

SEFS STAFF ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE POLICY

Attendance. Clients and colleagues count on staff to be at work as scheduled to provide smooth and efficient operations. Although there are separate regulations governing different categories of staff, regular and punctual attendance is an ongoing expectation for all staff, both classified and professional. The definition of the actual arrival time that constitutes a tardy or late occurrence is at the discretion of the supervisor, with consideration given to the type of position (e.g., receptionist), client needs, and other relevant information. Failure to maintain an acceptable attendance record may result in an unsatisfactory performance evaluation and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The University's campus business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the discretion of the supervisor, after consideration of current business needs and regulations regarding overtime, staff may be granted a temporary modified work schedule or an alternative or flexible work schedule. These modifications should be requested of the supervisor in writing in advance of the need and may be denied if the employee has a pattern of tardiness or other attendance issues or for other work-related reasons as determined by the supervisor. Individual work schedules of full-time employees in Professional Staff level 2 or 3 will consist, at a minimum, of 40 hours per week, which will serve as the basis of vacation and sick leave accruals. However, the nature of responsibilities associated with the majority of level 2 or 3 full-time professional staff positions may frequently require that the employee exceed the typical 40-hour-a-week work schedule.

Accruing leave. All permanent and some temporary non-academic employees, classified and professional, accrue annual leave and sick leave. Leave benefits can vary for each employee type. Specific details are available at the following website: <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/polproc/index.html#leave>. Records of accrual and use are kept in OWLS (**Online Work/Leave System**), available on each employee's ESS website; supervisors can access this information on a read-only basis by logging into OWLS as a supervisor: <https://prp.admin.washington.edu/owls/info.asp>. *Auditors take an interest in leave records because they involve financial assets; annual leave balances have cash value upon separation or retirement and sick leave balances have cash value upon retirement.*

Scheduled absence: Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that work coverage is provided and that work loads are fairly distributed, all within budget. Supervisors are also responsible for the accuracy of the Employee Work-Leave Report of those they supervise. For these and other reasons use of accrued leave must be requested in advance and approved in writing by the employee's supervisor. Email requests and approvals, which document dates and addressees, are the preferred SEFS method of documenting the advance written approval, which is an audit requirement. These emails are then printed and attached to the monthly Work-Leave Report that serves as supporting documentation for official leave balances. Units that cannot use email may develop their own systems as long as the requirement of documented advance written request and approval attached to Work-Leave records is met.

As soon as employees are aware that they will need time off from their regular work schedule, including non-emergency medical or dental appointments, they should request the time off from their supervisor. As much notification as possible should be given when requesting more than a day or two of vacation so that arrangements can be made for work coverage. Vacation is generally not granted for sick leave absences (*except for absences covered by FMLA*). Leave without pay is generally not granted for sick leave if the employee has sick leave hours available.

Extended absence. In the case of an extended illness or hospitalization, staff members can arrange for extended leave with their supervisor. Those eligible for the federal FMLA (<http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/roles/mgr/leavetoday/fmla/index.html>) may take up to 12 weeks' leave under certain conditions. This must be discussed with the supervisor as soon as the need is known so that the necessary paperwork, which may include documentation from a health care provider, can be completed. The state Family Care Act also provides leave use entitlements (<http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/roles/mgr/leavetoday/fmla/fcl.html>).

Unscheduled absence. Staff members are expected to keep unscheduled absences to a minimum. Sick leave is a benefit provided to employees to cover wages during absences related to illness. Full use of sick leave each time it is accrued may not constitute acceptable attendance and, if it is determined that sick leave is used excessively, may be cause for disciplinary action. Staff members who become ill and cannot come to work must call their supervisor before their expected arrival time or as agreed upon with the supervisor. For an illness exceeding one day, this call must be made daily thereafter unless other arrangements have been made with the supervisor. It is preferable to speak to the supervisor directly, but if it is necessary to leave a message a return telephone number must be included in the message. At the supervisor's discretion, documentation from a health care provider may be required, particularly if the absence extends to three consecutive days. Failure to provide requested verification may be subject to discipline. Upon returning to work, employees must email their supervisor to summarize the leave taken and attach

this email to the monthly work-leave report. **Notification:** Except in extenuating circumstances, not calling in to report an absence is considered serious misconduct, the absence will be considered unauthorized, and the employee may be charged leave without pay. Having someone else call instead of the employee is not acceptable, except in extreme situations. Not following procedures for reporting absences may result in corrective action up to and including dismissal.

