



Staff Handbook

July 1, 2024



HUMAN RESOURCES

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INTRODUCTION

This Staff Handbook, also referred to as the Handbook, is designed to acquaint staff employees with Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) and to provide information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting employment. Faculty and student employees are not governed by the Handbook. Employees should read, understand, and comply with the provisions of the Handbook. It describes many responsibilities of employment and outlines the programs developed by SWOSU to benefit employees, (For the purpose of this Handbook, the term “staff” shall include staff and administrative positions.)

No employee Handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy and procedure; rather, this Handbook is intended to serve as a guide for the daily activities of SWOSU. SWOSU reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any segment or portion of the Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. The policies presented in the Handbook may be amended, deleted, or supplemented by the President and/or Vice President of Human Resources. To ensure this is the most current version of the Handbook, refer to either the Human Resources Office (HR) or the Staff Handbook listed on SWOSU’s [website](#).

SWOSU is an “at-will” employer, excluding administrators, at or above the director level, and faculty. The contents included in this Handbook in no way modify or amend the right of SWOSU as an at-will employer in origination or termination of employment. At-will employment is for no specified term and is terminable at the will of either the employee or the employer. Only the President may alter an individual’s employment at-will status and will only do so in writing. No other process, expressed or implied, will negate the right of SWOSU to terminate employment at any time, without notice and with or without cause.

Administrators, at or above the director level, whose appointment is not renewed, will be given written notice from the University by April 1st, prior to termination of the current appointment. Administrators whose positions are externally funded may be non-renewed without prior notice. Failure to reappoint may be without specific cause. **Note:** Head Coaches may not be governed by the April 1st notification deadline and should instead refer to their individual written employment agreement.

Any portion of the Handbook that may be modified, altered, initiated, revoked, or amended does not invalidate other segments of the Handbook.

Employees who have questions that are not addressed by this Handbook should contact their supervisor or HR.

Note: Throughout the Handbook, the President and Vice Presidents may be referred to as executive officers or senior administrators.

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook is designed for informational purposes only and does not constitute an employment contract. Revisions to this Handbook shall be made by the express written approval of the President and/or Vice President of Human Resources.

This Handbook endeavors to reflect the policies of the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO) and SWOSU in compliance with state and federal law. RUSO policies and state and federal laws supersede SWOSU policies to the extent that they are in conflict. Any policy which is ambiguous may be interpreted by the President or their designee. The online version of the RUSO policy manual may be found at this link: <https://www.ruso.edu/policy-manual>

For questions or specific clarifications about information contained in this Handbook, please contact the Human Resources Office.

To all staff employees of SWOSU:

Staff are the lifeblood of our university. Your diligence, positive attitude, hard work, and team effort are essential to the mission and growth of SWOSU.

The Staff Handbook is a summary of policies, programs, and benefits that are available to you. Please familiarize yourself with the content.

I wish you every success in your employment with Southwestern Oklahoma State University and hope your career at SWOSU is rewarding.

Sincerely,

Dr. Diana Lovell

President



BACKGROUND

Long before it became SWOSU, the University was first the Southwestern Normal School, established by an act of the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1901. The Normal School was authorized to offer two years of training and four years of preparatory work for students who were not qualified for college admission. The first classes met in 1903. Since then, the University has held four names and grown into an accomplished four-year university.

More information on the history of SWOSU, as well as its mission statement and strategic plan, can be found on the University [website](#).

EMPLOYMENT

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Equal Opportunity: SWOSU, in compliance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, the Americans with Disabilities Act and, to the extent required by these and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, qualified disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or veteran status in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, employment, financial aid, housing services, educational programs, or activities the University operates.

Title IX Statement

Southwestern Oklahoma State University is committed to providing an educational, living and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex for all members of its community to include students, faculty, staff, contractors, and visitors. Title IX is a federal law under the guidance of the Department of Education and the Office of Civil Rights that prohibits the discrimination of individuals on the basis of sex, gender, and gender identity, its more than just discrimination. It also includes sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Title IX provides gender equity in academics and in programs.

Title IX states, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title IX applies to conduct that occurs on SWOSU owned or controlled premises, in an educational program or activity, including SWOSU sponsored or supported events, in buildings owned or controlled by student organizations officially recognized by the university. It applies regardless of the sex, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation of the parties.

A variety of activities are covered under Title IX, including athletic programs, recruitment, admissions, financial aid, and participation in extracurricular programs and activities. Title IX addresses discrimination situations such as unequal treatment of pregnant and parenting students or unequal pay based on gender.

The SWOSU community is dedicated to equity and access without prejudice and to creating a safe campus community environment. SWOSU provides in-depth periodic educational opportunities to faculty, staff, and students about Title IX including, but not limited to, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

Individuals with a concern or seeking assistance on this matter may contact the Title IX & Compliance Coordinator. In addition, individuals may also contact the Dean of Students Office, Human Resources Office, Campus Police Department, and/or any senior administrators. While these administrative offices will, to the extent possible, treat such conversations as confidential, they are required to take appropriate responsive action. Individuals who desire to have a privileged conversation (that has additional rights to confidentiality) may contact the Center for Health and Well-being and speak to one of the department's counselors and/or the Campus Nurse.

Inquiries regarding SWOSU's statement of Non-Discrimination policies may be directed to the Vice President of Human Resources.

Conditions of Employment

Drug Free Workplace: The illegal manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs by students and employees on SWOSU property, or as a part of any SWOSU student sponsored activity, is prohibited. Employees must abide by this policy as a condition of employment. (See Drug Free School/Workplace)

Employment Eligibility Verification: SWOSU employs only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and is committed to complying with various state and federal laws governing employment practices. Upon accepting employment, each employee must have a properly completed Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 with appropriate supporting documents to establish eligibility for employment. Newly hired employees must complete Section 1 of Form I-9 in its entirety on or before the first day of work. Additionally, SWOSU is an E-Verify employer.

Screening/Reference Verification: SWOSU reserves the right to complete background checks on new hires and employees. Information gathered from the background checks will be considered confidential, to the extent possible. Additionally, at the discretion of SWOSU, various screenings and verifications checks may be conducted. This may include, but is not limited to reference checks, driving records, degrees, licensure, and certification verifications.

Loyalty Oath: As required by state statute, employees are required to sign a Loyalty Oath upon employment by SWOSU.

