



**UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA**  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear New Colleague,

Welcome to the University of West Georgia! One of my primary goals as president is to support your success as part of our Pack. Each day, no matter your title or responsibility, you will provide valuable services that contribute to our strategic vision for the institution. And because your skills, talents, and passion are critical to helping our university grow and improve, your work here will impact the lives of students as they **become** who they are supposed to be.

This handbook, prepared by the Office of Human Resources, is intended to answer many of your questions about working at UWG. It details the university's personnel policies and procedures, explains your responsibilities as an employee, and provides a summary of staff benefits. Please keep this handbook as a reference. If you have any questions, feel free to ask your supervisor or contact Human Resources at 678-839-6403 or [hr@westga.edu](mailto:hr@westga.edu).

You are joining the university at an exciting time. We have grown to become the seventh-largest public university in the state of Georgia and an essential partner in the advancement of the economy and talent development in this region and the state at large. Out West, we have a distinct identity that reflects our long-standing commitment to making certain students are put in the best position to be successful at every turn in their education, with our ultimate goal being their completion of whatever degree or credential they seek.

As faculty and staff members, we play an essential role in helping to maintain the momentum of this institution so that we are able to increase access to education, strengthen the connectedness of our community, and enhance the local, national, and global impact of UWG. For most of us, we help others solve problems, and problems are not solved until the person who presented the problem feels like it has been solved.

We personally follow challenges all the way through to the solution on behalf of those to whom we are in service.

As you begin to settle into your new roles, I encourage you to think big, be bold, and reflect on how, by building on our historic and emerging strengths, we can contribute to making the University of West Georgia the leading, most engaged university for this state in the 21st century. I look forward to working with you toward our shared goals and learning from your experience and ideas, continuing to enhance this university together.

Thank you for becoming part of the University of West Georgia. Go West, and Go Wolves!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Kelly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brendan B. Kelly, Ph.D.

*President*

**University of West Georgia**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **How to Use the Employee Handbook**

In order to achieve the University of West Georgia's goals, it is important for each employee to understand his/her role as a member of the University of West Georgia community. This handbook will acquaint you with the policies, regulations, pay, and benefits that apply to classified employees.

This handbook is presented as a matter of information only and its contents should not be interpreted as an express, implied, or inferred contract of employment between the University and any of its employees. Your employment with UWG is "at-will" and entered into voluntarily. You are free to resign at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Similarly, UWG is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it handy for future reference. One of your first responsibilities is to become familiar with its contents. This handbook is only a summary of our policies, so please review it with your supervisor or the Human Resources Department if you have any questions.

All information contained in this handbook is subject to change at any time at the discretion of UWG with or without notice.

### **Profile of University West Georgia**

The University of West Georgia, a unit of the University System of Georgia, is a doctoral comprehensive university offering undergraduate and graduate degrees. The purpose of the University is three-fold: to provide students with educational opportunities for their intellectual and personal development, to conduct research and to provide public service. The University is committed to scholarly achievement, creative expression and service to humanity. In support of its purpose, the University provides a liberal arts core curriculum; a diversified curriculum in the College of Arts and Humanities, College of Science and Mathematics, College of Social Sciences, School of Nursing, College of Business, and Education; a comprehensive program of student services; and a program of continuing education. The excellent quality of programs provided by the University can be attributed to the high caliber of faculty, administrators, and staff members who are employed at the institution. The University enrolls in excess of ten thousand students who attend classes on the main campus and external centers. Every day, our students and faculty prove that amazing things happen when you Go West.

## **UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Statement**

It is the policy of the University of West Georgia to follow federal law in regards to affirmative action and equal opportunity. The University of West Georgia's affirmative action program and related policies are developed in compliance with Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, as amended; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Sections 503 & 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II) and their implementing regulations; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as it amends 38 U.S.C. 4212.



## **Employment of Disabled Veterans and Veterans of the Vietnam Era**

It is the policy of University of West Georgia not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because he or she is an individual with a disability, a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam Era. It is also the policy of the University of West Georgia to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam Era and individuals with disabilities. This policy applies to all employment actions including, but not limited to, advertising, recruitment, hiring, compensation, retention, training, demotion, promotion or transfer, layoff, Reduction in Force (RIF) or termination and tenure. Persons wishing to self-identify as an individual with a disability, disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era should contact the Human Resources Department.

In order to ensure compliance, operational responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy and maintaining and updating the affirmative action plan for individuals with disabilities, disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era lies with the Human Resources Department. Every member of the University community is expected to uphold this policy as a matter of mutual respect and fundamental fairness in human relations. This policy has the unequivocal support of the Office of the President. All members of the faculty, staff, and student body are expected to ensure that nondiscriminatory practices are followed at the University of West Georgia.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The University of West Georgia prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who can perform the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation(s). An individual is disabled under the Act if he or she:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

The University of West Georgia has and will continue to provide reasonable accommodations to enable the institution to hire and retain qualified employees who are able to perform the essential functions of their positions. Any person wishing to self-identify as disabled or request a reasonable accommodation due to a disability should contact the Human Resources Department.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Sexual harassment is prohibited by the University of West Georgia, the University System of Georgia and by state and federal law. The University of West Georgia is firmly committed to maintaining a work environment free of sexual harassment and does so by providing training for all employees explaining the definition of sexual harassment, how to report sexual harassment and the consequences for sexually harassing a member of the University community. Sexual harassment of any member of the University community is prohibited and will subject the offender to disciplinary action which may include termination.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission definition, adopted by the University of West Georgia, states that unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

The University of West Georgia will not tolerate any form of harassing behavior to employees by consultants, contractors, or other non-employees.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any employee who feels that he or she has been the victim of harassment is encouraged to use the University's internal procedures to resolve complaints. The complainant may elect to use any of the two UWG Employee Handbook procedures.

The complainant may consult *informally* with the University Ombudsperson, or the complainant may submit a *formal* complaint with the Human Resources Department.

*Complainants should note that informal resolution through the Ombudspersons Office does not constitute "putting the University on notice" of harassment. Actions of the Ombudsperson focus on communication, education, and possible resolution.*

Formal complaint procedures through the *Human Resources Department* focus on investigation and discipline. A complainant may use any of the procedures initially, and may move among them as the situation dictates. Employees may also file harassment complaints with the appropriate state or federal agencies under Title VII and Title IX.

### **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was the first comprehensive federal law to prohibit sex discrimination against students and employees of educational institutions. Title IX states, in part: *No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.* The policy of the University of West Georgia is to implement affirmative action and equal opportunity for all employees, students and applicants for employment or admission without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, veteran status or disability. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination. Sexual harassment is a form of prohibited sex discrimination. Students (male and female) and employees (faculty and staff) are protected from sexual harassment and may recover monetary damages. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for enforcing the law. Faculty, staff, and students can file complaints of sex discrimination with the Title IX Coordinator. Retaliation against complainants is prohibited. The Title IX Coordinator can be contacted in the Human Resources Department.

### **Discriminatory Harassment Policy and Non-Discrimination Policy Statement**

The University of West Georgia will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of *race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin or religion.* Every student and employee in the University community has the responsibility not to engage in any unlawful discrimination. The right of free speech, although fundamental to our democratic system of government and essential to the exchange of ideas in a university, is not absolute. The Supreme Court of the United States has held

that certain categories of speech are not entitled to First Amendment protection. These categories include obscenity, fighting words, and to a limited extent, defamation. There is no place on a university campus for speech or other expression that personally vilifies another individual. Such personal vilification is even more distasteful when it involves insults that are based on *race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, or religion*. Complainants who believe that they are victims of discriminatory harassment are encouraged to use the University's internal procedures to resolve complaints which are listed under "Staff Grievance Procedure" in the UWG Classified Employee Handbook. They may also file discriminatory harassment complaints with appropriate state or federal agencies under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The complainant may elect any of several internal procedures.

The complainant may seek an informal resolution by:

- conferring with the University Ombudsperson;
- consulting with supervisors of the alleged harasser;
- initiating formal procedures through the Human Resources Department.

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy and Disciplinary Actions**

The use, consumption, possession, distribution or sale of any narcotic, dangerous drug, or controlled substance by any employee of the University for which such employee does not have a legal license or valid prescription is strictly prohibited. The University supports all federal, state and local laws relating to the use of alcoholic beverages. The use, possession, consumption, distribution or sale of alcoholic beverages on any property owned or leased by the University is prohibited. Exceptions may be made only by the President or a designee (campus events, tailgating, etc). In these instances, all laws surrounding alcohol consumption, including but not limited to the drinking age of 21, will be enforced. No University funds may be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages. The adherence to these policies on alcohol and drugs shall be the individual and personal responsibility of each employee of the University. Any employee who violates the policy on alcohol and/or drugs shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the University and referral to the appropriate federal, state and/or local authorities for prosecution, as appropriate.

Any employee who is convicted of unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, use or possession of a controlled substance, an illegal or dangerous drug, or who admits guilt of any such offense in a court proceeding, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. It is the employee's responsibility to inform the University of such convictions and/or admittance of guilt.

Employment following a drug related offense may be conditioned on the employee's completion of a drug abuse treatment and education program approved by the President. If, prior to arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, or a dangerous and/or illegal drug, an employee notifies his or her immediate supervisor that he or she illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana, or a dangerous drug and is receiving treatment or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse and education program approved by the President, such employee shall be retained for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan and the quality of his/her work remains satisfactory. Retention of such employee shall be conditioned upon satisfactory completion of the program. The employee's work activities may be restructured if, in the opinion of the immediate supervisor, it is deemed advisable.

No statement made by an employee to a supervisor or other person in order to comply with this policy shall be admissible in any civil, administrative or criminal proceeding as evidence against the

employee. The rights herein granted shall be available to a University employee only once during a five-year period and shall not apply to any such employee who has refused to be tested or who has tested positive for a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous and/or illegal drug.

### **Staff Grievance and Appeals Policy**

The Staff Grievance Procedure is available to any classified employee working at least the equivalency of full-time who has completed the provisional employment period. The Grievance Procedure is not available to temporary employees, faculty, students or non-university employees (consultants, contractors, etc.).

The Staff Grievance Procedure may be used by an eligible employee to bring a grievance about a suspension, demotion, or other disciplinary action(s); or an involuntary termination (involuntary terminations do not include resignation or retirement).

This Staff Grievance Procedure may **not** be used to bring a grievance about:

- performance evaluations;
- flexible work option(s) decisions;
- reductions in force;
- salary and grade classification determinations;
- organization of a department or allocation of its resources;
- termination of grant funding; or
- non-renewal of a limited term position.

### **Staff Grievance and Appeals Procedure**

Misunderstandings and difficulties sometimes occur in a work setting. While most of these situations can be handled in the department or unit, a few require special attention. The procedures outlined apply to non-faculty employees of the University of West Georgia after the completion of six months of employment.

**First Level** – The employee attempts to remedy the problem through consultation with his/her immediate supervisor.

**Second Level** – If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily with the supervisor, the employee may discuss the problem at each level of supervision up to and including the appropriate Vice President.

**Third Level** – If the grievance has not been resolved at the second level, the employee may present his/her grievance to the Chief Human Resources Officer within ten (10) days of decision at Vice President level.

**Fourth Level** – If the grievance cannot be resolved at the third level, the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee will arrange for an impartial Board of Review, members to be appointed by the President within ten (10) working days after written request. This evidentiary hearing shall be informal in nature and shall not be conducted under strict rules of evidence or procedures applicable to proceedings in the Superior Courts in Georgia. Normally, persons other than the

employee are not authorized to participate in the hearing. However, the employee may select an advisor. Attorneys are allowed to serve as an advisor only, to assist and advise the grievant at the hearing. Attorneys will be authorized by the Chairman of the Board of Review to participate in the hearing, if it appears that the hearing will in any way involve or relate to an indictment of, or the existence of any criminal charge against the grievant.

The recommendation of the Board of Review shall be forwarded to the President for final decision. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the employee, he or she may file an application for review, in writing, to the Board of Regents, within 20 calendar days following the written decision of the President. This appeal shall state the final decision of the President and the redress desired and shall be filed and processed in accordance with the provisions of Article VIII of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents. The grievant may be represented by an advisor or an attorney during the appeal process to the Board of Regents.

### **Performance Policy**

The University of West Georgia supports a consistent, continuous and communicated performance management process. As required by Board of Regents policy, a formal, written performance evaluation is to be completed within the first quarter of the calendar year. The performance evaluation must include an evaluation of the employee's capability, productivity, efficiency, and potential for departmental and institutional development. Merit-based compensation should be based upon performance as measured by the performance evaluation instrument.

### **Conflict of Interest**

An employee of the University of West Georgia shall make every reasonable effort to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. This includes avoiding actual or apparent conflict of interests between his or her university obligations and his or her outside activities. (See BOR Policy Manual regarding outside activities policy at [http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/conflict\\_of\\_interest](http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/conflict_of_interest))

### **Occupational**

An employee of the University of West Georgia shall not engage in any occupation, pursuit, or endeavor which will interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties.

All full-time faculty, administrators, and other professional staff members employed by UWG are expected to give full professional effort to their assignments of teaching, research, and service.

