

SECTION 500: BENEFITS/LEAVE

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501: Benefits

PEEHIP INSURANCE

In 1983, the Legislature created a state-wide health insurance plan known as PEEHIP (Public Education Employees Health Insurance Plan). For hospital/medical coverage, the Board employed Blue Cross/Blue Shield to be the third party administrator effective October 1, 1992. Southland National continues to be the carrier for PEEHIP dental, vision, cancer, and indemnity coverage.

Basic hospital/medical, HMO, dental, vision, indemnity and cancer policies are available to all permanent employees on Salary Schedules A, B, C, D, E, and H. Temporary, seasonal, and adjunct employees are not eligible for insurance benefits. The state allocation for each eligible employee is designated each year. To be eligible for a full allocation, an instructor must be full-time and a support worker must be employed at least twenty hours per week. Employees may contact the Payroll Office or the Office of Human Resources for current rates and available coverage.

Employees are allowed to add, drop, and make other changes to PEEHIP coverage only during open enrollment. Open enrollment begins July 1 and continues through August 31, with changes in coverage becoming effective October 1. For current employees pre-existing conditions will be waived on all new coverage that are effective October 1. New employees may enroll on their date of employment, or the first day of the month following employment or October 1. New employees with effective dates of coverage on or after July 1 will be given waivers on waiting period for pre-existing conditions. Once a member makes a change during open enrollment, he/she may not change again until the next open enrollment unless there has been a change in status.

All insurance premiums for PEEHIP through payroll deduction are made in twelve (12) monthly payments. For those personnel who will not be working during the summer months and will not be receiving a payroll check during the summer, it will be their responsibility to see that monthly premiums are received in the Business Office by June 15, July 15, and August 15. If payment is not received, insurance coverage will be terminated according to the date of nonpayment. For enrollment and additional PEEHIP information, please refer to the Retirement Systems of Alabama website at www.rsa-al.gov.

TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF ALABAMA

The Teachers Retirement System is a defined benefit plan qualified under Section 401(a) of the IRS code. Since its inception in 1941, the plan has provided disability and service retirement benefits to members and survivor benefits to qualified beneficiaries. Mandatory participant is a condition of employment and required for all permanent employees on Postsecondary Salary Schedules A, B, C, D, E and H. Categories of TRS membership and employee contribution rates are:

- Tier 1 = Regular Employees hired before January 1, 2013, contribute 7.5%
Certified Law Enforcement employees hired before January 1, 2013, contribute 8.5%
- Tier 2 = Regular Employees hired after December 31, 2012, contribute 6%
Certified Law Enforcement employees hired after December 31, 2012, contribute 7%

The RSA Member Online Services Website offers members a quick way to view their TRS statement, RSA-1 statement and change an address. Information for the Teachers Retirement System is available online at www.rsa-al.gov.

GROUP TERM LIFE INSURANCE

Effective October 1, 1987, a \$15,000 group term life insurance benefit was funded by the Legislature. This benefit provides \$15,000 in life insurance for each active full-time member of the Teachers Retirement System with part-time members receiving prorated amounts. This program is contingent on funding by the Legislature each year. Please refer to the Retirement Systems of Alabama website for additional information at www.rsa.-al.gov.

STATE DEATH BENEFIT

If a member dies prior to retirement, death benefits are calculated and paid to the beneficiary (ies), based on the member's age, service credit, employment status, and eligibility for retirement. The preretirement death benefits the beneficiary (ies) or estate will receive are outlined in the TRS Member Handbook.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

This tuition waiver program is designed for all full-time and Salary Schedule H-35 employees of The Alabama Community College System and their dependents as defined under Section II. Effective Fall Semester of 2009, full-time employees and Salary Schedule H employees of system institutions and the Alabama Community College System are eligible for tuition assistance for courses taught by Athens State University. Tuition assistance is limited to availability of space per course. The program will be coordinated by each institution for employees within The Alabama Community College System. An application form for the tuition assistance program is available at each institution and should be completed prior to registration for classes. A copy of the completed form must be maintained by the employing institution and the institution offering courses (if different).

Definitions

Employee -- Any full-time or Salary Schedule H-35 employee of any System institution and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. This program will not include temporary or part-time employees (other than Salary Schedule H-35 employees), or persons serving as independent contractors to any of the System institutions or to the Alabama Community College System Office.

