

Memo to: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: Dr. Loren J. Blanchard, President
Subject: Leave Without Pay Policy

UH-Downtown/PS 02.A.13
Issue No. 5
Effective date: 04/20/2023
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1. PURPOSE

This PS outlines the guidelines regarding leave of absence without pay for eligible University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) employees.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Benefits-eligible employee: An employee who is employed to work at least 20 hours per week for at least 4.5 continuous months, excluding students employed in positions that require student status as a condition of employment.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 Leave of absence without pay may be granted to benefits-eligible UHD employees for education or research and writing to enhance the employee's contribution to the institution. Also, benefits-eligible employees requesting leave for personal reasons may qualify depending upon the circumstances.
- 3.2 Approval also will be contingent upon the department's ability to satisfactorily reschedule the workload. Such leaves are the prerogative of the University and are not an inherent right of employment.
- 3.3 In cases where a benefits-eligible employee or a member of his/her immediate family is being treated for a serious health condition, leave of absence without pay may be approved or the employee may qualify for leave under [PS 02.A.11, Family and Medical Leave Policy](#).
- 3.4 Except for disciplinary suspensions, active military duty, and workers' compensation situations, all applicable accrued paid leave balances (vacation, compensatory leave, and sick leave) must have been exhausted before the leave without pay period commences.
- 3.5 Employees unable to return to work on the specified return date must provide documentation for an extension which is acceptable to the appropriate administrative officer. This documentation should be submitted prior to the expiration of the original leave or as soon as possible thereafter. Failure to comply with the conditions of the leave will result in forfeiting the privileges of the leave and may be considered as a voluntary resignation of employment.

- 3.6 Employees on leave of absence without pay are governed by the following rules and regulations:
- 3.6.1 Leaves will be limited to twelve months and shall have specific effective dates; A leave of absence without pay longer than 30 days requires approval from the department head. Supervisors may approve leave that is less than 30 days.
 - 3.6.2 Except where specified otherwise, an employee will not accrue vacation, sick leave, or state service credit for any full calendar month (i.e., from the first day of a month through the last day of a month, inclusive) on leave without pay. The employee is not eligible for holiday pay while on unpaid leave.
 - 3.6.3 As required by State law, all accrued paid leave entitlements must be exhausted; Sick leave may only be used as described in [SAM 02.D.01, Vacation and Sick Leave](#).
 - 3.6.4 Group insurance may be continued, provided that the payment of full premiums is paid by the employee. Payments must be paid directly to [ERS](#). During the leave period, the employee will be responsible for payment of the total premium since the monthly state contribution ceases for any full calendar month of leave unless the employee is on approved Family and Medical Leave or Parental leave.
 - 3.6.5 Teacher Retirement or Optional Retirement programs are suspended unless provided by another eligible employer and are automatically reinstated upon the employee's return to work; however, faculty members should contact the Office of Human Resources (HR) regarding options for continued participation in Teacher Retirement System of Texas. Funds cannot be withdrawn from Teacher Retirement or Optional Retirement programs. All voluntary retirement programs become inactive.
- 3.7 The President may grant exceptions to these policy limitations for such reasons as interagency agreements or other educational purposes.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Requests for an extended leave of absence without pay may be initiated through the employee's supervisor.
 - 4.1.1 The request should outline the purpose of the leave, start, and return dates. Leave requests should be submitted in advance.
 - 4.1.2 Leaves must be approved by appropriate parties; see section 3.6.1.
 - 4.1.3 A copy of the approved/disapproved request will be submitted to the Office of Human Resources for the employee's personnel file.

- 4.2 A Personnel Action Request (ePAR) must be submitted to place the employee on leave of absence without pay. HR will initiate ePARs for FMLA, Parental, and Worker's Compensation leave or any other medically related leave.
- 4.3 An employee approved for leave of absence without pay should contact HR immediately to discuss benefits during the leave.
- 4.4 Employees approved for extended leave of absence without pay (4.5 months or longer) must complete the separation clearance process as outlined in [PS.02.A.22, Separation Clearance Guidelines](#).
- 4.5 The employee must contact the supervisor prior to returning to work.
 - 4.5.1 A mutually acceptable return date must be agreed upon if not done at the start of the leave. Personnel Action Request (ePAR) must be initiated by the employing department to return the employee to active status.
 - 4.5.2 If the leave was for medical reasons, the employee must provide an acceptable doctor's release to HR to return to work.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Vice President for Human Resources

Review: Every three years on or before April 1st.

Signed original on file in the Office of Human Resources.

6. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 04/25/94

Issue #2: 09/20/06

Issue #3: 04/05/11

Issue #4: 03/25/15

7. REFERENCES

[UH SAM 02.D.04](#)

[UH SAM 02.D.01](#)

[PS.02.A.22](#)

[PS 02.A.11](#)