Confidentiality Statement: As a result of employment by SWOSU, some individuals may have access to student, employee, or business records which contain confidential information. The disclosure of such information is governed by the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), Open Records Act, and other mandates. Upon accepting employment, employees are required to sign the University's Confidentiality Statement acknowledging they understand that disclosure of confidential information to any unauthorized person could subject them to criminal and civil penalties imposed by law. It is also a violation of SWOSU's policy and could result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Additionally, it is understood that employees are not allowed to alter, modify, add, or delete

information on university records or documents unless specifically instructed to do so by an authorized SWOSU official.

Conflicts of Interest

Employees must conduct SWOSU business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. The following procedure identifies areas of conflict that are prohibited by the Oklahoma Ethics Commission and state law. The information contained within this policy is not comprehensive but serves as a guideline to provide general direction so employees can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation.

- An employee shall not knowingly receive, directly or indirectly, money or other valuable item(s) for the performance or non-performance of their duties other than the compensation allowed by law.
- Employees shall not, directly or indirectly, solicit, receive, or agree to receive anything of value for agreeing to appoint, appointing or procuring the appointment of another person to any state office or job.
- An employee shall not use their official position to solicit or secure special privileges, exemptions, or compensations for themselves or others except in performance of their duties allowed by law.
- An employee shall neither disclose nor offer to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of their official position, nor use such confidential information for their own personal gain or benefit.
- An employee shall not accept or solicit compensation or employment that would impair their independence or judgement in the performance of their public duties.
- Except as permitted by the Oklahoma Ethics Commission and state law, an employee shall not rent, lease, sell, offer to sell, or cause to be sold—either individual or through any business enterprise in which they hold a substantial financial interest—goods, services, buildings, or property to SWOSU.
- Neither an employee nor an immediate family member of an employee may, directly or indirectly, solicit, receive, or agree to receive anything of value in excess of the amount allowed by state law in aggregate in a calendar year from a person who the employee knows or should know. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a lobbyist or lobbyist principal
 - a person seeking to do business with SWOSU
 - anyone who has a substantial financial interest in matters or actions before or affecting SWOSU

Employees desiring additional information concerning the Oklahoma Ethics Commission's complete rulings on conflicts of interest and other ethics issues may contact HR and/or the Ethics Commission.

Nepotism

Except as prohibited by the laws of the State of Oklahoma, relationship by consanguinity or by affinity shall not, in itself, be a bar to appointment, employment, or advancement in universities governed by RUSO. No two persons who are related by affinity or consanguinity regarding appointment, employment promotion, salary, or tenure for the other, nor shall either of two persons so related, who hold positions

in the same internal budgetary unit, be appointed to an executive or administrative position for said internal unit. Performance evaluations and recommendations for compensation and promotion will be made by one not related to the individual being evaluated, although the President of SWOSU may grant waivers. RUSO shall be notified of any such waivers at its next meeting.

Relatives that are within the third degree of relationship to an employee by blood or marriage are as follows: spouse, parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, brother or sister, son or daughter, uncle or aunt, niece or nephew, grandson or granddaughter, great-grandson, or great-granddaughter, and any of these relatives by marriage.

Employees should inform HR if the nepotism guidelines mentioned above are relevant.

Political Activities

An employee who participates in political activities must do so in a manner that does not:

- Imply, directly or indirectly, that SWOSU endorses such activities
- Interfere with the rights and privileges of other employees of SWOSU
- Interfere with the rights and privileges of students attending SWOSU
- Interfere or disrupt the normal routine operation of SWOSU
- Interfere with the assigned duties of the employee
- Utilize SWOSU materials or supplies (postage, stationary, telephone, email, etc.)

Outside Employment

Employees may hold employment outside of SWOSU's normal working hours, provided such employment does not interfere with the individual's responsibilities and duties to the University. Employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to SWOSU's scheduling demands regardless of existing outside work requirements. Tasks or activities associated with outside employment should not be performed during any employee's scheduled work time, nor may university resources or facilities be used for such conduct.

If, in the judgment of SWOSU, an employee's outside work interferes with their performance or that work time and/or SWOSU resources have been utilized in connection with the outside employment, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS

Employment Status

Full-Time Employment: These individuals are employed 40 hours per week. However, for benefit purposes (health insurance, etc.), non-temporary individuals routinely working 30 or more hours per week are considered full-time, although annual, sick, and holiday leave are provided on a prorated basis.

Part-Time Employment: These individuals are employed less than 30 hours per week. Staff employees who routinely work at least 20, but less than 30 hours a week will receive annual, sick, holiday leave on a prorated basis and benefits through Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System (OTRS).

Employment of 20 hours and above will be offered in five (5) hour increments.

Temporary Employment: These individuals are employed in a position not anticipated to last beyond six months. Temporary positions do not qualify for SWOSU's benefit package.

Regular-Status Employees: These individuals are employed on a continuous basis for a minimum of 20 hours or more per week. Benefits are prorated according to the hourly workweek amount as designated on the Pay Action Form.

Exempt and Non-Exempt Status: The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) identifies these categories of employment. The HR Office reviews employment classifications to ensure compliance. **Non-Exempt:** These individuals are often referred to as "staff" and "hourly". (See Work Schedule; Compensatory Time.) **Exempt Employees:** These individuals meet certain requirements established by the FLSA and do not qualify for overtime pay or Compensatory (comp) Time.

Grant-Funded Employees: These are individuals whose employment is funded by grant or contract monies. Except for leave benefits and possible holidays, grant-funded employees will generally follow the guidelines for other SWOSU employees.

- **Annual Leave:** SWOSU policy requires that employees whose positions are funded with grant or contract monies must have their Annual Leave funded within the grant. SWOSU funds will not be used to pay for unused Annual Leave upon resignation, retirement of the employee, or upon the termination of grant funding. Essentially, employees are requested to take their leave within the funding cycle of the grant. In the event Annual Leave is not exhausted, it is permissible to payout Annual Leave if grant funds are available. This does not prevent employees from carrying over and using Annual Leave in future periods funded by the grant.
- **Holidays:** Grant-funded employees may or may not follow SWOSU's holiday schedule. Contact the Sponsored Programs Office or the supervisor to determine individual holiday schedule. (See Leaves: Holidays)
- **Transferring Employees:** SWOSU employees transferring into a grant-funded position with the University will be allowed to carry unused, accrued Sick Leave into the grant-funded position. If an employee accumulates a combined Annual Leave balance (university and grant) above 480 hours, the combined balance is treated as if it were one total and anything above the 480 hours as of the end of August will transfer to the employee's Sick Leave balance. Employees transferring out of a grant-funded position are not able to transfer any leave accrued under the grant.