Dependent -- The spouse of any full-time employee, the unmarried, natural or adopted children of any full-time employee, residing in the household of the employee or the employee's former spouse; the unmarried stepchildren of any full-time employee, residing in the household of the employee.

Eligibility

A. Requirements

Employees -- Employees must have been employed by a System Institution or the Alabama Community College System Office for one full academic year or at least 12 months, whichever is less restrictive, prior to the first scheduled day of class for the term for which the employee is applying. Employee eligibility will remain in effect for the duration of their employment in The Alabama Community College System.

Dependents -- Dependents will be eligible when said employee is eligible, and to the same degree to which the employee is eligible, except as herein modified.

B. Termination of Eligibility

Employees -- Eligibility terminates if the employee discontinues full-time employment at the respective institution for any reason except on an approved leave of absence.

Dependents - Dependents will be ineligible when said employee becomes ineligible, except that dependents of any employee who has 25 years or more of continuous service in The Alabama community College System upon retirement from The Alabama Community College System are eligible to participate in the program for a five-year period commencing with the date of the employee's retirement.

Amount of Assistance, Limitations, and Conditions

Tuition Cost

All eligible employees and their dependents will be allowed a waiver of one-third of the normally-charged tuition after the first year (full academic year or 12-month period) of employment; a waiver of two-thirds tuition after the second year of employment; and a waiver of full tuition after the third year of employment (partial tuition adjustments are to be rounded down to the nearest dollar). Salary Schedule H-35 employees will be allowed a waiver calculated at a prorated rate of full-time employment. Expenses for supplies, books, and fees other than tuition will not be waived. Each institution will be allowed to count the credit hours generated by these enrollees.

Limitation

There is no limitation as to the number of credit hours taken, other than the regular academic limitations that apply at the respective institutions. All students will be required to abide by the academic policies that are in effect at the institution they are attending.

Conditions

To be eligible for tuition waiver, the student-employee or dependent must maintain at least a "C" (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) in the courses for which he/she receives tuition assistance. Failure of the student-employee or dependent to meet this grade requirement will result in the employee or dependent's having to pay tuition for courses taken until his/her average grade is "C" or better. The student-employee or dependent can then again be eligible when his/her cumulative grade point average is brought back up to the "C" requirement.

502: LEAVES WITH PAY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Planned absences from the job—such as annual leave and personal leave—must be requested and approved in the Boris system prior to the occurrence of the absence. Military Leave and Court Attendance must be requested and approved on the paper Request for Leave Form prior to the occurrence of the absence.

Sick leave and emergency leave should be requested in advance whenever possible. Since illness of staff and faculty members or their immediate families can seldom be anticipated, the leave submission must be completed immediately upon return to work. However, each person absent due to an unanticipated illness or emergency must notify the immediate supervisor and/or Dean level supervisor as soon as possible on the day of the employee's absence.

Leave Year

A leave year for earning accrual and use of leave by college employees is September 1 through August 31.

Annual Leave

Employees eligible to accrue annual leave are those compensated from Salary Schedules A, B, C, E, and H (prorated). Employees compensated from Salary Schedule H shall receive annual leave under the same terms and conditions as other eligible employees, except a "day" of annual leave shall be as follows: four (4) hours for employees compensated from Schedule H-20, five (5) hours for employees compensated from Schedule H-25, six (6) hours for employees compensated from Schedule H-30, and seven (7) hours for employees compensated from Schedule H-35.

The official table for determining annual leave accrual is as follows:

<u>Years of Experience</u>	<u>Annual Leave</u>
0-4	1.00 day per month
5-9	1.25 days per month
10-14	1.50 days per month
15-19	1.75 days per month
20 and above	2.00 days per month

A maximum of 60 days of annual leave may be accrued and carried forward into each September. Earned annual leave may be taken at appropriate times as approved in advance by the President or designee. Annual leave may exceed 60 days during a year; however, annual leave exceeding 60 days earned but not taken by September 1 is forfeited.

Court Attendance

Full-time employees of System institutions who are required by a court to attend such court in the capacity of jurors or witnesses under subpoena will be granted special leave with pay to attend such court. Locally, this policy is also extended to salary schedule H employees.

Upon receipt of a Summons for Court Attendance, the employee will submit a Request for Leave form with a copy of the summons attached. This form, once approved, should be forward to the

Office of Human Resources and will be retained in their personnel file. Personnel summoned for court attendance and subsequently released are expected to return to work.

