



Policy Title:	Sick Leave
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Policies Superseded:	FAST-HREO 420 (in part)
Policy Management Area(s):	Human Resources and Equal Opportunity

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POLICY:

It shall be the policy of Coastal Carolina University to grant sick leave to all eligible employees in a manner consistent with state law and regulations promulgated by the Department of Administration's Division of State Human Resources (DSHR). All procedures on sick leave will be subject to review and audit by DSHR to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal requirements.

PROCEDURE:

I. ADMINISTRATION

- A. Sick leave is granted to help employees through periods of illness. Time missed from work resulting in sick leave is subject to verification. Department heads are responsible for sick leave authorization verification and for ensuring that leave and attendance are recorded accurately. Human Resources and Equal Opportunity (HREO) benefits personnel will assist with sick leave policies and ensure guidelines are followed.
- B. Department heads may require verification of illness for time missed if sick leave is used. This verification consists of a health care provider's statement of the need for sick

leave and gives the inclusive dates of the leave. The employee must be given advance notice of the need to supply a verification of illness.

- C. Supervisors should notify HREO benefits personnel of any absence that exceeds three days, as such an absence may be covered under FMLA. Notification regarding unauthorized absences and absences involving leave without pay should also be communicated to the HREO benefits area.
- D. HREO is responsible for leave policy interpretation and administration.
- E. The sick leave policy will be applied in an equitable manner to all eligible employees. In instances of suspected sick leave abuse or violation of policy, department heads or authorized supervisors may require the employee in question to provide a licensed health care provider's verification of time missed from work as a result of illness or treatment. The employee must be given advance notice of the need to supply a verification of illness.
- F. Additional employees may not be hired to replace full-time equivalent (FTE) employees on sick leave or other authorized leave. Temporary or substitute employees may be hired for limited periods of time to provide coverage during the absence of employees in FTE positions on qualified approved FMLA leave.
- G. The University maintains leave records for each employee covered under the sick leave policy. Leave records are subject to audit.
- H. The leave balance of each eligible employee is shown on the employee's electronic pay advice located in Self-Service.

II. SICK LEAVE ELIGIBILITY

Sick leave will be earned by and granted to full-time and part-time employees in FTE positions who are:

- A. Scheduled to work at least one-half of the workweek on a 12-month basis; or
- B. Scheduled to work the equivalent of one-half of the workweek during the full academic year of nine months or more.

III. SICK LEAVE EARNINGS

- A. Crediting of Sick Leave
 - 1. Employees who are in a pay status one-half or more of the workdays of the month will earn sick leave for the full month. Employees in pay status for less than one-half of the workdays of the month will not earn sick leave for that month.

2. Employees will earn sick leave while on sick leave, annual leave, or other authorized leave with pay. Employees will not earn sick leave during periods of unpaid leave.
 3. Employees' sick leave earnings are computed based on the number of hours in the employee's workday.
- B. Rate of Earnings
1. Full-time employees in FTE positions will earn sick leave at the rate of one and one-fourth working days per month.
 2. Part-time employees in FTE positions will earn sick leave on a pro-rata basis.
- C. Maximum Accrual and Carryover
1. Full-time and part-time employees in FTE positions will be permitted to earn up to a maximum of 15 sick leave days in a calendar year. They may carry over from one calendar year to the next any unused sick leave up to a maximum of 180 days.
 2. Exceptions:
 - a. An employee who changes from being full-time to part-time or from part-time to full-time without a break in service will retain the sick leave hours previously earned.
 - b. If this change results in the employee having a maximum sick leave accumulation in excess of 180 days as of the effective date of the change, the employee will not forfeit the excess. The employee will retain this excess sick leave, which will be the maximum amount the employee may carry over into future years.
 - c. If the employee subsequently reduces the amount of sick leave carried over to 180 workdays or less, 180 workdays will become the maximum amount of unused sick leave the employee may carry over thereafter.

IV. GRANTING OF ADDITIONAL SICK LEAVE

- A. In the event an employee's illness extends beyond available sick and annual leave, the Vice President of Human Resources or designee may, upon the written recommendation of the employee's department head, advance up to 15 days of additional sick leave to the employee. Only one approved request may be outstanding at any given time.
- B. Sick leave may be advanced only if documentation from a licensed health care provider indicates that the employee is expected to return to work within the 15-day time period for which sick leave is being advanced. If no medical prognosis is available or an estimated return-to-work date is not determined or is greater than 15 days, the employee must exercise some other form of leave or be placed in leave-without-pay status.
- C. Upon return to work, all sick leave earned by the employee will be applied to the sick leave deficit (advanced sick leave) until the deficit is eliminated.