Transfers and Promotions

SWOSU encourages employees to apply for campus vacancies for which they qualify, and feel would better meet their work desires. SWOSU is not able to guarantee current employees will be transferred or promoted into open positions.

If an employee transfers from one department to another within SWOSU, accrued Compensatory Time not taken prior to the transfer will be paid and charged to the previous department. If a non-exempt employee transfers into a position ineligible for Compensatory Time, accrued Compensatory Time will be paid and charged to the previous department. Accrued Annual and/or Sick Leave will transfer with the employee to the new department.

Employees transferring in or out of grant-funded positions should refer to the Grant-Funded Employees section of this Handbook or contact HR for more information.

Personnel Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify HR, in writing, of any changes in personnel data. Name changes, personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, changes affecting number and names of dependents on SWOSU insurance policies, and other such status reports should always be accurate and current. The Change of Address Form is available on [Etrieve](#).

Access to Personnel Files

Personnel files are the property of SWOSU and access to the information they contain is confidential and restricted. Access to personnel files will be limited to senior administrators and HR employees. Additionally, deans, directors, supervisors, Business Office personnel, and others deemed to have a legitimate reason to review the information will be provided access. An employee may review material in their employee file and/or request a copy of their personnel file.

Open Records

SWOSU is subject to the Open Records Act, as such, certain information is made available to inquiring individuals upon request; this includes position, date of hire, and gross wage rate.

A fee shall be charged for retrieving documents pursuant to a request which is solely for commercial purposes, or which causes excessive disruption of normal business operations. Sufficient time shall be allowed for retrieving and copying documents as requested. The Vice President of Human Resources is the designated Records Officer for SWOSU. Visit the [SWOSU Open Records Procedures](#) for more information.

Performance

The performance of the employee may be considered in determining compensation, promotions, demotions, layoffs, disciplinary action, and employee terminations. Performance is to be judged on quality of work, amount of work, faithfulness to duties, and other factors that determine the value of an employee's service.

Employment Termination

Although an employee may terminate employment at-will, SWOSU requests an employee to give at least a ten work-day notice, in writing, to their immediate supervisor. Supervisors considering recommendations for discharge are asked to contact the Vice President of Human Resources before any further actions are taken. (See Employee Termination Form in [Etrieve](#))

Exit Interview and Clearance Process: To assist in the transition of leaving employment, an exit interview may be scheduled with employees. Areas that are addressed during the exit interview include final payroll and benefit information. Additionally, the employee will have the opportunity to share opinions and perceptions addressing several areas of their employment experience with SWOSU.

Benefits: Benefits end the last day of termination month. Employees may continue health, dental, and/or vision benefits through COBRA. Employees may also be eligible to continue voluntary products upon termination.

Leaves: Employees are eligible to use Annual Leave and/or Compensatory Time through the end of the last month they physically work. Remaining Annual Leave and/or Compensatory Time will be paid out up to the maximum allowable accumulation on the payroll following termination. This does not apply to individuals leaving employment by retirement, who are eligible to use out their accrued leave time.

Return of SWOSU Property: Employees are responsible for items issued to them or placed in their possession or control. Such items may include, but are not limited to:

- credit cards
- electronic devices
- equipment
- identification cards and/or badges
- keys
- parking decals
- protective equipment
- tools
- uniforms
- various written materials, forms, documents, or manuals
- vehicles

Property owned by SWOSU is to be returned on or before the last day of work. Check with Human Resources for assistance.

Personal Property

Prior to retirement, resignation, or termination, employees should remove personal property from their offices and other campus facilities. SWOSU is not responsible for personal property left by employees. Employees are solely responsible for making appropriate arrangements for the protection of their property. Personal property left behind will be considered abandoned and SWOSU has the right to remove or discard it.

Break in Service

For purposes of this policy, a break in service is defined as when an individual leaves employment and returns to work at SWOSU within 60 calendar days. Employees in positions earning Annual and/or Sick Leave, who have a break in service, shall have those benefits reasonably reinstated by SWOSU.

- **Annual Leave:** Accrual rates shall be based upon the previous date of hire less the length of the break in service.
- **Sick Leave:** Unused, accrued Sick Leave that was lost at the time of separation shall be reinstated.

BENEFITS

Insurance Programs

Regular-status employees assigned to routinely work 30 or more hours per week are provided employer-paid insurance benefits. Coverage for new hires, rehires, and transfers to benefit eligible positions is effective on the first of the month following the date of hire. If the hire date is the first of the month, benefits start the first of the following month. Optional insurance coverage may be provided for eligible dependents at the employee's cost. Dependent coverage is subject to timely enrollment, eligibility requirements, and payment of premiums. For insurance questions, please contact HR or visit the HR website.

Group Employer-Paid:

- health insurance
- life insurance
- vision insurance
- long-term disability insurance
- workers' compensation
- Oklahoma Teachers' Retirement System (see [Retirement Benefit](#) section)

Optional Employee Paid: SWOSU offers a variety of voluntary benefit programs to eligible employees. Some examples of these benefits are:

- group dental insurance
- section 125 plan (flexible spending-medical/health savings account/dependent daycare reimbursement)
- short term disability
- critical illness, hospital indemnity, and accident policies
- voluntary life (employee, spouse, and eligible children)

Additional Benefits

- waived tuition for qualified employees and their dependents. To view the eligibility requirements and complete the form, refer to the [Tuition Waiver Form in Etrieve](#)
- free employee membership at SWOSU Wellness Center and University swimming pool
- free admissions to many college level athletic events and theatre/drama productions held on campus
- free access to the services of the Al Harris Library
- discounted canoe, fishing equipment rental and camping rental at the Crowder Lake Facility
- eligible for discounted cafeteria meal plans

Employees may be required to present their SWOSU ID to utilize the above benefits.

Retirement Benefits

This section is intended to provide employees with a brief summary of retirement benefits that are available to eligible employees. Employees requiring specific answers regarding these benefits should contact HR. Please note that retirement benefits vary based upon date of hire, years of continuous service, and other factors. Employees are strongly encouraged to contact OTRS and HR.

