jobs.uasystem.edu>. Qualified applicants will be referred to the hiring departments for interviews and final selection. Supervision of Student Employees will also be the responsibility of the hiring department. All student employee new hires are contingent on the completion of a satisfactory background check.

Pay Guidelines

Student jobs are paid utilizing a student pay structure. However, in certain circumstances and with prior approval, student jobs may pay different rates of pay depending on department funding, job responsibilities and other factors. Rate differentials may also apply for students providing assistance during special events. Student Assistant employees are guaranteed to be paid at least the current federal minimum wage. Paychecks are directly deposited to the student's designated checking/savings account.

Undergraduate Student Assistants employed by the UA System Office are considered non-exempt employees and are paid by the hour. They are covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act, and should be paid time and a half their regular rate of pay if the hours worked in any workweek are greater than 40. The workweek at the UA System Office begins at 12:00 a.m. on Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday.

Graduate Student Assistants employed by the UA System Office are paid a monthly stipend and are not eligible for overtime pay. Depending on departmental approval and funding availability, some Graduate Student Assistants may receive tuition assistance.

Exceptions may be made only by the UA System Office Department of Human Resources.

3. EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

3.1 ATTENDANCE

There will be times when it will be necessary for employees of the UA System Office to be absent from work due to illness or personal reasons. The UA System Office supports employee needs in this regard, but, must also keep business needs in mind. Employees should follow departmental guidelines in regard to reporting work absences. In general, employees who need to be absent or tardy to work for any reason are responsible for notifying their supervisor or department head as soon as possible once they determine they will be absent. Supervisors reserve the right to require additional information from employees as deemed necessary.

Any employee who is absent for three (3) consecutive, scheduled work days without notification to the appropriate supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Excessive Absenteeism

Individual departments have the authority and responsibility to define excessive absenteeism for their employees. Management should keep records to ensure that consistent standards are applied to employees in the department. Employees who are determined to be excessively absent will be subject to progressive discipline. The UA System Office HR Department should be consulted prior to management taking disciplinary action with an employee regarding excessive absenteeism.

3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

The UA System Office makes every effort to protect the private information of its employees, and that of the faculty, staff, and students of the System campuses.

While complying with governmental reporting and record keeping requirements, the UA System Office strives to ensure that all personal and job-related information regarding employees is handled in a secure, confidential, and appropriate fashion. Therefore, employees should not participate in or allow the unauthorized access, use, review, disclosure, dissemination, alteration, or destruction of confidential information. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information from student records in violation of any System campus policy on confidentiality of student records and/or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
- Information from employee records in violation of the UA System Office's Personnel File Privacy Policy or State or Federal laws;
- Information from internal discrimination/harassment/retaliation/Title IX/other investigations when such information is required to be kept confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis;
- Any personally identifiable health information relating to the past, present, or future physical or mental health condition of an individual, the provision of health care to an individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual, in violation of state or federal laws (including but not limited to: HIPAA, FERPA, ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or FMLA); and

- Any other System information that is not public information or subject to an open-records request (including but not limited to information contained in drafts and other non-final reports, privileged information, proprietary research or other trade information, etc.).

Some employees may be asked to sign confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements depending on their position or the type(s) information they are working with.

3.3 PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Employees are expected to maintain high standards of personal cleanliness and to present a neat, professional appearance. Individual departments have the authority to define appropriate professional dress standards for their employees. Some positions may require stricter standards than others.

In addition, recognizing that some individuals may have sensitivity or allergic reactions, wearing or using fragrances and/or scents in the UA System Office is discouraged. Employees who are concerned about a co-worker's use of fragrances or scents are expected to discuss their concerns directly with that individual in a sensitive and discreet manner. If such a discussion is not feasible, employees should bring the concern to their supervisor or to the Department of Human Resources.

3.4 DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

The unlawful or illegal manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance by any employee of the UA System Office while he or she is at work or at another site where the employee is carrying out assigned duties, is prohibited. No employee may report to work while under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal substance.

The possession, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances is not permitted on the worksite or other UA System Office property during working hours, unless such occurs in the course of authorized business or special UA System Office function that includes alcoholic beverages or where consumption was otherwise approved by an employee's supervisor, provided however only modest consumption shall be permitted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any UA System Office employee required to drive a vehicle during or after such a function is prohibited to consume alcoholic beverages or controlled substances.

UA System Office employees must self-disclose all post-employment criminal convictions (except minor traffic violations), including drug and alcohol-related convictions within five (5) business days of the conviction. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with UA System Office's Self-Disclosure of Criminal Convictions Policy found in section 1.7 of this handbook.

3.5 SMOKE AND TOBACCO FREE WORKPLACE

Smoking is prohibited on all UA System Office properties. This applies to employees, visitors, volunteers, vendors, contractors, subcontractors, and members of the public and is applicable at all times. It applies to buildings and all related grounds such as entrances, exits, patios, sidewalks, stairways, parking areas, and any vehicles on the grounds, regardless of ownership.

Smoking includes inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, e-cigarette, or pipe. Tobacco products include all forms of tobacco including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), smokeless tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and other vapor-producing products.

Employees who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to correction action as defined by the UA System Office Department of Human Resources. Visitors/non-employees who refuse to comply may be asked to leave the premises.

3.6 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The UA System Office will not tolerate threats of violence, acts of violence, harassment, intimidation, retaliation or any other form of disruptive behavior from employees or from other individuals in the workplace. Violations of this policy will lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment and/or the involvement of appropriate law enforcement authorities as needed.

Employees who commit acts of violence outside the workplace, but which are directed at the UA System Office, may also be in violation of UA System Office policy and will be dealt with appropriately.

3.7.1 PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a) Physical assault, with or without weapons;
- b) Oral or written statements that imply or suggest violence;
- c) Verbal abuse or other disruptive behavior, depending upon the nature and severity of the conduct;
- d) Gestures, utterances, behavior or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of violence;
- e) Intimidation or implied threats or acts that cause a fear of harm in another individual;
- f) Behavior that a reasonable person may interpret as being violent or so traumatic that it interferes with others' ability to effectively function in their work environment;
- g) Violent acts that result in property damage or sabotage of equipment, files, reports or other records;
- h) Relationship or partner violence (i.e. abusive behavior occurring between two individuals in an intimate relationship). This may include physical violence, sexual, emotional, and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and other forms of control;
- i) Bullying or repeated and/or severe aggressive behavior likely to intentionally hurt, control or diminish another person, physically, mentally or emotionally;
- j) Enlisting, coercing, or asking others to do the above acts.

The above list is illustrative only and not exhaustive. **No form of workplace violence will be tolerated.**

All members of the UA System Office should be alert to the possibility of violence on the part of employees, former employees, or other individuals who may be encountered on System Office property or while conducting official System Office business.

If you witness or are subjected to any conduct that you believe is workplace violence, you must speak to, write, or otherwise contact your direct supervisor, or if the conduct involves your direct supervisor, you should report it to your Department Head or Human Resources as soon as possible.

The complaint should be as detailed as possible, including the names of all individuals involved and any witnesses. The UA System Office will directly and thoroughly investigate all complaints of workplace violence and will take prompt corrective action, including discipline, up to and including discharge, if appropriate. The UA System reserves the right to contact law enforcement, if appropriate.

If you become aware of an imminent violent act or threat of an imminent violent act, immediately contact appropriate law enforcement and then contact your supervisor or Department Head.

Protective or Restraining Orders

Any employee who obtains a temporary or permanent order of protection should provide a copy of the order to the appropriate supervisor and to relevant law enforcement agencies. Additionally, the employee is encouraged to provide the following information on the abuser: a photograph or physical description, description of the abuser's automobile and license plate number and any other information that may be helpful for the security of the employee and his or her workplace.