- D. If an employee separates from employment before satisfying the sick leave deficit and later returns to employment with the state, the leave deficit will need to be satisfied upon re-employment.

V. USAGE AND CHARGING OF SICK LEAVE

- A. Leave taken under this section may qualify as FMLA leave and, if so, will run concurrently with sick leave.
- B. Reasons an employee will be allowed to use sick leave are as follows:
 - 1. Personal illness or injury that incapacitates the employee from performing the primary duties of their position. (See Section VI Extended Disability Leave.)
 - 2. When certified by a licensed health care provider, exposure to or infection with a contagious disease such that your presence on duty could endanger the health of others, including fellow employees or students.
 - 3. Appointment for medical or dental examination or treatment when the appointment cannot reasonably be scheduled during non-work hours. To the degree possible, examination appointments should be approved in advance by the authorized supervisor.
 - 4. Sickness and recovery related to pregnancy or other temporary medical impairments. The date on which resulting sick leave begins and continues will be at the request of the employee based on the determination and advice of a licensed health care provider.
 - 5. Treatment of alcoholism or alcohol abuse by the employee for the purpose of participating in public or private treatment and rehabilitation programs that have been approved by the South Carolina Department of Mental Health.
 - 6. Care of an ill immediate family member for up to 10 days of accrued sick leave within a calendar year for those employees earning sick leave. For the purpose of this policy only, “immediate family” includes the employee’s spouse and children, in addition to the following relations of the employee or the employee’s spouse: mother, father, brother, sister, grandparent, legal guardian, and grandchildren. In such cases, sick leave may be granted for the same reasons that apply to employees. (See Sections V. B. 1-5.)
 - 7. Care of an adoptive child after placement for up to six weeks of earned sick leave. The leave authorized by this section may be requested by the employee only if the employee is the person who is primarily responsible for the care and nurture of the child. However, if both parents are employed by the State of South Carolina, only one parent may qualify for the adoption leave. (See additional guidelines under the University’s FMLA policy.)
- C. Use of sick leave will be calculated in quarter-hour increments.
- D. In qualifying sick leave situations, the employee will use all available sick and annual leave before going on leave without pay unless the Vice President of Human Resources or designee grants an exception at the employee’s request.

- E. When a holiday is observed by the University while an employee is using sick leave, that day will be considered a holiday and will not be charged as a day of sick leave for the employee. The employee must be in a paid status on the day before the holiday in order to receive pay for the holiday.
- F. If an employee on annual leave becomes ill, the portion of leave attributed to the illness may be used as sick leave at CCU's discretion.

VI. EXTENDED DISABILITY LEAVE

- A. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), certain extended illnesses may be protected as disabilities and may require reasonable accommodation.
- B. HREO will require, prior to approval of extended disability, certification by the health care provider to include:
 - 1. The date on which the serious health condition began.
 - 2. The probable duration of the condition.
 - 3. Appropriate medical facts as would be known by the health care provider regarding the condition.
- C. Dates set forth in the health care provider's initial certificate may be subsequently amended as medically necessary. HREO may require additional documentation from the health care provider issuing the certificate or may secure additional medical opinions from other health care providers.
- D. Disability leave may be exercised using either leave with or leave without pay, or a combination of both.
- E. If the employee is able to return to work within the approved extended leave period, the employee will be reinstated to the same position or to one of a comparable pay band for which the employee is qualified.
- F. If the employee is unable to return at the conclusion of the extended leave period, he/she may be separated from service if reasonable accommodation under the ADA does not exist.
- G. The employee has the option of using or retaining accrued annual leave prior to going on leave without pay. The employee must use all sick leave before going on leave without pay, unless the Vice President of Human Resources or designee grants an exception at the employee's request and for good cause shown.
- H. Prior to returning to work, a release to return to work from the employee's health care provider will be required.
- I. Work-related injuries or illnesses are also subject to the extended disability guidelines.