- **Teachers' Retirement System of Oklahoma (OTRS):** SWOSU provides OTRS benefits to eligible employees, as defined by OTRS. Normally, regular-status employees assigned to routinely work 20 or more hours per week qualify for membership in OTRS. OTRS contributions are made at the expense of federal and private grants when allowable. Employees are reminded that, at retirement, 60 calendar days must pass between a retiree's last day of pre-retirement public education employment and post-retirement of public education employment. [Visit the OTRS website for more information](#) or refer to the OTRS Member Handbook. The OTRS retirement process is a multi-step and timely process. Therefore, individuals should contact HR and OTRS well in advance (approximately four months) of their desired retirement date.
 - **At retirement, 120 days (960 hours) of unused Sick Leave equals one additional year of service.**

- **Retirement Insurance Program:** Eligible individuals hired prior to July 1, 2009, and have at least 10 continuous years of creditable service with OTRS, immediately preceding retirement, may retain employer-paid health and group life coverage until age 65. Eligible individuals hired after July 1, 2009, and have at least 10 continuous years of creditable service with OTRS, immediately preceding retirement, may retain SWOSU's health insurance at their own cost.
- **Supplemental Retirement Annuity:** Employees with a date of employment prior to July 1, 1995, may be eligible for a Supplemental Retirement Annuity (sometimes referred to as the Regents' Supplement).
- **403(b) and 457(b) Retirement Plan:** SWOSU employees, excluding graduate assistants and students, may take advantage of contributing to a voluntary 403(b)/457(b) retirement plan through payroll deduction.

Leaves

SWOSU provides generous leave packages for the benefit of its employees. Leaves are intended for specific purposes as addressed in this Handbook.

While documentation is not required each time an employee accesses leave as addressed in this policy, such right is reserved by SWOSU in its sole capacity. Supervisors should contact HR regarding extended leave and/or questions regarding the ability of an employee to safely return to work. SWOSU reserves the right to require a return for duty fitness test.

Both the employee and supervisor are responsible for notifying HR of an employee absence from work which would affect payroll status for example: extended leave, FMLA, or leave without pay.

Employees do not accrue leave, receive holiday pay, or pay for unforeseen closings during leave of absence without pay, administrative leave without pay, layoff, shared leave, workers' compensation, or removal from payroll for any reason. All leave accruals and holiday pay will stop when the employee is physically absent from work for an entire payroll cycle.

Individuals will accrue leave for months that they are paid for at least half the month.

MONTHLY ACCRUALS BASED ON WEEKLY SCHEDULED HOURS

YEARS OF SERVICE	20 Hours	25 Hours	30 Hours	35 Hours	40 Hours
MONTH FOLLOWING HIRE DATE THROUGH MONTH 59	5	6.25	7.50	8.75	10
MONTHS 60-239	6	7.50	9	10.50	12
MONTHS 240 +	6.68	8.35	10.02	11.69	13.36
MAXIMUM ANNUAL LEAVE ON AUGUST 31 ST OF EACH YEAR	240	300	360	420	480
MONTHLY SICK LEAVE	5	6.25	7.50	8.75	10

MAXIMUM COMP TIME	40	50	60	70	80
HOLIDAY LEAVE	4	5	6	7	8

--UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL TIMES ARE IN HOURS.

Annual Leave: Annual Leave shall accrue for 12-month, regular-status employees who are employed to routinely work 20 or more hours per week. Employees routinely working at least 20, but less than 40 hours will accrue Annual Leave on a prorated basis. Accumulation rates are based on eligibility, anniversary date, and years of service (see table above).

Eligible employees will begin accruing leave on the first full month following employment. An employee does not earn Annual Leave during a leave of absence without pay, Administrative Leave without pay, layoff, shared leave, workers' compensation, or removal from payroll for any reason. Accrual of Annual Leave while on Administrative Leave with pay is at the discretion of SWOSU.

For 40-hour employees, unused, accrued leave, in excess of 480 hours at the end of August payroll is transferred to the individual's Sick Leave balance. For eligible employees working less than 40 hours per week, a prorated maximum accrual and accumulation is used (see table on page).

Deductions from Annual Leave are done at one-quarter hours (15 minute) increments for employees not on hourly payroll (see exception for hourly payroll). Annual Leave is to be used during period(s) mutually agreed upon by the employee and their supervisor.

Upon leaving the employment of SWOSU, eligible employees shall receive compensation for unused, accrued Annual Leave. Annual Leave pay will be calculated based on the employee's straight time pay rate (in effect when Annual Leave benefits are used). An individual leaving the employment of SWOSU cannot be compensated in excess of their maximum allowable accumulation (480 hours for 40-hour employees).

Note: Individuals employed through grants or contracts may not be covered under this policy. Such individuals should contact their principal investigator or HR for information concerning Annual Leave.

Sick Leave: Sick Leave is a period of time during which an employee is unable to work due to illness, injury, medical, surgical, dental, or optical examinations/treatments, or because the employee has been exposed to a contagious disease which could jeopardize the health of co-workers. Absence due to illness of immediate family members (spouse, parent, parent-in-law, child, stepchild, legal ward, or sibling) may be charged to Sick Leave. Sick Leave is to replace time missed during straight-time hours only. SWOSU reserves the right to review an individual's employment status based on misuse of Sick Leave, as well as excessive usage. Additionally, SWOSU, in its sole capacity, reserves the right to require documentation from a health care provider in support of the absence.

Eligible employees will begin accruing leave on the first full month following employment. Regular-status employees who are routinely employed to work 20 or more hours per week are eligible for Sick Leave. Employees routinely working at least 20, but less than 40, hours will accrue Sick Leave on a prorated basis.

Deductions from Sick Leave are done at one-quarter hour (15 minute) increments for non-exempt employees not on hourly payroll (see exception for hourly payroll). Exempt employees are required to use accrued Sick Leave in the event they are absent from work for one full day or more for a qualified reason. However, an exempt employee, routinely required to miss partial workdays, will be required to utilize accrued Sick Leave when appropriate.

SWOSU does not credit an employee for accrued Sick Leave earned at other employers.

Sick Leave benefits will be coordinated with all other forms of benefits for which SWOSU pays the cost, so that no more than 100% of the employee's current weekly rate of compensation is paid for absence from work.

Any accrued, unused Sick Leave shall not be compensated upon the termination of employment.

