

Classified Employee Handbook



VALDOSTA
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Introduction

The policies, practices and benefits described in this handbook are broad internal guidelines. This handbook does not constitute a contract between Valdosta State University and its employees on either a collective or individual basis. Valdosta State University reserves the right to change any provision listed in this handbook. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it available for future reference. One of your first responsibilities is to become familiar with its contents. If you have a question, please discuss it with your supervisors or contact the Human Resources Department

Revised: July 2017

Your New Employer

Valdosta State University and You

A special act of the Georgia Legislature established an institution of higher learning in Valdosta, Georgia, in 1906. However, no appropriation was made for buildings or maintenance until the summer of 1911, when the state appropriated \$30,000 for one building and equipment. With community enthusiasm that has continued, the City of Valdosta donated 60 acres and \$50,000 to be used toward the establishment of the college campus. The first building, Converse Hall, was erected and furnished at a cost of \$55,000.

In 1912, the Legislature granted an adequate annual appropriation for maintenance, and the future of the institution was assured. The college, called the South Georgia State Normal College, opened to “young ladies” on January 1, 1913, offering two years of college work. An act of the Legislature in 1922 changed the name to Georgia State Women’s College at Valdosta and authorized a four-year program leading to the bachelor’s degree.

The Board of Regents made the College co-educational in 1950 and changed the name to Valdosta State College. On July 1, 1993, Valdosta State College became a Regional University within the University System of Georgia.

VSU Mission Statement

As a comprehensive institution of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University (VSU) is a welcoming, aware, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving our communities’ rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. As such, the VSU mission consists of three interrelated parts:

- **Student Mission:** To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.
- **University Mission:** To operate the university with a focus toward human, environmental, and financial sustainability while increasing value to our local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. To expand opportunities for our students, employees, and varied community members by promoting social justice and service learning.
- **Regional Mission:** To provide our region and our home with the resources and support necessary to develop and sustain a higher quality of living, greater economic and community development, and inspired innovation that nurtures and respects our diverse population and beautiful environment while promoting academic outreach, public and private entrepreneurship, and collaboration with all regional entities.

Valdosta State University fulfills its mission by focusing on inclusion in all aspects of the educational experience.

VSU Blazer Creed

Valdosta State University is a learning environment based on trust and mutual respect in which open dialogue, vigorous debate and the free exchange of ideas are welcome. The university is equally dedicated to the core values of community, including a commitment to practice civility, integrity and citizenship. As members of this community and proud Blazers we will strive to uphold these core values for the advancement of the University.

Civility-A Blazer shows courtesy and compassion as well as respect for the dignity of every human being

Integrity- Each Blazer is responsible for his or her own actions and our community is stronger when we contemplate the context of our decisions and uphold the principles of trust and honesty.

Citizenship- Every Blazer has an interest in the well-being of the community and therefore a duty to stay informed to make positive contributions and to offer support to those who need help.

Human Resources and Employee Development Mission Statement

The Division of Human Resources and Employee Development is a strategic partner in supporting the goals and values of Valdosta State University by recruiting, developing, and retaining a highly qualified and diverse workforce.

Conditions of Employment

Probationary Period

All employees hired to fill a regular position shall serve the first six months of employment at the University on a probationary basis. During this period the employee has a chance to evaluate his/her job, and the supervisor has an opportunity to evaluate how well the employee is adapting to the new position. If an employee is not to be continued beyond the probationary period, he/she will be notified prior to the completion of the probationary period. An employee may be terminated at any time during the provisional period without the right of appeal. Following termination, the employee may be eligible to reapply for vacant positions after thirty days.

Orientation and Required Training

All new regular employees are introduced to Valdosta State University through a general orientation program conducted by the on-boarding specialist and an additional group orientation conducted by Employee and Organizational Development. Human Resources will notify new employees of the time and date to report for orientation. Additional training is required of all new employees within the first year of employment.

The new employee orientation is an important introduction to Valdosta State University. It consists of an overview of the University, a description of expectations for employees, and a review of payroll and benefits. Specific information such as work assignment, work hours, and departmental policies will be provided in each department by one's supervisor.

Each new employee shall be responsible for reading and familiarizing himself/herself with all policies, rules, and procedures of Valdosta State University with regard to the following:

- A. Human Resources & Employee Development Policies, procedures, and benefits
- B. Statement of duties to be performed and the conditions of employment including compensation. The department head or supervisor is responsible for explaining the duties and responsibilities of the job.
- C. A welcome package/orientation is provided to new employees. A welcome letter indicating start date, time, and location of orientation to Valdosta State University, Benefit enrollment paperwork, and all new hire paperwork for payroll processing, is also provided to each new employee.
- D. Consultants, Temporary and Temporary-Agency Workers may receive an abbreviated orientation when appropriate.

Compliance

During your first weeks of employment you will be asked to complete a mandatory ethics compliance training program. Other compliance information will also be completed based on your position and job duties. During your employment at VSU, you will also participate in mandatory annual compliance training. Instructions on how to complete these programs will be posted via the university list serve.

Security Questionnaire Loyalty Oath

The State of Georgia requires that a Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath be executed and retained in the employee's permanent file. This document must be completed by all persons employed for thirty or more days.

Disqualification of Employment

A person may be disqualified for employment for the following reasons:

- Conviction of a criminal drug offense. Conviction of a criminal drug offense shall disqualify an individual for employment with the University System of Georgia. The first conviction shall disqualify a person for not less than two (2) years. Any person who has been convicted of a second or subsequent criminal drug offense shall be ineligible for employment or re-employment for a period of five (5) years from the most recent date of conviction. Any false statement of material fact during the recruitment, application or hiring process including but not limited to failing to disclose a criminal conviction history where required in employment application.
- Membership (past or present) in any organization advocating the violent overthrow of the Government of the United States.
- Felony convictions and convictions involving crimes of moral turpitude automatically disqualify an individual for employment with the University System of Georgia in a position of trust.

Immigration Form I-9

All new employees are required by the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 to complete a government form I-9 before, or within three (3) days of, employment. This form attests to the individual's eligibility for employment in this country and must be presented to the person processing your employment papers. This law applies to all individuals, regardless of employment status, who enter into an employee/employer relationship with the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

Criminal Background Check

Georgia law provides that persons previously convicted of certain crimes are not eligible to hold some positions with the University System. In order to fulfill this mandate, Human Resources & Employee Development will conduct criminal background checks on all persons seeking employment. Certain convictions may disqualify an applicant for consideration in sensitive positions or positions of trust.

Personal Data Sheet

Employees have the right to review their personnel records with Human Resources & Employee Development. Employees must make an appointment with the office to review their file.

Notification of Change of Name, Dependents, Address, etc.

Employees may make changes to personal information using the HR/Payroll systems. Certain changes, i.e. name changes and marital status, will require submission of the required supporting documentation to Human Resources & Employee Development. Change of name, telephone and address are important and should be reported promptly. Beneficiary changes and health insurance information should be handled directly with the on-site Benefits staff.

Employee Service Date/Hire Date

An employee service date is the date of your initial employment with the University System of Georgia unless there has been a break in service by termination of employment. For those who change from part-time to full-time and/or regular to temporary status or vice versa, the following policies apply:

1. A person who has a part-time regular position will retain his/her service date when changing to full-time regular position.
2. A person who has a full-time regular position who changes to a part-time regular position will retain his or her service date.
3. The service date of an employee changing from a full-time temporary position to a regular position (either full-time or part-time) will change to the effective on the date of the move to regular status.

4. The service date of an employee changing from part-time temporary position to a regular position either full time or part time will change to the effective date of the change to regular status.

Employment Policies

Equal Opportunity Employer

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, status as a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era, or handicap be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or any of its several institutions now in existence or hereafter established. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the USG (BoR Minutes, 1969-70, p. 154; 1979-80, p. 15; October 2008).

Americans with Disabilities Act

Valdosta State University is governed by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, which specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Valdosta State University is committed to complying with the goals and objectives of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Persons needing accommodations should contact the Director of Social Equity or the Director of Human Resources & Employee Development.

Employment of Relatives

No individual shall be employed in a department or unit, which will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. A marital or familial relationship shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for any employee. For the purpose of this policy, relatives are defined as husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers, sisters, and any in-laws of any of the foregoing (BoR Minutes, February 14, 1973, p. 312).

The basic criteria for the appointment and promotion of USG employees shall be appropriate qualifications and performance as set forth in the policies of the Board of Regents. Relationship by a family or marriage shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage.

No individual shall be employed in a department or unit that will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individual and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. As used herein, "line of authority" shall mean authority extending vertically through one or more organizational levels of supervision or management (BoR Minutes, 1989-90, p. 250).

This standard does not apply to the temporary or part-time employment of children under age 25, nor to any individual employed as of February 14, 1990, at any institution where a relative of such individual then holds a superior position at least one level of supervision removed from such individual in any line of authority. Exceptions may be approved by the Board of Regents upon recommendation of the Chancellor as being clearly in the best interest of the institution and the USG.