The immediate supervisors have been delegated the authority to approve leave for court for personnel in their respective areas throughout the year. The immediate supervisors are responsible for assuring that leave taken by employees in their area of responsibility is reported timely and accurately on the basis of the Request for Leave they have approved.

Emergency Leave

A maximum of three days of emergency leave with pay may be granted to any full-time employee compensated from Salary Schedules A, B, C, and E during any leave year if, in the judgment of the President, it is essential that the employee be absent. Emergency leave with pay is non-cumulative.

- Annual and Sick Leave must be exhausted prior to requesting Emergency Leave.
- Support personnel on Salary Schedule H may be granted a maximum of three days of emergency leave as above with a "day" defined as four (4) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-20, five (5) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-25, six (6) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-30, and seven (7) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-35.
- Emergency leave will not be paid on termination or resignation of employment.

Military Leave

All full-time employees are eligible for paid military leave of up to 168 hours per calendar year in the event of being called to active duty. During the period of paid military leave, the respective employee shall continue to accrue all employment benefits, including sick and annual or personal leave, as well as paid medical insurance benefits. Once available paid military leave is exhausted, the employee may take available annual or personal leave and continue to receive all employment benefits.

All full-time employees eligible for paid military leave shall also receive up to a maximum of 168 hours of paid military leave each time such eligible employee is called by the Governor of the State of Alabama to duty in the active service of the state.

Personal Leave

a. Personnel Employed on Salary Schedules A, B, C, E, and H

Up to two (2) days of personal leave with pay will be granted to each full-time employee on the above salary schedules during any leave year. Up to two days per year of personal leave is extended to all support personnel on Salary Schedule H as above, with a "day" defined as four (4) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-20, five (5) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-25, six (6) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-30, and seven (7) hours for persons paid from Salary Schedule H-35. Personal leave is non-cumulative.

A reason for personal leave is not required. However, personal leave with pay shall be requested prior to its occurrence. Personal leave will not be paid on resignation or termination of employment.

b. Personnel Employed on Salary Schedule D

Up to five (5) days of personal leave with pay will be granted to each full-time employee on the first day of each academic year. Personal leave is non-cumulative. A reason for personal leave is not required. However, personal leave with pay shall be requested prior to its occurrence. Personal leave will not be paid on resignation or termination of employment.

All personal leave requests by faculty of three (3) or more consecutive days, during a period that includes open registration or when classes are in session, must have PRIOR APPROVAL of the President. These requests must be made in writing to the President with copies to the Division Chairperson and the Vice President of Instruction as does any request to miss graduation.

c. Unused Personal Leave

Personal leave not taken will be converted at the end of the leave year to sick leave. Election by the employee otherwise requires timely written notice by the employee to the institution.

Professional Leave

Professional leave with pay may be granted to any full-time employee when federal or other non-institutional funds are available for such purposes. A person granted a leave with pay must return to the institution for a minimum period of two years or repay the monies received while on leave. The tenure status of persons on professional leave will be not affected. Professional leave will be granted only on written request from the President and approval by the Chancellor.

Professional Development Leave

Full-time personnel employed by the College shall be granted professional and/or vocational leave with pay for up to ten (10) days per year upon approval by the President. In the opinion of the President the professional and/or vocational development activity must enhance significantly the

employee's direct contributions to the institution and that it is consistent with the goals of the employee's professional and/or vocational development plan. Documentation of the activity, its purpose, and the benefits derived from the activity, must be placed in the official personnel file.

Sick Leave

- a. Each full-time employee employed on Salary Schedules A, B, C, E, and H shall earn one day of sick leave per month of employment. The maximum accumulated sick leave is authorized pursuant to Section 16-1-18.1, *Code of Alabama* of 1975, as amended.
- b. Each full-time employee employed on Salary Schedule D shall earn one day of sick leave per month of employment to a maximum of nine days during the academic year (fall and spring semesters) and up to a maximum of three days during the summer term.
- c. Any unused balance of sick leave accumulated at the end of the leave year will be carried forward to the next succeeding year.
- d. An employee may accumulate an unlimited number of sick leave days.
- e. Accumulated sick leave days will not be paid on resignation or termination of employment.

