



## **Unclassified Personnel Guideline #10 Attachment 1**

### **Unclassified Staff Sick Leave Questions and Answers**

The paid sick leave program is a significant fringe benefit offered by the University of Wisconsin System to faculty and academic staff. This benefit can be used in time of personal illness or family care, and can provide a benefit at retirement to help pay post-retirement health insurance costs. The purpose of this document is to communicate to faculty and academic staff some frequently asked sick leave program questions. This document is primarily intended to address general questions asked by faculty and academic staff.

In order to preserve this important and valuable employee fringe benefit the University is required to establish policy as to the use and reporting requirements. These requirements are found in the [Wisconsin State Statutes](#), [University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code \(UWS\)](#), [Board of Regent Policy](#) and [Unclassified Personnel Guidelines \(UPGs\)](#).

While this document is intended to provide helpful information about the sick leave program, your Institution's [Staff Benefits Office](#) is your best resource to address specific individual questions you may have.

#### **1. How many sick leave days do faculty and academic staff earn annually?**

Full-time faculty and academic staff earn 12 days of sick leave annually or 6 days per regular academic semester. Faculty and academic staff are considered full-time if they hold a 100% appointment.

If you are considered part-time your sick leave will be prorated based on your percentage of appointment. For example, if you hold a 50% appointment you will earn 6 days of sick leave annually.

#### **2. Are faculty and academic staff required to complete monthly leave reports?**

Yes. Leave reports are required by state statute Chapter §40.05 (4)(bp)(3b) and by University Unclassified Personnel Guidelines (UPGs). If no sick leave is taken during the reporting period a report indicating no or zero (0) leave taken is still required.

#### **3. How is sick leave reported?**

Full-time faculty and academic staff appointments report sick leave, according to University policy, in one-half and full day increments.

Absences between one-quarter day (2 hours) and three-quarters day (6 hours) are charged as one-half day (4 hours). Absences greater than three-quarters day (6 hours) and one and one-quarter day (10 hours) are charged as one day (8 hours).

Part-time, less than a 100% appointment, faculty and academic staff charge sick leave on an hour for hour basis in accordance with their approved work schedule. While leave is earned on the basis of your percentage of appointment, sick leave is charged based on the actual use, not your percentage of appointment.

**4. If faculty and most academic staff are considered to be salaried and exempt employees, why are they required to report sick leave and colleague coverage based on a 40 hour per week schedule?**

Although faculty and most academic staff are salaried and exempt under Fair Labor Standards Act, rather than considered hourly employees, they are required to report sick leave and colleague coverage usage based on a 40 hour per standard week established by state statute, Chapter §40.05 (4)(bp)(3a).

It is important to note that this "standard work week" exists for the purpose of reporting sick leave. This is not a University standard since most faculty and academic staff are salaried professionals who generally work more than 40 hours per week if they hold a 100% appointment.

The Chancellor at each institution agreed to this requirement in return for the uncapped accumulation of sick leave credits. Prior to this agreement sick leave accrual was capped at a maximum of 6.4 days for faculty and academic staff in 9 month appointments, and 8.5 days for 12 month appointees. With the cap removed, faculty and academic staff accrue up to 12 days per year.

**5. Is there a standard 40 hour schedule or do I select my own?**

Under University policy, Unclassified Personnel Guideline #10.06, you have two options. The work week will be defined by:

a) Automatic consent to the standard business week Monday through Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or

b) By mutual agreement, in writing, with the department chair, or appropriate administrator.

**6. When is it appropriate to use sick leave?**

Sick leave can be used for personal illness, injury, disability, pregnancy and bereavement. See Unclassified Personnel Guideline #10.04 for a more detailed explanation on the use of sick leave.

**7. Do I lose accumulated sick leave not used by the end of the year?**

No. If you report completely, accurately, and in a timely manner, your sick leave not used during the year earned is carried over year to year.

## **8. What benefit does sick leave provide at retirement?**

At retirement your accrued sick leave days, converted into hours, are multiplied by your highest basic pay rate with the University or state converted into an hourly rate of pay. The resulting amount of "sick leave credits" will pay your state group health insurance premium cost during your retirement years.

In accordance with the University's Financial and Administrative Policy #29, Section IV(H), the hourly rate of pay is calculated by dividing your highest monthly rate of base salary by 174 hours.

If you have 15 or more years of University service, additional supplemental sick leave credits are added to the balance, based on your years of service and program maximums.

For example: A faculty member retires after 20 years of service with 1500 hours of sick leave accumulation. An additional 1040 hours are credited as a result of the Supplemental Sick Leave Credits. The total hours, 2540, are multiplied by the faculty member's highest hourly rate of pay which results in "credits" to pay state group health insurance after retirement.

## **9. May I use sick leave before it is earned?**

No, with one notable exception. Newly hired full-time faculty and academic staff are granted an initial sick leave entitlement of 22 days on the date of hire providing they meet the sick leave program eligibility requirements. No additional sick leave is credited for 18 months. Part-time faculty and academic staff will receive an initial entitlement prorated based on their percentage of appointment. After 18 months have lapsed faculty and academic staff earn a maximum of 12 days per year.

## **10. Will I continue to accumulate sick leave while on a leave of absence?**

If your approved leave of absence is "with pay" (i.e., faculty sabbatical) you continue to accumulate sick leave and report sick leave usage. Your sick leave will accrue at the rate in effect prior to your approved paid leave of absence. If the leave is granted "without pay," no additional sick leave is accumulated or reported.

## **11. Can sick leave be used if there is a death in my immediate family?**

Yes. This is referred to as bereavement leave. Excluding travel time, this is generally 3 days. The time may be extended, with the approval of the institution's appointing authority or designee.

## **12. Is sick leave reported during Winter and Spring breaks? Is reporting required?**

Yes. Faculty and academic staff are in pay status during Winter and Spring breaks while classes are not in session. During these periods faculty and academic staff are required to fulfill any and all university obligations under the terms and conditions of their employment. Sick leave used during these periods of the academic year must be reported.

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