



Valdosta State University
Human Resources & Employee Development
Policies and Procedures

Leave Policies

The institution and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia recognize the necessity and beneficial aspects of granting leaves for vacation, illness and other absences required of the employee.

Obviously, the leave programs described herein are part of the total employment cost to the institution, and employees should exercise discretion in their absences for other than established holidays and vacations.

Employees working on a part-time basis and temporary employees are not eligible for the leave benefits described in that they are paid only for hours actually worked.

Requests for leave are to be made on the [leave request form](#). These forms are to be kept and retained in the department for four years.

1. [Holidays](#)
2. [Vacation Leave](#)
3. [Sick Leave](#)
4. [Miscellaneous Leave](#)
5. [Family Leave](#)

SECTION 802.01

Holidays.

Valdosta State University has established twelve official paid holidays for all regular employees. A terminating employee shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring after the last working day, and temporary employees are excluded. Of the twelve holidays, two will be considered "floating holidays" to be taken as directed by the President. Normally, these "floating holidays" will be taken during the week of Christmas; however, should work schedules forbid, these days will be taken at later dates.

The official paid holidays are as follow:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King's Birthday
3. Memorial Day
4. Independence Day
5. Labor Day
6. Thanksgiving
7. Christmas
8. Floating Holidays

Normally, holidays occurring on Saturday will be observed the preceding Friday, and those falling on Sunday will be taken the following Monday.

a. Persons first employed during months having extended holidays, normally November and December, will be paid for the established holiday(s) only.

b. Information on payment for working on holidays can be found in Section 801.

SECTION 802.02

Vacation Leave.

All regular classified employees and 12 month appointed faculty members working at least one-half time are entitled to vacation leave in accordance with the provisions set forth below. Employees serving on provisional appointments earn vacation, but are not expected to take such time until the expiration of their first six months of service, unless their immediate supervisor gives prior approval. By the nature of their work some classified employees, i.e. coaches and nurses have negotiated contracts that do not include the accumulation of vacation leave. Regular 10 month faculty do not accrue annual leave.

Vacations are normally scheduled during "slack" periods and at the convenience of the department. Employees should pre-arrange their schedules to be certain there is no conflict in requested leave time. Should two employees request identical leave periods and simultaneous leave cannot be granted, the employee with longer service normally has priority.

The rate of accumulating annual leave is based on the anniversary date of current employment as shown below. Regular employees working half-time or more shall earn and accrue vacation time in an equivalent ratio to their percentage of time employed. Faculty members on a twelve month contract earn vacation leave at the maximum rate of accrual.

a. Accumulation Rates.

1 - 60 months of service: 1 1/4 days monthly, 15 annually
61 - 120 months of service: 1 1/2 days monthly, 18 annually
over 120 months of service: 1 3/4 days monthly, 21 annually

b. Accrued Vacation Leave. Employees may accrue leave not to exceed the maximum of 45 days at December 31 of each calendar year. Terminating employees may be paid for a maximum of 45 days and do not earn leave beyond their last working day. Employees placed on terminal leave, pending retirement, shall not accrue vacation leave beyond their last official day of work.

1. Employees reporting to work prior to the 15th of the month shall accrue a full months accrual. Employees terminating prior to the 16th of the month will not accrue leave for the month of termination. All leave accruals will be credited at the close of the month and employees can not take leave in advance of actual accrual.

c. Accountability. Each employee is required to complete necessary time records reflecting dates and amounts of leave taken. These records become a part of the permanent work record, and are source data for updating attendance reports. The supervisor must certify the dates and the type leave taken as accurate.

d. Non-State Funded Employees (Sponsored Personnel). "Sponsored" employees shall be required to take their vacation leave during the course of their employment unless there is adequate funding in the grant or other non-state income source to cover payment of accrued vacation leave balance at date of termination. The University does not accept financial liability in cases where funding is inadequate to cover accruals. Employees in such categories are, therefore, encouraged to take their vacations as accrued and avoid a build-up of accumulated time which is not funded.

e. Treatment of Accrued Vacation Leave Upon Transfer To Another Institution. Upon a move between institutions in the University System, with no break in service, an employee must transfer accrued vacation leave of between one (1) and twenty (20) days. For employees with accruals in excess of twenty (20) days, the employee may elect one of the following options:

1. Transfer of the total leave balance, not to exceed forty-five (45) days
2. Payment of accrued vacation leave in excess of of twenty (20) days by the institution from which the individual is moving. The total leave paid in such cases cannot exceed twenty-five (25) days.

f. Treatment of Accrued Leave Upon Contract Conversion. Faculty members on a twelve (12) month contract shall be paid their accrued vacation leave subject to the forty-five (45) day maximum. This payment will be made in the fiscal year of termination, assuming availability of funds. Should funds not be available, said payment shall occur in the ensuing fiscal year.