Required medical documentation. At the supervisor's discretion, employees may be required to submit documentation from their health care provider in such cases as (but not limited to):

- If absent for three (3) consecutive days,
- If the ability to return to work is in question
- If there are attendance issues/problems
- If there is a need to substantiate the employee's own or a household member's serious health condition
- If there is suspected abuse of the sick leave benefit

Failure to provide requested verification may result in disciplinary action. Submission of altered or falsified documentation is grounds for dismissal.

Unauthorized absence. Examples include tardiness, leaving early, extending breaks or lunches beyond the allocated time, extra breaks, unauthorized absence from assigned work area, excessive absenteeism through use of sick leave and leave without pay, a pattern of absences falling on days before and after holidays, weekends, and vacation days, not following proper procedures in arranging absences, not providing medical documentation when requested by the supervisor, and unexpected absence without timely and proper notification of the supervisor. Supervisors should attempt to contact employees who fail to notify them of their absence. Unauthorized absences may result in disciplinary actions, and employees may be charged leave without pay. Absence without authorized leave for a period of three working days may be considered a resignation. Employees not present for work and who do not call for three scheduled work shifts may be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Making up time is a privilege granted by supervisors on very infrequent occasions where good reason is provided; such requests may be denied if there is a pattern of tardiness or other attendance issues, resulting in Leave Without Pay for time missed, which will be considered an unauthorized absence. For those employees who begin to develop a record of excessive absenteeism, the supervisor may require other reporting policies and procedures. Generally, make-up time must be completed within the same week. Level-2-and-above professional staff frequently work alternative or flexible schedules due to the expectation that they provide *at least* 40 hours/week of service in order to accomplish their jobs.

Breaks and lunch. For Classified and WPRB staff, breaks (15 minutes for each four hours worked) must be taken, and lunches cannot be reduced to less than 30 minutes. Breaks and lunches cannot be taken at the end or beginning of the day, with the exception of 30 minutes of the normal 60-minute lunch as prearranged with the supervisor.

Overtime and compensatory time. Overtime is defined as work in excess of 40 hours in any given work week for overtime-eligible staff (classified, WPRB, and level-1 professional staff). The defined work week plays a role in determining overtime; The SEFS standard work week is Sunday through Saturday, but individual work weeks can vary if the job requires it. Overtime/compensatory time accrual must be approved in advance by the supervisor and documented, and must be paid or added to compensatory time balances within the same pay period or upon notification to the SEFS payroll coordinator; supervisory approval is also required before the use of compensatory time. Email requests and approvals are the preferred SEFS method of documenting the advance written approval requirement. These emails are then printed and attached to the monthly Work-Leave Report that serves as supporting documentation for official leave balances. Units that cannot use email may develop their own systems as long as the requirements of documented advance written request and approval are met.

Level 2 and level 3 professional staff are expected to work at least 40 hours per week and are not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time.

Disciplinary/corrective action. Examples of activities which may result in such actions include **but are not limited to:**

- Failure to follow policy for reporting absences
- Tardiness
- Taking longer and/or extra breaks than those scheduled

- Taking longer lunches than scheduled
- Unauthorized absence from assigned work area
- Unauthorized absenteeism which results in leave without pay (*includes but is not limited to the above cited incidents, absences not related to illness, or as a result of using all accrued sick leave.*)
- A pattern of absences falling on days before and after holidays, weekends, vacation days

If employees begin to develop a record of excessive absenteeism, the supervisor may require him/her to follow additional reporting policies and procedures.