



# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

## Staff Handbook

### **SICK LEAVE POLICY** (also referenced in the [Employee Policy Manual & Handbook](#))

The University of North Alabama provides eligible faculty and staff employees sick leave to prevent loss of income.

#### **Accrual of Sick Leave**

Full-time regular faculty and staff employees are entitled to 96 work hours (12 workdays) of sick leave each year at the employee's regular rate of pay regardless of length of service. Eligible part-time and half-time employees are entitled to sick leave at a prorated share for hours worked. Provisional employees are not entitled to use sick leave until the end of the 90-day provisional period. Temporary employees are not entitled to sick leave.

Employees entitled to sick leave earn sick leave credit for all hours that they are considered to be in active pay status, which includes but is not limited to (a) normal work hours, (b) paid vacation, (c) paid sick leave, (d) paid jury duty leave, and (e) paid military leave.

#### **Usage of Sick Leave**

##### **Categories of Sick Leave**

There are various categories of sick leave, the usage of which are subtracted from the employee's sick leave balance.

**Personal illness/accident leave and physician appointments:** An employee may take sick leave if he/she is unable to work due to illness or injury or for health-related professional services which cannot be obtained outside regular work hours.

**Maternity leave:** Sick leave can be used for up to 6 weeks' postpartum. Should an employee desire to take the balance of her 12-week Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allotment for extended maternity leave (beyond the postpartum period), she must use annual or unpaid leave to do so. Disabilities caused or contributed to by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions are treated the same as disabilities caused or contributed to by other medical conditions under the University's health or disability insurance and sick and annual leave plans.

**Family illness/accident leave:** Sick leave may be used for illness or injury of an immediate family member which requires the employee's presence. Immediate family is considered to be a spouse, child, stepchild, mother, father, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild. Generally, the maximum amount that can be charged against sick leave for family illness/accident leave during a calendar year is 12 weeks for family members covered by the FMLA.

**Bereavement leave (death of a family member):** An employee may take time off due to a death in the immediate family and may charge the time off to sick leave. Immediate family is defined above. Proof of relationship to the family member may be required. Generally, the maximum amount that can be charged against sick leave for death of a family member is three days. Additional sick leave time may be granted under certain circumstances by the appropriate vice president.

**Funeral leave:** An employee may take sick leave to attend the funeral of family members (outside the immediate family) and friends. Time off normally is limited to one day or less for each occurrence.

**Personal leave:** An employee is allowed time away from work to take care of extraordinary legal or personal business matters. Personal leave should be approved in advance, and work requirements take priority over personal leave. Only two days per year of personal leave are authorized. (The year starts on January 1 and ends on December 31.) An additional three days of leave may be approved by the appropriate vice president when circumstances warrant such action. Personal leave is charged against the accrued sick leave balance and cannot be carried over from one year to the next.

**On-the-job injury leave:** An employee who is injured on the job may elect to charge the absence to his/her accrued sick leave in lieu of being paid under the University's Workers' Compensation Equivalent Program. After exhausting all sick leave, the employee may request that annual leave or compensatory time be used, but such requests must be made to the Office of Human Resources.

**Miscellaneous uses:** Sick leave may be taken to attend classes during the workday if approved by the supervisor or for absences resulting from inclement weather when the University is not closed may be charged against sick leave.

### **Planning and Taking Sick Leave**

For sick leave purposes, a day is considered 8 hours for full-time regular staff employees, and as the actual hours the employee was scheduled to work for regular staff employees who work less than 40 hours per week.

Use of sick leave for authorized non-emergencies, (e.g., medical, dental, and optical appointments) should be planned in advance, and coordinated with the employee's supervisor.

Sick leave may be taken in increments of one-quarter of an hour with seven minutes rounded down to the nearest quarter hour and eight minutes rounded up the nearest quarter hour. Sick leave may not be used for vacation time.

### **Requesting and Reporting Sick Leave**

All sick leave hours taken by monthly-paid employees are to be reported on the leave report in Self Service Banner by the employee and submitted to the appropriate supervisor. Non-exempt employees are to report sick leave hours taken on the bi-weekly timesheet in Self-Service Banner.

All cost center heads are responsible for monitoring absences within their areas and for ensuring that leave is reported properly.