Response

All reports or complaints under this policy will be investigated and confidentiality will be maintained where appropriate. Some behaviors may also be prohibited under law and the UA System Office may report such cases to the proper authorities. Reasonable action will be taken to ensure that individuals involved in an investigation or who provide information during an investigation do not suffer any form of retaliation because of their good faith participation.

No Retaliation

The UA System prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting incidents of workplace violence of any kind, pursuing a workplace violence complaint, or cooperating in related investigations.

3.7 CHILD PROTECTION

The University of Alabama System Office places importance on creating a secure environment for children. To that end, the following child protection policy and procedures have been adopted. This policy applies to child abuse or neglect that allegedly occurs on UA System Office owned or leased property, or while System Office employees are participating in a UA System connected activity at any other location. For the purposes of this policy, a "child" is any person under 18 years of age.

With very limited exception, Alabama law (ALA. CODE § 26-14-1 et seq.) makes the reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect, regardless of the circumstances in which it may occur, mandatory for hospitals, clinics, medical professionals, teachers, school officials, law enforcement officials, social workers, daycare workers, mental health professionals, members of the clergy, and any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to a child. It is the UA System Office's position that, in addition to the mandated statutory reporting requirements for certain individuals and entities, all UA System Office personnel who have a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected must immediately make a report, regardless of the setting or circumstances of the potential abuse or neglect. Neither Alabama law nor any UA System Office policy allows you to delegate the duty to report child abuse or neglect.

This policy should not be viewed as limiting any legal, ethical, and/or professional reporting obligations any UA System Office employee may have separate and apart from this policy. If UA System Office employees are subject to additional reporting obligations, the UA System Office employees should comply with those obligations as well as this policy.

Forms of Child Abuse and Neglect

No form of child abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual, will be permitted or tolerated under any circumstances whatsoever. Child abuse is morally and legally wrong. It can come in many forms.

- Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.
- Sexual abuse may be perpetrated by an adult or another child and includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law. Sexual abuse also includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the perpetrating adult or child. Sexual abuse may or may not involve touching.
- Sexual exploitation includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes.
- Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child includes the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter.

Reporting Procedures

If you know or suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect, **you must act**. It is not required that you have proof that abuse or neglect has occurred. Any uncertainty in deciding to report suspected abuse or neglect should be resolved in favor of making a good faith report.

In making a report, your actions should be as follows:

1. **Immediately** report the information to the nearest UA System campus police department. Your oral report should include all available information regarding the known or suspected abuse or neglect, including but not limited to: the name of the child, his or her whereabouts, the names and addresses of the parents, guardian, or caretaker and the character and extent of the injuries. The report should also contain, if known, any evidence of previous injuries to said child and any other pertinent information that might establish the cause of such injuries, and the identity of the person or persons responsible for the same. However, you should not delay making a report to gather this information. Do not directly question or solicit information from the child or from the person suspected of improper behavior. That is not your role; the role of investigation lies with city, county, state or other appropriate officials.
2. In addition to making an oral report, you must also complete a Child Abuse or Neglect Report Form found on the UA System Office's [website](#) and deliver the same to the nearest UA System campus Police Department. It shall be the responsibility of UA System campus Police Department

to notify the Office of Counsel of the suspected child abuse and to coordinate the investigation with local law enforcement and state officials. Further, it shall be the responsibility of the UA System campus Police Department to either report the incident to the State of Alabama Department of Human Resources or to ensure that the local law enforcement agency has made the report. The UA System campus Police Department shall advise the reporter that such report has been made. Finally, the UA System campus Police Department shall be responsible for maintaining all records and reports related to the incident and to brief university officials regarding progress or resolutions as needed.

Prohibition on Retaliation and Immunity from Liability

Any person who makes a good faith report of child abuse or neglect shall not be subjected to retaliation. Further, any person or entity that makes a good faith report of child abuse or neglect is immune under Alabama law from any liability – civil or criminal – that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

Failure to Report

Pursuant to ALA. CODE § 26-14-13, any mandatory reporter who fails to report child abuse “shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than six months' imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.00.” UA System Office employees who are subject to additional reporting obligations, may also be subject to additional punitive actions, including increased fines and/or imprisonment.

Any UA System Office employee who willfully fails to report a case of suspected child abuse is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal.

3.8 STATE ETHICS LAW

All employees of the UA System Office are expected to comply with the State Ethics Law. UA System Office employees may not use their positions to obtain personal gain for themselves, their families, or businesses with which they or their family members are associated, unless authorized by law.

Additionally, UA System Office employees may not solicit or receive a thing of value, such as gifts, favors, services, or tickets to entertainment, social, or sporting events, offered only to UA System or UA System Office employees, or use UA System Office equipment, facilities, time, human labor, or other System property under the employee's control for the employee's private or business benefit.

The Ethics Law also requires all employees making a certain salary to complete a Statement of Economic Interests by April 30 of each year. All employees who are required to submit that Statement must also complete Alabama Ethics Laws training within (90) days of their employment with the UA System Office.

Employees should contact the Office of Risk Management or the Office of Counsel for additional guidance, and/or should refer to the [Alabama Ethics Commission](#) website for more information about state ethics laws.

3.9 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF UA SYSTEM OFFICE EMPLOYEES

The pursuit of or engagement in political activities by a System Office employee must comply with Board Rule 304 and existing state and federal laws. Board Rule 304 gives authorization to employees of the UA System Office to engage in political activities provided that it does not result in a conflict of interest or interfere with their performance of assigned duties at the UA System Office.

Employees may give public support of a political candidate or cause provided the employee makes it known they are speaking in their private and individual capacity and not on behalf of the UA System Office. Employees may not lend or appear to lend the support of the System Office through use of their name, their position, or department reference in connection with any contribution or solicitation to a political campaign or organization, nor to any causes that become matters of civic concern.

Employees may not use or permit the use of any UA System Office resources, including official stationery, time, or property for or on behalf of any political candidate, campaign, or organization, nor for any contribution or solicitation of any contribution to any political candidate, campaign or organization.

No employee may seek or hold public office and remain employed with the UA System Office if such activities could or would result in a conflict of interest or interfere with the employee carrying out his/her UA System Office responsibilities.

Employees who desire to seek election to public office must first obtain written consent from the Chancellor through their appropriate reporting channels. Employees who have questions about their involvement in political activities should seek guidance from their supervisor.

Failure by a UA System Office employee to abide by the rules related to political activities of UA System Office Employees is grounds for dismissal.

3.10 No SOLICITATION/No DISTRIBUTION

Employees shall not solicit in work areas or during working time (i.e. when either the employee soliciting or the employee being solicited is in work areas or during working time).

Employees shall not distribute any literature or other non-work materials in work areas or during working time.

Examples of prohibited activities by employees during working time or in work areas include, but are not limited to solicitations or distributions related to the following:

- Raffles
- Charity drives
- Sports pools
- Bake sales
- Sales of items to raise funds for non-UA System Office related organizations or entities
- E-mail solicitations
- Commercial or personal business sales

Solicitation, canvassing, vending, peddling, or distribution by non-employees on UA System Office property is strictly prohibited.

Normal business contacts with UA System Office officials and personnel by authorized vendor representatives is not prohibited. The UA System Office also reserves the right to allow a few limited charitable exceptions, such as access for the United Way campaign and blood drives.