Professional employees are encouraged to participate in professional activity that does not interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties provided the activity meets one of the following criteria: (1) is a means of personal professional development; (2) serves the community, state or nation; or (3) is consistent with the objectives of the institution.

For all activities, except single-occasion activities, the employee shall report in writing through official channels the proposed arrangements and secure the approval of the President or his/her designee prior to engaging in the activities. Such activities include consulting, teaching, speaking, and participating in business or service enterprises.

### **Political Activity**

As responsible and interested citizens in a democratic society, employees of the University of West Georgia are encouraged to fulfill their civic obligations and otherwise engage in the normal political processes of society. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate for employees to manage or enter political campaigns while on duty to perform services for the University or to hold elective political office at the state or federal level while employed by UWG.

**Therefore, the following policies governing political activities are hereby adopted:**

- Employees **may not** manage or take an active part in a political campaign which interferes with the performance of duties or services for which he or she receives compensation from the University.
- Employees **may not** hold elective political office at the state or federal level.
- A candidate for or holder of an elective political office at the state or federal level may not be employed or hold a faculty, staff, or other position at the University, with or without compensation.
- Employees seeking elective political office at the state or federal level must first request a leave of absence without pay beginning prior to qualification as a candidate in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. If elected to state or federal office such person must resign prior to assuming office.
- Employees may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level, or appointive office, when such candidacy for or holding of the office does not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to the University.

### **Possession of Weapons/Workplace Violence**

#### **Policy**

The University of West Georgia prohibits the possession of any weapon on the Campus except as noted below. The Campus is defined by the law to include the campus proper as well as property leased by or loaned to the University for university functions. This includes, but is not limited to, off-campus sites used by Athletics for sporting events or vehicles used by the University to provide transportation for students and staff. OCGA 16-11-127.1(b). This prohibition extends to all faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

#### **Definitions**

Under the law the following items are considered weapons and therefore may not be possessed on campus. Weapon means and includes any pistol, revolver, or any weapon designed or intended to propel a missile of any kind, or any dirk, bowie knife, switchblade knife, ballistic knife, any other knife having a blade of two or more inches, straight-edge razor, razor blade, spring stick, metal knucks, blackjack, any bat, club, or other bludgeon-type weapon, or any flailing instrument consisting of two or more rigid parts connected in such a manner as to allow them to swing freely, which may be known as a nun chahka, nun chuck, nunchaku, shuriken, or fighting chain, or any disc, of whatever configuration, having at least two points or pointed blades which is designed to be thrown or propelled and which may be known as a throwing star or oriental dart, or any weapon of like kind, and any stun gun or taser as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section 16-11-106. Weapon does not include baseball bats, hockey sticks, or other sports equipment possessed by competitors for legitimate athletic purposes; and this policy does not apply to certain persons acting within their official capacity, i.e., law enforcement officers, prosecuting attorneys, etc. For a complete list, please refer to OCGA § 16-11-127.1(c).

#### **Exceptions**

The following exceptions are the only exceptions to this policy:

1. Weapons which are used in classroom instruction. Weapons used in classroom instruction

by faculty, staff, or students must be approved in writing by the UWG Chief of Police prior to the weapon being brought onto campus. In addition, students must secure approval by the instructor prior to requesting permission from the UWG Chief of Police. Permission requests to the Chief of Police must include academic justification and security considerations. Those bringing weapons must comply with the stipulations established by the Chief for security and safety purposes, and failure to do so may be considered a violation of this policy. Weapons brought on campus for classroom instruction will not include live ammunition although deactivated rounds are allowed for demonstration purposes only.

2. Any person (including students) who holds a valid weapons carry license obtained in accordance with OCGA § 16-11-129 or pursuant to OCGA § 43-38-10 may keep a weapon within a vehicle in transit or parked within the campus property. Please be aware that a permit to carry belongs to an individual and does not automatically extend to persons authorized to operate a vehicle. If the license holder is not present with the vehicle to be used on campus, make arrangements to remove any weapon from the vehicle prior to entering the campus, or to secure the weapon in a locked compartment, container, or firearm rack, before operating the vehicle on campus.

3. A weapon may be kept in a motor vehicle used by an adult over the age of 21, for the purpose of dropping a student off to, or picking up from, a campus location, a University sponsored function, or a university form of transportation, provided the weapon is under the license holder's possession and control, or otherwise in a locked compartment, container, or firearm rack of the vehicle. This exception could also apply to non-university activities conducted on the campus if the activity has been authorized by a duly authorized official at the University. This exception is intended to allow the presence of weapons in a motor vehicle which is on campus for a short duration and for a specific purpose (i.e., dropping off or picking up a student), and therefore this exception DOES NOT apply to any student of the University. A student must be over the age of 21, must possess a valid weapons carry license and may only keep a weapon inside a parked vehicle on campus or while transiting through campus in a motor vehicle.

### **Violations**

All persons found in possession of a weapon as defined by state law in OCGA § 16-11-127.1 that does not fall within one of the stated exceptions are subject to arrest. A violation of the law by any person with a valid license to carry weapons subjects the violator to a misdemeanor. Violations of the law by any person without a valid license to carry license subjects the violator to a felony. Please refer to OCGA § 16-11-127.1. Students found in possession of any weapon other than one specifically listed as an exception will also be referred to Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Staff and faculty will also be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

[http://www.westga.edu/police/index\\_13791.php](http://www.westga.edu/police/index_13791.php)

### **Policy on Smoking**

The University of West Georgia (UWG) has a commitment to the health and wellness of its students, faculty, and staff. The General Assembly of the State of Georgia adopted the Smokefree Air Act in 2005, which protects building occupants from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Effective January 1, 2007, smoking is limited to outdoor areas on campus that are away from building entrances and exits for all university-owned facilities.

### **Purpose**

1. Protect the UWG community and visitors from secondhand smoke while on campus.
2. Protect life and property where smoking would present a safety and/or fire hazard.

## **Definitions**

To "smoke" and "smoking" means creating smoke by lighting a cigarette, cigar, pipe or other smoking product. It means as well puffing on, carrying or holding a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other tobacco product.

"Secondhand smoke" means smoke emitted from lighted, smoldering or burning tobacco from a person smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes or other tobacco products.

## **Policy Statement**

In compliance with the Georgia Smokefree Air Act of 2005 (OSGA 31-12A et. seq.) and the Rules of the Georgia Department of Human Services, Public Health, Chapter 290-5-61):

1. Smoking is prohibited inside all buildings operated or leased by the University of West Georgia including, but not limited to, classrooms, laboratories, studios, open and private offices, corridors, dining areas, restrooms and common areas.
2. The minimum outside smoking distance is 25 feet from any building entrance, outdoor passageway to an entrance or any air intake where smoke would affect occupants and those entering or leaving the area.
3. Smoking is prohibited inside all vehicles that are owned, leased or rented by the University.
4. Smoking is prohibited in areas that are identified by the University as nonsmoking by the universal sign for nonsmoking or a "no smoking" sign.

## **Enforcement**

This policy shall be enforced according to the rules established in the UWG employee, faculty and student handbooks.

## **CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **Types of Employees:**

**Faculty:** The faculty shall consist of the corps of instruction and the administrative officers as defined in Section 300 of the Policy Manual of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.  
[http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/employee\\_categories/](http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/employee_categories/)

**Classified Employees:** Classified employees shall consist of the professional and administrative employees and staff defined as follows:

**Professional and Administrative Employees:** All employees who are exempt from the Federal Wage-Hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because of their professional or administrative responsibilities, and who are not identified as faculty or graduate assistants, shall be designated as Professional and Administrative Employees.

**Staff:** All employees who are not exempt from the Federal Wage-Hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) shall be designated as staff. (NOTE: The University System of Georgia position classification system includes the appropriate FLSA status in the "Master List with Definitions and Guidelines.") [http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits\\_docs/masterBCAT.pdf](http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits_docs/masterBCAT.pdf)



**Types of Employment:** The University System of Georgia includes four types of employment for all employees as follows:

1. **Regular:** Employees who are employed for a continuous period that is expected to exceed six (6) calendar months shall be known as "regular" employees. Regular positions with a work commitment of half-time or greater are benefits-eligible.
2. **Regular – Limited Term:** Employees who are employed for a continuous period that is expected to exceed six (6) calendar months but whose positions are intended to have a limited term not to exceed three (3) years shall be known as "Regular-Limited Term." This status may be used for situations when funding for the position is covered by sponsored or other non-state sources or allocated for a limited term as in the case of special projects and when employment is generally not intended to continue following the initial limited term period. Regular-limited term positions with a work commitment of half-time or greater are benefits-eligible.
3. **Temporary (Casual Labor):** Employees who are not employed as "regular" employees are "temporary" employees. Institutions may hire temporary employees directly or may elect to obtain the services of temporary employees through outside organizations that provide temporary services. It is recommended that all temporary employees are processed through Human Resources to maintain compliance with state, federal and Board of Regents policies. Temporary employees paid through the institution shall be employed for a period no longer than six (6) calendar months; however, such temporary employment may be extended up to an additional six (6) months if the appropriate employing supervisor or department head needs the services of that individual subject to the approval of Human Resources. Once an individual has served as a "temporary" employee for a twelve (12) month period he or she shall not thereafter be employed as a "temporary" employee until a period of thirty (30) calendar days has elapsed. Under no circumstances shall an individual serve as a temporary employee for more than eighteen (18) months within any twenty-four (24) month period. Temporary positions are not benefits-eligible. When an institution elects to use a temporary agency to secure the services of temporary employees, the institution is expected to use the temporary agencies designated by the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) and shall employ such individuals in compliance with DOAS regulations.
4. **Temporary (Casual Labor) – Occasional:** Occasional employees are a subcategory of temporary. An individual with an "occasional" appointment works sporadically, but might work on a recurring basis, as needed, over a period longer than six (6) months. These individuals may work full-time or part-time for brief periods, but their total Full Time Equivalency (FTE) over the course of a year should not exceed 49% of the time. Occasional positions are not benefits-eligible.
5. **Student Employees:** All student employees shall be and are classified as "temporary," and employment of student assistants shall not be subject to the re-employment restriction outlined in sections 3 & 4 above. See the policy on position classification for additional information on student employees.

### **Employment of Foreign Nationals**

The employment and/or payment of nonresident foreign nationals shall be in compliance with all applicable federal laws and shall comply with all relevant visa restrictions (BOR 8.2.4EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS). [http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/employment\\_of\\_foreign\\_nationals/](http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/employment_of_foreign_nationals/)

## **Employment of Relatives**

The basic criteria for the appointment and promotion of employees of the University of West Georgia shall be appropriate qualifications and performance as set forth in the policies of the Board of Regents. Relationship by family or marriage shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. No individual shall be employed in a department or unit with the result being the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. As used herein, "line of authority" shall mean authority extending vertically through one or more organizational levels of supervision or management. This standard does not apply to the temporary or part-time employment of children under age 25, nor to any individual employed as of February 14, 1990, at any institution where a relative of such individual then held a superior position at least one level of supervision removed from such individual in any line of authority. Exceptions may be approved by the Board of Regents upon recommendation of the Chancellor as being clearly in the best interest of the institution and the University System.

For the purpose of this policy, relatives are defined as husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers, sisters, and any in-laws of any of the foregoing (BOR 8.2.3 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES).

## **Employment Beyond Retirement**

An individual, who has retired from the UWG and is receiving benefits from the Teachers Retirement System, the Employees Retirement System, or the Regent's Retirement Plan, may be eligible for reemployment on a part-time basis by the UWG. Reemployment of UWG retirees by the USG must fall under the following conditions:

- A rehired retiree must have a minimum break of at least one (1) month between the effective date of his/her retirement and the effective date of his/her reemployment.
- The work commitment of a rehired retiree must be less than half-time; i.e., less than 49%.
- The salary that is paid to a rehired retiree must be either:
  - No more than 49% of the annual benefit-base compensation amount that he or she was earning at the time of his/her retirement, with consideration for the average merit increase percentages that have been applied since the employee retired; or,
  - No more than 49% of the average compensation for the position into which the retiree is being hired based on the institution's existing compensation plan, or, if not applicable, the average compensation of existing or previous incumbents; or,
  - No more than 49% of a reasonable market competitive rate for the position into which the retiree is being rehired as determined by the institutional Chief Human Resources Officer.
- The salary that is paid to a rehired retiree must be consistent with his/her work commitment.

If you retired on a service retirement, all employment with a TRS covered employer must be reported by the employer of your eligibility to continue receiving a monthly benefit payment while working in an allowable position.

## **Employment of Minors**

The employment of all persons under the age of 18 years shall be in compliance with the regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor. <http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/agerequirements.htm>

## **HIRING AND TERMINATION GUIDELINES**

### **Pre-Employment Screening**

The pre-employment screening process consists of a background check, credit check for specified positions with access to financial resources, drug testing for some positions, and a probable skills proficiency demonstration based on the assigned position and departmental requirements.

### **Background Investigation**

It shall be a condition of employment with any institution of the University System of Georgia to submit to a background investigation. Offers of employment shall be conditional pending the result of the background investigation which shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- A state and federal criminal history check covering a minimum of seven (7) years;
- A nationwide sex offender search;
- A social security number check; and
- For all professional, faculty and academic positions, an academic credentials check.