SECTION 802.03

Sick Leave.

The University has established a sick leave policy allowing salary continuation for all regular employees who are incapacitated by illness or injury. Supervisors should impress upon their employees that sick leave is a privilege, not an inherent right to additional time off the job. Abuse of this privilege will be considered a serious offense and could be considered just grounds for termination of employment.

Employees should notify their supervisors immediately if they are unable to report to work due to illness. Those failing to "call in" might have the absence charged against annual leave or considered as leave without pay, depending upon their supervisor's recommendation.

Employees who have failed to call in or show up for work for three days may be considered to have abandoned their position and will be terminated for job abandonment. See Section 801.01 for additional information.

1. Sick Leave With Pay

Sick leave with pay may be granted to employees who are absent due to an illness or health related issue which affects the staff member or any member of the employee's immediate family, provided that sick leave is available. This includes absences due to personal illness or injury, illness or injury of a family member, calls from schools or day care providers to pick up a sick child, doctor's office visits for routine health care, and any other legitimate illness or health care issue which affects an employee or the employee's immediate family. If an employee elects to use available annual leave in lieu of sick leave for such absences, the request should be honored.

a. For all regular employees of the University System of Georgia, sick leave shall be accumulated at the rate of one working day per calendar month of service. All regular employees working one-half time or more will accumulate sick leave in an equivalent ratio to their percentage of time employed. Sick leave for all employees shall be cumulative with no maximum limitation. Monthly accruals will be made at the close of business on the last working day of the month. Employees are not allowed to take accruals in advance.

b. Sick leave may be granted at the discretion of the institution and upon approval by the supervisor of an employee's absence for any of the following reasons:

1. Illness or injury of the employee.
2. Medical and dental treatment or consultation.
3. Quarantine due to a contagious illness in the employee's household.

4. Illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family requiring the employee's presence.

Immediate family for the purposes of sick leave is defined as the employee's spouse, parents, grandparents, children, brothers, sisters, in-laws and members of the employee's household. Sick leave can be used for up to three days for death in the immediate family. Additional use of sick leave for this purpose is at the discretion of the supervisor.

5. Disability due to pregnancy

c. Sick leave claimed for a continuous period in excess of five days, will require a physician's statement in order for further sick leave with pay to be taken. This statement may include : dates of illness; the date upon which the employee will be able to return to work; what percentage of time he/she will be able to work and whether or not any restrictions are imposed on the employee's daily activities pertaining to his /her work. A physician's statement may also be required for shorter absences at the discretion of the employee's supervisor.

d. Extended sick leave may be granted within the guidelines of the Family Medical Leave Act as defined in Section 802.5.

e. A terminating employee shall not accumulate sick leave or be entitled to receive sick pay after the last working day of his or her employment. Employees placed on terminal sick leave, pending retirement, shall not accrue sick leave or other benefits. Sick leave may be counted toward service with the Teachers Retirement System as set forth below:

Days of Unused Sick Leave	Creditable Service	Days of Unused Sick Leave	Creditable Service
0-59	None	330-349	17 months
60-69	3 months	350-369	18 months
70-89	4 months	370-389	19 months
90-109	5 months	390-409	20 months
110-129	6 months	410-429	21 months
130-149	7 months	430-449	22 months
150-169	8 months	450-469	23 months
170-189	9 months	470-489	24 months
190-209	10 months	490-509	25 months
210-229	11 months	510-529	26 months
230-249	12 months	530-549	27 months
250-269	13 months	550-569	28 months

270-289	14 months	570-589	29 months
290-309	15 months	590-600	30 months
310-329	16 months		

2. Sick Leave Without Pay Any employee unable to return to work after exhausting all accumulated sick leave and accrued vacation leave may be granted sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one year. Furthermore, such approved sick leave shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue his or her group insurance benefits; and the institution will continue its share of the cost; such sick leave may be requested for each subsequent calendar period thereafter. All other benefits are prohibited which otherwise would accrue to the employee/patient.

Extended leave of this nature may be incorporated with the Family Medical Leave Act which is defined in a subsequent section.

3. Sick Leave Accrual for Faculty

Effective July 1, 1983, the University System of Georgia adopted a sick leave policy for all permanent general faculty employees who are employed on a fiscal or academic year basis at one-half time or more.

This policy supercedes the Regent's previous sick leave policy which granted sick leave of two weeks, one month, three months, etc., in accordance with the faculty member's length of service.

For the purposes of sick leave, faculty will be regarded as working a five day week with a workday being defined as eight (8) hours.