Amorous Relationships

A USG faculty or staff member, including a graduate teaching assistant, is prohibited from having an amorous relationship with any student who the faculty or staff member supervises, teaches, or evaluates in any way. A USG employee is prohibited from having an amorous relationship with any other employee if either employee supervises, evaluates, or in any other way directly affects the terms or conditions of the other's employment. Any individual who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the offense, up to and including termination.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Federal law provides that it shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any employer, because of the sex of any person, to discharge without cause, to refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against any person with respect to any matter directly or indirectly related to employment or academic standing. Harassment of an employee on the basis of sex violates federal law. Sexual harassment of employees or students in the University System is prohibited and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. Unwelcome sexual advancements, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual
3. Such unreasonable conduct interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment

Reporting, Investigation, and Resolution

All charges of sexual harassment will be investigated. The Title IX Coordinator located in the Office of Social Equity shall investigate the complaint of sexual harassment.

Discrimination Policy

The University System of Georgia is an affirmative action/equal opportunity/equal access employer that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, or status as a Vietnam War Era veteran. Allegations of discrimination will be handled by the Office of Social Equity.

Ethics Policy

All employees must complete an annual Ethics Compliance Training program as per the Board policy on Ethics BOR 8.2.20. In the event an actively employed employee fails to complete USG Ethics training and certification or other required training the employee shall be subject to disciplinary action consistent with Board Policy up to and including termination.

Every member of the VSU community is required to adhere to the University System of Georgia Statement of Core Values – Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Respect – that form and guide the daily work of the organization and to abide by the code of conduct.

Gratuities Policy

An employee of the University shall not directly or indirectly solicit, receive, accept, or agree to receive a thing of value by inducing the reasonable belief that the giving of the thing will influence his/her performance or failure to perform any official action. The acceptance of a benefit, reward, or consideration where the purpose of the gift is to influence an employee in the performance of his/her official functions is a felony under O.C.G.A. § 16-10-2.

An employee of the University or any other person on his/her behalf, is prohibited from knowingly accepting, directly or indirectly, a gift from any vendor or lobbyist as those terms are defined in Georgia statutes O.C.G.A. 21-5-70(6) and 45-1-6(a)(5)b. If a gift has been accepted, it must be either returned to the donor or transferred to a charitable organization. A gift may be accepted by the employee on behalf of the institution subject to reporting requirements of the Board of Regents. If the employee gift is accepted, the person receiving the gift shall not maintain custody of the gift for any period of time beyond that reasonably necessary to arrange for the transfer of custody and ownership of the gift.

For purposes of this policy a gift is defined as lodging, transportation, personal services, a gratuity, subscription, membership, trip, loan, extension of credit, forgiveness of debt, advance or deposit of money, or anything of value. A gift shall not include:

1. Food or beverage consumed at an occasional meal or event, provided the value is reasonable under the circumstances but in no event exceeds \$100 per person;
2. Food, beverages, and registration at group events to which substantial numbers of employees of an institution

and/or the University are invited;

3. Food, beverage, or expenses afforded employees, relatives or others that are associated with normal and customary business or social functions or activities;
4. Actual and reasonable expenses for food, beverages, travel, lodging, and registration provided to permit participation in a meeting, demonstration, or training related to official or professional duties if participation has been approved in writing by the President, or his/her designee;
5. Promotional items generally distributed to the general public;
6. Textbooks, software, and instructional materials to be reviewed;
7. An award, plaque, certificate, memento, or similar item given in recognition of the recipient's civic, charitable, political, professional, private or public service or achievement;
8. Legitimate salary, honoraria, benefit, fees, commissions, or expenses associated with the recipient's non-public business, employment, trade, or profession;
9. Gifts from a person or entity who is neither a lobbyist nor a vendor as those terms are defined in State Statutes, nor a student or patient at an institution;
10. Consulting fees, honoraria, or financial benefits from sponsors or foundations, received as part of a negotiated contractual agreement and in conformance with University and campus policies;
11. Gifts to or from University foundations or other separately incorporated, charitable entities.

Appearance of Conflicts of Interest

An employee shall make every reasonable effort to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. An appearance of conflict exists when a reasonable person will conclude from the circumstances that an employee's ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by personal interest. An appearance of conflict can exist even in the absence of a legal conflict of interest.

Employees are referred to State conflict of Interest Statutes O.C.G.A. § 45-10-20 through § 45-10-70 and the Board of Regents Policies 8.2.13, 8.2.15, and 8.2.16 through 8.2.20, to include University System of Georgia Ethics Policy found at <http://www.usg.edu> and institutional policies governing professional and outside activities.

A violation of this policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Ownership of Intellectual Property Rights

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia recognizes that research and scholarship should be encouraged

and carried out without regard to financial gain from licensing fees, royalties, or other such income. However, the Board of Regents also recognizes that patentable inventions, discoveries, software programs, and other intellectual property often arise from University System of Georgia-related staff or faculty efforts.

The policies governing the administration of inventions are included in the Board of Regents Policy Manual. Other board policies govern other forms of intellectual property including computer software. Those policies also provide recognition and incentive to inventors and at the same time ensure that University System of Georgia shares in the rights pertaining to inventions in which it has an investment. Any income accruing to the USG is used in furtherance of its academic mission.

Drug Free Work Place

Valdosta State University, as a recipient of federal funds, supports and complies with the provisions of the Drug Free Work Place Act of 1988. As an employer, Valdosta State University will aggressively promote and strive to maintain a drug free work place for its faculty and staff.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs by VSU employees is prohibited. Violations of this policy, to include misdemeanor and/or felony drug convictions during the course of one's employment will result in appropriate disciplinary actions being imposed by the institution. Said penalties may include suspension or termination of employment.

Employees who feel they have a potential substance abuse problem are encouraged to seek professional assistance. The Valdosta State University Counseling Center staff may perform an initial referral to community resources.

Random Drug Testing

Employees of the University serving in "safety sensitive" positions are subject to random drug testing. Such positions include public safety, health care, heavy equipment operators, and positions requiring the Commercial Driver's License. When an employee is advised to report for a random drug test, such must be accomplished as defined by policy. Failure to report or testing positive for illegal drug use may lead to termination of employment in accordance with University procedures.

Tobacco and Smoke Free Campus

In accordance with the Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005, Title 31 Chapter 12A, this policy reinforces the USG commitment to provide a safe and amicable workplace for all employees. The goal of the policy is to preserve and improve the health, comfort and environment of students, employees and any persons occupying our campuses.

The use of all forms of tobacco products on property owned, leased, rented, in the possession of, or in any way used by the USG or its affiliates is expressly prohibited. "Tobacco Products" is defined as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, all forms of smokeless

tobacco, clove cigarettes and any other smoking devices that use tobacco such as hookahs or simulate the use of tobacco such as electronic cigarettes.

Classification and Compensation

Job Classifications

Your classification is based on the responsibilities and duties involved in your particular job. Within most occupational fields there are several levels or grades based on the difficulty of the job, the responsibility you assume, and the experience you need to successfully accomplish the job objectives. Employees whose duties have changed significantly since originally being classified should discuss this issue with their supervisor; requests for reclassification are managed online via PeopleAdmin.

Affordable Care Act

Definitions

The below definitions apply to terms used in this policy:

- **Benefits Eligible:** There are three definitions pertaining to benefits eligible as described below:
 1. **Full Benefits Eligible:** This is defined as 30 or more hours per week or .75 FTE and greater, which applies to regular faculty and regular staff employees. Full benefits include all benefits in accordance with University System of Georgia of Board of Regents policy 8.2.9 Insurance.
 2. **Partial Benefits Eligible:** This is defined as 20 to 29 hours per week or .5 FTE to .74 FTE. Partial benefits eligible may apply to regular faculty and regular staff employees. Partial benefits include retirement and pro-rated leave accruals.
 3. **Non-Benefits Eligible:** This is defined as 19 or less hours per week (.49 FTE or less), which applies to regular faculty and staff employees. Non-benefits eligible also includes temporary faculty, staff, and student employees who may not work more than 1,300 hours in a 12 month period as defined later in this policy. Students may not be placed into a regular status.
- **Board of Regents:** The governing body of the University System of Georgia

Employee Categories

- **Faculty:** The faculty shall consist of the corps of instruction and the administrative officers as defined in Section 3 of the Policy Manual of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.
- **Staff:** Staff employees shall consist of two major employee groups 1) staff *professional and administrative employees* and 2) *staff non-exempt* and defined as follows:
 1. **Staff Professional and Administrative Employees** are exempt from the Federal Wage-Hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because of their professional or administrative responsibilities. (This group does not include faculty or graduate assistants); and
 2. **Staff Non-Exempt Employees** are not exempt from the federal wage-hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). (NOTE: The University System of Georgia position classification system includes the appropriate FLSA status in the “Master List with Definitions and Guidelines”.)
- **Student Employees:** Student Employees are considered temporary and include graduate assistants and student workers.

