MERCER UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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| **Title:** | University Leave Policy (Vacation and Sick Leave) |
| **Effective Date:** | July 1, 2026 |
| **Issuing Authority:** | Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance |
| **Policy Contact:** | Associate Vice President for Payroll and Benefits<br>payroll@mercer.edu, benefits@mercer.edu, 478-301-2699 |

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the Personal Leave (PTO) and Sick Leave Program recognized by Mercer University.

For the purposes of this policy, days are calculated and accrue as hours. To calculate equivalent hours, divide the regular hours worked during the workweek (not to exceed 40) by 5 workdays. For example, a day of PTO for a 40-hour per week employee would equate to 8 hours, regardless of how those hours were scheduled and worked during that week.

## Scope

This policy applies to Mercer University employees who are eligible for Personal Leave including Regular Full-time Non-Exempt Classified Staff, Regular Part-time Non-Exempt Classified Staff (Category I), Regular Full-time Exempt Administrative Staff, Regular Full-time Exempt Professional Staff, or 12-Month Faculty.

## Exclusions

Employees of MERC should refer to their Employee Handbook for official leave policies. Employees under special contracted arrangements should refer to their written employment agreement.

## Definitions

As used in this policy, the following term(s) have the meaning specified below:

> **Employee:** any faculty (including, but not limited to, regular, visiting, or adjunct), any individual who has an appointment at the University, and all regular and temporary staff.

## Policy Statement

### I. Personal Leave

#### Accrual of Personal Leave

All employees eligible for Personal Leave begin accruing such leave as of their date of employment or eligibility as the schedule below:

A. **Regular Full-time Staff Non-Exempt Classified Staff** and Regular Part-time Non-Exempt Classified Staff (Category I) in all areas of the University:

   0 thru 3 years of employment: 10 days
   4 thru 6 years of employment: 12 days
   7 thru 9 years of employment: 15 days
   Over 10 years of employment: 18 days

   Regular Part-time Non-Exempt Classified Staff (Category I) accrue Personal Leave at a ratio equivalent to their percentage of time worked.

B. **Regular Full-time Exempt Professional/Administrative Staff** in all areas of the University:

   0 thru 3 years of employment: 12 days
   4 thru 6 years of employment: 15 days
   7 thru 9 years of employment: 18 days
   Over 10 years of employment: 22 days

C. **12-Month Faculty** receive 22 working days of personal leave each Fiscal Year. Up to a maximum of 11 days may be "carried over" for use in the next year (whenever the 12-month contract remains in place for that year).

**Use of Personal Leave**

A. Personal Leave is provided to afford an employee the opportunity for rest, recreation, and personal activities, and as such, Personal Leave may be taken for any reason, or without a reason provided, subject to the employee's available accrual and the scheduling approval of the employee's supervisor.
B. Personal Leave will be used to subsidize Sick Leave or Bereavement Leave upon exhaustion of accrued Sick Leave. See also policies and procedures entitled Sick Leave Policy, Family Medical Leave (FMLA) Policy, Worker's Compensation, and Bereavement Leave Policy.
C. In no instance will an employee separating from the university be paid for personal leave accrual exceeding two weeks (ten days) beyond their last day of active employment.

**Maximum Accrual of Personal Leave**

The maximum amount of Personal Leave that may be accumulated for use by all *eligible** Regular Full-time Non-Exempt Classified Staff and Regular Part-time Non-Exempt Classified Staff (Category I) and Regular Exempt Professional/Administrative Staff is the amount accrued in a

one-year period. Days accrued in excess of the one-year maximum (on June 30 for monthly employees and on the last day of R26 for biweekly) are adjusted in the Payroll accrual system each year. No payments are made in lieu of taking leave, except for *eligible** unused personal leave existing at the time of termination. However, such terminal leave for *eligible** staff may not exceed two-weeks (ten days) beyond the last day of active employment.

The accrual year for monthly employees runs for 12 monthly pay-periods beginning with R01 on July 1 and ending with R12 on June 30. The accrual year for bi-weekly employees runs for 26 equal pay-periods beginning with R01 and ending with R26.