Offers of employment are conditional pending the result of a state and federal criminal history check covering a minimum of seven (7) years. Positions of trust are those that involve interaction with children, after-hours access to facilities, access to financial resources that have been otherwise identified by the hiring official to require a more extensive background investigation.

A background investigation shall also be performed on any existing employee being transferred, reassigned, or promoted to a position of trust. Any existing employee that is transferred, reassigned, reclassified or promoted into a position requiring a Purchase Card, when they have not been assigned a Purchasing Card previously, must submit to a credit check. Existing cardholders are subject to a background check before renewal of the card.

An institution of the University System of Georgia may elect to perform reference checks and/or background investigations on part-time, student or temporary employees.

### **Credit Check**

A criminal background investigation plus credit check will be conducted on final candidate(s) if the position handles cash, checks or financial information. If a credit check has been conducted within the last 12 months, a new investigation may not be conducted.

### **Drug Testing**

Employees in "high-risk" jobs on a regular basis shall be subject to random drug testing for evidence of use of illegal drugs. Additionally, an employee who has notified his/her supervisor that he or she has a drug related problem shall be subject to random drug testing.

The following employees in "high-risk" jobs on a regular basis shall be subject to random drug testing for evidence of use of illegal drugs:

- Campus Law Enforcement Officers who regularly perform “high-risk” work in which inattention to duty or errors in judgment while on duty will have a potential for significant risk of harm to the employee, other employees, or the general public.
- Campus Law Enforcement Officers employed by private organizations which contract with an institution to provide security services shall be subject to random drug testing procedures as prescribed by their employer and consistent with this policy.
- Persons employed in positions requiring a CDL and in other positions that have been deemed by an institution’s administration to be considered hazardous.
- Persons employed in Health Services, Licensed Professional Counselors, Student Development, Athletic Trainers, Dispatchers, or related positions.

“Random” testing for University of West Georgia employees will be performed in accordance with the same regulations and procedures as those prescribed by the Board of Regents and approved by the chancellor for drug testing of applicants for state employment. Such testing shall not, at any one time, be given to more than one officer on each work shift who has been previously classified as a “high-risk” employee.

Law enforcement officers subject to random testing as mentioned in procedures of the Board of Regents for classified personnel may be terminated from employment if they decline to submit to a random drug test or if they test positive for the use of illegal drugs.

The identity of any officer who declines a drug test, or who tests positive for drug use, shall be withheld from all persons except those who have need for such information in their official capacity.

### **Conditions of Employment**

The following actions are required of all employees as a condition of employment:

- **Completion of I-9:** This form identifies an individual’s legal right to employment in the United States and must be completed within three days of employment.
- **Federal and State Withholding Forms:** These documents indicate the amount of federal and state taxes to be withheld by the employer and must be completed upon employment.
- **Benefits Enrollment:** For benefits-eligible employees only: optional benefit enrollment (for example, health insurance) must be completed within 30 days of the employee’s original hire date with the University in order to participate in benefit programs.
- **Loyalty Oath:** All employees of the University System of Georgia who receive public funds for services rendered as employees are required to affirm that they will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Georgia. The Loyalty Oath must be completed as required by the laws of the State of Georgia. This form must be retained in the permanent files of the University of West Georgia.
- **State Security Questionnaire:** The State Security Questionnaire must be completed for all persons employed for 30 or more days. This form will be prepared and filed appropriately by the University. The Sedition and Subversive Activities Act of 1953 (Georgia Law 16-11-5 *et seq.*) requires each new employee to sign, prior to employment in state government, a questionnaire which is designed to establish that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that he or she is a subversive person. A subversive person is defined as one who commits,

advocates, or teaches any act intended to overthrow or destroy the government of the United States or government of the State of Georgia by force or violence, or who is a knowing member of a subversive organization.

- **USG Ethics Training & Compliance Agreement:** The Board of Regents approved a System wide Ethics Policy at the November 10, 2008 meeting. The new Ethics Policy is part of a three-pronged approach the University System is taking to ensure ethical conduct by USG faculty, staff, administrators, vendors, contractors, and members of the Board of Regents. The training is mandatory for all University System staff and faculty. The training must be completed within 90 days from initial hire date, and annually thereafter.
- **Orientation:** Orientation is required of all benefits-eligible employees. A general orientation program is regularly scheduled for all new regular classified employees. The orientation program provides critical information concerning policies, procedures and employee benefits. All new classified employees are required to attend the orientation program. On the first day of work, new employees will be scheduled for orientation by the Benefits Administrator in Human Resources. In addition to attending the general orientation program, each new employee should meet with his or her supervisor, who will explain the duties and responsibilities of the position. Any specific departmental policies, procedures, and regulations will be explained by the supervisor at that time.
- **Identification Card:** A new employee may obtain a UWG identification card as soon as his/her information is added to the Banner system. ID cards can be obtained in the Auxiliary and Support Services Office. The card is the bearer's official University identification and should be carried at all times. It is to be shown upon request to any University employee whose assigned responsibilities authorize him/her to verify employee identification. The card is not transferable and is the property of University of West Georgia. It should be returned to the University upon termination of employment. Loss of an ID card should be reported immediately to the Auxiliary and Support Services Office.
- **Official Forms and Updates:** New employees will be asked to fill out information forms for payroll and benefit purposes and will be responsible for the continuing accuracy of all information, including all criminal actions. If necessary, new forms may be obtained from Human Resources. Be certain to notify Human Resources of change of address. To change federal or state withholding, pick up the forms at Human Resources Department. Updates can be completed in ADP. State taxes require paper forms.
- **Participation in Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or Optional Retirement Plans (ORP):** When applicable, application for membership in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia or one of the Optional Retirement Plans must be made. Employees eligible for the optional retirement plans have 60 days from their hire date to make an election. This election is irrevocable.
- **Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (temporary non-student employees and part time instructors):** The COBRA '90 legislation contained a provision that all state employees except student employees must be part of a public retirement system or participate in Social Security during their employment with the University of West Georgia. The State of Georgia has created a retirement plan for temporary employees called the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan to comply with this legislation. When employment ends with the University of West Georgia, the temporary employee will be entitled to a refund of all the contributions made to the plan. Georgia Defined Contribution "Application for Refund of Contribution Form" is available online at [http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index\\_forms.php](http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index_forms.php). Employees terminating

employment with the University of West Georgia must complete a refund form in order to have their contributions refunded from this plan.

### **Provisional Period for New Hires, Transfers and Rehires**

With the exception of certain University Police employees, each new classified employee is required to serve the first six (6) months of employment at the University of West Georgia in a provisional status. During this time, the new employee has the first opportunity to evaluate the University as a place to work. The supervisor is strongly encouraged to evaluate the employee's job performance during the provisional period. If the employee's work performance is not satisfactory, the employee will be notified in writing during the six month provisional period *and the employee may be terminated at that time without the right of appeal.*

In the event of an approved leave of greater than thirty (30) days, an equivalent extension of the provisional period may be granted with the approval of the Chief Human Resources Officer. An extension should be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and in no instance shall the provisional period be extended such that the total provisional period would exceed nine (9) months. University System employees transferring to another University System institution or the University System Office are subject to a new six (6) month provisional period upon beginning at the new location. University Police employees are subject to the same provisional employment requirement as other classified employees, except that the six month provisional period will not begin until any person employed as a police officer has completed his/her mandated training for certification as a police officer. This special provision only applies to those University Police employees for whom specified training is mandated by state law and such training occurs after their employment begins.

Employees in the six-month provisional period are only eligible for transfer or promotion within their current department/college/division during that period and only when granted permission by the department head, dean/vice president of their current department/college/division.

Employees who have successfully completed a provisional period and who are transferring or being promoted into a new position within the University of West Georgia will not be subject to another provisional period.

Former employees who are rehired will be considered new employees and will have another provisional period.

### **Termination Guidelines**

#### **Involuntary Termination**

Staff employees may be terminated at any time based upon failure to meet the conditions of employment. The University of West Georgia encourages all supervisors to follow the performance improvement process; however, there are certain offenses that warrant immediate termination. Those offenses should be discussed with employees by their supervisors. When notified of termination, the employee must return all University property and must leave the University premises by the date specified.

#### **Reduction in Force**

Should it become necessary to reduce the work force at the University, job eliminations or job consolidation may be required. When personnel reductions become necessary, affected employees will be given 90 days notice when possible so that they may seek employment elsewhere within or outside of the University of West Georgia. Classified employees who are

terminated, demoted or otherwise adversely affected by reorganization, redirection, program modification or financial exigency, as approved or determined by the University President or designee, are not governed by the procedures described in the Grievance Process.

### **Rehire after Termination**

Former employees who are terminated are generally not eligible for rehire. However, former employees who were terminated may request the Chief Human Resources officer to review the case and determine eligibility for rehire six months from the effective date of the termination. A decision will be rendered after a review of the employee's work records at the University and other information as deemed appropriate.

### **Resignation**

Resignation is voluntary relinquishment of employment by an employee. An employee should submit written notification of termination a minimum of two weeks prior to his or her last day worked. Before leaving, the employee must return all University property including keys, I.D. cards, etc. Employees who resign for any reason are requested to give as much notice as possible. See Clearance/Exit Interview.

### **Retirement**

No staff member may be required to retire because of age. The requirements for retirement under TRS can be found in the BOR Policy Manual. Employees planning retirement are encouraged to discuss their plans with representatives in the Human Resources Office well in advance of their planned retirement dates.

[http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/policy/8.2.8\\_retirement/](http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/policy/8.2.8_retirement/) <http://www.trsga.com/>

## **CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION GUIDELINES**

University of West Georgia's classification and compensation program for classified staff employees is administered by the Classification and Pay Analyst in the Department of Human Resources. The program consists of a Pay Plan and BCAT Classification System that are designed to group positions that have similar duties, levels of responsibility, skills and educational requirements into the same general levels of pay. The pay rates for each job title are determined by the knowledge, training, skills and level of responsibility and risk assigned to that position. In addition, every effort is made to ensure equitable salary ranges are in keeping with other universities in the University System of Georgia and similar positions in the local, regional and national markets.

### **BCAT Classification System**

The BCAT system is based on general job categories that are linked to the Federal Integrated Postsecondary Education and Data System (IPEDS) job classifications. Every employee's job title is assigned a specific BCAT Identification code. The BCAT system uses a logic that assembles similar types of positions by function allowing institutions to "customize" their campus working titles and to build compensation programs appropriate to their own competitive job markets.

### **General Pay Plan**

The Pay Plan consists of pay grades which provide a means for the University to group comparable positions together into common ranges of pay based on job scope, complexity and other factors. The salaries for similar positions should fall within a designated range, or pay grade. The ranges overlap, but each range specifies three guide points:

- A Minimum (all individuals would expect to make at least this pay level)
- A Midpoint (a benchmark to the external market for similar positions)
- A Maximum (the most that someone would expect to make for a position at a particular pay level)

## **Employment Classification**

All employee job titles at the University of West Georgia are assigned a Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status of either exempt or non-exempt.

### **Exempt**

Exempt status is assigned to positions that are not eligible for overtime pay as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employees in executive, administrative, and professional positions are typically exempt under the FLSA and are paid a designated salary, regardless of the number of hours they might work in a week. Such positions are hence "exempt" from the FLSA. Exempt employees are not entitled to additional pay or compensatory time off for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a given work week. Any schedule adjustments for an exempt employee must be approved by his/her immediate supervisor.

### **Non-Exempt**

Non-exempt employees are subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and are eligible to be compensated for hours worked in excess of 40 per week. Employees that are assigned non-exempt status must complete timesheets and be paid on an hourly basis for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek. If non-exempt employees work more than 40 hours in the workweek, they must be paid overtime at a rate of time-and-a-half. *WORKING OVERTIME MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE SUPERVISOR OR DEPARTMENT HEAD. Failure to have over-time approved may result in disciplinary action.*

## **Job Postings**

Human Resources posts position announcements on the UWG Human Resources site with a current listing of classified and temporary position vacancies. Employees are encouraged to use the website below as a resource for potential promotion or transfer opportunities. The position openings can be accessed online at <https://jobs.westga.edu>

A posted position may specify that it is restricted to applicants within the University of West Georgia community. Such a vacancy will be indicated for "internal applicants only". Internal applicants include regular classified staff and full time casual labor employees. If a position holds a title that has been identified in the University of West Georgia Affirmative Action Plan as underutilized by minorities or women, the vacancy must be posted externally. If a position is not deemed to be underutilized, the hiring manager may select either internal (only regular staff members may apply) or external recruitment (anyone can apply).

## **Employment in Multiple Positions**

Employees of the University of West Georgia may be employed in only one full-time position or classification within the University System of Georgia at any given time. If an employee wishes to accept another position in addition to a current position at the University or within the University System of Georgia, the following rules will apply:



The combined work time for both positions cannot exceed 100 percent of full time status (or 40 hours per week). Both positions must be the same FLSA classification, either exempt or non-exempt. Acceptance of the second position must be approved by the employee's department head and the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee. Questions concerning specific circumstances should be directed to the Human Resources Department for more detailed information.

### **Salary Increases and Adjustments**

Salary increases and/or adjustment moneys are dependent on the University's allocation from the Board of Regents through the State of Georgia legislative appropriations process.