The policy provides for a sick leave accrual rate for general faculty employees of one day (8 hours) per month. Ten month faculty accrue ten days of sick leave each academic term. Faculty members working less than one- half time and temporary faculty members accrue no sick leave.

This accrual is based on continuous employment at one-half (.50 EFT) time or more and earned in an equivalent ratio to the percentage of time worked. For example, a regular faculty member working one-half time earns four (4) hours of sick leave per month.

Absences must be reported and records maintained

In addition, the policy mandates that absences must be recorded and accurate records of sick leave accrued and taken are to be maintained.

SECTION 802.04

Miscellaneous Leave.

1. Educational Leave Without Pay.

Institutions may grant educational leave without pay to full-time employees for periods not to exceed one year at a time for the purpose of encouraging professional development. Such approved leave shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue his or her group insurance benefits with institutional participation.

2. Military Leave With Pay.

Regular employees shall be entitled to leave with pay while engaged in the performance of any ordered military duty, to include schools conducted by the Armed Forces of the United States, and while going to and from such duty. To be considered, such duty must be in the service of the State or of the United States and must not exceed a total of thirty days in any one calendar year.

Maximum pay shall be limited to eighteen days per calendar year and shall not exceed eighteen work days in any one continuous period unless the Governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to active duty as a member of the National Guard.

A copy of military order(s) to active duty service shall be required in such cases.

3. Military Leave Without Pay.

a. Military leave without pay shall be granted when a regular employee enlists, or is ordered to active duty service with any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States for the initial period of such service. Upon completion of active service, such employee shall be restored to his or her former position upon request, or, at the discretion of the institution in which he or she is employed, to one of similar status with all privileges of accumulated seniority, salary increases, etc., provided:

1. His or her discharge is under conditions other than dishonorable.
2. He or she requests reinstatement within ninety (90) days after his or her discharge or separation from active duty.

b. If, as a result of military service, a person is not physically or mentally qualified to perform the duties of his or her former position or one of like status, his or her institution shall offer him or her employment in a position at a level which his or her physical or mental condition will permit him or her to perform at the established rate of compensation for that position.

4. Maternity Leave. Disability due to pregnancy shall be considered as any other disability and appropriate sick leave provisions of these policies shall apply. This provision is also covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act. See Section 802.05 for additional information.

5. Court Duty. Court duty leave with pay shall be granted regular employees for the purpose of serving on a jury or as a witness. Such leave shall be granted upon presentation of official orders from the appropriate court.

6. Voting. Employees of the University System are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right to vote in all federal, state and local elections. When an employee's normal working hours coincide with voting hours, the employee shall be granted leave as stipulated by his or her immediate supervisor, for the purpose of voting.

7. Selective Service and Military Physical Examinations. Any regular employee required by Federal law to take a Selective Service or military physical examination shall be paid for any time lost to take such an examination.

8. Personal Leave. At his or her discretion, the President of an institution may approve personal leave of absence without pay for periods not to exceed one year. Such approved personal leaves shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue his or her group insurance benefits; however, the institution will not contribute to the cost.

9. Leave for Organ and Marrow Donation. Each employee who serves as an organ donor for the purpose of transplantation shall receive a leave of absence, with pay, of thirty days. Each employee who serves as a bone marrow donor for the purpose of transplantation shall receive a leave of absence, with pay of seven days. Leave taken under this provision shall not be charged against or deducted from an employee's accrued annual or sick leave. Such leave shall be included as service in computing any retirement or pension benefits. This provision shall apply only

to an employee who actually donates an organ or marrow and who presents to the appropriate supervisor a statement from a licensed medical practitioner or hospital administrator that the employee is making an organ or marrow donation.

10. Blood Donations (Effective 6/07)

An employee of a USG institution is allowed a leave of absence, without loss of pay, of not more than eight hours in each calendar for the purpose of donating blood. This absence shall be computed at two hours per donation, up to four times per year. Any employee who donates blood platelets or granulocytes through the plasmapheresis process shall be allowed a leave of absence, without loss of pay, of not more than 16 hours in each calendar year, which shall be computed at four hours per donation, up to four times per year.

11. Breast-feeding (Effective 6/07)

A USG institution may provide reasonable unpaid break time each day to an employee who needs to express breast milk for her infant child. The institution should make reasonable effort to provide a place so that this can be done in privacy. A mother may breast-feed her baby in any location where she and the baby are otherwise authorized to be.

12. Other Leave. In the event of inclement weather or any emergency which requires absence of employees, the President of the University may declare the institution closed. Such absence may be considered leave with or without pay as determined by the President.

SECTION 802.05

Family Leave.