Hourly Employees: Individuals on hourly payroll, who routinely work 20 – 25 hours per week, submit their time through Self-Service. Annual Leave, Sick Leave, and Compensatory Time is accrued and charged to the hundredth decimal point. This time is not rounded to the nearest quarter hour.

Administrative Leave: Administrative leave with or without pay may be granted at the discretion of the President of SWOSU or their designee. See also conduct and discipline.

Official campus closures due to weather or other unforeseen events are to be charged as Administrative Leave and should be noted as such on non-exempt employees' timesheets.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA): The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Employees and Supervisors are to notify HR within 5 business days of a potential qualifying event, HR will then advise the employee of the required documentation. Eligible employees are entitled to:

- Twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for:
 - the birth of a child and to care for a newborn child within one year of birth;
 - the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
 - the care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
 - a serious condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
 - any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;" or
- Twenty-six workweeks of leave during a 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the servicemember's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin (military caregiver leave).

Spouses who work for the same employer share a total of 12 workweeks of FMLA leave per leave year for:

- The birth of a child,
- Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, or
- Care for a parent with a serious health condition.

Spouses who work for the same employer also share a total of 26 workweeks of FMLA to care for a military family member with a serious injury or illness.

FMLA leave runs concurrently with all unused, accrued leaves.

Funeral Leave: Time required for funeral (arrangements/travel) may be charged to available Sick Leave up to a total of five working days annually. The annual period begins on the first day of the fall semester. Employees are to indicate on their leave forms when funeral leave is used. **Note:** Employees requiring additional time beyond five days for instances involving a spouse or child, will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the President or their designee. Funeral Leave does not accumulate.

Holidays: Regular-status employees are eligible for SWOSU's paid holidays if they are at work on the regularly scheduled days consecutive with the holiday or on approved leave with pay however there is an exception for employees in the process of retiring. Such individuals should reach out to HR. The [holiday schedule](#) is posted on the SWOSU website and is subject to change at the discretion of the President and/or their designee. Employees working a minimum of 20, but less than 40, hours per week shall receive prorated holiday compensation. Individuals employed through a grant may or may not be covered under this policy. Any additional leave given by the President before a scheduled holiday is considered Holiday Leave and should be reported as such on non-exempt employees timesheets.

Jury Duty: SWOSU encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Routine pay will be given to employees who are subpoenaed for jury duty or as a witness before a court of law, legislative committee, or judicial body. Employees are to send the jury summons to HR. The employee is to report for work as soon as the court schedule permits. The employee must keep their supervisor aware of any changes or extensions of jury duty. SWOSU reserves the right to request documentation verifying time spent during jury duty.

Leave without Pay: Leave of absence without pay may be approved or required when it is an acceptable action, in the opinion of the President or their designee. SWOSU is not obligated to re-employ individuals at the conclusion of such leave. Employees are to use applicable accrued leave prior to using leave without pay.

Maternity or Paternity Leave: Maternity and Paternity leaves are subject to the same conditions as other leave benefits. (See [FMLA](#))

Military Leave: Employees who are members of a component of the United States Armed Forces shall, when ordered by the proper authority to service, be entitled to a leave of absence for the period of such service without loss of status or seniority. During the first 30 regularly scheduled workdays of such leave in the federal fiscal year, the employee shall receive full regular pay. (See FMLA)

Personal Leave: In general, approved personal leave is limited to a maximum of three working days. Personal leave is used only if all accrued Annual Leave and Compensatory Time is exhausted and is counted against the employee's accrued Sick Leave balance, if available. Personal leave does not accumulate. The annual period begins on the first day of the fall semester.

Shared Leave: SWOSU employees may donate unused, accrued Sick Leave to the Shared Leave pool. This leave is to assist employees who are suffering from or have a qualifying relative suffering from an extraordinary or severe illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that has caused or is

likely to cause the employee to take leave without pay or terminate employment. Donations made under this policy are gifts. This policy does not create an entitlement or expectation of Shared Leave to eligible employees. More information on this policy can be found on the [Request for Shared Leave Form](#).

Voting Leave: SWOSU encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections by voting. A reasonable amount of time off with pay will be given for the purpose of voting in national, state, and local elections.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employees are eligible for up to three paid counseling sessions per calendar year. These sessions can be used by the employee or their eligible dependent(s) which includes spouse and dependent children.

The Human Resources Office will assist with initiating a consultation for employees. To start the process please complete the [Employee Assistance Program – EAP Request](#) in Etrieve.

EAP services include, but are not limited to:

- individual counseling (abuse, alcohol, family, etc.)
- anger management
- academic counseling
- group counseling
- court-ordered counseling
- relationship counseling
- PTSD counseling

SWOSU's EAP provides limited counseling and referral in seeking assistance concerning mental health. It is not within the scope of SWOSU's EAP to diagnose or prescribe medication. The identity and discussions of individuals using this service are confidential.

Wellness Center Membership

Employees of SWOSU may use the Wellness Center during the hours of operation, free of cost. Employees must have a valid employee ID. Family rates for spouse and dependents, between the ages of 16 – 18 years of age, are available through payroll deductions. To initiate a Wellness Center deduction, complete the [Wellness form](#) online.

TIMEKEEPING, HOURS, AND PAYROLL

Timekeeping

Non-Exempt: Employees will accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They should also record any beginning and ending times of split shifts or departures from work for personal reasons. The weekly total hours worked will be rounded up or down to the nearest quarter hour for employees not on hourly payroll. Timesheets can be found on the [Forms Page](#) on SWOSU's HR webpage. It is not necessary to record time off for rest periods. (See [Attendance and Punctuality](#))

If an employee works for more than one department, they cannot be clocked in more than one department at a time.

Exempt: Employees are paid not for hours worked but rather for the work that they performed. Exempt employees complete a leave of absence report for time missed each month. The [leave of absence report](#) can be found on the [Forms Page](#) on SWOSU's HR webpage.

Paydays

SWOSU uses a once per month [pay schedule](#). In the event the regularly scheduled pay date does not fall on a workday (e.g., weekend or holiday), the pay day shall be the last workday prior to the regularly scheduled pay date.

Direct Deposit: SWOSU offers an Automatic Clearing House (ACH) service that provides for direct deposit to an employee's account.

Earning Statement Access: Payroll check stubs are available electronically through [GoSWOSU](#). The [ITS Help Desk](#) is available for individuals needing additional help with this process.

Pay Discrepancies: In the event there is a perceived error in the amount of pay, individuals should contact HR.