Employment Status

- **Regular Employment Status:** Regular employment is *considered continuous* and may also be defined by agreement, contract, term, or restricted funding source(s). Regular employment may be benefits eligible, partial benefits eligible, non-benefits eligible, full-time or part-time, exempt or nonexempt. Regular exempt employment must meet the “salary basis” requirement under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
 - **Salary Basis:** Being paid on a “salary basis” means an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period on a weekly or less frequent basis and the predetermined amount cannot be reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of the employee’s work subject to exceptions under FLSA.

- **Temporary Employment Status:** Temporary employment is short in duration to address business needs and must meet the requirements and characteristics described below:
 1. A temporary is non-benefits eligible.
 2. A temporary does not have an expectation of long-term employment.
 3. A temporary may be full-time or part-time.
 - A temporary employee may not exceed a total of 1,300 hours worked in a 12-consecutive month period. The 1,300 hours can be accumulated in any combination during the 12 month period. Once a temporary employee has worked 1,300 hours or has been employed for 12 consecutive months, whichever comes first, the temporary employee must have a break in service of 26 consecutive weeks. Employment applies across all USG institutions.
 - If a temporary employee is needed beyond the 1,300 hours, they must be moved to a regular employee status.
 - A temporary who is dually or jointly employed in more than one position must have all hours worked counted towards the 1,300 hour worked limit from the date of hire into the first position this includes Temporary Staff Arrangements.
 4. A temporary may be separated at any time for any reason without notice and either the employer or the employee can end the employment relationship. Such separation is not grievable or subject to appeal.
 5. A temporary is typically considered non-exempt under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime provisions and paid for all hours worked on an hour-for-hour basis, and they must receive overtime pay for hours worked over 40 in a workweek at a rate not less than time and one-half their regular rate of pay. In some instances, temporary employees, such as graduate assistants, post docs or credentialed professionals, may be exempt.

Note: If a temporary employee exceeds an average 30 or more hours per week during the ACA measurement period and meets the definition of healthcare eligibility under ACA, if they continue employment in a regular position, they will become eligible to enroll in healthcare benefits during the ACA administrative period.

Employee Categories: Types of Employment:

- **Faculty:** Consists of the corps of instruction and the administrative officers as defined in Section 3 of the Policy Manual of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.
1. The types of faculty are described below:
 - **Regular Faculty are** employed on a continuous basis and whose duration of employment may also be defined by agreement, contract, term, and/or restricted funding source(s). Regular Faculty may be full-time or part-time. Those faculty with a work commitment of half-time or greater are partial or full benefits eligible and those who work less than 20 hours per week are non-benefits eligible. Regular Faculty who are not hired through a competitive search will typically be given a “term” appointment for one academic or fiscal year, and may be reappointed for one (1) additional year, not to exceed a total duration of 2 years. Regular Faculty who have a full-time (1.0 FTE) appointment may be tenured, on tenure track or hold a non-tenured position in accordance with Sections 8.3.7 and 8.3.8 of the Policy Manual of Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.
 - **Temporary Faculty are** employed on a short term basis through written appointment. They are not employed on an academic year contract. If they are employed for more than one consecutive academic semester for 30 hours or more, except when the Academic semester is combined with Summer semester immediately preceding or following the Academic Semester, they shall be employed as Regular Faculty. Temporary Faculty are non-benefits eligible.
 2. **Requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA):** Under the ACA, a reasonable method of crediting hours for Part-time Regular and Temporary Faculty may be used to determine healthcare eligibility. The University System of

Georgia has determined that a reasonable method for converting credit hours or contact hours to standard hours work is as follows: 1.25 Prep/Grading hours + .5 Office/Meeting hours per each Classroom/Contact hour per week. Graduate Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants will track hours worked. Below is a conversion chart which will be used for crediting hours on a weekly basis for Part-time Regular and Temporary Faculty for purposes of the ACA to determine healthcare eligibility:

Contact Hours per week	Classroom/Contact Hours	Prep/Grading Hours	Office/Meeting Hours	Standard Hours Worked	FTE/Effort
1 Contact Hours	1	1.25	.5	2.75	.07
2 Contact Hours	2	2.5	1	5.5	.14
3 Contact Hours (1 course)	3	3.75	1.5	8.25	.21
4 Contact Hours	4	5	2	11	.28
5 Contact Hours	5	6.25	2.5	13.75	.34
6 Contact Hours (2 courses)	6	7.5	3	16.5	.41
7 Contact Hours	7	8.75	3.5	19.25	.48

Contact Hours per week	Classroom/Contact Hours	Prep/Grading Hours	Office/Meeting Hours	Standard Hours Worked	FTE/Effort
8 Contact Hours	8	10	4	22	.55
9 Contact Hours (3 courses)	9	11.25	4.5	24.75	.62
10 Contact Hours	10	12.5	5	27.5	.69
11 Contact Hours	11	13.75	5.5	30.25	.76
12 Contact Hours (4 courses)	12	15	6	33	.83

**Regular part-time faculty eligible for leave accrual and retirement at .5 FTE and above*

***Regular faculty are fully benefits eligible at .75 and above (includes health and voluntary benefits and retirement and leave)*

- **Staff Employees:**

1. The types of staff employees are described below:

- **Regular Staff** are employed on a continuous basis and whose duration of employment may also be defined by term and/or restricted funding source(s). Regular Staff employees may be full-time or part-time. Those with a work commitment of half-time or greater or .5 FTE are partial or full benefits eligible and those who work less than 20 hours per week are non-benefits eligible.
- **Temporary Staff Employees** are employed for a short duration and are non-benefits eligible.

2. **Requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA):** Under the ACA, all regular staff employees who work less than 30 hours per week (less than .75 FTE) and all temporary staff employees shall record and report all hours worked to determine health benefits eligibility.

- **Student Employees:** Student Employees are considered temporary and include graduate assistants and student workers. Student Employees may not exceed a total of 1,300 hours worked in a 12-consecutive month period. The 1,300 hours can be accumulated in any combination during the 12 month period. Student employees' are not subject to the re-employment restriction requiring a break-in-service after 12-consecutive months of employment. International students in lawful F-1 and J-1 status who are enrolled full-time are eligible to work for an institution but must not work more than 20 hours per week in accordance with visa restrictions and must ensure compliance with Federal Work Study requirements. See the policy on position classification for additional information on student employees.

Salary Adjustments and Increases

Salary adjustments may occur whenever a new salary scale is approved by the Board of Regents, our governing body. Appropriate adjustments will be made to employee's salaries in positions affected as funds are made available. This action should not be confused with a promotion or similar action where there is a change in an employee's responsibility.

Merit increases are normally made at the beginning of the fiscal year in July, providing funds are made available to the Board of Regents from the state appropriation allocated by the Georgia Legislature. The decision to increase your salary is made after considering your record for the previous year as reflected in the performance evaluation. The prevailing salary scale within your particular job classification must also be considered. It should be stressed that salary increases are not automatic.

Transfers and Promotions

Transfers are considered to be lateral changes within the same job classification and do not involve an increase in salary. Transfers normally have the convenience of the employee or the University as their goal; however, this action is also an effective tool used in increasing the flexibility of the work force. A criminal background check is required for all transfers and promotions.

Transfers can be of a temporary or permanent nature and should not be confused with promotion or demotion, which are initiated by the Department of Human Resources & Employee Development.

Promotions, unlike transfers, involve an upgrade in position classification, an increase in salary where funds are available, and whenever practical, they will be made from within. Promotions are made on the basis of merit and not seniority.

Therefore, to be promoted, an employee must possess the skills and abilities required in the vacant position, and must have performed satisfactorily in his or her former capacity. Promotions are competitive, as it is the desire of the University to place the best qualified person in a vacant position.

Provisional employees are not considered for promotion or transfer unless such action occurs within the same operating unit with the ultimate decision to retain the provisional employee to be reviewed and approved by the initial employing supervisor. Promotion or transfer of a provisional employee does not extend the provisional employee period.

Time Records

State and Federal laws require records be kept of all time worked.

With the new ACA guidelines it is necessary to use eTime in order to track the hours worked for healthcare eligibility under the Affordable Care Act. This means that all hours worked have to be input into eTime.

For employees who are paid on a monthly (or stipend) basis, an ACA pay rule has been designated by the USG BOR in which the employee can enter the time for tracking purposes only. If you have questions regarding this pay rule or the use of eTime for tracking purposes please call Human Resources.

Working Hours

Most University employees work a 40 hour week. There are variations of this schedule depending on the department in which you work. For example, the University Police Department must be open 24 hours a day. Adjustments in work schedules are made to fit their needs. Your supervisor will let you know the schedule you will work. Variations to the normal work day must be approved by Human Resources.

The need for overtime work is infrequent at the University. Each department is encouraged to schedule its work so their jobs can be accomplished during the prescribed work week. Payment for overtime is made in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and must be pre-approved by your supervisor.