Any regular employee who has been employed on a half-time or greater basis by Valdosta State University for at least twelve months is eligible for twelve weeks of family leave during a twelve month period commencing on the date the family leave begins. Family leave shall be unpaid leave; however, if an employee is eligible to use accumulated sick and/or annual leave, the employee may do so after obtaining permission from his/her supervisor. Family leave must be approved at the departmental level, with the Department of Human Resources being advised of all relative facts. Keep a copy of the form in your department and send original to Human Resources. See <http://www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/fmla/> for additional information and required forms. The University reserves the right to designate an employee's leave as leave under the Family Medical Leave Act.

Family Medical Leave will be administered to run concurrently with the university sponsored annual and sick leave. At Valdosta State University, employees may use their individually accrued paid leave, be in leave without pay status, maintain reduced work schedules, or be absent from work intermittently. As appropriate, all of the above will count toward the 12 weeks of an employee's FMLA entitlement.

A. Eligibility Requirements.

Family leave shall be granted to an eligible employee in the event of:

1. the birth and care of the child of the employee;
2. the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. a serious health condition of the employee's child, spouse, parent, or spouse's parent, necessitating the employee's presence; or
4. a serious health condition of the employee which renders him/her unable to perform required job duties. Employees on approved family leave shall be responsible for group insurance premium payments as is required of other individuals on unpaid leave status.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, the employee (including part-time and temporary) must have worked for the University System of Georgia:

- a. for at least 12 months total (not necessarily the last 12 months); and
- b. for at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the leave.

B. Request for Leave.

The employee shall provide the employer with certification and prior notice in a manner which is reasonable and practicable when requesting leave under these provisions. In those cases where the necessity for leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, supervision of a serious health condition, etc., the employee:

1. Shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer; and
2. In those situations where husband and wife are entitled to family leave under this policy, the aggregate number of work weeks of leave shall be limited to twelve weeks if such leave is taken:
 - a. For birth, care or placement of a child; or
 - b. To care for a sick parent or spouse's parent.

C. Certification of Serious Health Condition.

Employees may be required to provide a medical certification of a serious health condition prior to approval of family leave. Such certification shall include:

1. The date on which the serious health condition commenced
2. The probable duration of the condition
3. The appropriate medical facts within the health care provider's knowledge regarding the condition; and
4. An estimate of the amount of time that the eligible employee is needed to care for the covered individual. If the employee has a serious health condition, it will also be necessary to certify the fact that the employee cannot perform the duties of the position held. In any case, where the employer has reason to doubt the validity of the certification provided, the employer at its own expense may require the second opinion of any health care provider approved by the employer.

Should the second opinion conflict, a third opinion at the employer's expense may be requested. The third opinion shall be rendered by a health care provider approved jointly by the employer and employee, and the opinion rendered shall be binding on both parties.

D. Restoration of Employment. Employees taking leave under this provision are generally entitled to be returned to the position of employment previously held or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits and other terms and conditions of employment, if the employee fully complied with the terms of the leave. Prior to restoration of employment a certification from the employee's health care provider indicating the employee is able to resume normal duties may be required.

Restored employees shall not be construed to be entitled to:

1. The accrual of any seniority or employment benefits during any period of family leave, e.g., holiday pay, leave accruals, etc.; or
2. Any right, benefit, or position of employment other than those to which the employee would have otherwise been entitled.

E. Denial of Restoration.

Salaried employees who are among the highest paid 10% of the employees employed may not be restored if:

1. Such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the employee's operations;
2. The employer notifies the employee of its intent to deny restoration on such basis at the time it determines such injury would occur; and
3. In any case in which leave has commenced, and the employee elects not to return after receiving such notice.

F. Unlawful Practices by the Employer.

It shall be unlawful for the employer to interfere with, restrain, to deny or attempt to deny the exercise of any right provided by state law. Discharge or discrimination against any employee because such individual has filed charges, instituted procedures, given information in connection with any inquiry or proceeding related to any right provided or has testified relative to any inquiry or proceeding is prohibited.

G. Appeals

Employees who feel they have been denied appropriate consideration of a family leave request, or have otherwise been discriminated against, may file a written appeal within five working days of such action. This appeal should be addressed to the individual having ultimate administrative responsibility for the department or operational area. Said appeal should include pertinent details and preferred remediation and will be reviewed with all parties. A written decision will be rendered within five working days from receipt of the employee's appeal by the Vice President or other key administrator having responsibility for the operating unit.

The employee, upon receipt of written notification of leave denial by the key administrator, can request a review by the President of the University. This appeal should occur within five working days, and the decision of the President shall be final at the institutional level.

Appeal beyond the institutional level shall be in accordance with those procedures set forth in Board of Regents policy. The Department of Human Resources will provide assistance as required in the appeals process.

For additional information or questions on FMLA see the [FAQ](#) page.