A classified employee (classified employees are defined as benefit eligible employees who are not identified as faculty) must complete his/her six month provisional period before being eligible for promotion, demotion or lateral transfer. In order to be entitled to receive a merit increase, classified employees must be employed a minimum of three months prior to the preparation of the fiscal year budget.

There are typically five types of salary increases and salary adjustments:

- 1. Merit:** A merit increase is a performance-based salary increase.
- 2. Market Adjustments:** A form of salary increase based on criteria other than merit. This adjustment could be to establish equity within a unit or vice presidential area or an adjustment based on market conditions. The institution does not receive any additional funding for these adjustments and must do internal shifting of moneys whenever these types of salary increases are awarded.
- 3. Promotions:** A promotion is defined as a shift of an employee from one position to another position on a higher pay grade than his/her current position. The amount offered for a promotion cannot be less than the new pay plan minimum but any additional moneys are dependent on the departmental budget.

When an employee is promoted due to ***applying for an advertised position*** the employee may receive any amount up to:

- a. the minimum of the pay plan
- b. the difference between the two pay plan minimums added to his/her current salary/or
- c. with HR approval up to the midpoint of the pay plan
- d. with Vice President of Division of Business & Finance approval, any amount above the midpoint of the pay plan.

When an employee is promoted ***due to reclassification*** the employee receives up to:

- a. the minimum of the pay plan
- b. the difference between the two pay plan minimums added to his/her current salary/or
- c. with HR approval up to 15% above the minimum of the pay plan

The department head must prepare written justification and submit to the Human Resources Generalist. Criteria for additional money should be based on an employee's exceptional experience and/or education.

#### **4. Demotions or Lateral Transfers**

**Demotion:** A demotion is when an employee is selected to fill a vacant position with a lower pay grade. Whenever this occurs, Human Resources will determine, in consultation with the hiring manager, a rate of pay at any point from the minimum rate of the new job classification's pay grade up to the present salary of the employee, provided that the present salary does not exceed the maximum amount authorized for the new job classification. Whenever an employee is demoted he or she cannot receive a pay increase. The salary rate may also depend on departmental funding and is linked to the vacant position, not the employee's current rate of pay.

**Lateral Transfer:** A lateral transfer is when an employee moves from one position to another position that is on the same pay grade regardless of the title of the new position. When an employee is moved to a lateral position due to either applying for an advertised position or via the reclassification process the employee may:

- a. transfer at his current rate, provided it does not exceed the maximum of the pay grade
- b. with HR approval, receive up to the midpoint of the pay plan
- c. with Vice President of Division of Business & Finance approval, receive any amount above the midpoint of the pay plan.

The department head must prepare written justification and submit to Human Resources. Criteria for additional money should be based on an employee's exceptional experience and/or education.

#### **5. Temporary Salary Increases**

The institution authorizes supplemental compensation on a case by case basis. There are times an employee is asked to perform duties outside his/her normal scope of responsibility or absorb work previously performed by an employee who has resigned or is on an extended leave of absence. If these duties are ongoing it may be necessary to provide a temporary supplement to the employee. This supplement does not become part of the employee's base compensation, and it ceases when the temporary assignment is over. This supplement is subject to approval by Human Resources.

The following conditions apply:

- Whenever an employee is asked to assume additional duties or duties with a higher level of responsibility or complexity, the period of time should not exceed six months.
- The amount of the supplement may be affected by departmental funding availability.

#### **Job Evaluation Process**

The University's job evaluation process is designed to maintain consistency in the utilization of various job titles. This process ensures that employees performing similar duties have the same or similar job titles with corresponding pay levels. The job evaluation process requires a comparative analysis of a position to determine if the current classification and/or compensation levels are appropriate. The job

evaluation process also includes the review of required knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform duties assigned to a position. A review of current market data may be required during the job evaluation process as a means of obtaining the University's goals in:

- Attracting and retaining qualified individuals by matching job skills with the assigned position
- Ensuring that internal and external equity issues are addressed
- Encouraging professional growth for employees
- Recognizing necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities required for a position
- Ensuring that the employee is appropriately compensated

### **Job Analysis and Job Audit**

Generally, a position only needs to be reviewed if its duties have changed significantly over time or if substantive new duties have been assumed that are beyond the scope of what generally might be expected for a position with the current title. If an employee believes his position should be reviewed for reclassification, the employee should discuss the possibility with his immediate supervisor. If the manager concurs, contact Human Resources for assistance with the process of modifying the position description within PeopleAdmin. Employees may be asked or may offer to help describe the duties they perform so that their managers can fully reflect the current scope of their responsibilities. The Classification and Compensation Analyst in Human Resources will review the information provided and make any recommendations to the manager or supervisor in the college or department.

### **PAYROLL GUIDELINES**

#### **Payroll Deductions**

Each employee's paycheck will have specific deductions as required by law, University of West Georgia regulation and/or at the employee's request as listed below:

##### **Required Deductions:**

- Federal and State Income Taxes
- Social Security (FICA), if applicable
- Medicare (FICA), If applicable
- Teachers Retirement System Contributions or Optional Retirement Plan Contributions
- Georgia Defined Contribution (7.5% of gross pay – for Temporary Employees Only)

##### **Optional Deductions (This list is not all-inclusive):**

- Credit Union savings or loan payments
- State Charitable Contributions Program
- U.S. Savings Bonds
- Tax-Sheltered Annuity contributions under 403(b) of Internal Revenue Code

- 457 Deferred Compensation Plan
- Insurance premiums
- Annual Fund campaign gifts
- Dependent Care Spending Account contributions
- Flexible Medical Spending Account contributions
- Health Savings Account (HSA) Contributions
- Recreation Center membership fee

All temporary employees are exempt from Teacher Retirement System contributions and Optional Retirement Plan contributions and are not eligible for insurance benefits, but do participate in the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan. Regular employees working less than half time are not eligible for insurance or retirement benefits.

### **Garnishments, Withholding and Debt Repayment**

The University considers the acceptance and settlement of just and honest debt to be a mark of personal responsibility. The University is required by law to accept and process garnishments served by officials of the court. Failure to meet financial obligations causes discredit to the University. Repeated instances of default in the payment of debt, after appropriate counseling, are sufficient grounds to terminate employment for cause. The University is authorized to hold paychecks and/or deduct from regular paychecks or vacation pay amounts owed by its employees for any fine, fee, penalty or other financial obligation to the institution.

### **ADP/Timesheets**

Provisions of the Fair Labor and Standards Act require that non-exempt employees record and submit a record of the hours worked per workweek and per pay period. The official workweek for all nonexempt employees begins at 12:00 a.m. Saturday morning and ends at 11:59 p.m. Friday evening. Timesheets must reflect hours worked for each work week of the pay period and include all absences taken in the pay period.

Falsification of or failure to complete timesheets may result in failure to get paid and/or disciplinary action including termination. All time records must be approved by both an authorized reviewing authority and the employee.

### **Paychecks**

Non-exempt, bi-weekly staff and temporary employees are compensated for all hours worked on every other Friday. These hours are worked through midnight the Friday before payday. Exempt employees (monthly employees) are compensated on the last business day of each month.

For those employees receiving a paper paycheck, please note that these checks are no longer issued from the University payroll office. Paper paychecks will be issued and mailed from the ADP processing center in Alpharetta, Georgia. These checks will be mailed to the home/ mailing address on file in the ADP system. We cannot guarantee that you will receive your paycheck on the scheduled pay date.

If you have not received your paycheck after five business days, please contact the Human Resources office to arrange for issuance of a replacement check. The reissue process takes at least 24 hours.

If you are currently receiving a paper paycheck and would like to participate in direct deposit, please enter your banking information in the Direct Deposit panel under Pay and Taxes in your ADP profile.

### **Overtime Pay**

Overtime pay is calculated at one and a half times an employee's regular hourly rate of pay. Overtime pay is applicable for physical hours worked in excess of 40 in a work week. This applies only to hourly staff.

### **Direct Deposit**

All employees of the University are encouraged to use the automatic payroll deposit service which provides for the direct deposit of pay to a participating bank. Employees using direct deposit are required to complete an *Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposit of Net Pay* form available in the Human Resources Department or it can be entered online in ADP.

### **BENEFIT GUIDELINES**

The University of West Georgia offers benefits-eligible employees the opportunity to participate in various benefit plans provided by the Board of Regents and/or University of West Georgia, which include but are not limited to health insurance, dental insurance, basic life insurance, supplemental life insurance, disability income insurance, dependent life insurance, flexible spending accounts, health savings accounts, and retirement plans. The University contributes toward the premiums for health and life insurance and matches retirement contributions based upon terms set by the Georgia Legislature. The Human Resources office along with the Board of Regents provides each eligible employee with complete descriptions and comparisons of the available benefit plans, along with the respective monthly premiums. For specific information on the available benefit plans, please refer to either the Human Resources webpage at [http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index\\_benefits.php](http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index_benefits.php) or the University System of Georgia's website, located at [www.usg.edu/hr/benefits](http://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits).

### **Benefits Eligibility**

To be considered "benefits-eligible", an individual must be appointed to a regular faculty or staff position that has an anticipated duration of six months or more, and is at least half-time (.5 FTE for staff and .38 FTE for academic year faculty). Benefits-eligible faculty and staff may cover their spouses and eligible dependent children.

### **New Employees**

New benefits-eligible employees may enroll in available benefit plans within the first 30 days of employment. Employees who do not enroll in benefit plans within the first 30 days of employment must wait until the annual open enrollment period to enroll. Employees should be aware that their first 30 days of employment may be their only opportunity to enroll in certain benefits. The Human Resources Office will notify you of any benefits which fall into that category. Additionally, enrollment in certain benefit plans during the Open Enrollment period may be based upon the approval of a medical underwriting review and evidence of insurability.

### **Eligible Dependents**

Eligible dependents for health insurance purposes include the spouse and dependent children up to age 26. When adding dependants, it will be required that employees present a marriage license for spouses, birth certificate for children, or other document establishing a dependent relationship as a condition of their coverage.

## **Health Insurance**

New employees who are benefits-eligible have 30 days from their date of hire to select a medical plan. On an annual basis, the University offers an Open Enrollment period. During Open Enrollment, employees may change their healthcare plan elections and/or levels of coverage. The University pays a share of the cost of healthcare coverage. The employee must pay the remaining portion of the premium through payroll deduction. Premiums for medical insurance are withheld from the payroll check on a pretax basis.

## **Dental Insurance**

The University provides a voluntary dental program for all eligible employees, which must be selected within the first 30 days of employment with the University. The employee pays 100% of the monthly premium and the premium is withheld from the payroll check on a pre-tax basis.

## **Life Insurance**

### **Group Basic Life Insurance**

The University provides \$25,000 of basic life insurance for all benefits-eligible employees at no cost to the employee. The basic life insurance plan is also a double-indemnity plan, meaning that the \$25,000 payment will be doubled in the event of accidental death.

### **Supplemental Life Insurance**

Eligible employees may purchase supplemental life insurance through the same program in increments of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 times their annual salary. The premiums are based on the age of the insured and the amount of coverage selected. This is optional coverage is paid by the employee. Supplemental Life is a double indemnity plan that would be doubled in the event of accidental death.

### **Dependent Life Insurance**

Eligible employees may also insure their dependents (spouse & children). Dependent life is a \$10,000 policy for your spouse and each of your children between the ages of six months and 19 (26 if they are unmarried, full-time students at an accredited institution). The premiums for the dependent life insurance plan are paid by the employee via payroll deduction.

### **Acceptance and Continuation Policy**

The supplemental and dependent life insurance plans are guaranteed to be accepted IF the employee enrolls during the initial 30 day period. After the first 30 days of employment, evidence of insurability will be required to acquire coverage.

## **Disability Income Insurance**

Eligible employees may participate in short-term and/or long-term disability income insurance. These voluntary plans allow employees to receive a monthly benefit if they become disabled (physician certification required). Employees pay the full premium for disability insurance through payroll deduction.

## **Vision**

Eligible employees may choose to participate in a vision insurance plan which provides coverage for primary vision care benefits including eye examinations, prescription eyewear, and contact lenses through a broad-based provider network.

## **Section 125 Plan**

University of West Georgia participates in a Section 125 Plan as authorized by the Internal Revenue Code. Employee health, dental, and flexible spending account premiums and Health Savings Account contributions are deducted on a pre-tax basis and are not subject to federal tax, state tax or FICA. The choices made by a new employee or during the annual open enrollment period must remain in effect for the entire plan year (January 1 – December 31), unless the employee has a mid-year qualifying event.

The annual open enrollment period normally occurs during the month of October or November with coverage dates effective January 1 of the following calendar year. A Benefits Fair is held during the open enrollment period to give employees the opportunity to gather benefits information and talk with the various providers before the open enrollment period ends.