4. BENEFITS

4.1 **INSURANCE BENEFITS**

A number of insurance-related benefits are available for UA System Office employees. Some of those benefits are health, dental, vision, flexible spending accounts, life insurance, accidental death & dismemberment, and long-term disability. This list of benefits should not be considered all-inclusive.

Benefits as well as others are explained during new employee orientation when the new employee is given an opportunity to ask questions and enroll in selected benefits. Up-to-date information about benefit programs is maintained on the UA System Office's [website](#). The initial enrollment period for benefits is the first thirty (30) days of employment at the UA System Office. If employees do not elect certain benefit coverage during the first thirty (30) days of employment they may not be allowed to enroll or elect coverage under the benefit until the next annual open enrollment period. Employees with a qualifying life or family status change have thirty (30) days to make any benefit changes. Life or family changes include but are not limited to a change in marriage, divorce, childbirth, adoption of a child, spouse's employment changes, moving into a position with a full-time equivalency (FTE) within the UA System Office, etc.

Regular part-time employees with a .5 FTE or greater have the option to enroll. Temporary full-time employees also have the option to enroll, but temporary employees who work less than full-time are ineligible to participate in this program.

Additional information regarding specific insurance can be found in the [Health and Wellness](#) section of the UA System's webpage.

4.2 **RETIREMENT PLANS**

All eligible employees are required by state law to participate in the State of Alabama Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) 401(a) retirement plan. This is a 401(a) defined benefit plan that provides retired employees with a specific benefit payable monthly for the lifetime of the member. Employees must pay a set monthly percentage of their salary into the TRS plan. In addition to the employee's monthly contribution, the UA System Office contributes an additional percentage which is determined by TRS and approved by the Alabama Legislature.

In addition to TRS, the UA System Office offers 403(b) and 457(b) retirement plans for all eligible employees. Participation in these plans is voluntary, in addition to an employee's TRS contributions, pre-tax, and may be done through payroll deductions. The UA System Office makes a matching contribution for all regular full-time exempt staff on employee contributions up to 5% of gross monthly pay into the 403(b) plan. Any contributions above 5% are not matched.

Eligible employees may also contribute to the System's 457(b) plan. Contributions to 457(b) plan may be made instead of, or in addition to, an employee's 403(b) contributions. An employee's 457(b) contributions are not matched by the UA System Office.

For additional details, please contact the UA System HR Department or visit the [Employee Benefits](#) page on our website.

4.3 EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT POLICY

The UA System Office offers educational assistance to eligible employees and their eligible dependents who are enrolled at any of the UA System campuses. In accordance with usual academic rules, admission must first be obtained in order to receive educational benefits. Residency requirements for in-state tuition are established by the respective university.

Fees and other charges of any kind will not be reimbursable under this policy effective with fall 2019 enrollment. This includes, and is not limited to, the cost of housing, meal charges, or fees, e.g., course fees, college fees or charges associated with the auditing of a course. The calculation of assistance is based on a certain percentage of the tuition costs only.

Benefit Cap

Some UA System campuses may apply a dollar cap to educational assistance for employees and/or their dependents. If a UA System employee or their dependent(s) attends a university within the UA System that applies a dollar cap to their education benefit, the same dollar cap will be applied to the UA System benefit.

Eligibility for Educational Benefits

Upon employment, all regular (not temporary) part-time and full-time employees eligible to receive educational assistance if enrolled at any of the System campuses.

Spouses and dependents of eligible employees are eligible to receive educational assistance after the employee has been employed six (6) months.

All System Office retirees and their spouse and dependents maintain eligibility for assistance if they were eligible on the last day of the retiree's employment. Assistance for spouses and dependents will cease at the retiree's death.

Note: Eligible System Office retirees are those individuals who meet the (retirement) service and age requirements as defined by the Teachers' Retirement System of Alabama.

Educational Benefit for Eligible Employees

The educational assistance provides reimbursement to eligible full-time employees of an amount equal to 100% of the tuition costs for three (3) credit hours in the fall and spring semesters and six (6) credit hours in the summer terms at the standard on-campus, in-state graduate or undergraduate tuition rate. All other hours taken will result in reimbursement of an amount equal to 50% of the tuition costs at the standard on-campus, in-state undergraduate or graduate tuition rate. Higher tuition rates for special enrollment programs, such as but not limited to law school, medical school, or executive programs, do not entitle employees to amounts above the standard on-campus, in-state graduate tuition rate.

Eligible part-time employees will receive a prorated amount of educational assistance based upon their full-time equivalency (FTE).

The employee must be in an eligible employment status through the first day of classes to receive educational assistance for the fall semester, spring semester, or summer terms. If it is later determined that the employee was not eligible, any applicable educational assistance may be recalled. Employees

are responsible for notifying the HR Department of the UA System Office regarding any information that would affect eligibility for educational assistance.

If the employee terminates employment or becomes ineligible during the course of the term, any educational assistance in place at the time of termination will remain in effect for the remainder of that term only.

Educational Benefit for Spouses and Dependents of Eligible Employees

After eligible employees have been employed six (6) continuous months, spouses and dependents may be reimbursed an amount equal to 50% of the tuition costs at the standard on-campus, in-state undergraduate or graduate tuition rate for eligible courses. Higher tuition rates for special enrollment programs, such as but not limited to law school, medical school, or executive programs do not entitle the eligible dependent to amounts above the standard on-campus, in-state graduate tuition rate.

The employee must be in an eligible employment status through the first day of classes for the spouse or dependent to receive educational assistance for the fall semester, spring semester or summer terms. If it is later determined that the employee was not eligible, any applicable educational assistance may be recalled. Employees are responsible for notifying the HR Department of the UA System Office regarding any information that would affect eligibility for educational assistance.

If the employee terminates employment with the System Office or an eligible dependent becomes ineligible during the course of the term, any educational assistance in place at the time of termination will remain in effect for the remainder of that term only.

For the purposes of this policy, a dependent child must either meet the definition of an IRS dependent or must be unmarried and under age 26 on the first day of classes.

Only one educational assistance occurrence per student will be awarded even if more than one family member is employed by the System Office.

Dependents of eligible part-time employees will receive a prorated amount of educational assistance based upon the employee's full-time equivalency (FTE).

For student financial aid purposes, the educational benefit may be considered a financial resource that must be deducted from estimated financial need in accordance with Federal regulations. Contact the campus's Student Financial Aid Office if additional information is needed.

Spousal/Dependent Child(ren) Verification

Documentation to substantiate whether an individual is a spouse and/or dependent child of the employee is required. Such documentation includes tax returns, birth certificates, marriage certificates, etc. If the information provided has been intentionally falsified, the employee may forfeit the educational benefit, may be responsible for reimbursing the UA System Office for any amount paid in benefit, and will be subject to disciplinary action. The employee should notify UA System Office Human Resources immediately of any change in eligibility or tax status.

Procedures

Eligible employees who wish to apply for educational assistance for themselves or for their eligible spouse/dependents should complete and submit an educational assistance application to the HR

Department of the UA System Office. Applications are available online on the UA System Office [website](#). Only one application per student is necessary for the academic year. The academic year begins with the fall semester and ends with the summer terms. To obtain reimbursement, receipts and a completed requisition form must be submitted to Payroll who will then process the reimbursement. For those educational benefits which are taxable, reimbursement will be processed through payroll as a separate check from the employee's regular payroll check.

Class Attendance for Credit Courses during Working Hours

In order for an employee to attend a class during working hours, prior approval by the appropriate supervisor must be given. Such approval is limited to three (3) work hours per week with the understanding that the time off does not interfere with the daily operation of the work unit. Time off to attend a class during working hours may be approved as annual leave or personal leave or the time off may be made up.

