

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL CENTER

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

POLICY #: HR-026

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2001

(Revision Date September 1, 2008 changes noted in Red)

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide a standard of attendance and punctuality for all Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center staff members. Because staff are vital to the work of the institution, reliable and consistent attendance is a condition of employment.

PROCEDURE

This policy applies to all staff. Staff are expected to be at their work site at their scheduled start time. Each department determines the work schedule and hours for staff as necessary for its operation. The normal full time schedule for hourly paid staff is a 40-hour week. However, work schedules may vary among departments including reduced full-time schedules, part-time, required overtime, flexible and seasonal schedules to accommodate the operational needs of the department. Operational and scheduling needs of departments may require departments to set additional attendance and punctuality standards, in accord with those outlined below, as long as they are not in conflict with the spirit and purpose of this policy. If additional guidelines are established, they must be consistently applied across the department and staff must be notified in writing that the guidelines vary from this policy.

- I. **Absence:** Staff are considered absent **when not at work or unavailable** for the assigned work schedule regardless of the reason. **Staff are required to work the assigned schedule to meet the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) for the position.**
- A. **Scheduled absences:** Staff are to notify their supervisor (or designee) as early as possible about scheduling time off from work (e.g. vacation, doctor's appointments, personal days, etc.), whether paid or unpaid. Scheduled absences are arranged at the mutual convenience of the department and the staff member based on the operational needs of the department. Absences can be considered scheduled if a 24-hour advance notice is given, or notice in accordance with the guidelines established within a work unit is given, and the absence is approved by the supervisor or designee.
- B. **Unscheduled absences:** If a staff member misses work due to an unscheduled absence (e.g. calling-in sick), he/she must follow department procedures for calling in. Failure to follow established departmental procedures may result in Performance Improvement Counseling (PIC) up to and including discharge. After three consecutive days of unscheduled absences, failure to notify and receive approval will be considered job abandonment and the staff member's employment status can be terminated effective the day following the last day of work.
- C. **Excessive unscheduled absences:** Excessive unscheduled absences may result in staff being placed on Performance Improvement Counseling (PIC) up to and including discharge. Supervisors will notify staff when patterns or concerns develop

that may place them at risk for PIC or discharge. The following factors should be considered in determining if unscheduled absences are excessive:

- **Patterns of Absence:** A pattern of absence demonstrates a predictable routine. For example, is the staff member consistently absent the day after payday, or a particular day e.g. Monday/Friday, or always on the day before or after a holiday, etc?
- **Frequency of absence:** How often does the staff member have an unscheduled absence? Repeated instances of unscheduled absences, such as call-ins, early departures, not reporting for on-call, etc. should be considered. Even though the absences may not constitute a predictable pattern, is the staff member often absent?
- **An occurrence is defined as an unscheduled absence.** However, a single occurrence may involve consecutive days of absences without a return to work in between. Prearranged/approved time off and accommodations, as well as time off qualifying under the FMLA are not considered occurrences for determining excessive absenteeism. Supervisors may require documentation from staff when appropriate.

In addition to these factors also consider the number of absences as outlined below:

1. Unscheduled absenteeism for Staff Members in Their Initial Orientation and Evaluation Period:

In any ninety (90) day calendar period excessive absenteeism is defined as:

- ⌚ absence from work for two or more occurrences, or
- ⌚ more than 3 days

Staff within their initial orientation period should receive a written notice after their first occurrence or second day of absence.

2. Unscheduled absenteeism for Staff Members Beyond Their Initial Orientation and Evaluation Period: In any ninety (90) day calendar period excessive absenteeism is defined as:

- ⌚ absence from work for more than three occurrences, or
- ⌚ more than 7 days

In a twelve (12) month period, excessive absenteeism is defined as:

- ⌚ absence from work for more than seven occurrences, or
- ⌚ more than 12 days

In cases of excessive absenteeism, supervisors are encouraged to consult with Employee Relations to determine if Performance Improvement Counseling (PIC) is warranted. If a staff member is already on PIC, the staff member may be subject to further Performance Improvement Counseling, including discharge.

B. Department Changes: The operational needs for some departments may require different or stricter standards. Examples of these are departments that operate 24 hours a day/7 days a week (such as Residence Halls or hospital units), departments that provide a scheduled service (such as Operative Services or Dining Services), or departments that have periodic business deadlines (such as Payroll). If a department determines that their business needs require them to deviate from this policy, they should follow the process below:

- Obtain approval from their Administrator
- Notify and consult with Employee Relations
- Communicate changes to staff in writing
- Document in writing the notification to staff

II. Tardiness: Staff are considered tardy when he/she fails to report to the assigned work site at the scheduled time. This includes returning **late from breaks and lunch periods.**

Departments define the punctuality standards for their operations and are responsible for communicating them to staff. Staff who expect to be late are to notify the supervisor or their designee according to departmental procedures.

Tardiness for Staff Members in Their Initial Orientation and Evaluation Period: In any ninety (90) day calendar period excessive tardiness is defined as: --tardy on four (4) or more occasions Staff within their initial orientation period should receive a written notice after their second occasion of tardiness. ***Tardiness for Staff Members Beyond Initial Orientation and Evaluation Period:*** Excessive tardiness is defined as: --tardy on three (3) or more occasions during any thirty (30) day calendar period or, --tardy on seven (7) or more occasions in any six (6) month period In cases of excessive tardiness, supervisors are encouraged to consult with Employee Relations to determine if Performance Improvement Counseling (PIC) is warranted. If a staff member is already on PIC, the staff member may be subject to further Performance Improvement Counseling, including discharge.

NOTE : Staff may not extend a normal workday to make up for being tardy without supervisor approval.

III. Documentation: Where applicable, staff must use a time reporting system to document work time and breaks from work. Absences, late arrivals, early departures and extended breaks in the workday are accounted for on the staff member's time

record. Vacation, sick or personal time away from work must be reported and deducted from the appropriate accrual. Supervisors are responsible for noting corrections and approving all time records. Failure to adhere to time reporting procedures may be grounds for immediate discharge. See Discharge Policy, HR Policy #015.

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