## **Qualifying Events for Mid-Year Changes**

The IRS regulation, under Section 125, has strict rules regarding the operation of these plans. Exceptions are permitted under IRS rules when a member has a qualifying event during the plan year. Employees are required to notify the Human Resources Department within 30 days of the qualifying event and provide appropriate documentation to make mid-year changes. Some examples of plan year qualifying events include:

- Change in marital status
- Birth or adoption of a child
- Death of a covered dependent
- Loss of eligibility status by a covered dependent
- Change in employment status that affects eligibility for coverage
- Losing or gaining healthcare coverage eligibility under Medicare or Medicaid
- Change in residence to a location outside of a healthcare plan's service

## **Transfer of benefits to another Unit within the University System of Georgia**

To transfer benefits to another unit of the University System of Georgia, there must not be a break in service over 30 days and the effective date may not be a holiday. All benefit plans offered by the Board of Regents carry over to an employee's new employment. Plans which are unique to the University of West Georgia may not be transferred to an employee's new employment.

For employees with accrued vacation of 20 (160 hours) or fewer days, the employee must transfer to the new unit all accrued vacation up to 20 days (160 hours). For employees with accrued vacation of greater than 20 days (160 hours), an employee may elect one of the following options:

Transfer of the total accrued vacation balance, not to exceed 45 days (360 hours); or Receive payment from the former institution of accrued vacation leave in excess of 20 days (160 hours). The total accrued vacation leave for which the employee may be paid shall not exceed 25 days (200 hours). An employee must transfer accumulated sick leave if there is not a break in service of over 30 days.

### **Continuing Benefit Plans at Termination (COBRA)**

Terminating employees will retain insurance benefits through the end of the month that employment is terminated, provided the full premiums have been paid. Under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), employees may elect to continue medical or dental coverage for up to 18 months. In special instances, the 18 month period may be extended. COBRA election must be made within 60 days from the date COBRA notification is received. Terminating employees will receive notification and COBRA information in the mail.

- **Disabled Status**

If a qualified beneficiary is determined to be disabled under Title II or XVI of the Social Security Act at the time employment ended and the plan administrator is notified within 60 days, the qualified beneficiary may elect continuation for up to 29 months following the termination of employment.

- **Dependents**

A spouse of an employee whose coverage ends due to divorce or a child who reaches the maximum age for coverage as a dependent may continue coverage for thirty-six (36) months. COBRA Election must be made within sixty (60) days from the date the COBRA notification is received. The cost for COBRA dependents is 100 percent of the total premium, plus a 2% administrative fee. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that premiums are paid in a timely manner. This premium must be paid on time each month, or COBRA coverage will be discontinued. Cobra is administered through ADP.

### **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)**

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is available to full-time, benefits-eligible employees of the University System of Georgia who have successfully completed at least six (6) months of employment in a benefits-eligible position as of the date of the TAP application deadline for the desired academic semester.

Employees are required to go through the regular student admissions process prior to applying for TAP. Employees must complete a TAP application and return it to the Human Resources office by the deadline for each semester in attendance. Employees may seek approval to enroll in up to nine (9) academic semester credit hours for each of the three designated semester periods: Fall Semester, Spring Semester, and Summer Semester.

For complete policy reference and TAP forms: [http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index\\_2452.php](http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index_2452.php)

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

The University of West Georgia, as a unit of the University System of Georgia, provides limited liability insurance protection to its employees while in the conduct of the business of the University. This insurance covers employees' legal liability to others for personal or bodily injury and property damage resulting from actions or inactions of an employee of the University of West Georgia acting within the scope of his or her employment. The Office of the Attorney General will defend the employee from



such claims under most circumstances. Additional information may be obtained from the University of West Georgia Risk Management office.

### **Retirement Plans**

All state employees, excluding student employees, must be part of a state sponsored retirement system and/or Social Security during their employment with the University of West Georgia. Georgia law requires membership in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS) or an Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) for all benefits-eligible employees. Employees eligible for the optional retirement plans have 60 days from their hire date to make an election. The employees must either opt to participate in the Optional Retirement Plan or the Teachers Retirement Plan. This election is irrevocable. Non-exempt (hourly paid) employees are required to participate in the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia. Exempt (monthly paid) employees may choose either the TRS or the ORP. Employees who fail to make an election within 60 days of their original hire date will be enrolled in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia.

The State of Georgia created a retirement plan for temporary employees called the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan. When employment ends with the University of West Georgia, the temporary employee will be entitled to a refund of all the contributions made to the "GA Defined Contribution Plan."

### **Social Security**

Terms, conditions, requirements, reservations, benefits, privileges, and other conditions of Title II of The Social Security Act, as amended, apply to all officers and employees of the University System except those specifically excluded under the agreements with the Employee Retirement System of Georgia.

### **Employees Covered by Social Security**

All employees eligible for the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia and Optional Retirement Plan will make contributions to Social Security.

### **Employees Subject to the Medicare Portion of Social Security Only**

The following employees are subject to the Medicare portion of Social Security only:

- Temporary, seasonal or intermittent employees who are employed at an hourly rate of pay, including part-time instructors who participate in GA Defined Contribution.
- Employees working less than half-time

### **Employees Not Covered by Social Security**

Non-resident aliens may be exempt in accordance with their visas. Student employees are also exempt from Social Security Tax.

### **Georgia Defined Contribution Plan**

Temporary employees contribute 7.5% of their wages to the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (GDGP), which is the State equivalent of Social Security. For complete policy reference:

<http://www.ers.ga.gov/plans/gdcp/gdcpmain.aspx>

Employees terminating with the University of West Georgia must complete a refund form in order to receive a refund of their contributions to GDCP. The form to request a refund is available online at: [http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index\\_forms.php](http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index_forms.php) . All refund applications must be returned to the Human Resources Department for processing.

### **Teachers Retirement System of Georgia**

The Teachers Retirement System of Georgia is a defined benefit plan. All regular employees who work 1/2 time or more are eligible. Employee and employer contribution rates are set annually by the USG Board of Regents. Employee contributions are deducted from salary before federal and state income taxes (pre-tax dollars) are paid on contributions. Federal and State of Georgia income tax is deferred until the account is withdrawn or retirement benefits are received. Employees who leave the University before retirement are advised to investigate their options regarding the TRS funds. All withdrawals of funds (not including rollovers) are subject to additional tax and penalties. The form to request a refund or rollover of contributions is available either in the Human Resources office, or online at: <http://www.trsga.com/>

- Vesting

Vesting in the Teachers Retirement System occurs at ten (10) years of service. Service may also be purchased for teaching in the public schools of Georgia, State of Georgia employment, maternity leave and study leave. Up to five years credit may be obtained for service in the armed forces of the United States during periods of national emergency. After six years of Georgia service, credit may be purchased for out-of-state teaching in public schools or colleges. Please contact TRS for additional information.

- Eligibility for Retirement

Eligibility for retirement is governed by the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia and the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents policy reference can be found at: [http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/policy/8.2.8\\_retirement/](http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/policy/8.2.8_retirement/)

- Early Disability Retirement

Permanent disability retirement is available at any age if the member has at least 9 1/2 years of service in the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia.

### **Optional Retirement Plan (Regents Retirement Plan)**

The Optional Retirement Plan is available to exempt employees hired after June 30, 2008, faculty and certain key administrators who work 1/2 time or more. The employee and employer contribution rates are set by the Board of Regents. This contribution rate is applicable regardless of the source of salary. Employee contributions are deducted from salary before federal and state income taxes (pre-tax dollars) are paid on the contributions. Federal and State of Georgia income tax is deferred until the account is withdrawn or retirement benefits are received.

Contributions may be distributed among several funds offered by Fidelity, TIAA-CREF, and Valic. Members may change companies once per quarter. Employees eligible for the Optional Retirement Plan have 60 days from their hire date to make an election. This election is irrevocable.

- Vesting

Vesting in the Optional Retirement Plan is immediate. Since vesting is immediate, the total funds, including the state's contributions, remain in the member's name for his or her ultimate retirement.

Every dollar set aside by the University for the member will remain in the fund, even if employment is terminated. If the member becomes permanently and totally disabled or dies, all monies in the fund, including the State's contribution and appreciation or depreciation of the funds, would be made available to the member or the named beneficiary.

- Eligibility for Retirement

Eligibility for retirement is governed by the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents policy reference can be found in the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia Policy Manual, section 802.0902-- *Definition of a University System of Georgia Retiree and Eligibility for Retirement*.

### **Voluntary Supplemental Retirement Accounts**

The University of West Georgia provides 2 voluntary retirement programs to eligible employees. The following two programs allow employees to set aside additional funds for retirement on pre-tax bases.

#### **Tax-Sheltered Annuity Plans {403(b)}**

Most employees\* are eligible to participate in a voluntary tax-deferred annuity plan offered through the University of West Georgia under provision 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). This plan allows participants to direct a portion of their income, on a tax-deferred basis, into any of a number of investment vehicles such as annuity contracts and mutual funds. Taxes are deferred until their money is withdrawn - usually upon retirement (withdrawal prior to retirement age carries a penalty). Employees make the full contribution, via salary reduction (there are no employer contributions). Employees may enroll or change their elections for the 403(b) plan at any time, including during the annual benefits open enrollment period. In general terms, employees may set aside an additional amount based on current IRS guidelines. Employees age 50 or older may set aside up to an additional \$5,000. The annual contribution is allocated equally across the number of paychecks an employee receives during the year for his/her base salary. The current 403b vendors are Fidelity, TIAA-CREF, and VALIC. *\*Tax treaties generally disallow non-immigrant foreign nationals who work in the U.S. from excluding such contributions from their taxable income, so there is no advantage to participation.*

#### **Deferred Compensation Plans {457(b)}**

The University of West Georgia offers a voluntary deferred compensation plan under provision 457(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). This plan allows employees to defer a portion of their income, on a tax-sheltered basis, into any of a number of investment vehicles. Taxes are deferred until the money is withdrawn. Unlike a 403(b) plan, withdrawals at times other than retirement do not carry an additional penalty. Employees make the full contributions, via salary reduction (there are no employer contributions). Employees may enroll or change their elections for the 457(b) plan at anytime, including during the annual Benefits Open Enrollment period. In general terms, employees may set-aside up to the current IRS mandated limit in a 457(b) Plan. Employees who are age 50 or older may set aside an additional amount based on current IRS guidelines. The deferral is allocated equally across the number of paychecks an employee receives during the year for his/her base salary. There are two authorized vendors offering a variety of investment options: TIAA-CREF and VALIC. Employees may participate in both the 403(b) and the 457(b) plans.

### **Healthcare Savings Account**

The Healthcare Savings Account (HSA) may be used to cover the cost of medical, dental, and related expenses that are not otherwise paid by insurance (i.e., healthcare and dental plan deductibles and qualifying out-of-pocket medical & dental expenses that fall outside your plan's coverage). Employees must enroll in the high deductible health plan to be eligible for an HSA. Annual contribution limits are

set by the Internal Revenue Service. Any unspent funds left in the account after the end of the plan year will roll over into the next year.

### **Flexible Spending Accounts**

Medical Spending Accounts allow an employee to set aside funds on a pre-tax basis to cover the cost of medical, dental and related expenses that are not otherwise paid by insurance (i.e., health care and dental plan deductibles and qualifying out of pocket medical and dental expenses that fall outside your plan's coverage. Any unspent funds left in the account after the end of the plan year will be forfeited.

### **Dependent Care Spending Account**

The Dependent Care Flexible Spending account may be used to cover the cost of qualifying childcare, eldercare, or care of other legal dependents. Employees may enroll within 31 days of being hired or during the annual Benefits Open Enrollment period. Note that setting up a Dependent Care FSA can save employees substantial tax dollars on predictable childcare costs. However, employees are forewarned - **Any** unspent funds left in the account after the end of the plan year must be forfeited. Under the law, the combined dependent care contributions of both parents **cannot** exceed the maximum allowable election set by the IRS.

### **Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan**

Employees may participate in the Georgia Higher Education Savings Plan by payroll deduction. The program, known as a 529 Plan, is administered by TIAA-CREF. It allows employees to set aside money for higher education expenses - for their children, grandchildren, or other beneficiaries of their choice (including themselves). Under current law, any earnings grow tax-free in the account and are tax-free when withdrawn and used for education purposes. Employees who participate in the program may also be eligible for a state tax credit for such contributions. Participation in the Georgia plan does not mean that the beneficiary must attend college in Georgia. The fund may be used for qualified higher education expenses at accredited postsecondary institutions across the country. For more information call 1-877-424-4377.

### **Appealing Denied Benefit Claims**

Denied benefit claims must be contested directly through the benefits provider. For additional information please contact Human Resources.

## **ANNUAL LEAVE, SICK LEAVE AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

### **Time-off Benefits**

Time-off benefits are provided to eligible employees of the University for a variety of reasons, including rest and enjoyment, jury/witness duty, illness, etc. The University has designed a comprehensive time-off benefits program.

### **Holidays**

The University of West Georgia observes 12 official paid holidays each year. An exact schedule of these holidays is published each year by the University administration. This schedule can be found on the UWG website at: [http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index\\_13837.php](http://www.westga.edu/hrpay/index_13837.php). These holidays are observed in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by the University. Student assistants, graduate assistants, part time instructors and temporary non-students are not eligible to receive holiday pay. To receive pay for the holidays, an employee must be in pay status the day before and the day after

the holiday. A terminating employee will not be paid for any official holiday occurring after the last working day of his or her employment.