Taxation of Benefits

Tuition benefits can be taxable at the federal and/or state level depending on a number of factors. Please refer to the educational assistance application for up-to-date and detailed taxation information and consult your accountant for tax advice.

4.4 COMPENSATION FOR ADDITIONAL DEGREES AND CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSURES POLICY

The UA System Office encourages and rewards continuing education among its employees. Therefore, budget permitting, all regular staff who have been employed for six (6) months and have satisfactory job performance may be considered for a salary increase upon completion of additional job-related or job-enhancing degrees from regionally accredited colleges or universities and/or upon receiving select job-related or job-enhancing certifications and licensures. These certifications/licensures are frequently from government-recognized certifying or licensing organizations. Regular part-time staff should receive a prorated amount based upon their full-time equivalency (FTE). For example, an eligible part-time employee of 0.50 FTE may be eligible for an amount equal to 50% of the \$3000 for a Masters' degree.

Procedures

To be eligible for an increase, employees must complete the [Compensation for Additional Degrees and Certifications Request Form](#) and submit it to his/her supervisor or department head for approval prior to beginning a degree program. (Employees who have started and not yet completed a degree program prior to the implementation of this policy on July 1, 2019 will be considered grandfathered and should submit the request form as soon as possible.) For budget planning purposes, supervisors and department heads must then seek approval for the salary increase from the office of Finance and Administration. The approved form should be retained in the department. Once the degree/certification has been obtained, the employee should provide documentation of the degree/certification to Human Resources. Increases, to the extent permitted under the budget, will be effective the date of the completion of the degree, certification, or licensure.

<i>Degree</i>		<i>Certification/Licensure</i>	
Associate	\$1,000	Certification	\$1,000
Bachelor	\$2,000	Licensure	\$1,000

Masters/EDS/JDS \$3,000

Doctorate \$4,000

Regional accreditation ensures that an institution’s academic programs meet acceptable levels of quality. There are six regional accreditation bodies in the United States. Regional accreditation is considered the highest form of institutional accreditation and offers a broader level of approval. Regionally accredited colleges and universities are defined as postsecondary institutions that are fully accredited by the regional accrediting associations as identified by the Department of Education. The Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs can be found [here](#).

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- Higher Learning Commission
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Nationally accredited institutions are not recognized for the purposes and application of this policy unless they are also regionally accredited by one of the agencies identified above.

The types of certifications and licensures that may be rewarded are typically those that are nationally recognized across a wide variety of industries and usually require continuing education to maintain the certification or licensure. Although it is not possible to list all the designations this may include, several examples are Certified Public Accountant, Professional Engineer and Professional Architect. Pay increases will be centrally funded for those employees who are paid from state funds. For employees who are paid from non-state funds, increases will be paid from their salary source(s).

All increases are subject to the availability of funds and the approval of the appropriate Director, Vice Chancellor, Chancellor, and/or Human Resources.

Note: This policy applies only to the attainment of the first degree/certification at each level. Example: If an individual earns multiple bachelor’s degrees, compensation may be considered for only one of the bachelor’s degrees. This applies to all categories listed above. In addition, if an employee is enrolled in a degree-seeking program and is granted a lower level degree in the process, maximum compensation will not be awarded for each degree individually. Example: If an individual is enrolled in a bachelor’s degree seeking program and, during the degree seeking process, the institution or individual determines that an associate’s degree could also be awarded based on credit hours, compensation will not be awarded for the associate’s degree, only for the degree being sought.

4.5 LEAVE ADMINISTRATION

UA System Office exempt employees must report leave no later than the 7th day of each month. For example, for leave taken in January, a leave report must be submitted by February 7. Supervisors of employees who fail to report their leave in a timely manner will be notified and are at liberty to take disciplinary action if necessary. Non-exempt employees report leave on each time sheet. Time sheets, leave reports, and leave request forms can be found on the [UA System website](#).

4.5.1 **ANNUAL LEAVE**

Eligible employees will accrue annual leave time to be used for discretionary absences that are authorized by their supervisor or department heads prior to use of such leave. Use of annual leave is considered to be a privilege and not a right. Accrued annual leave may not be used before it is earned, and therefore may not be taken in the same period in which it is accrued.

Supervisors or department heads are responsible for scheduling and approving annual leave of their employees prior to actual absences. Employees must submit a request for annual leave in advance. In scheduling leave, however, the effective continuation of the normal work routine and operations will be the primary consideration. Department heads and supervisors will make the final determination regarding whether or not an employee's annual leave may be taken at the time requested by the employee. A recognized holiday that occurs during an employee's vacation will not be charged to annual leave time.

Accrual of Annual Leave

Eligible exempt employees may accrue a maximum of 22 workdays of reimbursable annual leave. Eligible non-exempt employees accrue annual leave in proportion to their length of service according to the table below. The most recent hire date for continuous unbroken service of less than 12 months in a benefits eligible position at the UA System Office will be used to calculate the length of service for annual leave accrual (see Reinstatement of Service Date Policy). With supervisor approval, annual leave may be taken at any time after the time has accrued. It is the responsibility of both the employee and the supervisor to accurately report all leave time taken by the employee.

Accrual of annual leave is based on paid time and is considered accrued and credited to the employee's annual leave balance in the pay period following the period in which the time was accrued. It is the responsibility of both the employee and the supervisor to accurately report all leave time taken by the employee.

Leave Accrual for Full- Time Non-Exempt Employees

Length of Continuous Service	Accrual Rate Per Bi-Weekly Pay Period
1 – 5 Years of Service	4.62 hours
6 – 10 Years of Service	5.23 hours
11 – 15 Years of Service	5.83 hours
16 or More Years of Service	6.77 hours

Eligible employees accrue annual leave based on their full-time equivalency (FTE). Eligible full-time exempt employees accrue annual leave at the rate of 1.833 days for each month worked, which equates to 22 days per year. Employees in this employment category must be employed by the 15th of the month to accrue the full amount of leave. If hired after the 15th of the month, the accrual will be prorated.

It is not the intent of the UAS Office that any existing employee accrue fewer days per pay period than previously accrued. Consequently, if on the date this handbook is implemented an employee's rate of accrual is higher than the rate of accrual listed above, the higher rate shall be used.

Note: During the month of termination, leave is prorated on the number of days worked.

Holidays or administrative leaves that occur during paid annual leave will be charged to holiday or administrative leave, not to annual leave. If normal UA System Office and/or coinciding campus operations are suspended for emergency purposes, such as inclement weather, during the time annual leave is being used, those days will also be charged to administrative leave.

Unused Annual Leave

Annual leave on record over the maximum of 44 workdays after the last paycheck for the fiscal year (October 1 - September 30) will be converted to sick leave. Employees who separate from service after six months of active employment with the UA System Office shall be paid for all accumulated and unused annual leave up to 44 days at the employees' current rate of pay.

Transfer of Annual Leave

Transfer of accrued annual leave from other institutions of the UA System (UA, UAB, and UAH) is accepted and will be added to the employee's accrued annual leave balance. The institution from which the employee transfers must certify and provide documentation for the transferred annual leave balance to the UA System Office. After transfer, the accrual rate of annual leave according to UA System Office policy will apply to the transferred employee. This does not apply where a break in service has occurred as part of the transfer.