Attendance and Punctuality

SWOSU expects employees to arrive on time at their work location, fully prepared for the duration of their work period. However, SWOSU recognizes that there are times when absences and tardiness cannot be avoided. In such cases, employees are expected to notify their immediate supervisor as early as possible of their absence or delay. Unreported absences of three consecutive workdays may be considered a voluntary resignation of employment with SWOSU. Excessive absences and/or tardiness may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Work Schedule

Work week: The workweek begins at 12:00 am on Saturday and ends at 11:59 pm on the following Friday.

Breaks: For the benefit of the employee, SWOSU provides paid rest periods of up to 20 minutes per four-hour period. Rest periods are subject to revocation or modification by supervisors. Rest periods are to be taken in the middle of the work period and are not intended to modify lunch time or the beginning or end of work period. Lunch breaks, if taken, are to be a minimum of 30 minutes. Employees are expected to stay on campus during paid break times. Individuals needing to leave campus for personal errands should clock out during such times.

Lactation Breaks: SWOSU is supportive of breastfeeding and ensures a cooperative work environment for nursing employees. In an effort to promote work-life balance, SWOSU provides reasonable time and private accommodations for employees wishing to express milk or nurse during work hours. Accommodations may be provided upon request. Additionally, a lactation room is available in the SWOSU Nurses office on the Weatherford Campus for employees and visitors.

Flex Time: SWOSU recognizes the benefit of, where feasible, providing employees with a degree of flexibility in their work schedules. Therefore, supervisors are able to assign the work shifts for their employees. This practice is allowed only when an adjustment of the normal workday does not adversely impact the services provided. Flex hours that would impact total hours worked each week will need approval from HR.

Volunteering on Campus: Non-exempt employees may not volunteer their time for campus activities that are substantially similar to their SWOSU job. Individuals who wish to volunteer their time for non-similar job duties or functions must obtain prior approval from HR.

Overtime: As a condition of employment, employees may be required to work occasional or periodic overtime hours determined by SWOSU. Employees working overtime are to receive their supervisor's prior consent. By approving the timesheet, supervisors authorize overtime earned. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as is practical to employees within a work unit.

Time off using Sick Leave, Annual Leave, Holidays, as well as additional leave types will not be considered hours worked for the purpose of calculating time at the one and one-half rate.

Compensatory Time: Compensatory Time (frequently referred to as Comp Time) is accumulated by non-exempt employees who work in excess of their normal work schedule with such time not being paid out to the employee at that time. For hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a given workweek, Compensatory Time is calculated at the rate of one and one-half times. The maximum allowable accumulation of Comp Time is 80 hours for a 40-hour employee (the maximum is prorated for individuals scheduled to work less than 40 hours). Employees automatically receive compensation for any hours earned above the maximum amount. **Note:** The decision to pay Comp Time or to accumulate is the decision of the employee's budget unit head.

Employees transferring from one department to another are required to use accumulated Comp Time prior to transferring or be paid by the department in which the time was earned.

Upon leaving the employment of SWOSU, employees who have Comp Time shall receive compensation for any unused, accrued Comp Time.

Call Back: An employee called back to work outside of their normal work shift shall be paid for a minimum of two hours' time. The two-hour minimum does not apply if the work performed is for the convenience of the employee.

Business Expenses

SWOSU maintains the practice to reimburse employees for authorized and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred on SWOSU business or in justifiable pursuit of SWOSU's objectives. Reimbursement is based on actual expenses incurred, subject to the limitations established by SWOSU's [Travel Policy](#), the State Travel Reimbursement Act, and university budget. For additional information pertaining to business expenses, employees should contact their supervisor or the Business Services Office.

WORK CONDITIONS

Internal Communications

SWOSU strives to provide a campus environment that is safe and ethical. To meet this goal, SWOSU offers numerous reporting options for suggestions, comments, and concerns to be brought forward by employees.

Open Door Policy: SWOSU uses an open-door policy to resolve issues that cause concern with work conditions, university policy, safety, and other matters. It is often the case that the supervisor closest to the matter is best suited to resolve the issue. Thus, individuals are encouraged to seek direction from their immediate supervisor to resolve concerns as they arise. However, should an employee's supervisor not address the matter to an individual's satisfaction, or should an individual prefer, they may contact an administrator in their supervisor's chain-of-command, HR, and/or a senior administrator.

Suggestion Box: Suggestions may be submitted [electronically](#) through the SWOSU website. Individuals may also submit written suggestions via the drop box located in the hallway of the Hays Administration Building.



EthicsPoint: SWOSU provides a confidential tip line called EthicsPoint. This reporting option allows confidential reporting of unethical, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate behavior to a third-party company. Reports may be filed through the [website](#) or by calling 1-866-898-8438.

Silent Witness Program: The Silent Witness Program is operated by the Campus Police Department and is designed to allow individuals to anonymously report crimes. To share information or report a crime, submit a [Silent Witness form](#) on the SWOSU website.

SWOSU Staff Council (SSC)

A successful campus community is composed of dedicated faculty, administration, staff, and student members. Commitment comes from meaningful involvement and participation in the practices of SWOSU.

SWOSU has organized and officially recognizes the [SSC](#) which includes employees that are not faculty, administrative officers, or student employees.

The SSC may make recommendations to the administration concerning matters that are in the best interest of SWOSU. Such recommendations shall be made through the Vice President of Administration and Finance.

Safety

SWOSU endeavors to provide a safe environment in compliance with federal, state, and local safety regulations. Establishment and maintenance of a safe work environment is the shared responsibility of SWOSU employees. Employees are to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in their work activities. Individuals should immediately report any unsafe conditions to their supervisor and/or HR.

Firearms/Weapons: In accordance with state law, no one other than a commissioned law enforcement officer may carry firearms on campus. The possession of fireworks, explosives, or weapons including, but not limited to, bows, knives (excluding small pocketknives), or paint-ball guns is prohibited on university property. Contact the [Campus Police Department](#) for any questions related to this policy.