## **Annual Leave (Vacation)**

### **Eligibility**

Regular, full-time and part-time benefits-eligible employees are eligible to accrue vacation hours. Full-time employees accrue 10 hours vacation per month for the first five years of employment. After the completion of the 5th year of service, vacation will accrue at 12 hours per month. Employees with 10 or more years of service will accrue at 14 hours per month. Regular employees working at least one-half time but less than full time earn and accrue vacation hours in an equivalent ratio to their work commitment. Temporary employees, including student assistants, graduate assistants, part-time instructors, and regular employees who work less than one-half time do not earn or accrue annual leave. An employee must be in pay status on or before the 15th of the month to accrue leave for that month. Leave is accrued on the last working day of the month. An employee must have a sufficient leave balance from prior months to cover the hours taken through the last day of the vacation. Otherwise, the employee will be in a Leave Without Pay status. *Annual Leave time may be taken at times mutually acceptable to an employee and his/her immediate supervisor.*

### **Carryover of Unused Vacation Days**

On December 31 of each calendar year, each employee's leave record shall be adjusted to reflect no more than 45 days (360 hours) of accrued vacation/annual leave. Any hours in excess of 360 will be forfeited.

### **Terminal Vacation Pay**

All unused, accrued vacation/annual leave, not to exceed 45 days (360 hours), shall be paid to an employee upon his/her termination from employment. If any portion of an employee's compensation is funded by a grant or other funding sources, the terms set forth by the grant or funding partner will determine if the payout of vacation hours is permitted. An employee who terminates on or after the fifteenth of a month shall accrue vacation/annual leave for that month.

### **Record of Earned Annual Leave**

Accrued vacation and sick time can be viewed in ADP. Employees are responsible for checking balances periodically. All leave time taken will be documented in ADP on an employee's electronic time sheet.

## **SICK LEAVE**

### **Eligibility**

Regular, full-time and part-time benefits-eligible employees are eligible to accrue sick leave hours. Regular employees working at least one-half time but less than full time earn and accrue vacation hours in an equivalent ratio to their work commitment. Full-time employees accrue eight (8) hours of sick leave per month. Sick leave may be granted at the discretion of the institution and upon approval by the supervisor for an employee's absence for any of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the employee;
- Medical and dental treatment or consultation;
- Quarantine due to a contagious illness in the employee's household; or
- Illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family requiring the employee's presence.

An employee must be in pay status on or before the 15th of the month to accrue leave for that month. Leave is accrued on the last working day of the month. An employee must have a sufficient leave balance from prior months to cover the hours taken through the last day of the absence. Otherwise, the employee will be in a Leave Without Pay status. Employees are not to perform University related tasks while on sick leave.

### **Annual Allowance and Accumulation**

For all regular full-time employees, sick leave shall be accumulated at the rate of one 8 hour work day per calendar month of service. Regular part-time employees working one-half time or more will accumulate sick leave in an equivalent ratio to the percentage of their work commitment. Sick leave for employees shall be cumulative. Temporary employees, including student assistants, graduate assistants, part-time instructors, and regular employees who work less than one-half time do not earn or accrue sick leave.

### **Reporting Absences Due to Illness**

Employees are expected to report all absences due to illness or injury directly to their supervisors or department heads as soon as possible and should indicate probable length of absence so that schedule adjustments may be made. Employees absent for prolonged periods should communicate with their supervisors weekly, unless on approved leave of absence. Exempt employees' timesheets are due on the 10th of the current month, for leave taken the previous month.

### **Physician's Statement**

If an employee is out of work due to illness or care of an ill relative for five consecutive days, a physician's statement is required covering the dates of absence upon return to work. Under some circumstances, supervisors may require an employee to provide a physician's statement for sick leave absences for less than five days.

### **Physician's Return to Work Certification**

Supervisors reserve the right to request a release from a physician to allow an employee to return to work. Such certification may also be requested of employees returning from FMLA leave.

### **Donated Sick Leave Pool**

The purpose of the Donated Leave Program is to provide a means for University employees to donate paid sick leave to a leave pool. The pool of donated leave is available to be used by fellow University employees who are eligible for and require leave while experiencing a life-threatening or emergency medical condition. Use of leave from the pool keeps eligible employees from taking leave without pay during their time of crisis.

For Complete policy reference: [http://www.bf.westga.edu/HRPay/Leave\\_Pool\\_Policy.asp](http://www.bf.westga.edu/HRPay/Leave_Pool_Policy.asp)

### **Sick Leave without Pay**

Any employee unable to return to work after exhausting all accumulated sick leave and accrued vacation leave may request sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one year. This additional sick leave may be granted at the discretion of the department and will be without pay. If additional sick leave is approved by the department, the employee will have the option to continue his or her group insurance benefits while on sick leave. The institution will continue to pay its share of the cost for such period, but the employee must continue to pay his or her share of premiums. Upon return from approved, unpaid sick leave, the employee will be restored to his or her original position, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. UWG cannot guarantee that an employee will be returned to his or her original job. Should an employee be unable to return to work after being granted sick leave without pay for one year, the employee will be terminated. During an unpaid leave status, vacation and sick leave benefits will not continue to accrue.

### **Terminating Sick Leave**

A terminating employee shall not be paid for any sick leave earned but not taken. However, employees retiring may use accumulated sick leave to earn additional service time with the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia.

### **Workers Compensation**

All employees of the University of West Georgia are covered under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. This act provides protection in the event of injury, illness or death that arises out of the course and scope of employment for the University. When an on-the-job injury or illness occurs, the employee should fill out a First Report of Injury form and/or notify his/her supervisor immediately. The supervisor will notify Risk Management or forward the injury form. If medical attention is required, treatment must be coordinated through our insurer. However, in the case of emergency, immediate treatment should be obtained from the nearest hospital emergency room. If emergency services are required, first contact the University Police at (678) 839-6000.

When an employee returns to work, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to inform Risk Management/Environmental Health & Safety immediately. Late notification of return to work status may result in incorrect payroll reporting for the employee.

Information on accident and reporting instructions for Workers' Compensation can be found at: [http://www.westga.edu/cpf/index\\_2118.php](http://www.westga.edu/cpf/index_2118.php)

### **Administrative Leave**

Administrative leave is a leave of absence initiated by the University to deal with special circumstances in which it is desirable to continue an employee's association with the University for the period of the leave. Administrative leave may be with or without pay and carries no promise of future re-employment.

## **Family and Medical Leave**

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave each rolling 12-month period. A rolling 12-month period is defined as 12 months from the date of first absence. To be eligible, the employee must be employed for at least one year and have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

### **Family Leave Entitlement**

Employees may request Family Leave for the following events:

- Birth of a child
- Adoption of a child
- Serious health condition of employee's child, spouse, or parent
- Serious health condition of employee

A "serious health condition" means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves: any period of incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient hospital care (such as an overnight stay), hospice, or residential medical care facility; any period of incapacity requiring sporadic absences from work, school, or other regular daily activities that also involves continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider; or continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider for a chronic or long term health condition that is incurable or so serious, that if not treated, would likely result in a period of incapacity;

Spouses who are both employed by the University are jointly entitled to a combined total of 12 workweeks of family leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for a child or parent (but not parent "in law") who has a serious health condition. Leave for birth, adoption or foster care placement must conclude within 12 months of birth or placement. Under some circumstances, employees may take FMLA leave intermittently—which means taking leave in blocks of time, or by reducing the normal weekly or daily work schedule. When FMLA leave is for birth or placement for adoption or foster care, use of intermittent leave is subject to approval by the University of West Georgia. FMLA leave may be taken intermittently whenever it is medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member, or because the employee is seriously ill and unable to work.

Any paid sick leave used during FMLA must be medically necessary as defined by the treating physician.

### **Notice and Certification**

Employees seeking to use FMLA leave are required to:

- Provide 30-days advance notice to the HR Department of the need to take FMLA leave, when practicable. The HR Department will notify the supervisor of necessary action;
- Complete a Medical Leave Request with one of the following attached. *Required forms may be obtained from the Human Resources office:*
  - Employee's Medical Certification Statement



- Medical Certification Statement for the Illness of a Family Member; or Application for Family Leave (non-medical)
- Meet with the designated Human Resources Representative in the HR office.
- Provide periodic reports during FMLA leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work.
- The employee may be required to obtain a second or third medical certification, at the University of West Georgia's expense.

### **Paid vs. Unpaid Leave**

When taking FMLA leave, employees may choose to use either accumulated sick and/or annual leave based on the following criteria:

- Sick leave MUST be used when FMLA leave is due to the employee's own serious illness or to care for designated family member.
- Once all sick leave has been exhausted, the employee may elect to use all of his or her accrued annual leave or freeze the annual leave at any given point.
- The request to freeze annual leave must be documented with a signed memo from the employee. Once the annual leave has been exhausted or if accrued annual leave has been frozen, the remainder of the FMLA leave will be in an unpaid leave status.

### **Benefits coverage during Leave**

During the period of FMLA leave, an employee may retain health, dental, and life benefits under the same conditions that applied before the leave began. If an employee's share of insurance premiums cannot be deducted from his/her pay, the employee will be required to pay his or her share of insurance premiums each month while on leave. Failure to pay the employee share of the insurance premiums may result in loss of coverage.

### **Job Restoration**

Upon return from FMLA leave, the employee will be restored to his or her original position or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions. The University of West Georgia cannot guarantee that an employee will be returned to his or her original job. The employee's use of FMLA will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using FMLA leave. In an unpaid leave status, however, the employee will not continue to accrue vacation or sick leave benefits.

### **Return from Leave**

Employees must notify the Human Resources Department of their return to work date at least five (5) business days in advance of the return to work date. A statement from the employee's physician certifying that the employee is physically able to return to work is required on the employee's first day back to work. The employee is responsible for ensuring that the documentation is delivered to the HR Department - either in person, via e-mail or facsimile. Upon receipt of the statement and personnel action request, the employee will be added to payroll if he or she was on leave without pay. In some cases, the employee may be required

to provide a fitness for duty certificate prior to being restored to active status. If an employee wishes to return to work prior to the expiration of FMLA leave, notification must be given to the HR office at least five (5) business days prior to the employee's planned return. The employee must provide medical certification that he or she is able to return to work earlier than expected.

### **Extension of Leave**

An employee requesting an extension of leave due to the continuation, recurrence or onset of his or her own serious health condition or the serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child or parent must submit a request for an extension in writing to the HR Department. The maximum amount of FMLA leave that an employee may take during a rolling 12-month period is 12 weeks. The employee is required to notify the HR Office as soon as it is determined that he or she will not be able to return from leave as originally planned.

## **Military Leave**

### **Definition of Military Leave**

Military duty, for the purpose of these regulations, includes any ordered military duty in the service of the State of Georgia or the United States. This includes schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States.

### **Duration of Military Leave**

Regular benefit-eligible employees are entitled to 18 days of leave with pay while engaged in the performance of military duty including going to and from such duty during normal working hours. The maximum length of military leave with pay is 18 work days (144 hours) in any one federal fiscal year or continuous period. The maximum leave time without pay cannot exceed five (5) years. In order to receive the annual military leave with pay, the employee must provide a copy of his or her original orders and the supervisor must complete a Personnel Action Request Form (PAR).

### **Benefits during Military Leave**

At the expiration of maximum paid military leave time, continued absence by the employee shall be considered as military leave without pay. The employee may elect to exhaust accrued vacation leave hours prior to going on an unpaid leave status. During the period of military leave without pay, an employee may retain health, dental, and life benefits under the same conditions that applied before the leave began. If an employee's share of insurance premiums cannot be deducted from his/her pay, the employee will be required to pay his or her share of insurance premiums each month while on leave. Failure to pay the employee share of the insurance premiums may result in loss of coverage. Any regular employee required to take a Selective Service or military physical examination is eligible for paid military leave if the exam is scheduled during normal working hours. The employee must submit the documentation of the exam request to his or her supervisor.

### **Return from Military Leave**

The employee must provide advance notification to his department and Human Resources of the return-to-work date. Upon receipt of the statement, the individual will be reactivated on payroll if the individual was on leave without pay. Employees may be required to provide fitness-for-duty certification prior to being restored to active status. Failure to return from

leave for reasons other than a continued serious health condition may require the individual to repay the employer's contributions to healthcare premiums during the period the individual should have returned.

### **Maternity Leave**

Disability due to pregnancy is considered as any other disability and appropriate sick leave provisions of these policies apply. See Sick and/or Family and Medical Leave for further information.

### **Educational Leave**

The President or a designee may grant educational leave without pay to full-time employees who have at least one year of service at the time of requesting leave. Educational leave may not exceed one year at a time and is to be used for obtaining a degree or professional certification. Such approved leave allows the employee the right to elect to continue his or her group insurance benefits at the same employee rate the individual paid through payroll deduction. The employee will be required to pay his or her share of insurance premiums while on leave each month. Failure to pay the employee share of the insurance premiums may result in loss of coverage.

### **Death in the Family**

Regular employees working one-half time or more who have a death in the immediate family may, upon approval of his/her immediate supervisor, be allowed necessary time off with pay, chargeable to sick leave. The amount of time allowed shall be determined by the immediate supervisor based on individual circumstances. In the event of death in the immediate family, sick leave with pay may not exceed five working days. For purposes of leave granted in the event of a death, immediate family is defined to include husband or wife, partner, children, mother, father, sister, brother, the in-laws of the aforementioned, and certain other relatives when, in the judgment of the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee's presence is justified. Employees who work less than half time may be granted time off due to a death in the family. However, since such employees do not accrue sick or vacation leave, they will not be paid for time off due to a death in the family.

