



Administrative Policies and Procedures

Procedure Number	Subject	Effective Date	Revised Date
HR-1.4.29	Attendance/Absenteeism Policy	07/01/07	

I. PURPOSE

To establish a single, campus wide guideline and methodology for determining whether or not sick leave usage is excessive, and if so, when disciplinary consequences should be issued. This policy is not intended to constrain the responsible use of sick leave benefits provided for by the Board of Regents/University System of Georgia.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to Classified employees and Administrative and Professional faculty.

III. POLICY

Each employee bears primary responsibility for attending work regularly and being reliable. The immediate supervisor, however, has direct responsibility for monitoring employee sick leave use and applying the policy consistently, obtaining documentation when necessary, ensuring that time records are timely and accurate, and maintaining regular contact with the employee when absences become extended. If indications of attendance problems begin to arise, the immediate supervisor bears primary responsibility for counseling the employee or, if counseling fails, disciplining the employee for excessive absenteeism. The Human Resources Office is responsible for interpreting Human Resource policy and reviewing all proposed disciplinary actions before they are issued. Supervisors or department heads contemplating disciplining an employee should contact the Human Resources Office immediately.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Excessive Absenteeism:

1. **Definition:** Absenteeism is defined as any time an employee is absent from work, including tardiness, leaving early and complete absence for the work day.
2. Absenteeism which exceeds fifty (50) hours a year for classified and administrative and professional faculty, except when justified due to extended personal or family illness, short-term disability or other injury rendering the employee unable to attend work, in accordance with Board of Regents/University System of Georgia policy and federal law.
3. **Sick Leave Balances**



- a. Many Classified as well as Administrative and Professional employees have large blocks of sick leave available since it is permitted to be retained annually. By the same token, new Classified employees have relatively low sick balances of sick leave available when first hired. The measure of excessive absenteeism is not being absent without available sick leave to use, nor is acceptable use of sick leave measured by simply maintaining a positive sick leave balance.
 - b. Examples: The new employee who contracts the flu and misses three (3) days and has no sick leave to charge should not be disciplined simply because he/she has no sick leave accumulated. Similarly, senior employees who have hundreds of hours of sick leave available should not be lulled into thinking it is acceptable for them to use a day of it each week simply because it is available.
4. **Physician Certification:** In the case of personal illness exceeding three (3) consecutive workdays, short-term disabilities or other injuries, upon return to work, the employee must present his/her supervisor with a physician's certification stating the following information:
- a. the nature of the illness;
 - b. the date when the employee can return to work; and
 - c. restrictions, if any

The physician's certification is a requirement, not a discretionary consideration. All physicians' certification statements should be forwarded to the Human Resources Office by the supervisor or department head for permanent file retention.

- B. Pattern Absences: When an employee's absences routinely fall on particular days of the week, like Mondays or Fridays, or contiguously with holidays or vacations, these absences are considered pattern absences. Another example of a pattern absence is when an employee is out for two (2) days, comes in for a day, and is out two (2) more (to avoid the doctor's certification requirement) routinely. Pattern absences are actionable as excessive absenteeism. One (1) or two (2) occurrences do not constitute a pattern absence.
- C. Mitigating Circumstances: The institution does not wish to penalize individuals who have experienced temporary disabilities or extended personal or immediate family illnesses or hospitalizations which have prevented them from attending work regularly. These types of mitigating circumstances should be factored into any review of individual sick leave use by a supervisor.
- D. Guidelines for Implementing Improved Attendance Programs:

1. Employee Guidelines:



- a. If you are experiencing health or personal problems which are affecting or are likely to affect your ability to attend work regularly, please make early contact with your department leadership so that the circumstances are known and options can be reviewed.
- b. Attempt to schedule medical and dental appointments outside your schedule at work if possible or over lunch.
- c. Marital or family problems, financial problems, and other lifestyle problems sometimes account for absenteeism among employees. Complete resolution of these types of situations often require sustained periods of time away from work. Employees should consider requesting a leave of absence under these or related circumstances.

2. Department Guidelines:

- a. Department practices which permit employees to report off sick to a department secretary or leave a message on the department's voice mail are discouraged.
 - b. Flexible schedules for employees should only be considered when the primary benefit is to the institution and not to accommodate a personal need. The institution cannot grant these types of amenities to all employees and it is not fair to just grant them to one.
 - c. Supervisors and managers should stay engaged in the leave reporting process. When such activities are delegated to departmental secretaries or other support staff, a message is sent that the department lacks concern over employee attendance.
- E. Application of the Policy: Consistency in application of this policy is crucial.
- F. Notice Requirements: Notice of this policy change shall be provided to all affected employees no later than thirty (30) days prior to implementation. New employees in affected classifications will be apprised of this policy during New Employee Orientation.