Falsification of Time Records

Employees who intentionally falsify time records may be subject to disciplinary action to include suspension or termination. Employees who “punch” co-workers in or out are considered to have willfully falsified such records unless they have been instructed to take such action by their immediate supervisor or an individual having the authority to so effect an individual’s time.

Rest Periods

Work schedule permitting, rest periods may be allowed, i.e. coffee breaks, snack breaks, stretch breaks, etc. Taking a break for a short rest period depends upon the department involved and whether or not normal work can be continued while employees take breaks. Where rest periods are allowed they are limited to two, 15-minute breaks per day. Breaks cannot be used to allow employees to leave work early.

Neither the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) nor Georgia law require breaks or meal periods be given to workers. However, many employers do provide breaks and meal periods. Breaks of short duration are common. The FLSA requires workers be paid for short break periods; however an employer does not have to compensate for meal periods of thirty minutes or more, as long as the workers are free to use the meal period time as they wish and are not required to perform work during that time.

Payday

Payroll checks are auto debited on the last working day of every month for exempt employees. Non- exempt employees will be on a bi-weekly payroll schedule with twenty-six (26) pay periods per year. Non-exempt employees will be paid every other Friday.

Payroll Deductions

Mandatory payroll deductions may include:

- D. Federal Income Tax
- E. Social Security (FICA)
- F. State Teacher's Retirement Program (if required, based on employment status)
- G. State income tax
- H. County occupational tax
- I. Court-ordered garnishments and child support orders
- J. Federal and state income tax levies
- K. Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (if required, based on employment status)

Voluntary payroll deductions may include:

1. Health insurance
2. State Charitable Contributions Program
3. U.S. Savings Bonds
4. Georgia 529 Higher Education Savings Plan
5. Certain approved commercial insurance premiums
6. Parking fees
7. Miscellaneous deductions (YMCA, AAA, Wild Adventures, Campus Rec, AFLAC, meal plan, etc.)

Leave Policies

Leave Procedure

If an absence from work is for leave purposes, the employee must utilize the department leave process and record leave in the HR/Payroll system. If no leave is available, the earnings for the pay period affected will be reduced.

Annual Leave

All regular classified employees working at least one-half time or more receive paid vacation. Employees on provisional status earn vacation time. All leave requests must have supervisory approval.

Vacations are normally scheduled during “slack” periods and at the convenience of your department. You should arrange your schedule to avoid conflicts in requested leave time. If two employees request leave for the same time period and both cannot be absent at the same time, the employee with longer service has priority.

Eligible employees earn:

Years 1-5: 10 hours per month
Years 6-10: 12 hours per month
Years 10+: 14 hours per month

Regular employees working one-half time or more but less than full-time will earn leave in a ratio equivalent to their percentage of time employed.

Earned vacation may be accumulated up to a maximum of 360 hours each calendar year.

Sick Leave with Pay

All regular employees shall accumulate sick leave at the rate of one working day per calendar month of service with no maximum accrual limit. All regular, part-time employees working one-half time or more will accumulate sick leave in an equivalent ratio to the percentage of time employed. If sick leave is claimed for a continuous period in excess of five workdays, a physician’s statement is required for the employee to claim further sick leave.

In the event of illness, injury or death in one’s immediate family, an employee may, upon approval by his/her immediate supervisor, be allowed necessary time off with pay chargeable to sick leave. Sick leave may be used for up to three days for death of immediate family. Additional use of sick leave for this purpose is at the discretion of the supervisor. 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.

Leave for Marrow & Organ Donation

1. Employees who serve as an organ donor for the purpose of transplantation shall receive leave of absence, with pay of thirty days.
2. Employees who serve as a bone marrow donor for the purpose of transplantation shall receive a leave of absence, with pay of seven days.

Sick Leave Without Pay

An employee unable to return to work after using up all accumulated sick leave may be granted sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one year upon approval by the Director/Dean and Vice President. Sick leave without pay when combined with other types of leave including FMLA; must not exceed one year. Such approval of sick leave without pay does not guarantee the absent employee a position upon return from the leave of absence; however, it does allow the absent employee to continue his/her insurance benefits with System participation in the premium cost. All other benefits are prohibited which would otherwise accrue to the employee.

Shared Sick Leave Program

University regular employees with at least one year of service may participate in the Shared Sick Leave Program. The Shared Sick Leave Program is a means for University employees to donate sick leave to a pool for possible use by a fellow University employee who may be experiencing a life-threatening or emergency medical condition, which has caused or is likely to cause the employee to take leave without pay. Such leave may be requested in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury of the employee. Potential leave recipients may request up to 160 hours of Shared Leave at one time, and may make up to two additional requests for Shared Leave within a calendar year, for a maximum total of 480 hours per year within a five year period. The requests may be consecutive.

Employees are allowed to donate up to 40 hours of sick leave (in eight (8) hour increments) during the University Annual Open Enrollment period for the following calendar year. Leave donations are not reversible or refundable. Employees who contribute to the Shared Sick Leave Program must maintain a minimum of 40 hours of personal sick leave.

Court Duty

Employees called for jury duty or witness duty will be paid at the normal rate of pay for any regularly scheduled time lost from the job. This leave will be granted upon presentation of official orders from the appropriate court.

Voting

Employees are encouraged to vote in all federal, state, and local elections. An employee whose work schedule would otherwise prevent him/her from voting may, at the discretion of his/her immediate supervisor, be permitted sufficient time off with pay, not to exceed two hours, in order to vote.

Personal Leave

At the discretion of the President or his designee, personal leave of absence without pay for periods not to exceed one

year may be approved. Such approved personal leave shall allow the employee the right to elect to continue group insurance benefits.

Maternity Leave

Disability due to pregnancy shall be considered as any other disability and appropriate sick leave provisions shall apply and falls under the provision of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Family & Medical Leave

Consistent with the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, an eligible employee may be entitled to up to twelve work weeks of leave during any 12-month period, for one or more of the following reasons:

- The employee's own serious health condition, including an on-the-job injury or occupational disease covered by Worker's Compensation, which causes the employee to be unable to perform the functions of his or her job.
- The care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition
- The birth and care of a newborn child
- The legal placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care
- A spouse, son, daughter, or parent being on active duty or having been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces. Leave may be used for any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the service member's current tour of active duty or because the service member is notified of an impending call to duty in support of a contingency operation.

Consistent with the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, an eligible employee may be entitled to up to twenty-six work weeks of leave during any 12-month period, for the following reason:

A spouse, son, daughter, parent, or nearest blood relative caring for a recovering service member. A recovering service member is defined as a member of the Armed Forces who suffered an injury or illness while on active-duty that may render the person unable to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating.

FMLA and Health Insurance

Whether utilizing paid or unpaid time, employees may continue their insurance benefits during FMLA leave by paying their portion of the premiums. In order for insurance benefits to continue (as is the case with other types of sick leave without pay) the employee must make the normal premium payment and must contact the benefits section to arrange for premium payments during the period of the leave without pay

If you have any questions about your insurance as it related to Family & Medical Leave, please contact Human

Resources & Employee Development.

FMLA and Leave

FMLA leave is unpaid (employers are not required to grant such leave as paid time off). However, the University requires that employees utilize – their accrued paid sick leave and/or annual leave, as appropriate for such absences.

If an employee is on unpaid FMLA leave he/she would not accrue annual leave or sick leave during this period of time. If an employee is using unpaid FMLA on an intermittent basis, leave accruals will only calculate on that paid portion of the pay period. Questions regarding the calculations of leave accruals should be directed to the Human Resources & Employee Development.

If a request for family leave is denied for any reason, notice of the denial will be provided to the requesting employee by the supervisor denying the request in a timely manner. The notification will be provided in writing and will include the reason for the denial.

Employees are referred to the Family and Medical Leave Act (www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/fmla).

Employee Responsibilities Under FMLA

FMLA allows employees to balance their work and family lives by taking reasonable unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons. The FMLA seeks to accomplish this in a manner that accommodates the legitimate interests of employers, minimizes the potential for employment discrimination on the basis of gender, while promoting equal employment opportunity for men and women. As an employee requesting family leave, you are expected to provide your supervisor with appropriate notification and documentation.

- To be entitled to leave, employees must give at least a 30-day advance notice for foreseeable leave, or as much notice as is possible and practicable. An employee must first obtain a Family and Medical Leave Request form. For unforeseeable leave, you must provide notice as soon as possible. Human Resources & Employee Development will provide you with written notice regarding the approval or denial of your request for family leave.
- The University may require documentation of the need for leave by having the health care provider complete the Form WH-380-E-Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition. An employee must provide the requested certification to his/her employer within the time frame requested (the institution must allow at least 15 calendar days after its request), unless it is not practicable to do so despite the employee's diligent, good-faith efforts.