Work Related Injuries and Illnesses (Workers' Comp): Work-related accidents that result in injury are to be reported to their supervisor at the earliest opportunity, regardless of how minor the injury may appear at the time. In the event the employee is unable to locate their supervisor, they should contact the Campus Police Department to report the injury. By reporting work-related injuries and illnesses, the employee assists the University in ensuring the appropriate workers' compensation procedures may be initiated; thereby making SWOSU a safer place to work. (See [Incident Report Form](#) on SWOSU's website)

Security of Facilities: Security is provided in the maintenance of SWOSU's facilities through a number of mechanisms, including limitations on hours of operation, policies on keys, provision of adequate lighting, security cameras, as well as, restricting access to those bearing appropriate identification. Additionally, Campus Police perform building checks and lockups on campus buildings at scheduled times.

Reporting Crimes and Emergencies on Campus: Reports of criminal actions or other emergencies occurring on the campus should be made to the Campus Police Department at 580.774.3111 or by calling 911. Victims of serious crimes may request support personnel such as ministers and counselors during and after reporting. The Clery Act, as well as the campus crime statistics, are available on the [Campus Police website](#).

Related Security Procedures and Practices Programs: SWOSU encourages individuals to be responsible for their own security and the security of others. Presentations by the Campus Police Department are provided upon request to the campus community. Formats may include speakers, videos, demonstrations, and workshops.

Campus Alert System: SWOSU has an emergency notification system to offer a convenient way to receive urgent messages from the University. All SWOSU employees are automatically added to the SWOSU Alert System to receive emergency alerts to their cell phones and SWOSU email. Only emergency or other urgent messages will be sent via SWOSU Alert.

Though the system is free, subscribers may have to pay fees associated with their text messaging service.

Inclement Weather/Closing of Campus: The decision to close the campus due to inclement weather or other events will be made by the President or their designee. Once a decision to close has been made, the appropriate media outlets will be notified and/or a notice on SWOSU Alert will be sent.

Open Flames: In keeping with SWOSU's intent to provide a safe work environment, the use of unauthorized open flames in SWOSU buildings or property is prohibited. The prohibition of open flames does not apply to authorized work personnel performing hot works construction, repair activities, or properly supervised educational activities.

[Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended \(ADA\) Policy](#)

SWOSU is committed to complying with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its amendments. It is the University's policy not to discriminate against an otherwise qualified employee or applicant regarding terms or conditions of employment because of such individuals disability or perceived disability. SWOSU will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals upon notice or when the University becomes aware of an individual's disability, provided such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the University. As part of the interactive process, potential accommodations may be attempted on a trial or short-term basis.

ADA accommodations must be requested and approved through HR.

[Maintenance Procedures](#)

As a safe working environment is paramount concern for SWOSU, department heads and supervisors are to notify the Physical Plant of routine maintenance needs. The Physical Plant is dedicated to addressing work order requests in a timely manner. However, employees should recognize that work orders are prioritized by severity of need. (See [Maintenance Work Request](#) Form on SWOSU's website.)

Emergency Procedures: SWOSU employees observing a potentially hazardous maintenance problem should contact the Physical Plant at Ext. 3788. In the event of an after-hours emergency, call these emergency numbers in the following order:

- 24-hour emergency number – 774.9002
- Campus Police – 774.3111

Employee Identification

Photo Identification Cards: SWOSU provides a photo identification (ID) card to staff and retirees. The ID card may be used for access to various facilities and activities that are available to SWOSU employees. The ID cards are provided at no cost to the employee. ID will expire upon termination of employment and are to be returned to the HR office.

Specific departments may have additional requirements regarding ID cards.

Nametags: SWOSU provides a free nametag to regular-status employees. Wearing the nametag is encouraged but is not mandated.

Dress Code

SWOSU recognizes that due to the variety of job duties and responsibilities across campus, differences in what is deemed acceptable dress will exist. SWOSU will endeavor not to infringe on an individual's preferred dress habits. However, SWOSU will intervene when an employee's dress style or grooming habits interfere with assigned work duties, present a safety concern, or cause distraction to fellow employees or students.

Uniforms: As a general practice SWOSU, does not purchase or provide uniforms to individual employees. However, at the discretion of SWOSU, exceptions to the practice may be permitted. The two primary reasons such exceptions are made is in the event that an employee's position requires a style of uniform or clothing that is not deemed appropriate for street wear because of a heightened level of protection is necessitated. These exceptions are made either by the President or their designee.

Note: Uniforms and clothing purchased by SWOSU are to be used in the performance of the employee's job functions. Such clothing is not intended for personal use and will be returned to SWOSU upon termination of employment.

Use of SWOSU Equipment

SWOSU provides a variety of equipment to assist individuals in accomplishing their job duties. Such equipment may include, but is not limited to, tools, computer equipment, machinery, and vehicles. When using such equipment, individuals are to exercise care and follow proper operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Individuals are to notify their supervisor and/or HR if equipment appears to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair.

University equipment is not to be used for personal gain. The following provides limited information on selected areas.

Privacy: Individuals are afforded no expectation of privacy when using SWOSU equipment and/or resources. This is not modified by the issuance of keys, passwords, or other devices for securing areas (computers, desks, file cabinets, offices, etc.). Furthermore, use of SWOSU computing and e-mail systems grant consent to the review of messages to or from employees in the system in printed form or any other medium.

SWOSU utilizes numerous surveillance cameras to enhance the safety of the campus community. As such, employees may be videoed in the routine course of their workday.

Keys: Individuals are to assure the appropriate usage and safeguarding of university keys entrusted to them. Prior to the issuance of a key(s), the appropriate department head must sign an authorization. (See [Key Request Form](#) on SWOSU's website)

Vehicles: Only authorized individuals shall drive a SWOSU vehicle. Such individuals are to possess a valid driver's license. They are to obey traffic laws and to wear their safety belts when operating the motor vehicle. State law prohibits the use of texting while operating a motor vehicle. In general, non-employees may not ride in SWOSU vehicles. However, an authorized individual operating a University vehicle may transport non-employees in cases such as:

- Students riding as a part of a University activity
- The spouse of an employee attending a function in which the spouse is generally expected to attend
- The non-employee is traveling as an invited participant
- A city official is riding as part of a sponsored event

Refer to section 8 in the Safety Manual for further details on this policy.

SWOSU reserves the right to require a driver improvement course when deemed in the best interest of the University.

Mail System: The Mailroom receives and processes mail for campus departments. Refer to the [Mailroom Policy](#) for full details and procedures. Once mail is received by the mailroom it becomes University property.

Computers and Computing Equipment: Computing services at SWOSU are designed to promote and enhance the educational, research, and administrative efforts of the University. Individuals utilizing these services are responsible to ensure computing resources are used in an ethical and lawful manner under the [Computing Policy](#).