4.5.2 SICK LEAVE

Eligible employees who have sufficient accruals of sick leave will be paid for authorized absences resulting from sickness or injury. Eligible full-time exempt and non-exempt employees accrue sick leave at a rate of 1 day for each month worked. Eligible part-time employees accrue sick leave prorated on the basis of their FTE. Employees in these employment categories must be employed by the 15th of the month to accrue leave. If hired before the 15th of the month the accrual will be prorated if other than the 1st of the month. Note: During the month of termination, leave is prorated on the number of days worked. There is no maximum accrual of the number of days of sick leave that may be accumulated. Sick leave for TRS Tier 1 employees may be used as credit for retirement. Teachers' Retirement System guidelines and limitations will apply.

Use of Sick Leave - Sick leave is not an earned right, but a privilege, and should be taken only for reasons provided in this policy. Generally, eligible employees may use paid sick leave for personal (employee's) illness/injury, or to attend to the serious illness/injury of relatives who reside in the immediate household, or parents outside of the household, and to obtain health-related professional services that cannot be scheduled after regular working hours. Employees must report an absence for sick leave to their supervisor prior to the absence or at the earliest opportunity and provide an expected date of return. In addition, some departments may have more specific guidelines regarding sick leave. If this is the case, the departmental guidelines should be followed. Employees may be required to provide documentation for absences. The approving supervisor reserves the right to require an employee to reschedule an appointment based on business operations and necessity.

Holidays or administrative leaves that occur during paid sick leave will be charged to holiday or administrative leave, not to sick leave. If normal UA System Office and/or coinciding campus operations are suspended for emergency purposes, such as inclement weather, during the time sick leave is being used, those days will also be charged to administrative leave.

Abuse of Sick Leave – Outside of approved Family and Medical Leave, supervisors may require evidence of illness or injury in the form of a medical certificate or statement from a physician for all sick leave absences. Abuse of sick leave is grounds for disciplinary action. Supervisors should consult with the UA System Office HR Department if there is a concern of sick leave abuse.

Unused Sick Leave Upon Separation from Service – Non-exempt employees who leave the UA System Office after five (5) continuous years of sick leave accruing service are eligible to receive one-half pay of current rate of pay for each day (up to 120 days) of accrued and unused sick leave. Sick leave may be accrued beyond 120 days but will not be subject to payment upon termination. Payment may also be made at the death of the employee or upon retirement in the State Teachers' Retirement System. Payment to non-exempt employees of one-half pay for all eligible days of accrued, unused sick leave in a prior separation is considered full pay for those sick leave days. Non-exempt employees who leave UA System Office employment with less than five (5) continuous years of sick leave accruing service at the UA System Office will not be paid for accrued sick leave.

When a non-exempt employee transfers to a position of exempt status, all sick leave will be transferred and must be used or taken as retirement credit and will not be subject to payment upon separation. Exempt employees will not be paid for accrued sick leave upon separation. Exempt and non-exempt employees who separate from service with sick leave may transfer the leave to participating approved state agencies and institutions. Retiring employees may apply sick leave toward retirement service credit.

Transfer of Sick Leave - Transfer of accrued sick leave from other participating (Teachers' Retirement System) approved state institutions and agencies is accepted and will be added to the employee's accrued sick leave balance. The institution from which the employee transfers must certify and provide documentation for the transferred sick leave balance to the UA System Office. After transfer, the accrual rate of sick leave according to UA System Office policy will apply to the transferred employee. This does not apply where a break in service has occurred as part of the transfer.

4.5.3 PERSONAL LEAVE

Eligible full-time employees are credited five (5) personal days at the beginning of each fiscal year. Eligible part-time employees are credited on a prorated basis of their FTE. Eligible new hires are credited on a prorated basis of their hire date through the end of the fiscal year in which they are hired. Similar to annual leave, use of personal leave time is a privilege, not a right. With supervisor approval, personal leave may be taken at any time after the beginning of the fiscal year.

Personal leave on record at the time of separation from service is not compensable; any remaining personal leave at the end of each fiscal year is not transferable to the next fiscal year.

**See <http://uasystem.edu/administration/benefits/> for a Summary of UA System Office Leave and Holiday information detailed above.*

4.5.4 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Upon the death of close family members, regular part-time and regular full-time employees may be given up to three (3) workdays of paid bereavement leave per occurrence. Regular part-time employees may receive prorated pay based on their regularly scheduled work hours. Close family members are defined as spouse, children (including stepchildren, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law), parents (including stepparents, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law and stepparents-in-law), brothers, sisters (including stepbrothers, stepsisters, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law), first cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, grandchildren and any other individuals who permanently reside in the employee's home.

To request bereavement leave, employees should immediately notify their appropriate supervisor or department head.

4.5.5 JURY DUTY

The UA System Office will provide time off with pay from regularly scheduled work hours for the day or days an employee is required to serve on jury duty. This applies to regular full-time, regular part-time and temporary full-time employees. The juror is required to return to work the next work day after being dismissed from jury duty for all services or is released from service for a particular day by the court. In order to receive pay, proper documentation of time actually served must be provided. Employees should notify their supervisor or department head of impending jury duty as soon as they receive notice to serve. A copy of the notice must be provided.

Witness Summons – If employees are subpoenaed to serve as a witnesses in court and are called to the court during their regular work schedule, they will be paid for the time they are scheduled to work and are serving as a witness. This applies to regular full-time, regular part-time and temporary full-time employees. Employees should notify their supervisor or department head of impending jury duty as soon as they receive notice to serve. Proper documentation of time for court appearances must be provided. Employees who appear as witnesses on their own behalf, either as plaintiffs or defendants, are not eligible for paid leave. They may request annual leave or personal leave for this purpose.

4.5.6 MILITARY LEAVE

The UA System Office will comply with the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) and applicable Alabama laws pertaining to military leave. This policy supersedes any and all previous policies/practices of the UA System Office related to military leave rights and benefits.

As laws change, or as interpretations of the laws change, military leave benefits for employees may change accordingly. No attempt is made in this policy to cover all possible situations and circumstances that may arise when an employee is ordered to active duty. Therefore, as military leave situations arise, employees should consult with their supervisor and the UA System Office HR Department for current and complete details regarding their military leave rights.

Eligibility for Military Leave of Absence

In accordance with USERRA and Alabama law (Ala. Code § § 31-2-13, 31-12-2), employees who perform service in the uniformed services (as defined by USERRA) are entitled to a military leave of absence from their UA System Office position, subject to the limitations and restrictions set forth in federal and state laws and UA System Office policy. Upon receiving an assignment for military service, employees should promptly provide notice to their supervisors prior to going on military duty, unless precluded by military necessity. If an employee is required to use annual leave, sick leave, personal leave or compensatory time as a result of being called to active service during the war on terrorism, that leave shall be restored.

Compensation for Military Leave

Except as provided below, eligible UA System Office employees who perform service in the uniformed services (as those terms are defined by USERRA) will be placed on unpaid military leave status for all days that they are engaged in such military service. Affected employees are not required to use accrued leave in lieu of paid or unpaid military leave; however, they may elect to use accrued annual leave, personal leave or earned compensatory time at their discretion.

a) Compensation for 168 working hours per calendar year for federal military leave.

UA System Office employees eligible for Military Leave of Absence who are active members of the Alabama National Guard or of any other reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States will receive, pursuant to Ala. Code § 31-2- 13, up to 168 hours of paid military leave per calendar year for performance of federal military duty. This military service includes drills, annual training, or military schools. Once the 168 hours of paid military leave is exhausted, an employee may use other leave available, such as annual leave, personal leave or earned comp time.

It is not necessary for employees who are still on military leave to return to work for the UA System Office in order to receive 168 hours of paid military leave for the calendar year subsequent to being placed on military leave.

b) Compensation for 168 working hours at any one time called to active service by the Governor.