- Medical recertification may be required every 30 days for prolonged illnesses. Please get the Form W-H-380-E – Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee’s Serious Health Condition.
- For a personal serious health condition, you may be required to present a fitness-for-duty clearance from your health care provider before being reinstated to active duty.
- You must make arrangements to pay your health insurance premiums. Please contact the benefits department to make these arrangements.
- You must notify your employer of any changes of circumstances for which your leave is being taken.
- You are expected to return to work by the end of the approved FMLA leave. If you do not return, and if failure to return is not due to a continued or newly document qualifying serious health condition, you may be required to reimburse the institution for the employer portion of the health coverage premiums that it paid on your behalf during the leave.
- Once you have reviewed your responsibilities, please consult Human Resources & Employee Development if you have further questions. Please review your FMLA rights and benefits.

FMLA and Military Notification

Leave is available to covered family members of members of the National Guard or Reserves, or of retired military, who are on active duty, called to active duty, or are notified that they will be called to active duty in support of a contingency operation, as that is defined in various statutes governing military service. Leave is not available to regular members of the Armed Forces, and it is normally not available to members of state militias, unless they are called up in support of a U.S. operation.

The regulations define eight categories of “qualifying exigencies”:

- Short-notice deployment (7 days’ notice or less and only available for 7 days total);
- Military events and related activities (such as ceremonies and briefings);
- Child care and school activities (for non-routine matters);
- Financial and legal arrangements;
- Counseling;
- Rest and relaxation (up to 5 days);
- Post-deployment activities (including debriefings or funeral services for up to 90 days following the termination of the covered military member’s active duty status)’
- Any additional activities agree to by employer and employee

Although intermittent and reduced schedule leave are available for qualifying exigencies, qualifying exigency leave counts against the employee's 12-week per 12-month total allotment for FMLA leave. The employer may also request documentation of the need for qualifying exigency leave.

Military Leave

Under State of Georgia law, military differential pay may be provided by a government employer to a public officer or employee for absences due to ordered military leave.

The Board Policy now allows for University System of Georgia institutions to implement a program to provide eligible employees with military differential pay, extending the current 18 -30 days of paid military leave up to a period of 12 months. The full text of BOR Policy 8.2.7, Leave can be accessed at the following link:

http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C224/#p8.2.7_leave

The Human Resources Administrative Practices Manual has been updated to provide additional guidance on the administration and implementation on the policy and can be accessed on the following link:

http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/military_leave

Furloughs

The Board of Regents has delegated to each President the authority to implement a mandatory furlough program. In the event it becomes necessary for the President to exercise this authority, employee furloughs would be conducted in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the Office of the Chancellor.

Holidays

We have 12 official paid holidays for all regular employees. A terminating employee shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring after his or her last working day. Temporary employees will not be paid for holidays.

Of the 12 holidays, two are considered "floating holidays" taken at your department's convenience. Normally, these "floating holidays" will be taken during the month of December. If you have to work on a scheduled holiday, you will be paid at the regular rate of pay and be given a substitute holiday within a thirty-day period immediately preceding or following the scheduled holiday. If no additional time off can be given, you will be paid at the normal rate with no additional time off.

Employee Health, Wellness and Other Benefits

In order to enroll newly acquired dependents, employees should contact Human Resources & Employee Development.

Domestic coverage is available on 100% employee paid voluntary benefits plans (vision, dental, supplemental life, accidental death and dismemberment) through separate insurance policies, not through the USG voluntary benefits plans.

Health Plans

The University offers group health benefit plans to all regular employees working three-quarter time or more. Plan materials providing detailed information on the options available are distributed to employees at the time of hire and during the Annual Open Enrollment period.

For each plan, application for coverage must be made within 30 days of employment; otherwise an application would have to be made during the Annual Open Enrollment period.

For families in which both husband and wife are employees of the University, family coverage may either be in the husband's coverage or the wife's coverage, but not both.

Dental Plan

The University offers to all its regular employees working three-quarter time or greater a self-insured group dental benefit plan. In order to acquire this coverage, application must be made within 30 days of employment. All eligible employees and their dependents should be added upon enrollment because there will not be another opportunity to add existing dependents. Please refer to the Dental Benefits Plan booklet for further information.

For families in which both husband and wife are employees of the University, family coverage may either be in the husband's coverage or the wife's coverage, but not both.

Vision Plan

The USG provides vision coverage which features a large network of national retail chains as well as local providers.

COBRA

If an employee or his/her dependent loses medical or dental coverage, he/she may be able to extend coverage under the provisions of a federal law known as the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA). This law provides for the continuation of insurance benefits to employees and/or dependents if certain qualifying events take place such as termination of employment, a reduction in work hours, divorce or attainment of the maximum age by a dependent. Benefits may be extended for a maximum of 18, 29, or 36 consecutive months, depending upon the qualifying event. Under COBRA a 2% administrative fee must also be paid by the employee.

Life Insurance

The university offers a group life insurance program to its regular employees working three-quarter time or more. A basic amount of life insurance (\$25,000) is provided at no charge to all eligible employees upon application for this coverage by

the employee. An employee may also purchase additional supplemental insurance coverage. When an employee purchases supplemental life insurance, the employee automatically receives the equivalent amount of insurance for accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D). Application for eligibility is required after 30 days of employment. The dollar amount of supplemental life insurance coverage available is dependent upon the employee's annual salary and is a multiple of one to eight times that salary amount. No evidence of insurability is required for up to three times salary for supplemental (up to \$50,000 spouse life or child life), if application for such coverage is made within 30 days of employment. Both the basic and supplemental life insurance plans contain accidental death and dismemberment benefits. Spouse and child life coverage does not contain accidental death and dismemberment benefits.

Supplemental Life

Domestic coverage is available on 100% employee paid voluntary benefits plans through separate insurance policies, not through the USG voluntary benefits plans.

Children of parents who are both employed by the University may be insured under the child life coverage of either parent but not under the coverage of both parents. Insurance premiums due for life insurance coverage are deducted from the employee's payroll checks. An employee who terminates employment with the University may convert all or part of the group insurance to an individual policy (except term insurance) at a premium rate based upon the age of the applicant at the time of conversion. Such conversions are permitted without evidence of insurability. Please refer to the benefits booklet for more information.

Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

The University offers a stand-alone accidental death and dismemberment plan. This plan is available for employees plus family.

Flexible Spending Accounts

Employees are eligible to participate in flexible spending accounts for either medical expenses or dependent care expenses. These accounts allow the employee to set aside a portion of his/her salary on a pre-tax basis. The account is used to reimburse the employee for incurred qualified medical or dependent care expenses. By setting aside the monies on a pre-tax basis, the employee can increase the amount of his/her net take-home pay. Each plan has a limit to the amount that may be set aside. This limit is set annually by the Internal Revenue Service. Annual election of participation is required.

Long Term Disability Insurance

The University offers an optional long term disability insurance (90-day elimination period) protection plan to provide employees with a guaranteed monthly income should they become totally disabled while employed by the University. This is a voluntary plan with all premiums paid by the employee. The plan is available to all regular employees who are employed at least three-quarter time. Insurance premiums for this protection are deducted from payroll checks on an after-tax basis in order that benefits received may be on a non-taxed basis.

Short Term Disability Insurance

The University offers an optional short term disability insurance (14-day elimination period) protection plan to provide employees with a guaranteed monthly income should they become totally disabled while employed by the University. This is a voluntary plan with all premiums paid by the employee. The plan is available to all regular employees who are employed at least three-quarter time. Insurance premiums for this protection are deducted from payroll checks on an after-tax basis in order that benefits received may be on a non-taxed basis.

Social Security

University employees participate in the Social Security Program. Contributions under this program are jointly made by the individual and the University. The rates of contribution and the retirement benefits are established periodically by Congress.

Workers' Compensation

All employees of the University are covered under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. This Act provides protection for the employee in the event of injury or death while performing services for the University.

If an employee incurs an on-the-job accident, he/she should immediately notify the immediate supervisor, who in turn is responsible for the following:

- An incident report must be completed for **ANY** accident, injury, exposure or illness.
- Any emergency or situation requiring medical attention should be called in to Amerisys.

Unemployment Compensation

You are also covered under the Georgia Employment Security Law, commonly referred to as Unemployment Compensation. The law provides some economic security when persons become unemployed through no fault of their own.

The unemployment payments supplied by this act help the worker get through the difficult time of unemployment and maintain some degree of purchasing power.

Retirement

Subsequent to the 1978 amendments to the Teachers Retirement Act, all regular employees working half-time or more are required to be members of the Teachers Retirement System and make contributions as a condition of employment.

Hourly-paid staff employees employed prior to 1978 were given the opportunity to participate in the Teachers Retirement System and purchase prior service credits, if desired, thus affording them a retirement benefit. Detailed information regarding retirement can be obtained by contacting the Department of Human Resources & Employee

Development.

Retirement Plans

Retirement benefits for most regular, half-time or greater employees of the University as a condition of employment are provided through the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. However, certain employees of the University whose positions are eligible for participation in the Optional Retirement Plan pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Regents under O.C.G.A section 47-21-7 and whose positions have specifically been identified as meeting the criteria under this law have an option to become a member of either the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia or the Regents Optional Retirement Plan (ORP).

