

Original Approval Date: April 1, 2009

Most Recent Editorial Date: July 27, 2016

Parent Policy: [Recruitment Policy](#)

## Managing Staff Vacation Procedure Support Staff

|                                                 |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Office of Administrative Responsibility:</b> | Human Resource Services                                                               |
| <b>Approver:</b>                                | Associate Vice-President (Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment)            |
| <b>Scope:</b>                                   | Compliance with University policy extends to all members of the University community. |

### Overview

The University of Alberta is committed to supporting employee wellness by ensuring that employees take their annual vacation. Timely utilization of vacation entitlement by employees is an integral component of maintaining work life balance, enabling our staff to remain effective, responsive, and productive members of the University community. Timely utilization of vacation entitlements also

- reduces the impact on the work unit of overly long vacations or large payouts, and
- reduces our **vacation liability**. Vacation liability is important because it affects the University's net asset position and can impair our ability to pursue certain financial initiatives such as the creation of internal endowments. Vacation liability has the potential to be financially material and therefore effective management of these funds is required.

### Purpose

In the interests of work-life balance and fiscal responsibility, the University of Alberta is committed to the principle that vacation time should be utilized by its employees on an annual basis. The purpose of this procedure is to support this principle by providing instruction to support staff and **supervisors** on vacation management.

## **PROCEDURE**

### 1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. It is the responsibility of the employee to
  - i. apply for vacation so that the full entitlement is used on an annual basis, and
  - ii. report all vacation taken in a timely manner.
- b. It is the joint responsibility of the supervisor and employee to ensure that vacation is scheduled in such a way that there is a balance between the impact on the workplace and the needs of the employee.
- c. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to
  - i. facilitate the ability of employees to take vacation
  - ii. respond to vacation requests in a timely manner,



iii. approve reasonable vacation requests subject to operational requirements and the provisions of the collective agreement, including allowing vacation for religious observances

iv. ensure that all vacation absences are keyed into Human Capital Management (HCM) or submitted to Human Resource Services at least monthly, and

v. manage vacation accruals for all support staff in the unit in such a way that no employee has more than the one year's vacation accrual at any time, unless specifically approved.

## 2. SCHEDULING VACATION

a. By a set date of each year, each supervisor advises employees of **blackout periods**, if any, and provides notice of the deadline by which vacation requests must be submitted for the upcoming period.

b. The supervisor considers vacation requests together with operational needs and the language of the collective agreement. Requests received by the deadline will be considered first. Requests received after the deadline will be considered later.

c. If a deadline is not set by the supervisor, the default deadline is April 1, in keeping with the **vacation year**.

d. An employee may not take general leave-without-pay if vacation accrual is available.

## 3. APPROVALS

a. All **vacation carry-forward** requests are subject to the approval of the **manager**. All remaining vacation requests are subject to the prior approval of the supervisor.

b. The supervisor will respond within one month to all requests received by the deadline.

c. An employee who does not report for work and subsequently applies for vacation will not have it approved, will not receive pay for that period, and may be subject to discipline. Exceptions for emergencies may be approved at the discretion of the manager.

d. An employee may not take vacation in excess of their available vacation accrual at the time vacation commences. Any exceptions must be pre-approved by the manager or designate.

## 4. CHANGING VACATION

a. Vacation schedules can be changed

i. by the employer in the event of an **operational emergency**, or

ii. by mutual agreement

b. Vacation can be converted for a medically supported illness leave when illness leave is exhausted.

## 5. VACATION ACCRUALS

a. No employee shall have more than the one year's vacation accrual at any time, unless it is specifically approved by the **Department Head** as an exception.

b. Exceptions to carry forward can exist, but rarely. In order to be considered for approval, the carry-forward request must arise from unusual or special circumstances, such as an extended absence due to illness, travel overseas for an important family event, or similar circumstance. It is subject to the approval of the Department Head. Approval will be



withheld unless the request is accompanied by a plan to utilize the excess vacation prior to the end of the following vacation year.

**c. Excessive Vacation Balances:**

i. Excessive vacation balances are reported to departments bi-annually; however, managers receive monthly updates on vacation accrual for their own unit in the Operating Leave Balance Report. Managers can access data on vacation balances for their employees at any time.

ii. Should an employee be found to have an excessive vacation balance, the manager needs to address the matter formally. The recommended process is to meet with the employee and discuss options with the staff member to reduce the accrual to no more than one year's vacation entitlement. If necessary, the manager will present options to the employee, who must make a choice between the options or suggest an acceptable alternative that can be implemented before the end of that vacation year. If a reasonable vacation plan is not received within two weeks of the meeting, the manager will schedule the employee's vacation with a minimum of 1 month notice, provided that the manager consults with HR Consulting Services before doing so.

**6. VACATION PAYOUT**

Vacation balances are rarely paid out. In the case of one of the following, the Associate Vice President (Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment) has the authority to negotiate one of the following:

a. A Trust employee transfers to another position, whether Operating or Trust, or an Operating employee transfers to a Trust position.

b. A change in status results in an employee transferring from an appointment where the employee is entitled to accrue vacation to an appointment where the employee receives vacation pay as a percentage.

c. An Auxiliary appointment is concluded.

d. An employee is laid off, terminated, resigns or retires.

e. The employee with a serious illness is not expected to return to work based on medical evidence, and the position is deemed vacant by the Employer.

f. An employee commences Long-Term Disability, at which time they

i. Will be paid out any excessive vacation balance.

ii. May apply to be paid out any remaining vacation balance.

g. The employee moves to an academic position.

In the rare circumstance where a vacation payout other than those listed above occurs, it is subject to the approval of the Employee, HR Consulting Services, the Department Head, NASA (for bargaining unit employees) and the Associate Vice President (Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment) by special agreement. Final authority is the signature of the Associate Vice President (Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment) .

**DEFINITIONS**

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.

**Vacation liability**

The University's financial obligation arising from accrued (unused) vacation balances.



|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Supervisor</b>                  | An employee whose job function requires them to organize, direct and control the work of others. A supervisor may be within the NASA bargaining unit or not.                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Vacation accruals</b>           | The amount of annual vacation an employee accrues as defined by the collective agreement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>One Year's Vacation Accrual</b> | Vacation credits earned over the last 12 months.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Blackout Periods</b>            | Periods during which vacation will not be approved due to operational requirements. Exceptions would be approved only rarely, and then only in very special circumstances. While the duration and frequency of blackout periods, if any, will vary with the operation, they cannot be so restrictive as to be unreasonable. |
| <b>Vacation year</b>               | April 1 to March 31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Vacation Carry Forward</b>      | Any approved vacation accrual in excess of that earned over the previous 12 months.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Manager</b>                     | An employee who is not support staff and whose job functions include the management of one or more employees.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Operational Emergency</b>       | An unanticipated, urgent event of pressing necessity requiring the presence of the employee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Department Head</b>             | Dean, director, chair, or head of a teaching or non-teaching department.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Excessive Vacation Balance</b>  | A vacation balance in excess of 12 months' accrual at any time or a balance in excess of \$15,000, which has not been approved in accordance with the procedure.                                                                                                                                                            |

## **FORMS**

[HR Forms + Documentation](#)

## **RELATED LINKS**

There are no related links for this procedure.