In addition to the 168 hours per calendar year described in section a) above, if these particular employees are called into active service of the State of Alabama by the Governor (typically in times of natural disaster), they will receive, pursuant to Ala. Code § 31-2-13, an additional 168 hours of paid military leave at any one time while called by the Governor to duty in the active service of the state.

c) Salary differential for employees activated during war on terrorism.

If the military base pay of an employee called into active service for the war on terrorism is less than the salary the employee would have received from the UA System Office if the employee had not been called to active service, the employee may receive a salary differential that is equal to the difference between the lower active duty military base pay and the higher public salary. (Ala. Code § 31-12-5)

d) Merit increases for employees on military leave.

When an employee returns from military leave, the UA System Office will pay that employee at the rate the employee would have attained with reasonable certainty had the employee remained continuously employed during the period of service.

Health Insurance Benefits

The UA System Office will, at a minimum, maintain health benefits and other benefits for the first 30 days of military leave as if the employee was actively employed. Employees on military leave of absence will be entitled to participate in any rights and benefits not based on seniority that are available to employees on non-military leaves of absence.

Consequently, for the first 12 weeks of an approved unpaid military leave, upon request from the employee, the UA System Office will continue health benefits and other benefits as if the employee were actively employed. After the initial 12-week period, employees on military leave may continue their benefits for a period up to 18 months. The employee must pay his or her portion of any benefit(s) premiums in order to keep the benefits active. If the employee does not return to work at the end of the military leave, the employee may be required to reimburse the UA System Office for the cost of the benefit premiums paid by the UA System Office for maintaining applicable coverage.

An employee called into active service in any of the armed forces of the United States during the war on terrorism, which commenced in September 2001, and who receives a salary differential while serving on such active duty may elect to continue with individual or family coverage under the UA System Office's health insurance plan for the duration of the time the employee receives the salary differential. Premiums for family coverage shall be the amount in effect at the time for an active employee with family coverage.

Credit for Time Spent on Military Leave

Time spent on eligible military leave counts as time served on the job for any calculation, determination or other decision that is dependent upon length of employment.

Pension Benefits

Time spent on military leave (whether paid or unpaid) is not considered a break in employment for pension benefit purposes. Upon return to work from military leave, if applicable, the employee must request to purchase retirement credit in the Teachers' Retirement System and must pay whatever amount that employee would have contributed had there not been an absence.

The returning service member who is eligible for reinstatement under USERRA has up to three (3) times the length of military leave (up to a maximum of five years) to make the retirement contribution payments that would have made to establish retirement credit. USERRA does not permit double credit in two retirement systems for the same military leave.

Therefore, the employee is not entitled to purchase credit in TRS if the employee receives credit in any other public retirement system, except the federal social security system.

Reemployment Rights

USERRA places a 5-year limit (with some exceptions) on the cumulative length of time a

person may voluntarily serve in the military and remain eligible for reemployment rights. The USERRA reinstatement rights do not extend, however, to employees who are employed for brief, non-recurrent periods with no reasonable expectation that employment will continue indefinitely. Under certain circumstances, employees are eligible to be reinstated to their former position unless the circumstances have so changed as to make reemployment impossible or unreasonable. If on military leave for 90 days or less, eligible employees may be reinstated to their own position. If on military leave for over 90 days, eligible employees may be reinstated to their own position or to a similar position of like seniority, status or pay.

Upon return from military leave, employees must comply with the current provisions of the law in regards to notification of and time frame in which they must return to work. These limits are specified in 38 USC § 4312 and vary depending on the length of military service. Upon return, employees will be entitled to a “grace period” as determined by law, to assist the employee in reintegrating back into the job. Provided however, although an employee is generally protected from discharge during any applicable grace period, the employee may still be discharged for cause.

The UA System Office will work to accommodate any employee who is returning to work with a service connected disability suffered during that employee’s military service. The employee should notify the Department of Human Resources as soon as possible (prior to returning to work when possible) to begin the accommodation process. If the employee’s disability requires the employee to be transitioned into another position, the UA System Office will work to place the employee in a position most nearly approximating the prior role.

4.5.7 LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Regular (non-temporary) employees who have at least six (6) months of continuous active service with the UA System Office may request a leave without pay provided such request is supported by a justifiable reason.

Leave without pay may be requested for a period *up to* 12 months, but is subject to the approval of the appropriate administrator. Approval of such leaves is discretionary and depends largely upon the circumstances, specialization or critical nature of the employee’s position, departmental needs, as well as the practicality of possibly replacing the employee for a temporary period.

Leave without pay may be considered for prolonged illness or injury after an employee has exhausted his/her Family Medical Leave, for education or professional development which will lead to increased job ability, for exceptional personal reasons, or for other reasons that reflect positively upon the UA System Office, and enhance an individual’s ability to make subsequent contributions to the organization.

4.6 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 applies to all eligible employees of the UA System Office. Eligible employees may take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in a rolling 12-month period for medical and family-related reasons. In addition, eligible employees may qualify for up to 26 work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to care for seriously ill or injured covered service members.

Upon return from FML, an employee will generally be returned to the position held when the leave began, or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment. If it appears that an employee will be unable to return to work at the conclusion of a leave, they should contact the UA System Office to determine what other benefits and/or leave options may be available to them. Approval of other types of leave is subject to the appropriate supervisor.

An employee who has not been approved for any other type of leave or sought a reasonable accommodation to extend the leave and who fails to return to work after an FML leave may be treated as having voluntarily resigned.

Eligibility for Family and Medical Leave

To be eligible for FML, an employee must have:

1. Worked for the UA System Office at least 12 months and
2. Worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months.
Only periods of actual worked time count toward the determination of whether the employee has worked 1,250 hours during the preceding 12 months. Periods of paid or unpaid leave, holidays, etc. are not counted as worked time and for the purpose of this policy are excluded.

Qualified Reasons for Leave

1. Birth and care of a newborn child of the employee
2. Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care, or who is otherwise assuming responsibility of a child *"in loco parentis"*
3. To care for immediate family members (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition
4. Employee serious health condition
5. Qualifying exigencies that arise out of the fact that the employee's spouse, child or parent is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces deployed to a foreign country, is a member of the National Guard or Reserves, on covered active duty, or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation in a foreign country. Qualifying exigencies include the following:
 - Short-notice deployment (7 calendar day maximum)
 - Military events and related activities
 - Child care and school activities of the service member's child
 - Financial and legal arrangements for the service member
 - Counseling
 - Rest and recuperation of the service member (15 days for each instance)
 - Attending to certain post-deployment activities, including attending arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings and events and other official ceremonies or programs sponsored by the military, for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered military member's active duty status, and addressing issues arising from the death of a covered military member
 - Parental care for a military member's parent who is incapable of self care when the care is necessitated by the member's covered active duty
 - Additional activities that the employer and employee shall agree qualify as an exigency and agree to both the timing and duration of such leave
6. To care for a U.S. service member or veteran with a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty while on active military duty if the employee is the spouse, child, parent or next of

kin of the service member or veteran. This type of Family and Medical Leave is referred to as “military caregiver leave” and leave entitlement is up to 26 work weeks in a single 12-month period.

Duration of Leave

Eligible employees may receive up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any “rolling” 12-month period, measured backward from the date that any FML is to be used. FML for the birth or placement of a child with the employee expires 12 months from the birth or placement of the child.

When leave is to care for a service member or veteran with a serious injury or illness, an eligible employee may take up to 26 work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for that service member or veteran. Military caregiver leave, when combined with other FML qualifying leaves, may not exceed 26 weeks in a single 12-month period during which the 26 weeks of military caregiver leave is available. A single 12-month period for purposes of military caregiver leave begins on the first day that an employee takes military caregiver leave and ends 12 months after that date, regardless of the rolling 12-month period that the UA System Office utilizes for determining available leave for other FML qualifying reasons.