As a condition of employment, all employees eligible for the Regents Optional Retirement Plan or Teachers Retirement System of Georgia must make an election within their first 60 days of employment. Those not making an election within 60 days will default to the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. **The retirement plan election is irrevocable.**

Might be a place for TRS and ORP- use of sick leave issues

Credit Union

MEA Federal Credit Union is available to employees of the University. All University employees are eligible to apply for membership. Additional information about the plan is available upon request from Human Resources & Employee Development.

Voluntary Retirement Savings Plan

You may wish to participate in various tax-deferred annuity programs wherein you invest a portion of your monthly salary affording a current tax benefit. Income you invest in such programs is not subject to Federal taxes until it is withdrawn at a later date.

The University does not approve or disapprove any plan or underwriting company. Proper investigation of each program is your responsibility. Further information concerning tax sheltered annuities may be obtained by contacting the Department of Human Resources & Employee Development.

All employees including temporary employees are eligible to participate in these plans

State of Georgia Deferred Compensation Plan

In accordance with the provisions of Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code, the State of Georgia has established a Deferred Compensation plan for employees of the State, and this plan is available to employees of the University. This plan allows employees to make pre-tax contributions to various investment options, which have been selected by the State. While the plan is similar to the Tax Deferred Savings Program available, there are differences, including different

investment vehicles. Please contact Human Resources & Employee Development for further information.

Employee Discounts

Please check the Employee Discount page for the latest information regarding discounts and the USG website for discounts for USG BOR employees.

Employee Wellness

The University System of Georgia and Valdosta State University Wellness Initiative is to increase opportunities for our employees to participate in a program that will assist them to lead happier and healthier lives as well as aid in reducing personal and healthcare costs. The Campus Wellness Committee provides programming and resources to assist VSU employees in their pursuit of health and wellness.

Employee Development

Performance Evaluation

The University subscribes to the concept of performance management. Therefore, an annual Performance Evaluation should be prepared on each employee by the immediate supervisor for purposes of advising the employee of his/her strengths and weaknesses of job performances as well as providing a basis for the determination of pay increases, promotion, demotion, retention, or transfer. It also provides an opportunity for a discussion of job description changes, of plans for employee development, and of goals for the year. This process should include a personal interview with the immediate supervisor. The process may also include a mid-year review at the discretion of the supervisor. The employee has the right to include a written response to the performance management assessment to be included or attached thereto and made a part of the personnel file.

Continuing Education and Other Training

Employee and Organizational Development regularly provides workplace-training opportunities; including various certificate programs, to University employees. University employees are also eligible to obtain ongoing education as well as other job specific training opportunities, if money is available. These opportunities may include conferences, specialized training, association memberships, etc., which is available, as job relatedness requires. Employee supervisor, department manager, and/or senior vice chancellor approval may be required.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

The Board of Regents is committed to helping full-time employees pursue growth and development. Employees are responsible for obtaining admission to the University System institution of their choice. Once an employee has been accepted, he/she must obtain a tuition assistance form and submit completed form to the supervisor for approval. The

employee should send the form to Human Resources & Employee Development for processing. The tuition assistance program is offered subject to the availability of space in class or classes. (See Human Resources & Employee Development for additional information)

Employee Awards

Valdosta State University recognizes full-time regular employees who complete five years of continuous service and every five years thereafter at an annual service awards program.

Other employee awards may be given throughout the year by Valdosta State University and various VSU units. If such awards include a monetary gift, the award may be paid through payroll services, and appropriate taxes may be withheld.

Council on Staff Affairs

The Council on Staff Affairs (COSA) participates in the process of University governance by advising the President about matters which affect classified employees specifically and about matters which affect the general welfare of the University. In so doing, the Council may consult with and make recommendations to other appropriate organizations of the University. The Staff Council is made up of representatives from all areas of the University work force. If you have concerns, questions, or suggestions concerning your status as a classified employee, you should contact your COSA representative.

Standards of Conduct

Personal Conduct and the Working Environment

Valdosta State University is a learning environment based on trust and mutual respect in which open dialogue, vigorous debate, and the free exchange of ideas are welcome. The University is equally dedicated to the core values of community, including a commitment to practice *civility*, *integrity*, and *citizenship*. As members of this community, and proud Blazers, we will strive to uphold these core values for the advancement of the University.

Employees are expected to provide reasonable effort and productivity and to adhere to published rules and regulations and accepted customs and standards of courtesy, conduct and cooperation.

Because the University seeks to maintain an environment conducive to the conduct of business and one in which the rights of others are respected, the University expects of its employees behavior consistent with the expectations of a professional environment. Part of the intent of this section is to identify typical offenses or behavior patterns for which disciplinary actions are taken. This is necessary in order to provide consistent treatment of all employees so that the rights of some employees will not be violated by other employees.

Although this is not an all-inclusive list, the following are work rules covering deficiencies of offenses for which disciplinary actions may be appropriate and which may result in discharge:

1. Failure to perform duties required by the employee's job description or assignments directed by management, including the failure to abide by the particular rules of an employee's place of work.
2. Failure to maintain work quality and/or productivity.
3. Failure to adhere to established safety policies and procedures.
4. Rude or discourteous behavior toward employees or customers, including threats, intimidation, coercion, the use of profanity and other harassing statements.
5. Tardiness, temporary unauthorized absence from the premises or work area during work hours, and leaving the work area early.
6. Presence in an unauthorized area.
7. Failure to report an injury occurring on premises concerning an employee, student, or any other person.
8. Behavior, which interferes with the work performance of other employees and/or disrupts any teaching, administrative or other activities.
9. Failure to adhere to established Information Technology policies and procedures.
10. Absenteeism and misuse of sick leave.
11. Unauthorized absence from work for an entire shift or workday without notification to the supervisor. Note: if an employee is absent from work for three days without authorization, they are considered to have quit without notice.
12. Insubordination or willful disobedience.
13. Consumption, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or other impairing substance on University property or during working hours.
14. Possession or transportation of a weapon on University System of Georgia property or at a University System of Georgia event in violation of state or federal law.
15. Wasting time, loitering, or loafing work, including sleeping while on duty.
16. Fighting in the work place.
17. Sexual harassment.
18. Acceptance of additional compensation in any form for work performed in the scope of employment at the University for which compensation has been or will be made through the payroll.

19. Commission of a criminal act.
20. Violation of confidential information pertaining to patients, students, employees or research/intellectual property, to include gaining unauthorized access to records or information with or without harmful intent.
21. Drug offenses.
22. Dishonesty.
23. Refusal to cooperate in University administrative actions (i.e. refusal to appear as a witness at an official grievance or other hearing, refusal to cooperate in an official investigation or inquiry, etc.)
24. Illegal use of the computer and/or network that would include, but not be limited to, copyright and software license violation, failure to adhere to all federal and state laws including those prohibiting slander, libel, harassment, and obscenity.
25. Private use of state property including computing/IT resources for personal gain or benefit, or for the gain or benefit of others.
26. Disclosing information that is confidential by law, including educational records; unauthorized release of confidential or official information.
27. Willful damage or theft of University property or property belonging to another person.
28. Falsification of institution documents or records including applications for employment.
29. Violation of University procurement card or purchasing policies.
30. Violation of University or Valdosta State University policies or procedures.
31. Theft, misappropriation of funds, and/or unauthorized access, use or removal of State property.
32. Unauthorized release of confidential or official information.

Attendance Guidelines and Expectations

An employee's work attendance has a direct effect on the ability to provide services in support of the mission of VSU. An employee's attendance record is a consideration for supervisors when selecting staff for initial hire, successful completion of the provisional period, transfer or promotion. Misuse of leave privileges, excessive leave usage, unexcused absences or a pattern of failure to report for or to remain at work may be grounds for disciplinary action. Colleges and departments may develop specific procedures to implement guidelines within the framework of their unit mission.

Work Practices

As a condition of employment, employees are expected to report for duty at the assigned time and place and to remain on

duty during scheduled work hours. Employees are also expected to report hours worked and leave taken. In a situation where employees are unable to report or may be delayed in arriving for work at the assigned time and place, contact must be made with the immediate supervisor or other designated person prior to the start of the scheduled work shift. Except in crisis or emergency situations, the employee is expected to make the call personally, provide a projected length of absence and explain the reasons for the absence or lateness. When absence is necessary, the employee must contact the supervisor in advance of every scheduled shift, unless the absence is approved in advance by the supervisor. Supervisory authorization must be obtained to leave the work site during a scheduled shift.

A supervisor may or may not grant an excuse for the absence depending upon the circumstances. Unexcused absence or lateness will be recorded as leave without pay. When an employee has been absent for more than five days or is chronically absent or late, the employee must provide appropriate documentation to justify excusing the absence or lateness.