Sick Leave Bank

- a. Upon the request of ten percent (10%) of the full-time employees of an institution, the President shall establish a sick leave bank plan for full-time instructional/professional/administrative employees and for full-time support employees, either jointly or separately. The decision of whether the sick leave bank will be joint or separate shall be made by the employees, using a secret ballot process.
- b. The Board representative on each institution's Sick Leave Bank Committee shall be the President of the institution or designee.
- c. For purposes of a sick leave bank, the term "catastrophic illness" is defined as: any illness, injury, or pregnancy or medical condition related to child birth, certified by a licensed physician which causes the employee to be absent from work for an extended period of time.
- d. The Chancellor shall establish guidelines for operation of a sick leave bank at System institutions.

Transfer of Sick Leave

Sick leave earned while employed by a local Alabama public school system, higher education public institutions in Alabama, or the Alabama Community College System may be transferred into a two-year college upon employment. The transfer of sick leave is limited to the number of days authorized by statute for two-year postsecondary education institutions.

Sick Leave Definitions

Sick leave is defined as the absence from regular duty by an employee for one of the following reasons:

- Personal illness or doctor's quarantine;
- Routine physical examinations, dental appointments, eye examinations, etc;
- Personal injury which incapacitates the employee;
- Attendance on an ill member of the immediate family (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister) of the employee or on an individual with a close personal tie to the employee; Death of a member of the family of the employee (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, granddaughter, grandson, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle);
- Illness, injury, or death of an individual not legally related to but having a unique relationship with the employee. (Where unusually strong personal ties exist due to an employee's having been supported or educated by a person, or some relationship other than those listed, this relationship may be recognized for leave purposes.);
- Persons on maternity leave will be paid for earned sick leave on request.

Absences Due to Illness

Paid sick leave for prolonged illness or pregnancy will be granted on request via Request for Leave. After five (5) days of absence due to illness, within a thirty (30) calendar-day period, the president or designee may require that an employee furnish a medical certificate by a qualified physician acceptable to the institution. This is to be done at the expense of the employee.

503: LEAVES WITHOUT PAY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Leave of Absence -- (Without Pay)

Full-time and permanent part-time employees who work twenty (20) hours or more per week may request a leave of absence, without pay, for justifiable reasons. The standard reasons and time spans for such leave are as follows.

Maternity Leave

A full-time employee of a system institution will be granted up to a maximum of one year of maternity leave without pay. Persons on maternity leave without pay resulting from pregnancy will be paid for earned sick leave on request. A person who resigns instead of taking maternity leave cannot be paid for accumulated sick leave. Persons taking maternity leave to stay home with adopted children will not be paid for earned sick leave. Leave earnings will continue for the period covered by maternity leave payments. The tenure status of persons on maternity leave will not be affected.

Personal Leave

The Chancellor may grant up to one (1) year of personal leave without pay to a full-time employee on the written request of the President to the Chancellor. Such request shall state that the leave without pay will not hamper the normal routine operation of the institution. The tenure status of persons on personal leave without pay will not be affected.

Professional Leave

Up to a maximum of one (1) year of professional leave without pay shall be granted to a full-time tenured faculty of an Alabama College System institution upon approval by the Chancellor if, in the judgment of the President, the purposes of the institution and the objectives of the department are not hampered by the absence.

- Other full-time employees may be granted professional leave, without pay, for a period not to exceed one year upon approval by the Chancellor if, in the judgment of the President, the purposes of the institution and objectives of the department are not hampered by such leave without pay.
- Professional leave will be granted only on written request from the President and approval of the Chancellor.

Emergency Leave

Leave for emergency reasons may be granted without pay for up to a maximum of one (1) year on written recommendation by the President and approval by the Chancellor. The tenure status of persons on emergency leave without pay will not be affected.

504: FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

The *Family and Medical Leave Act* (FMLA) was passed by Congress to balance demands of the work place with needs of families, promote stability and economic security of families, and promote national interests in preserving family integrity; minimize the potential for employment discrimination on the basis of gender by ensuring generally that leave is available for eligible medical reasons (including maternity-related disability) and for compelling family reasons; and promote the goal of equal opportunity for women and men. The State Board of Education and the institutions under its direction and control shall comply with the requirements of the FMLA. Those institutions shall administer the FMLA in conformance with regulations and guidelines promulgated by the Chancellor.

Supervisors should contact the Office of Human Resources when an employee has requested FMLA leave, or is absent from work for more than five (5) days due to an FMLA qualifying reason.