Spouse Coverage

In cases of childbirth, adoption, foster care placement or care of a child, if the employee and the employee’s spouse both work for the UA System Office, the total amount of annual family and medical leave available is 12 work weeks for each employee and does not have to be taken at the same time.

The same guidelines apply in cases of military caregiver leave; both employees may individually use FML to a maximum of 26 work weeks during a single 12-month period.

Use of Accrued Benefit Time

Employees will be required to use any accrued sick or annual leave at the onset of leave in accordance with established policy. Employees are not required to use personal leave concurrently with approved FML.

Intermittent Leave

An employee who takes FML for his/her own serious health condition or to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or a parent may take leave on an intermittent basis or may use FML to reduce his/her scheduled work hours. The employee must provide certification from the healthcare provider caring for the employee and/or family member and document the need for such leave.

Intermittent leave is limited to the equivalent of 12 weeks’ of work time. The total number of hours of intermittent leave available to an employee is equal to 12 times the number of hours per week the employee is normally scheduled to work, less any other FML taken in the same rolling 12 month period.

While an employee is on intermittent leave, the UA System Office reserves the right to transfer the employee to an alternative position which better accommodates recurring leave and which has equivalent pay and benefits.

Required Notice to Take FML

If the need for FML is foreseeable, the employee should provide written notice to the supervisor at least 30 days in advance. If proper prior notice is not given when the need for FML is foreseeable, leave may be denied unless there is a reasonable reason for the delay. Failure to comply with the notice

requirement may result in a delay or denial of the leave. If the need for FML is not foreseeable, notice must be given by the employee as soon as possible and practical. Except in cases of extreme emergencies, employees are expected to advise their supervisor as soon as they know of the need for the leave.

An employee's notice of a need/request for FML should be submitted in writing. Although an employee's initial request for FML does not have to specifically state he/she is requesting FML, the employee must provide enough information for the employer to know that the leave may be eligible for FML. For foreseeable leave, the employee must indicate when and how much leave is needed. Subsequent to an initial period of FML, if additional leave is needed for the same reason, the employee may be required to reference that reason or the FML.

Scheduling

If the leave is for the planned medical treatment of the employee or a family member, or requires intermittent or reduced schedule leave, employees may be required by their supervisor to arrange a particular schedule or to reschedule appointments or treatments, subject to the agreement and availability of the healthcare provider.

Certification by Healthcare Provider

Medical certification will be required from a healthcare provider in all cases involving either FML to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent, or leave due to an employee's serious health condition. The medical facts must be sufficient to support the need for the leave. At a minimum, the certification should include the underlying medical facts supporting the need for the leave, the plan of treatment and the prognosis of the illness or injury, any regimen of continuing treatment and an estimate of the frequency and/or duration of the leave. This certification must be provided within 15 calendar days of the request from the UA System Office. The UA System Office reserves the right to contact the healthcare provider for clarification.

Employees who take leave for a serious health condition will be required to obtain a medical release from their healthcare provider prior to returning to work.

Confidentiality

The UA System Office will keep all information related to requests for FML confidential. This information will be disclosed only to those with a need to know and will be used only to make decisions in regard to the provisions of this policy.

Benefits

While an employee is on FML, benefits will be maintained as if the employee were actively employed. As long as the employee is in a paid status, premiums for insurance will be deducted as usual from the employee's paycheck. If the employee ceases to be in a paid status, the employee will be responsible for paying the normal benefit premiums (i.e., employee cost).

Note: For service member leave, the UA System Office will maintain its contribution toward medical coverage for up to 26 weeks at the same level as if the employee were actively at work. If the employee fails to return to work after an approved Family Medical Leave, the UA System Office may recover premium payments for health insurance coverage paid during the FML period.

Procedure

Eligible employees who are unable to come into work for three (3) or more consecutive work days due to illness or injury of themselves or a qualifying family member should apply for FML by completing an FML Request Form. Forms may be obtained from the UA System Office [website](#) or by contacting the HR Department.

It is the responsibility of an employee on FML to regularly communicate to his/her appropriate supervisor regarding their leave status and their intent to return to work. At a minimum, employees should report to their supervisor every 30 days while on leave. An employee who is released to return to work earlier than expected should provide at least three (3) working days advance notice to the supervisor prior to returning to work. Employees on approved intermittent FMLA will turn in an intermittent leave record to their supervisor each pay period whether FMLA hours are used or not and are expected to follow departmental call-in procedures for all unscheduled absences.

5. PAYROLL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

5.1 **PAYROLL SCHEDULE**

The Payroll Department is responsible for processing the payroll for all System employees.

Bi-weekly Payroll Schedule

The bi-weekly payroll is processed every other week with paydays generally occurring on Wednesday. Employees must submit their time sheets electronically no later than noon on Monday following the end of the pay period. Employee Time and Attendance Sheets can be found on the UA System Office's [website](#) along with current payroll deadlines and processing dates.

Monthly Payroll Schedule

The monthly payroll is processed once a month with payday generally occurring between the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh of the month. Additional information on specific payroll processing and pay dates can be found on the UA System Office's [website](#).

Employees paid on a monthly basis should submit leave time taken during the pay period no later than the 7th day of each month. Supervisors of employees who do not submit their leave in a timely manner will be notified and are at liberty to take disciplinary action. The leave reporting form may be accessed electronically on the UA System Office's [website](#).

5.2 **DIRECT DEPOSIT OF PAYCHECKS**

Employees must have their paycheck directly deposited into a checking or savings account. Employees who need to make changes to their direct deposit form may do so by completing the Direct Deposit Authorization Form found on the UA System [website](#). All changes are effective immediately unless otherwise indicated by the employee.

5.3 **WORK SCHEDULES AND TIME-KEEPING**

The normal hours of operation for the UA System Office are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with some exception. Administrative and technical employees generally have a standard 8.00 hour workday and a 40 hour workweek with a one-hour unpaid meal period.

The establishment of schedules within the workweek is the responsibility of supervisors, directors, and other administrative officials, who must consider operational requirements of their department.

It is the responsibility of both the employee and the supervisor to accurately report all hours worked and all leave time taken by the employee. Non-exempt employees should not work outside their normal work schedule or during their unpaid meal period without their supervisor's prior approval. All hours worked by a non-exempt employee are to be reported and compensated.

5.4 **OVERTIME FOR NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES**

All hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek will be paid at the overtime rate of one and one half times the employee's regular (hourly) rate of pay.

For the purpose of calculating overtime pay in a workweek, sick leave, annual leave, and personal leave hours *do not count* toward hours worked.

Overtime will be paid only for hours actually worked and documented on non-exempt employee time records. Non-exempt employees should not work overtime without the prior knowledge and approval of their supervisor. Employees should not begin working prior to their scheduled start time and should not work beyond their scheduled end time without their supervisor's prior approval. Hourly paid employees should not be allowed to work while having lunch. If the supervisor determines that work load necessitates the employee working through lunch, time records should reflect this as worked time.

It is important for supervisors to monitor overtime violations. If an employee fails to adhere to this Overtime Policy, disciplinary action may be necessary. However, all overtime hours worked must be compensated regardless of whether the overtime was approved.

Neither non-exempt employees nor management of the UA System Office may waive the rights or obligations under the Fair Labor Standards Act nor agree to accept less or pay less than the required overtime rate.

Questions regarding overtime for non-exempt employees should be directed to the Department of Human Resources.