Employees may use the following definitions to assist in understanding the categories of attendance problems which represent misconduct. Appropriate responses to such problems will be determined based on the employee's overall attendance record. All circumstances will be considered in determining the response to attendance problems.

Definitions

Tardiness

Tardiness occurs when an employee fails to report to work at the specified starting time. Corrective action may be taken. Repeated tardiness after verbal counseling is a pattern of tardiness. If a pattern of reporting to work tardy is established, corrective action may also be taken. In this case, the employee must be notified in writing that a pattern of tardiness has been established before such incidents can be counted toward corrective action.

Failure To Notify Supervisor of Absence (No Call, No Show)

An incident of no call, no show occurs when an employee both fails to report for work at the start of a scheduled work shift and fails to notify the supervisor or designated person within 30 minutes of the start of the work shift of an intention to be absent.

Unjustified Absence

An unjustified absence occurs when a supervisor does not accept as reasonable an employee's explanation for an absence or lateness. A supervisor may designate a medical-related absence as unjustified only after consulting the Human Resources Department. Unjustified absences should be reported as leave without pay.

Failure To Remain On Duty

An incident of failure to remain on duty occurs when an employee does not obtain permission to leave the work site during scheduled work time or takes or exceeds a break period without authorization.

Excessive Absence

Excessive absence from work occurs when an employee is away from work to the extent that completion of normal work requirements is adversely affected. A supervisor may designate medical- related absences as excessive only after consulting with the Human Resources Department.

Any Combination of Attendance Violations

All attendance violations may be considered in determining the appropriate level of subsequent disciplinary actions. In some cases, both attendance violations and other incidents of misconduct may be considered in making such determinations. When such combinations occur, the employee's entire disciplinary record will be considered to determine the appropriate level of disciplinary action to recommend with subsequent incidents of misconduct. Such a recommendation will generally be at the next higher step in the progressive disciplinary process

Attendance During the Provisional Period

During the initial six-month provisional period, any pattern of absence, lateness, failure to report, or other work rule violations may result in departmental recommendation for termination of the appointment.

Presumed Resignation/Job Abandonment

Three consecutive working days of unauthorized absence for which an employee is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation is considered job abandonment or presumed resignation. A supervisor or designee should make reasonable attempts to contact the employee during this three day period; however, contact with the employee does not excuse the absence.

Appearance

Professionalism as an educational institution is reflected by the appearance and manner of our faculty, staff, and employees. Consequently, it is necessary to maintain and enhance the University's image.

Since Valdosta State University and The University System of Georgia do not have a dress code policy in the place, individual divisions or academic departments are responsible for setting guidelines on dress attire in the work place.

Supervisors have the responsibility to share their dress attire expectations to all of their employees. Supervisors have the right to identify incidents where employees are inappropriately dressed and take appropriate disciplinary actions.

Confidential Records and Information

Many employees will have access to confidential records and information in their regular work assignments, privileged and confidential information must not be shared with unauthorized personnel or individuals. Employees who violate confidentiality may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Personnel Records

The official, permanent personnel file of each employee is maintained in Human Resources & Employee Development. Employees may review their official, permanent personnel file with the appropriate Human Resources & Employee Development staff member by appointment.

Resignation

Employees who resign for any reason should give as much notice as possible. The normal and expected minimum notice

for support staff (nonexempt) employees is two weeks. A shorter period of time may be agreed upon in writing between the supervisor and the employee. A minimum notice for administrative staff (exempt) employees is one month, although in certain positions less time may be appropriate. Upon resignation, employees should contact their immediate supervisors for specific exiting procedures and information.

Prior to leaving the University, an employee must schedule an exit interview with Human Resources & Employee Development. At this time employees will also have an opportunity to arrange for the conversion or transfer of certain benefits. All property must be returned or paid for prior to the last working day.

Conflict Resolution

Workplace Conflicts and Dispute Resolution

In the day-to-day operation of any office or department, problems and misunderstandings sometime occur. If left unresolved, serious personnel problems might result. While consideration, cooperation, and common sense can resolve most of these situations, a few require special attention. It is the policy of the University to resolve disputes fairly, and at the lowest possible level. When conflicts or disagreements occur, employees should first attempt to resolve them through discussion with their supervisor. However, an employee must follow their supervisor's orders, even if they disagree with them, unless the orders are clearly illegal or unsafe, in which case the matter should be brought immediately to the next higher authority. When discussion with their supervisor fails to resolve a dispute, an employee has several other options. They may take the issue up with the next higher authority, may consult Human Resources & Employee Development, or utilize the Conflict Resolution services of Valdosta State University

Performance Management, Disciplinary Actions, and Dismissals

A. Performance Management, Counseling, and Discipline

Performance management ensures employees are able to perform at the highest possible standards. The University subscribes to the concept of performance management. Therefore, an annual Performance Evaluation should be prepared on each employee by the immediate supervisor for purposes of advising the employee of his/her strengths and weaknesses of job performances as well as providing a basis for the determination of pay increases, promotion, demotion, retention, or transfer. It also provides an opportunity for a discussion of job description changes, of plans for employee development, and of goals for the year. This process should include a one on one session with the immediate supervisor. The process may also include a mid-year review at the discretion of the supervisor. The employee has the right to include a written response to the performance management assessment to be included or attached thereto and made a part of the personnel file.

Supervisors, with the assistance of Human Resources & Employee Development, are given the discretion to choose the best available method to address unacceptable performance or conduct in light of overall circumstances. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all supervisors to address unacceptable performance or conduct by their employees. Such action may range from a simple verbal warning to discharge. Supervisors may use the performance evaluation process when applicable but should also address problems as they occur using other methods. This is including, but not limited to, verbal coaching,

review of expectations, additional training, to documented conferences and warnings.

B. Dismissal, Demotion and Suspension

A regular classified employee may be dismissed, demoted, or suspended by the immediate supervisor, with the assistance of Human Resources, if the employee's performance of duty or personal conduct is unsatisfactory. The employee shall be informed, in writing, of the reasons for the action taken and granted a reasonable opportunity (within five working days) to respond to the next highest authority. However, under emergency circumstances (when immediate action is necessary) the employee may be forthwith dismissed, demoted, or suspended (with or without pay) by the immediate supervisor, pending a review by the next highest authority.

Any such employee shall also be entitled to the procedural protection of a grievance hearing convened in accordance with Valdosta State University's Grievance Procedure.

Any employee who has been dismissed or suspended without pay and is later reinstated shall be entitled to recover back pay unless the President or his designee determines otherwise.

Rehire Employment

Former employees whose separations were under satisfactory circumstances would be eligible to apply for vacant positions and may be rehired in the same type of work or in another job for which they are qualified. Special conditions relate to the re-employment of University System of Georgia retirees and are covered in a separate policy. Upon rehire, an individual will serve an initial six months provisional period and will receive benefits and privileges of employment on the same basis as a new employee.

Sick leave, vacation, personal holiday, eligibility for merit increases, and all other benefits or privileges of employment based on length of service will accrue from the most recent service date.

Issuance of Keys

If it is determined that you need keys in your particular job, a request to the Key & Electronic Access Control (Key Shop) would be issued by the department. Keys and Card Swipe Locks are managed by the Key Shop. Lost keys should be reported immediately to the Key Shop Supervisor and the VSU Police Department. Replacement keys must be paid for by the responsible person.

Use of State Property

Employees of VSU have a responsibility to help minimize the costs of daily operations. State property should be given the same care as one's personal property. Employees are not permitted to use any VSU supplies or equipment for private/personal purposes. The conduct of any activity on VSU property shall be in such a manner as not to obstruct, or unreasonably interfere with, legitimate business or the free flow of traffic by persons rightfully using the grounds or facilities. You are responsible for the conduct of any visitors you bring to the office as your guest. Violations of these guidelines by a visitor can subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Telephone Service, Fax Machine, And Computers

Telephones, university owned cell phones, fax machines, and computers are to be utilized for business purposes. University equipment should not be used for personal calls, faxes, emails, or projects. Prompt calls and courteous manners are expected by all users. Employees should consult their supervisor to become familiar with the procedure to place calls.

Telephone procedures:

1. Prompt, courteous answers to telephone calls should be a self-imposed rule. It is a good practice to identify oneself and one's department/unit when answering or making a call.
2. Personal long distance calls must not be charged to University telephone numbers. If it is necessary to make a personal long distance telephone call from a university telephone, the call must be charged to a personal telephone credit card, must be placed as a collect call, or must be charged to a third number that is not a University telephone number.
3. Personal telephone calls should be kept to a minimum; supervisors are required to observe the frequency of such calls and to warn employees who use the phone excessively for personal calls.
4. All personal use of equipment should be kept to a minimum. Failure to abide by these procedures requires the reimbursement of the University and may lead to disciplinary action.

Computer procedures

There is an extensive policy covering the use of University computer equipment. For additional information or for a copy of the policy, refer to the University Information Technology website.