### **Court Duty**

Court duty leave with pay is granted to regular employees for the purpose of serving on a jury or as a witness. Such leave is granted upon presentation of official documentation from the appropriate court. A subpoena from the appropriate court qualifies as documentation as serving as a witness. A receipt from the appropriate court stating the number of days served qualifies as documentation for serving on a jury summons. Employees may retain juror or witness fees paid by the court. An employee appearing in court related to a personal matter will not be granted leave with pay but may take vacation time, if available.

### **Voting**

Employees are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right to vote in all federal, state, and local elections. If election polls are not open at least two (2) hours before or two (2) hours after an employee's normally scheduled work shift, sufficient leave time, consisting of a two-hour block, will be granted to permit the employee to vote. Time off for voting should be coordinated with employee's immediate supervisor.

## **WORKPLACE PRACTICES**

### **Work Schedules**

The normal work week for a full time regular classified employee consists of 40 hours per week. Employees may, on occasion, have to work more or less than forty hours per week. In these instances, advance notice will be provided when permissible and the employee will be compensated for the hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The supervisor determines work hours for the employee according to the needs of the University. There may be instances when the needs of the University dictate a change in schedule. This change will be communicated to the employee by the supervisor with at least two weeks notice when possible. Breaks, including lunch or coffee breaks, will be communicated by the immediate supervisor. When awarded, breaks may not be skipped in order to leave early or come in late. The University reserves the right to change work schedules as necessary to meet changing departmental needs.

### **Attendance**

Each employee, exempt and non-exempt, is expected to adhere to his/her scheduled hours. The supervisor sets the work schedule. If the employee is unable to report to work as scheduled for any reason, the employee should promptly notify his/her supervisor. It is not sufficient to leave a message with a co-worker nor should the notification be made by a friend or family member except under emergency situations. Such notification should be made as far in advance as possible. Failure to give the appropriate notification may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **University Closing (Inclement Weather or Emergency)**

In the event of inclement weather or any emergency that jeopardizes the safety of employees, the President or designee of the University may declare leave with or without pay. In the case of inclement weather, the following details the procedures for advising faculty, staff, students and the metro community when weather conditions require closure or delays the opening of the University. These procedures will apply to both weekday and weekend activities. The communications protocols for closures or delayed openings of the University during periods of inclement weather are described below:

- If snow or ice falls during the night, the decision to close or delay opening will be communicated through four media: television, radio, the voice mail of the Office of University Relations, and the University of West Georgia web page.
- If snow or ice conditions develop during regular daytime working hours and a decision is made to cancel classes and close offices, the University community will be notified via broadcast announcements, and also through television, radio, the public safety voice mail, and University website.

Listed below is more specific information about the media that will be used to communicate University closures and delayed openings.

#### **Television Stations**

WXIA-TV (NBC), WSB-TV (ABC), WGCL-TV (CBS), WAGA-TV (FOX)

## **Radio Stations**

92.1 FM, 102.7 FM, 1440 AM

## **Web Site Notification**

University closings will also be posted on our web site at [www.uwg.edu](http://www.uwg.edu). We will do our best to inform employees as early as possible about the University's operating status during periods of inclement weather. Information on closing can also be obtained by calling University Police, (678) 839-6000 (day or night), or University Communications & Marketing, (678) 839-6464 (daytime only).

## **Personnel Action Request**

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that documentation reflecting salary payment is received in Human Resources in a timely manner. The supervisor must complete the Personnel Action Request (PAR) relating to salary payment. This form can be accessed at the link below. Scheduled deadlines are posted on the HR website. PARs received after the deadline may require an adjustment to the following paycheck.

*Supervisors must ensure that all new-hire paperwork is completed within three (3) business days of the employee's start date.*

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/budget/PAR\\_11\\_29\\_2010\\_fillable.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/budget/PAR_11_29_2010_fillable.pdf)

## **Time Records**

Provisions of the Fair Labor and Standards Act require that non-exempt employees record and submit time worked each pay period. The current official workweek for all non-exempt employees begins at 12:00 a.m. Saturday morning and ends at 11:59 p.m. Friday evening. Time records must reflect hours worked for each work week of the pay period and should include all absences during the pay period.

**ALL TIME RECORDS MUST BE APPROVED BY BOTH AN AUTHORIZED REVIEWING AUTHORITY AND THE EMPLOYEE.**

## **Leave Documentation**

Leave documentation for monthly benefited employees is due the 10th of the current month for leave taken the previous month.

## **Breaks**

Breaks are a privilege granted by each individual supervisor and are not a right. The needs of the job must be satisfied before breaks can be granted. If the work situation permits, the supervisor may authorize breaks of up to a 15-minute duration. Employees on break may leave the work area. In departments where it is necessary to have someone on duty at all times, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that work assignments are covered to the approval of the supervisor. Therefore, in some units, breaks are not possible. Employees **may not** forego breaks to accumulate extra time off in the future or to make up for tardiness or previous absence. Breaks may not be skipped in order to leave early or arrive late.

## **Flexible Scheduling**

Flextime allows for flexible scheduling arrangements that permit variations in starting and departure times, but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a workweek or workday and does not allow for working away from the office location. Flextime can be used to improve coverage and extend service hours. Flextime is a privilege and may be discontinued, temporarily suspended or altered, with or without notice, at the sole discretion of the appropriate supervisor, vice president or dean when the work needs change or if service is impaired. Each request for a flextime schedule will be decided on an individual basis by the supervisor of the employee. All decisions should be consistent with department practices.

## **EMPLOYEE RECORDS**

The Department of Human Resources maintains for each employee a personnel file that contains vital employment information. To ensure that personnel records are up-to-date, it is the employee's responsibility to promptly notify Human Resources in writing of any changes in name, home address, marital status, number of dependents, beneficiary changes, telephone number, and person to notify in case of emergency. It is also important to notify Human Resources of scholastic achievements that may enhance your opportunities for advancement.

### **Access to Employee Records**

Access to employee records is subject to state statutes on personnel records. The University of West Georgia is a public university and is therefore subject to the Georgia Open Records Act, which means that employee information can be made available upon request.

### **Disclosure of Information**

As a service to employees, the Department of Human Resources will furnish, upon written request of third parties outside the University, an employee's dates of employment at the University and his or her title or position. In instances when payroll information is requested (e.g., salary information for the purpose of obtaining a mortgage), the requesting party will be advised that this information will only be made available with the written consent of the employee.

### **Updating Information**

In order to respond to possible emergencies and to provide employees with important notices relating to salaries, benefits, and other matters, it is important that the University have current and accurate records. Accordingly, it is the employee's responsibility to keep his ADP profile current (address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, etc).

### **Duty to Report Criminal Charges/Determinations**

#### **Criminal charges:**

An employee of the University of West Georgia who is charged with a crime (other than a minor traffic offense and/or local ordinance violation) shall report having been charged to his or her supervisor within 3 days of becoming aware of such charge. The employee shall report the crime(s) he or she has been charged with, and provide documentation of the charges upon request. Within 3 days of receiving notice from the employee, the supervisor will contact Human Resources so a determination can be made as to what action, if any, is immediately warranted.

### **Criminal Determinations:**

Within 3 days of the employee receiving a disposition of the criminal charges, he or she will notify his/her supervisor and provide documentation of the disposition. Within 3 days of receiving notice from the employee, the supervisor will contact Human Resources so a determination can be made as to what action, if any, is warranted. Failure to report under this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

### **EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The prevention of accidents and the promotion of safety are the responsibility of everyone in the University community. Everyone is encouraged to be alert to and report any unsafe practices and conditions that may present an imminent danger to individuals or property. Employees should report these types of conditions to their immediate supervisor or to the Risk Management Office. Risk Management provides support to the University in all areas of environmental and chemical safety, including chemical and other hazardous waste removal and radiation safety. If there are any concerns with fire safety, worker's compensation, accident prevention and property and liability insurance, employees are encouraged to contact the Department of Risk Management and Environmental Health and Safety for these services.

#### **Emergency Treatment**

In the event of a serious or life threatening emergency, call 911 for immediate assistance. If the situation is not an emergency, University Police may be contacted.

#### **Campus Safety**

Each of the University of West Georgia's buildings have fire evacuation plans posted in common areas. All employees are encouraged to become familiar with the escape routes for all buildings and floors, and the locations of fire extinguishers, hoses and alarms. In the event of a fire or evacuation, every employee should follow the fire safety evacuation route, vacate the premises and move to a safe area until the officials in charge declare the premises safe to enter. Exits and areas around fire extinguishers must be kept clear at all times. Periodic fire safety inspections and drills are held to test equipment and procedures. Employees are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the emergency action procedures associated with their work areas and how the University of West Georgia prepares for, responds to and recovers from a major emergency. A copy of the University Emergency Plans can be obtained on the UWG website at: [http://www.westga.edu/police/index\\_5162.php](http://www.westga.edu/police/index_5162.php). For questions about fire safety or emergency preparedness, contact University Police at (678) 839-6000. ***IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911 FOR AN AMBULANCE. THEN CALL (678) 839-6000 TO REPORT TO UNIVERSITY POLICE.***

#### **University Police**

University Police provide a variety of services to the University community including assistance to stranded motorists, safety escorts, and crime prevention programs. Call boxes linked directly to University Police are located throughout the campus in the event of an emergency situation. The phone number to contact in the event of an emergency is (678) 839-6000. To enhance campus security, University Police suggest that employees program this number in cell phones for easy access.

#### **Employee Right to Know**

The Public Employee Hazardous Chemical Protection and Right to Know Act of 1988 was passed to help protect public employees from dangerous exposure to hazardous chemicals. In compliance with

this law, the University of West Georgia has established labeling, reporting and training procedures relating to the use of hazardous materials. All University employees have access to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), which outline specific information about hazardous chemical materials. As part of its responsibility as your employer the University of West Georgia has developed a written plan for implementing the Hazard Communication Program. All new hires are provided an overview of the major elements of the Hazard Communication Standard and an understanding of the potential hazards of the chemicals they handle and the procedures to be used to ensure personal safety. UWG requires the training of employees about hazardous chemicals, labeling of chemical containers, and the management of chemical information sheets (Material Safety Data Sheets). The intent of the training is to provide employees with the chemical health and safety information they need to help protect themselves and to work safely with hazardous chemicals. Deans, vice presidents, department chairs, business managers and supervisors are responsible for assuring that their employees are trained if they are covered by this regulation, that containers are labeled, and an updated list of non-laboratory chemicals used in their work areas is maintained. The manner in which UWG is complying with each of these requirements is detailed in the Hazard Communication Plan. As an employee of the University, you must follow established procedures, attend a Hazard Communication training session, read chemical labels and Material Safety Data Sheets, and follow their instructions and warnings. For additional information, contact the Risk Management and Environmental Health and Safety Department.

### **Children in the Workplace**

It is expected that employees will not bring their children to work during the employee's scheduled work hours. In addition, children may not be cared for in the workplace. Other arrangements must be made. Employees bringing children to work may be asked to leave and be required to use accrued leave.

### **Pets**

Health, safety, and courtesy reasons preclude the presence of pets in the workplace, except approved service animals.

## **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT**

### **Performance Policy**

UWG supports a consistent, continuous and communicated performance management process. As required by Board of Regents policy, a formal, written performance evaluation is to be completed at least once every fiscal year. The performance evaluation must include an evaluation of the employee's job knowledge, accuracy and quality, customer service, attendance and punctuality, productivity, supervision required, adaptability, organizational skills, communication skills and interpersonal relations/teamwork. Merit based compensation should be based upon performance as measured by the performance evaluation instrument.

### **Performance Expectations**

Supervisors are required to provide employees with a job description, related performance expectations, and a copy of the evaluation instrument. The job description should be reviewed with the employee to ensure that it accurately reflects current responsibilities and expectations. The University of West Georgia Performance Evaluation Form must be used by the evaluator in evaluating his/her direct subordinates.



## **Performance Evaluations**

UWG has established a system of performance evaluations for all classified, exempt and nonexempt employees. These evaluations are used for making decisions regarding transfer, promotion, demotion, retention, supervisory assistance, employee training and development and for consideration in salary determination. All classified employees are evaluated by the immediate supervisor or department head on an annual basis, no less frequently than in twelve month intervals. At a minimum, the following elements are considered: job knowledge, accuracy and quality, customer service, attendance and punctuality, productivity, supervision required, adaptability, organizational skills, communication skills and interpersonal relations/teamwork. The supervisor or department head is not restricted to the foregoing as criteria for performance evaluation. Employees in the six-month provisional period should have an informal written evaluation after four months of employment.

The job performance of each University of West Georgia staff member should be appraised:

During the provisional period (first six months of employment) for new University employees:

Once a year for Regular Classified Employees outside of their probationary period

Performance Evaluation Forms are available on the Human Resources website

Completed evaluations, signed by two levels of supervision (immediate and secondary) and the employee, are to be submitted to the Department of Human Resources, between June 1st and July 31st each year

## **Interim Evaluation**

Supervisors are encouraged to give continuous and ongoing feedback to employees as it relates to their performance. Supervisors are also encouraged to conduct at least one interim performance evaluation during the evaluation period. This evaluation does not have to be formal, but should provide feedback to recognize and reinforce positive performance, to identify areas needing improvement, and to develop an improvement plan, when necessary. This evaluation should be documented for the record. The annual performance evaluation should not be the first time the employees hear that they are meeting or not meeting expectations.