**Administration of Personal Leave**

A. New hires are immediately eligible to use any accrued Personal Leave.
B. Employees who accrue leave by the month must be in a pay status for a minimum of 11 workdays (15 calendar days) each month in order to receive a Personal Leave Accrual for that month.
C. Personal leave should be scheduled and approved by the employee's supervisor before it is taken. (Unpaid leave may be approved only in the absence of PTO accrual.)
D. If a Non-Exempt Classified Staff Employee or Exempt Professional/Administrative Employee transfers into a 12-Month Faculty position, such individual may carry over up to 11 days into the new Faculty appointment position, if the employee has 11 or more days accrued vacation at the time of transfer. Existing accrued vacation in excess of 11 days may not be transferred into the new Faculty appointment. During the first year of the new Faculty appointment, the employee will receive a pro-ration of the 22-day leave provision based upon the number of months the employee occupies the Faculty appointment.
E. Employees who participate in the leave tracking system and terminate in good standing may be paid for unused accrued leave (up to a maximum of 10 days) at the time of termination.
F. Personal Leave existing at the time of termination exceeding ten days will not be eligible for pay-out at termination for any employment category.
G. 12-month Faculty Members who accrue 22 days are not paid for any leave beyond 10 days upon separation from the University. Neither does any accrued vacation carry over to be used by one leaving a 12-month position entering into a non-accruing position (i.e., nine-month contracts and staff position at an FTE of less than .50).
H. For terminating 12-Month Faculty Members, the 22 days are pro-rated and the employee will receive pro-rated credit for the period of time completed <u>during the current Fiscal Year</u>. Any personal leave taken during the current Fiscal Year will first be deducted from any carry-over days from the previous Fiscal Year, if any, and if no carry-over days were available or if more days were taken than carried over, the remaining days taken will be deducted from the pro-rated days. Upon termination, any days remaining of the pro-rated days on the last day of active employment will be paid out (not to exceed 10 days as indicated in F).

## II. Sick Leave

### Accrual of Sick Leave

A. All Regular Full-time Non- Exempt Classified University and MERC Staff and Full-time Exempt Administrative and Professional Staff accrue Sick Leave at the rate of one working day per calendar month of service.
B. All Regular Part-time Staff in Category I in all areas of the University accrue Sick Leave in a ratio equivalent to their percentage of time worked.
C. Category II Part-time Staff and Temporary Staff in all areas of the University are not eligible for accruing paid Sick Leave.
D. Regular Full-time Faculty do not accrue sick leave. In the event of an approved FMLA absence, some paid leave may be available. For details, please refer to Mercer's FMLA policy at https://policies.mercer.edu/family-and-medical-leave.

### Use of Sick Leave

Paid Sick Leave may be granted for any of the following reasons, upon approval of the employee's Dean or Supervisor:

A. Illness or injury of the employee, including work related events.
B. Medical and Dental treatment and consultations of the employee or an immediate family member.
C. Pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical conditions of the employee.
D. Illness, injury or disability of a member of the employee's immediate family requiring the employee's presence to care for the family member.
E. Sick Leave may also be approved for Bereavement Purposes.
   Up to five days may be approved for immediate family members (spouse, child, or parent) and up to three for extended family members (siblings and grandparents).

### Maximum Accrual of Sick Leave

Employees accruing Sick Leave may carry over unused Sick Days from year to year up to the appropriate maximum. Hours accrued in excess of 120 days for regular Mercer employees and 90 days for MERC employees existing as of June 30th are removed from the Payroll System during July each year.

### Administration of Sick Leave

A. New Hires are immediately eligible to use any accrued Sick Leave.
B. An employee must be in a with pay status for a minimum of 11 workdays (15 calendar days) each month in order to receive a Sick Leave Accrual for that month.
C. An employee is not paid for accrued unused Sick Days at the time of termination.
D. If an illness/episode of the employee or immediate family member extends beyond the employee's accrued Sick Leave, the employee is to use any accrued Vacation leave to

remain in a pay status.

E. Upon exhaustion of both accrued Sick Leave and Vacation Leave, the employee will be placed in a without-pay status.
F. Accrued sick pay hours will be cut back each year to the maximum allowed amount of 120 days (or 90 days for MERC). The accrual year for monthly employees runs for 12 monthly pay-periods beginning with R01 on July 1 and ending with R12 on June 30. The accrual year for bi-weekly employees runs for 26 equal pay-periods (beginning with R01 and ending with R26).

## Additional Resources

1. Bereavement Policy: https://policies.mercer.edu/bereavement-leave/
2. Family Medical Leave Policy: https://policies.mercer.edu/family-and-medical-leave/
3. Office of Human Resources: https://hr.mercer.edu/

## History

Revised July 1, 2023
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