University Mail System

The Valdosta State University mail system exists for the delivery of official interoffice/interdepartmental mail. Correspondence from non-Valdosta State University entities such as corporations, companies, and nonprofit organizations must be processed through the United States Postal Service. Once processed, it will be delivered by Office

Services. Personal mail should not be regularly delivered to the person at his or her VSU address. Also, under no circumstances may the postage for personal mail be charged to the VSU account. Use of the Valdosta State University mail system for personal purposes is unauthorized use of University property and may lead to discharge. Use of the University mail system for sending chain letters is a misuse of University and state property; therefore, use of the University mail system for sending personal chain letters is strictly forbidden.

Safety

All employees are expected to perform their duties in a safe manner. On-the-job safety is the employee's responsibility and every effort should be made to avoid careless work habits. Any unsafe working conditions encountered by an employee should be reported to his/her supervisor. If injured while on duty, an employee should immediately report the incident to his/her immediate supervisor.

Time Lost Due to Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

Occasionally the Valdosta area experiences bad weather making it difficult for employees to get to work. If open, employees should make every effort to safely get to work. When driving is difficult, employees may judge their ability to complete the commute and determine if they should claim Inclement Weather Leave using their accumulated annual leave. Further, it is the employee's responsibility to inquire of his or her supervisor and to understand the inclement weather practices as they apply to the employee's specific work circumstances.

The Governor shall make decision regarding the conditions affecting the closure of all agencies statewide. In the event of inclement weather or any emergency making attendance difficult for University employees, the President may declare leave with or without pay as he/she shall decide.

If inclement weather or other emergency conditions affecting all agencies statewide or within a geographic region develop during the workday, agencies will be notified by telephone and/or fax of any authorized changes to normal work hours. If such conditions develop during the night and warrant delayed opening of official closing, official announcements will be made by the President through local media outlets.

All employees are strongly encouraged to sign up for VSU's Campus Alert System using their personal telephone numbers and/or email address via the HR/Payroll system. Updates should be available on the University webpage.

Announcements will be made as soon as possible following any decision to close state operations in any area. Employees should listen to a local station for information about alternate work hours or office closing, and should be reminded that announcements on other stations may not be accurate. In the absence of official notification of delayed opening or office closure, employees are expected to report to work on time or contact their supervisor or other appropriate agency personnel as directed by their agency head.

Once again, it is your responsibility to contact your supervisor during such emergencies and to report the conditions that

are unique to your own situation.

When an employee is prevented from reporting to work or remaining at work because of the closure of the agency or subsection thereof by action of the Governor or President, as applicable, such absence is considered to be with pay and not charged to any accrued leave or compensatory time. Otherwise, unless declared by the Governor, Board of Regents, or the President, such absences due to an employee's personal circumstances shall be charged to available leave or compensatory time or shall be unpaid. The employee or department manager must complete a leave request form.

Fire and other emergency evacuations

The importance of fire prevention in all areas cannot be overemphasized. Carelessness and thoughtlessness are two primary reasons for fires. Fire hazards such as defective wiring, fire doors propped open, blocked corridors/exits, and the accumulation of combustible items should be reported to Environmental Health and Safety as soon as possible.

A. Provisions for Individuals with Disabilities

The landings inside each stairwell and protected elevator lobbies are considered "safe" areas for individuals with disabilities. It is routine procedure for emergency personnel (that is, Fire Department and Police) to check those areas for individuals with disabilities and/or injured persons. In the event that your building must be evacuated, individuals with disabilities should be escorted to the closest stairwell, and a staff member will notify emergency personnel when they arrive.

General procedures if you detect fire or smoke, no matter how minor it may appear to be, do this at once:

1. Stay calm and use common sense. Students and visitors will depend on your actions.
2. Close the door to confine the fire and smoke. Activate the fire alarm (a small red box located on the wall near each exit). Follow the instructions on the alarm.
3. Report the fire. Call Valdosta State University Police at (229) 259-5555, identify yourself, and tell the dispatcher the exact location of the fire or smoke and what is burning.
4. Notify your supervisor and emergency coordinator immediately.
5. Location maps and emergency routes are located in each conference room.
6. Evacuate yourself and visitors.

B. Building Evacuation

Should it become necessary to evacuate the building, all building occupants should proceed to the nearest exit, move away from the building, and assemble in a location predetermined by each department or building administrator. This will provide a quick and easy way to account for all personnel. It also is important for the Fire Department to have clear and unobstructed access to the building. Do not return to the building unless told to do so by the Fire Department, Police, or the Emergency Floor Coordinator.

Personal Use of State Vehicles

State vehicles may not be used for personal purposes except as stipulated by the state. Non-state employees should not

be permitted to travel in state vehicles.

Safeguarding University Equipment

If you handle University equipment, you are responsible for the care and security of that equipment while it is under your control. You are not permitted to use University equipment for personal reasons. Unauthorized use or removal of University equipment or property may be cause for immediate discharge. If you are found guilty of carelessness or mischievous, malicious, or willful destruction of University equipment or loss of property, you may be required to pay for the repair, recovery, or replacement of such equipment or property. In addition, this may be a cause for immediate discharge.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards are placed in the break rooms on each floor of the University offices and display information of interest to employees. They are intended for official and semi-official information. Good judgment and discretion should be practiced in the use of these bulletin boards.

Lost and Found

Articles found on the premises should be turned in to your supervisor or department head. Usually such items are turned over to University Police.

Employee Travel

Travel by employees on official State business is covered by regulations relating to reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses. Employees required to make official University trips must complete a Request for Travel form and have the form approved by the appropriate personnel before travel will be allowed.

After completing travel, a travel expense statement should be completed, signed and approved by the appropriate personnel and submitted to Financial Services for reimbursement. Any questions concerning travel regulations also should be directed to that office.

I.D. Cards

An authorization form is needed in order to be given an I.D. Card. New employees should go to the One-Card Services on or before your first day of employment to have an identification card issued. Presentation of a valid identification card will allow you to use VSU facilities and participate in campus activities.

Parking

Information related to parking, auto registration, and traffic regulations may be obtained by contacting the Department of Parking and Transportation. Human Resources provides an authorization form to new employees for obtaining a parking permit. Vehicle

registration must be completed prior to parking permits being issued.

Out-processing

Employees vacating positions with the University should report by appointment to the Department of Human Resources & Employee Development for out-processing. The main purpose of out-processing will be to ensure all University property has been returned, to help the employee determine the status of his/her group insurance, social security, and retirement benefits. If employee is resigning a resignation letter should be turned into their supervisor and Human Resources.

Solicitations

Employees who are in any University area to perform their jobs should not engage in commercial solicitation or vending. This includes selling, delivering, or collecting for products, insurance, etc. University telephones or other equipment should not be used for those activities.

Outside Activities

Any outside occupation, pursuit, or endeavor that interferes with the regular and punctual performance of an employee's duties is prohibited. In such cases, employment may be terminated. Before engaging in self-employment or salaried work or accepting positions of responsibility outside the University, the employee should discuss his/her plans with the immediate supervisor if there are any questions as to whether such activities might interfere with or be in conflict with University employment.

Professional employees are encouraged to participate in professional activity that does not interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties provided the activity meets one of the following criteria: (1) is a means of personal professional development; (2) serves the community, state or nation; or (3) is consistent with the objectives of the University. See Conflict of Interest policy for more information.

Employees may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level or appointive office when such candidacy does not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to the University.

Loans to Employees

It is not the policy of the University to act as a lending or collection agency, and loans are not allowed. You are expected to conduct your financial activity within the limits of your compensation.

Employees are not to act as loan agents either, and discovery of any employee lending money and charging interest shall be considered just cause for termination.

Garnishment of Pay

Valdosta State University considers the acceptance and settlement of just and honest debts to be a mark of personal

responsibility. Failure to secure a release of garnishment will result in payroll withholdings as set forth in state law. Repeated instances are subject to reprimand. Multiple garnishments will be considered grounds for dismissal. Check Board policy on garnishments??

Employees Affected by Reorganization, Program Modification, or Financial Exigency

Employees who are terminated, demoted, or otherwise adversely affected by reorganization, program modification, or financial exigency, as approved and determined by the President or his designee, shall not be governed by the Dismissal, Demotion, or Suspension, or Grievance Procedures as described in this handbook. Such employees shall, however, have the right to appeal to the Board of Regents.

Internal Investigation

Internal investigations may be of a routine nature, i.e., cash audits, inventory confirmations, etc., or may be initiated by the Department of Public Safety in response to a specific problem, i.e., theft of materials, cash shortages, etc. Employees in the area are expected to assist in such investigations, and failure to do so shall be an act of insubordination which might lead to disciplinary action.

Updates, Changes, and/or Revisions to Personnel Handbook

As a reminder, the policies and procedures in this handbook are designed to serve as guidelines for management action. All policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to change. All guidelines are subject to change by the BOR rules policies and procedures. Please check with Human Resources for the most up to date information regarding a guideline, rule, policy or procedure.

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