## **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a useful tool that can be *used with or in lieu of disciplinary action*. A PIP is a written document that discusses an employee's current behavior or performance problems and sets benchmarks for improvement.

Generally, a PIP is structured so that the employee's immediate supervisor will meet with the employee 30, 60, and 90 days after the PIP is introduced. The PIP can specify ever increasing benchmarks for the 30, 60, and 90-day periods, such that the expected performance after 90 days is that normally expected for the position. Alternatively, the PIP can simply specify the ultimate performance goals and schedule 30, 60, and 90-day meetings to discuss progress. Either way, the supervisor must follow up by monitoring the employee's progress and by meeting with the employee at the specified intervals to discuss the employee's improvement (or lack thereof) as well as strategies for making additional improvements. To provide a timetable outlining the dates by which improvement will be necessary, PIP's are frequently put in place as a follow-up to disciplinary action.

## **Conduct Guidelines**

Each employee must be responsible for his own behavior. Common sense, good judgment, cooperation, and appropriate personal behavior are part of the essential responsibilities of every employee at UWG.

### **Examples of Inappropriate Conduct**

Across the University of West Georgia, there are common themes for performance. Though jobs may vary across the University, there are some common conducts that are unacceptable. The following are examples of inappropriate behavior:

- Falsification of employment or other records, including timesheets
- Working under the influence of alcohol or an illegal substance
- Inappropriate handling or disclosure of confidential information or records
- Submission of falsified claims under the University's medical or other insurance plans
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- Sleeping on the job
- Failure to maintain professional standards of conduct with clients and co-workers
- Neglect of duty or failure or refusal to perform job-related duties and assignments
- Illegal manufacture, possession, use, sale or distribution of drugs, or use of alcoholic beverages on University premises
- Refusal to cooperate with an audit or investigation authorized by UWG President or an authorized agency with oversight of UWG
- Larceny, misappropriation, or unauthorized possession or use of property belonging to the University of West Georgia or any employee or visitor
- Creating unsafe conditions or contributing to such conditions by act of omission or neglect
- Misappropriation of departmental or organizational funds
- Unauthorized possession, copying or release of University records to unauthorized persons
- Threatening, intimidating, harassing or coercing of another individual
- Gambling on University premises or while engaged in University business
- Violation of the University nondiscrimination or sexual harassment policy

The conduct listed above is not an exhaustive list of inappropriate conduct. Employees participating in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action including termination.

## **Amorous Relationships**

When one party has a professional relationship towards the other, or stands in a position of authority over the other, even an apparently consensual amorous relationship may lead to sexual harassment or other breaches of professional obligations. The University prohibits all faculty and staff, including graduate teaching assistants, from pursuing amorous relationships with undergraduates whom they are currently supervising or teaching.

UWG strongly discourages amorous relationships between faculty or administrators and graduate/professional students and/or employees whose work they supervise. Anyone involved in an amorous relationship with someone over whom he or she has supervisory power must recuse himself or herself from decisions that affect the compensation, evaluation, employment conditions, instruction, and/or the academic status of the subordinate involved.

### **Process/Procedures**

Any individual in authority who is or has been involved in an amorous relationship with a person whom they may be called upon to evaluate must promptly report this fact to his or her supervisor. The supervisor will then arrange to see that the individual in authority does not evaluate nor participate in discussions and decisions that affect the compensation, evaluation, employment conditions, instructions, and/or academic status of the subordinate involved. Any individual who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the offense.

Any person who believes that a faculty member, administrator, graduate assistant or other employee is involved in an amorous relationship with a person under his/her direct authority or supervision should contact Human Resources.

UWG has the authority to take appropriate action when disruptive conduct, job performance problems, or actions that reflect poorly on the institution result from amorous relationship.

## **Progressive Discipline**

The Progressive Discipline process is designed to be constructive and corrective and to promote employee success. It gives employees the information necessary to understand what aspect of work performance, attendance and/or behavior is unacceptable, identifies the improvements that are expected, and provides the opportunity for employees to demonstrate the expected improvements. The goal is to improve performance, attendance, or behavior of employees and to assist employees in taking ownership of their performance, attendance, or behavior.

It is the responsibility of the employee to adhere to the expectations outlined by the supervisor and to adhere to the standards of conduct. It is recommended that employees whose performance or behavior is unsatisfactory be provided an opportunity to go through the progressive discipline process; however, there are circumstances that warrant immediate termination. In addition, there is no required number of instances that a supervisor must warn or reprimand an employee before termination is warranted.

### **Progressive Discipline Steps**

When an employee's performance or behavior is unsatisfactory, a progressive process is strongly advised. The steps involved in the process may include verbal discussion, written warning, suspension without pay, and termination.

It is recommended that department management document all steps of the corrective discipline process as they occur. Including warnings and ramifications if the unacceptable performance and/or behavior is not corrected.

In each step, department management is advised to state the next step to be taken if the performance does not improve. However, in cases of serious misconduct (please see the section on serious misconduct below), the employee may be immediately terminated, or suspended from the work force.

### **Verbal Disciplinary Action**

The initial disciplinary action should be verbal, whenever possible. The discussion should be firm but fair and should ensure that the employee clearly understands the established standards and expectations with respect to the unacceptable performance or behavior. A written record of the date and content of such discussions should be maintained in the appropriate files in the department.

### **Written Disciplinary Action**

If the initial situation indicates a need for stronger action, or if verbal disciplinary action fails to improve the employee's performance, the supervisor may issue a written disciplinary warning. The written warning outlines the undesired behavior, states expectations and lists consequences if issues continue.

The Department of Human Resources is available to assist department management with the composition of the warning document. Copies of the warning document should be maintained in the appropriate departmental file and also forwarded to Human Resources to be placed in the official employee file. The employee has the right to grieve the disciplinary action in certain situations. Please see the Staff Grievance procedures for further information.

### **Suspension Without Pay Action**

Suspension without pay follows a verbal or written disciplinary warning if the desired results have not been accomplished. The length of the suspension should depend upon the facts of each case, (e.g., type and severity of the behavior, previous work record of the employee, and previous disciplinary actions). The suspension should be clearly explained in a written disciplinary warning to the employee and should indicate any possible consequences of further performance, attendance, or behavior issues.

### **Dismissal Action**

Dismissal is advised when, among other reasons, an employee has engaged in serious misconduct or an employee has not corrected performance and/or behavior. Prior to dismissing an employee, department management is strongly advised to review the situation and related information with the Human Resources Department and supply appropriate documentation.

## **Serious Misconduct**

If dismissal is for serious misconduct, the employee may be dismissed immediately and no notice or payment in lieu of notice is required. Payment of wages to the employee is only required up to the moment of dismissal. This is a non-exhaustive definition of serious misconduct which includes:

- willful or deliberate behavior by an employee that is inconsistent with the continuation of employment;
- conduct that causes imminent and serious risk to:
  - health or safety of a person; or
  - the reputation, viability or profitability of the UWG operations;
- the employee, in the course of the his employment, engaging in:
  - theft; fraud; or assault;
  - the employee being intoxicated at work (defined as where the employee's faculties are, through intoxicating liquor or unprescribed drugs, so impaired that he or she is unfit to be entrusted with any duty he or she may be required perform);
  - an employee refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction

If serious misconduct is the cause of the dismissal, the employee will be given the reason for the dismissal and be given a chance to explain his conduct prior to the supervisor making the decision to dismiss him/her. Dismissal actions must be approved by Human Resources.

### **Job Abandonment**

When an employee does not report to work for three consecutive, scheduled workdays and does not communicate with the department as to his/her whereabouts or intentions regarding the job, the department should terminate the employee for job abandonment. Prior to taking such action, department leadership is advised to make reasonable efforts to contact the employee to determine the employee's intentions regarding the job.

#### **Termination Procedure for Job Abandonment**

After it has been determined by the hiring manager that an employee has abandoned his/her position (has not shown up or communicated with the department for three consecutive scheduled workdays) the supervisor should move to terminate employment. The hiring manager should work with Human Resources to conduct the following procedures (these procedures should be followed within 24 hours of determining an employee has abandoned his job):

- Contact Human Resources to draft a termination letter to the employee and to discuss other steps that need to be taken in the termination process (i.e. return of equipment, etc.)
- Contact University Police to restrict access to University of West Georgia property.
- Contact Facilities to determine if locks need to be changed or if additional keys are needed for the department.

### **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

Because of the varying degrees of performed duties on campus it is difficult for the University to have one uniform dress code. However, the University of West Georgia is a professional organization with a high level of visibility in the community. Our premises are visited by state/elected officials, students, clients and guests on a daily basis. Therefore, it is expected that all employees will maintain a professional appearance that aligns with their performed duties.

Discretion in style of dress and behavior is essential to and enhances the perception of the University. Employees are, therefore, required to dress in appropriate attire and to behave in a professional, businesslike manner. Please use good judgment in choice of work attire and remember to conduct yourself at all times in a way that best represents you and the University.

Employees may choose to wear UWG spirit wear on Friday.

### **USE OF UNIVERSITY SERVICES AND PROPERTY**

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of personal and business ethics and professional conduct. As an employee, you are required to do the same. Your daily activities on behalf of the University should always be carried out in an ethical and legal manner and conflicts of interest should be avoided. For further information please refer to the BOR policy manual at the following link:

[http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section9/policy/9.10\\_use\\_of\\_board\\_of\\_regents\\_property/#p9.10.6\\_use\\_of\\_institutional\\_facilities](http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section9/policy/9.10_use_of_board_of_regents_property/#p9.10.6_use_of_institutional_facilities)

### **UWG ID Cards**

Employees are required to obtain a UWG ID within thirty (30) days of employment from the Auxiliary Services UWG ID Office. The UWG ID is the official University of West Georgia card that is used for identification purposes and for access to many facilities on the main campus. It is a card used for photo identification and library materials check out. The UWG ID is the property of UWG and, upon leaving the University, employees are expected to return the card to their supervisors. If the card is lost or stolen, employees must immediately contact the Auxiliary and Support Services UWG ID Office during office hours Monday through Friday. After hours, lost or stolen cards should be reported to the UWG Police. The recipient of the card is responsible for all costs incurred by misuse of the card prior to proper notification to the Auxiliary and Support Services UWG ID Office or to the UWG Police. After the card has been reported to either of these locations, a new card can be issued on the following business day. There is a replacement fee for lost, stolen or damaged cards. The fee will increase for each subsequent replacement.

### **Use of Telephones**

The use of all State of Georgia telephone services should be limited to official University business only. Telephone calls should be handled in a prompt and courteous manner, and University telephone lines must be kept clear for business calls. Using office phones for personal long distance calls is a violation of University policy, which is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees may not make personal long distance calls with the intention of repaying the University at a later date. Personal cell phones should be kept in the off or vibrate mode during normal business hours. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **University Equipment**

Electronic mail, voice mail, fax machines and copiers should be used for official UWG business only. Employees should understand that electronic mail and voice mail messages are not secure and therefore should not be assumed to be private.

### **Computer Usage**

UWG equipment, including computer hardware and software are valuable assets. They should be used for official University of West Georgia business only. Although every effort is made to secure the privacy of each authorized user, messages or files stored on the computer or system network should

not be considered to be entirely private or secure. Under the Georgia Open Records law, information stored on a computer system, including electronic mail, might be available for inspection by any member of the public. Further, UWG reserves the right to have access to any information stored on a University owned computer or network. Under no circumstances may software be copied or installed on a UWG computer if such copying or installation would violate any copyright or licensing agreement or risk the security of UWG's network (i.e. file sharing). All system users are expected to follow the guidelines outlined in the "Acceptable Use Policy" published by Information Technology Services. Any employee in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as possible legal action.

### **Mail and Packages**

The University is not responsible for loss or damage to personal packages or mail addressed to any of its employees at a UWG facility. In order to avoid a possible financial loss, it is strongly recommended that such items be mailed or shipped to the employee's home address.

### **Visitors**

It is expected that employees will not receive personal visitors during working hours or in staff working areas.

### **Business Activities**

Employees who supplement their earnings by the promotion or sale of products and services do so entirely on their own initiative and without implied approval or endorsement by the University. All such activity, including sampling, soliciting orders, and deliveries, must be conducted entirely outside of working hours and entirely outside of UWG premises.

### **Recycling Programs on Campus**

The University of West Georgia recycles all paper products, including cardboard, plain and color, magazines, newspapers, phone books, books; drink containers including cans and plastic and glass bottles; and wooden pallets. Offices are asked to separate their recycling into two bins, with paper in one and bottles and cans in the other. In addition, there are several multi-compartment bins around campus that will accept trash, paper and drink containers. To request one or more recycling bins, to find out about the recycling pickup schedule in your building, or to request that a bin be emptied or a wooden pallet taken away, contact Building Services at 404-413-0600. For additional information about campus recycling and sustainability, please visit <http://www.uwg.edu/staffcouncil/green.html>