### **Advanced Sick Leave**

Upon the recommendation of the supervisor and department head, full-time regular employees may be authorized to take small amounts of sick leave in advance of earning said leave under emergency conditions, normally not to exceed 24 hours. An additional 16 hours of sick leave may be approved by the appropriate vice president when circumstances warrant such action. Advanced sick leave must be repaid from the next earned sick leave hours. Any sick leave time taken in advance, but not repaid with earned leave, must be repaid upon termination.

### **Donating Leave**

An employee in a position with "regular" status, who must be absent due to sickness or to care for a seriously ill member of his/her immediate family as defined by the [Family Medical Leave Act](#), and who has

exhausted his/her sick leave, annual leave, and compensatory time may be given annual leave or sick leave by another employee. The supervisor of an employee needing donated leave may solicit leave by contacting other employees directly or by an email to all faculty and staff employees. To donate leave, employees contact Human Resources, stating the desire to donate leave to another employee. Human Resources reviews and processes the requests according to policy and deducts only the needed hours per pay period on a proportional basis from each donor's appropriate leave balance and credits the recipient with the designated hours. An employee receiving donated leave will remain on the payroll with all benefit entitlements until all donated leave has been exhausted, he/she becomes eligible for long-term disability, or the sickness no longer exists, whichever comes first.

- No more than 80 hours per year may be donated by any individual employee.
- Leave cannot be donated if it results in a negative leave balance for the donor.
- An employee may not be absent on leave (a combination of annual leave, sick leave, personal leave, compensatory time, and donated leave) longer than 12 weeks during each calendar year, in cases other than his or her personal sickness. In cases of personal sickness, the employee may qualify for long-term disability.

### **General Sick Leave Policies**

Sick leave is not intended to be nor may it be used for additional annual leave time nor may it be converted to annual leave. However, an employee may choose to use annual leave or compensatory time instead of sick leave for any category of sick leave. If the qualifying sick leave extends beyond the employee's original authorized annual leave period, the additional leave time may be counted against accumulated sick leave.

The employee's supervisor has the responsibility to insure that the employee uses sick leave for its legitimate purposes. Until the supervisor is satisfied that the employee has used sick leave properly, he/she may recommend the withholding of sick leave pay. Upon request of the supervisor, the employee may be required to show evidence of his/her illness or of the necessity to be absent to attend to a family member during an illness in the form of a medical certificate from a physician.

If the President notifies employees in advance that a particular day or half day is designated as additional time off (holiday or inclement weather), an employee on sick leave is not charged sick leave for the time off. Additionally, if an employee is on annual leave and becomes ill, or if other circumstances occur which qualify the employee for sick leave, the leave time may be counted against sick leave, if certification is provided verifying the sickness or qualifying circumstances.

If the employee must be on an extended qualifying sick leave (e.g., sickness) and wishes to maintain his/her accumulated sick leave balance, the leave may be taken as annual leave. Furthermore, an employee may request leave without pay in order to preserve his/her accrued leave (to "freeze leave"). If the employee elects to freeze his/her leave, he/she has technically gone on leave without pay and is not entitled to accrue leave until he/she returns to work.

An employee on sick or temporary disability leave should return to work in his/her normal job as soon as medically feasible. An employee returning to work after such a leave may be requested to supply the University with a doctor's statement certifying that he/she is able to return to his/her normal duties. An employee is not permitted to work against the advice of his/her doctor. If an employee chooses not to return to work after being released by a physician to do so, the employee has resigned his/her position.

Accrued sick leave from another Alabama public educational institution who participates in the Retirement System of Alabama is transferrable to the University of North Alabama.

Any employee who violates or abuses sick leave is subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

**Sick Leave Carry-Over**

Unused sick leave is carried forward on December 31 of each year. There is no limit on the number of days that can be carried forward.

An employee's sick leave balance appears on his/her monthly or bi-weekly paycheck stub. Leave balances may also be viewed by the employee at any time in Self-Service Banner.

**Sick Leave and Employment Separation**

When the employee/employer relationship ceases to exist, sick leave is handled according to the following:

**Retirement:** Sick leave days are certified as additional service credit to the Alabama Teachers' Retirement System if an employee is vested.

**Resignation or Dismissal:** If vested, employees' accrued sick leave is certified to the Alabama Teachers Retirement System upon separation. If an employee is not vested, a record of his/her final sick leave balance is placed in her/her personnel file. If an employee is rehired at a later date, his/her sick leave is reinstated.