5.5 INDEBTEDNESS AND GARNISHMENTS

Wage garnishment orders are processed by the Payroll Department in accordance with federal and state guidelines or guidelines from the appropriate enforcement agency.

A garnishment is a court order that directs an employer to withhold money from an employee's paycheck and to forward that money to the appropriate payee as instructed by the court for payment of a debt that is owed. For example, wages can be garnished because of debts to creditors, federal and state tax levies or alimony and child support.

Garnishments of wages will be served on and answered by the Payroll Department according to the requirements of the Writ of Garnishment until the garnished sum has been paid to the court in full.

If an employee has a wage garnishment in effect with another employer prior to employment at the UA System Office, it is recommended that the employee present the wage garnishment information to the Payroll Department upon hire.

6. GENERAL POLICIES

6.1 INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

If the UA System Office officially closes due to inclement weather or other emergency reasons, employees will be granted administrative (paid) leave. Otherwise, if the UA System Office remains open, employees are expected to report to work as usual. Each campus will notify local media sources and post announcements on their websites as determinations are made regarding closings.

The UA System Office operates in multiple locations. Emergency closures, including closures due to inclement weather, may differ by location:

- Campus-based employees should follow campus procedures and advice.
- Montgomery-based employees should follow state office procedures and advice.
- Sid McDonald Hall and other System-only locations in Tuscaloosa should follow UA campus procedures and advice, except for additional advice, updates, and directives that will be communicated by official employee email, by phone, or the UA System Office's [website](#) from the Chancellor or his/her designee.

Leave Procedures for Emergency Closings

1. Administrative (paid) leave will be granted during emergency closings.
2. Regardless of location, if an employee experiences undue travel or other difficulties, but his/her office is open, the employee may request annual or personal leave from his/her supervisor.
3. Non-exempt employees must seek prior supervisor approval before performing work during official closings.

6.2 UA SYSTEM OFFICE PROPERTY

Private or personal use of UA System Office property without proper authorization is prohibited. Employees are prohibited from discarding UA System Office property. Employees should contact Human Resources for disposition of property that is no longer needed. Equipment that is obsolete or has been rendered useless must be transferred to the relevant campus Surplus Property for disposal by Property and Inventory Management regardless of the dollar value.

Employees separating from service are prohibited from retaining and/or removing any UA System Office property. UA System Office property includes, but is not limited to, work-related files of any kind, office keys, supplies, computers, credit cards, parking permits, furniture, office décor, etc. Employees should contact Human Resources for instructions on returning all UA System Office property upon separation from service.

6.3 RESPONSIBLE USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

All electronic media systems, including, but not limited to, voicemail, electronic mail, the Internet, voice and video networks, fax machines, hardware, software, local area networks, files, and all information

composed, transmitted, accessed, received, or stored in these systems are the property of the UA System Office. These systems are to be used primarily for conducting UA System Office business. Only limited, occasional, or incidental use of electronic media resources (sending or receiving) for personal, non-business purposes is allowable as is the case with personal calls.

These systems are not to be used in ways that violate UA System Office mission or policies or local, state or federal laws or other legislation. They should not be used for soliciting outside business ventures, nor for soliciting for non-System Office related purposes.

The UA System Office reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any employee's electronic files and messages and usage to the extent necessary to ensure that electronic media resources are being used in compliance with applicable guidelines, policies, and laws.

The UA System Office may exercise its right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all matters on its systems at any time, with or without employee notice, during or after working hours. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of these systems. In addition, the UA System Office may be required to provide information stored in its electronic media resources to someone other than the user as a result of a court order or a civil, criminal or internal investigation or an open records request.

6.4 TELEPHONE USE

The UA System Office recognizes there may be times when employees must make or receive personal calls during business hours. However, such calls should be held to a minimum and should not interfere with the employee's work. Employees are encouraged to handle such calls during their breaks or lunch time.

Use of personal cell phones and other electronic devices should also be held to a minimum and must not interfere with the employee's work. Employees are prohibited from using their cell phones and other electronic devices while driving on UA System Office business.

Supervisors are expected to address excessive or inappropriate use of UA System Office telephones or personal electronic devices during employee work hours.

Any emails accessed, stored and sent on system servers and Internet access on UA System Office-owned computers are the property of the UA System Office. Employees are discouraged from sending or receiving personal emails from their system email addresses. Upon termination from employment, it is within the discretion of the UA System Office to forward personal emails to individuals who have terminated their employment.

6.5 VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE

There are occasions when individuals will visit UA System Office employees in the workplace. While we seek to provide an environment open to work and families, it is important that visits not become disruptive to work routines. Frequent or extended presence of visitors during work hours may result in decreased employee productivity and effectiveness. The quality and integrity of UA System Office confidential data, services and resources may also be affected.

Further, the UA System Office believes that frequent or extended presence of visitors in the workplace has the potential to result in the risk of harm to the visitor and possible liability to the UA System Office.

It is not appropriate for children to be in the workplace on a regular basis. No child with an infectious disease should be brought to the workplace under any circumstances. If UA System Office employees must attend to their children, they should take sick or annual leave as appropriate to accommodate their children during working hours.

Situations that result in excessive or inappropriate workplace visitors will be addressed and may result in disciplinary action.

If a visitor is injured while visiting an employee in the workplace, employees should report the incident or injury to their supervisor and the UA System HR Department, which will provide the appropriate forms for reporting.

6.6 WORKFORCE REORGANIZATION

In times of business and/or financial necessity, the administration of the UA System Office has authority to determine the priority of retaining services and combining and/or eliminating positions or programs.

Employees who are impacted by a workforce reorganization should contact the UA System HR Department for assistance in locating other employment and for guidance regarding pay and benefit matters.

7. LEAVING THE SYSTEM

7.1 **RETIREMENT**

Employment with the UA System Office will end when an employee retires from service. Applications for retirement should be submitted to the UA System HR Department no less than thirty (30) days or no more than ninety (90) days prior to the effective retirement date.

Employees with a balance of annual leave or comp time may choose to use their available leave balance prior to their retirement date, subject to the approval of their supervisor; however, sick leave may only be used as defined under the “Use of Sick Leave” provision in this handbook. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide their supervisor with reasonable notice of their intended retirement date, as well as request any time off to be used in advance of that date. Annual leave, comp time, and sick leave remaining at the date of retirement will be paid out according to UA System Office policy.

Refer to section 6.2 in this handbook, UA System Office Property, regarding guidelines for returning property of the UA System Office upon separation from service.

7.2 **RESIGNATION**

Should an employee resign from the System Office, it is expected that exempt employees give at least a thirty (30) day notice and non-exempt employees give at least a two (2) week notice of actual working time prior to departure. Neither annual leave nor comp time should be taken during the last pay period after a notice of resignation has been given.

A notice of resignation may be given in writing or verbally. Supervisors should acknowledge in writing an employee’s resignation, even if the resignation is for a date in the future.

Management reserves the right to release an employee at the time of their voluntary resignation and/or pay them in lieu of notice.

Refer to section 6.2 of this handbook, UA System Office Property, regarding guidelines for returning property of the UA System Office upon separation from service.

7.3 **CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS**

Eligibility for certain employee benefits ceases upon the effective separation date, with some exceptions for retirees. All employees who leave the UA System Office should consult the UA System HR Department for information about continuation of benefits.

Refer to our [website](#) for the complete medical coverage options upon termination from employment.

7.4 **EXIT INTERVIEW**

The UA System Office strives to be a great place to work and encourages constructive feedback from our valued employees. Employees departing the UA System Office are encouraged to participate in an exit interview by scheduling a meeting with a member of the UA System HR Department.