VII. DISPOSITION OF SICK LEAVE

A. Transfer of Earned Leave

1. **Transfer Between State Agencies --** Employees who transfer from one state-covered entity to another without a break in service will transfer their earned and accumulated sick leave adjusted to the scheduled work week of the transferred-to agency. In the case of an employee transferring from a state-covered entity under whose system the employee had, prior to January 1, 1969, a maximum accumulation in excess of that currently authorized by the transferred-to state-covered entity, the total sick leave accumulated will be transferred. If the employee subsequently reduces the amount of sick leave carried over to 180 days or less, 180 workdays will become the maximum amount of unused sick leave the employee may carry over thereafter.
2. **Between a State Agency and a School District –** An employee of a state-covered entity transferring to a school district of the state, or a state school district employee transferring to a state-covered entity, is permitted to transfer and retain all sick leave earned while with the former employer, regardless of the employment status at the new employer, if the move occurs without a break in service.
3. **Organizational Reassignment –** When an employee moves from one campus or organizational unit of the University to another without a break in service, accumulated sick leave will be transferred with the employee. Please note that employees moving from a full-time FTE position to a research grant position, a temporary grant position, or a time-limited position will be considered to have a break in service, and transfer of any sick leave will be forfeited.
4. **Moving from One FTE Position Type to Another FTE Position Type**
 - a. Full-time employees in FTE positions who are reassigned to another full-time FTE position are entitled to retain their accumulated sick leave.
 - b. When an employee in an FTE position moves to another position in the University that has a different workday schedule, the employee's accumulated sick leave will be converted to the equivalent number of days of sick leave at the receiving department.
 - c. Full-time employees in FTE positions who are moved or reassigned to a part-time FTE position, and are scheduled to work at least one-half of the workweek in that part-time position, are entitled to retain their total number of days of accrued sick leave; however, the employee may not earn in excess of 180 days after the effective date of the move or reassignment. If the total amount of accrued sick leave is in excess of 180 days at the time of the move or reassignment, sick leave taken will be deducted from the total until the balance is reduced to 180 days or less, after which the employee will be eligible to accrue sick leave not to exceed 180 days.
 - d. Full-time employees in FTE positions who are moved or reassigned to less than half-time positions are entitled to retain their total number of days of sick leave. However, after the effective date of the move or reassignment, those employees may not accrue additional sick leave. Sick leave taken will be

deducted from their sick leave balances as of the date of the move or reassignment until the leave has been exhausted.

B. Separation from Employment or Break-in-service

1. If hired prior to July 1, 2012, an employee separating from employment as a result of retirement may receive service credit for no more than 90 days of unused sick leave at no cost to the employee. The leave must be credited at a rate such that 20 days of unused sick leave equals one month of service. This additional service credit may not be used to qualify for retirement.
2. An employee who terminates employment or experiences a break in service will forfeit all sick leave. The sick leave may not be reinstated, and the employee may not be compensated for the forfeited sick leave. However, in the event of a termination resulting from a Reduction-In-Force (RIF), employees who are recalled or reinstated within one year of the date of the RIF will have sick leave credit restored.

VIII. EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

A. Notification of Illness

1. As soon as an employee is aware that future use of their available sick leave will be required, the employee must notify the immediate supervisor of the need for the leave.
2. When an employee is incapacitated because of illness, the employee must notify their immediate supervisor of the absence prior to or at the start of the workday on the date(s) of the unscheduled absence. The employee must accurately enter their leave time in Self-Service or another authorized system, if possible. In the event the employee is unable to report leave, the supervisor or designee must complete leave time entry in Self-Service or another authorized system.
3. If an emergency exists and the employee is unable to contact the supervisor, arrangements should be made to have someone else notify the supervisor on behalf of the employee.
4. Unless some indication of the length of absence can be given on the first day of the absence, the employee is expected to notify the supervisor of each additional day of absence within 30 minutes of the beginning of each absent day.
5. Failure to give notice within the proper time limit may result in the absence being charged as unauthorized leave without pay, and the absent employee may be subject to disciplinary action.
6. If an employee is out for three or more days due to illness or to the illness of a qualified family member (as defined by the FMLA), the employee may be eligible for FMLA leave. Refer to CCU's FMLA Policy FAST-219. In these instances, the relevant supervisor and the employee should contact HREO benefits personnel to determine eligibility and guidelines for FMLA leave.

IX. SICK LEAVE RECORD CORRECTIONS

Record corrections – Requests by employees for corrections to their leave records must be made through their supervisor in conjunction with payroll.

X. RELATED POLICIES

- A. FAST- 240 Annual Leave
- B. FAST- 225 Annual and Sick Leave Guidelines for Research Grant, Temporary Grant and Time-Limited Positions
- C. FAST- 219 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- D. FAST- 214 Reduction-in-Force