Individuals using computers and network systems owned by SWOSU are subject to applicable local, state, or federal laws and university policies. SWOSU cooperates with duly constituted law enforcement agencies in cases of violation of applicable law. SWOSU will provide proportional sanctions for policy violations, including, but not limited to, reprimand, dismissal from the University, and legal action.

Informational Technology Services (ITS), in coordination with the President and/or their designee, may override an individual password: thus, employees are afforded no expectation of privacy in their e-mail or any other information stored or accessed on SWOSU computers.

Campus Parking

Individuals are permitted to park in campus parking locations, except those with designated restrictions. Certain SWOSU and service vehicles are exempt from some parking regulations.

Weatherford Campus: Employee vehicles parked on the Weatherford campus must display the appropriate parking decal, which can be obtained at the Campus Police Department. Additional decals may be requested.

Off-Campus Locations: Parking for SWOSU staff and faculty at off-campus locations, such as high schools and technology centers, will follow the location's procedures. Individuals with questions concerning the location's parking procedures should contact the location's administration.

Accidents: Individuals who are involved in traffic accidents, while in the scope of their employment, should take appropriate emergency steps then notify the Campus Police Department. Additionally, individuals involved in an at-fault traffic accident, while on SWOSU business, are required to take a defensive driving training course within six months of the event, SWOSU will pay for the first training; thereafter, training courses will be at the expense of the employee.

Security Inspections

SWOSU strives to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, harassing material, and other improper materials. SWOSU prohibits the control, possession, transfer, sale, and/or use of such materials on university property, including, but not limited to, work areas, vehicles, lockers, toolboxes assigned to an employee, or items brought onto the premises by an employee.

To ensure compliance with this policy, SWOSU reserves the right to inspect these areas. The fact that an employee may be provided a key, password, or other device for securing an area does not entitle the employee to an expectation of privacy.

SWOSU works with local, state, and federal authorities in an effort to secure SWOSU property and work environment. **Note:** It is not within the scope or intent of this policy to limit or interfere with campus police officers in the execution of their duties.

Sales and Solicitations

Private vendors are not allowed to use SWOSU facilities for the purpose of sales or solicitations.

Exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- Vendor has approval from the President or their designee.
- Vendor has approval from the appropriate SWOSU representative to use an auxiliary building, such as the Memorial Student Union, and solicitations are confined to the assigned area; established fees will be charged for the use of such auxiliary facilities.
- Vendor uses proper US mail services.

Communicable Diseases

SWOSU has established a protocol to be followed when an employee is infected with a communicable disease. Such diseases include, but are not limited to, hepatitis, meningitis, mumps, HIV/AIDS, whooping cough, measles, diphtheria, chicken pox, and tuberculosis. The purpose and complete procedure of the protocol can be found within the [Guidelines on Infectious Diseases](#).

Use of Tobacco

SWOSU is a tobacco free campus. This policy interprets campus in a broad and encompassing manner, which includes, but is not limited to, University owned buildings, facilities, sidewalks, roadways, parking lots, vehicles, and grounds.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “tobacco products” includes all forms of tobacco and not limited to cigarettes. This term also includes e-cigarettes and any form of vaping or tobacco-mimicking products.

SWOSU [Center for Health and Well-being](#) can assist those employees seeking to quit tobacco use.

Drug Free School/Workplace

In compliance with the Drug-Free and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, SWOSU recognizes that drug and alcohol abuse diminishes the integrity of the institution and erodes the strength and vitality of the individuals. Employees are expected to be in suitable mental and physical condition and able to perform their assigned duties satisfactorily. It is the intent of SWOSU to educate students and employees about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and to discourage the illegal possession and distribution of drugs and alcohol. Accordingly, SWOSU adopts the following policy:

The unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on SWOSU property, or as a part of any SWOSU student sponsored activity, is strictly prohibited. Students and employees must abide by this policy as a condition of enrollment or employment. Continuance of employment or enrollment following receipt of this policy constitutes acceptance of this policy by the employee or student. Sanctions will be imposed for violation of this policy. Employees and student are required to notify SWOSU Human Resources of any state or federal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring on SWOSU campus no later than five (5) days after conviction. Students are required to notify the Dean of Students within the same time frame.

University Sanctions: Under Federal Regulations, SWOSU must impose sanctions for violations of its Drug-Free Schools Policy. SWOSU sanctions include, but are not limited to, reprimand, restriction of activities, conduct probation, administrative leave, expulsion, and termination of employment. Administrative sanctions shall be imposed immediately or within 30 days of notification or awareness of the employee’s workplace related criminal drug statute conviction. SWOSU may also require the completion of an approved rehabilitation program at the employee’s or student’s expense. Disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the applicable policies of SWOSU.

It is also within the discretion of SWOSU to refer any violations to the appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution. Local, state, and federal laws provide for a variety of legal sanctions for the unlawful possession and distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol. Hence, sanctions include, but are not limited to, incarceration and monetary fines. Employees should note that they are also subject to SWOSU’s Drug-Free Community policy and can refer to that policy for additional sanctions.

Health Risks: Alcohol and other drug use represent serious threats to health and the quality of life. Alcohol and other drug use increase the risk of accidents, birth defects, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases. Health risks generally associated with alcohol and drug abuse can result in, but are not limited to, a lowered immune system, damage to critical nerve cells, lung damage, heart problems, liver disease, physical and mental depression, increased infection, irreversible memory loss, personality changes, and thought disorders. With most illicit drugs, it is possible that users will develop psychological and physical dependence. Further information concerning health risks may be found in the Center for Health and Well-being. Individuals should also consult their personal physician about alcohol and drug-related health risks. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) also provides resources, [DEA Website](#).

Counseling and Rehabilitation: SWOSU provides access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Counseling Services that is free to all students, faculty, and staff. EAP provides counseling and training programs that inform participants of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Assistance in locating an in or out-patient rehabilitation site is available through EAP. Additionally, health insurance benefited employees may contact Blue Cross Blue Shield (toll free number on the back of their card) for preauthorization benefits to access in or out-patient treatment. Volunteer participation in or referrals to these services is confidential.

Those needing help or advice may also use the following hotline numbers:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • SWOSU Center for Health and Well-being | 580.774.3776 |
| • (After hours) SWOSU Campus Police | 580.774.3111 |
| • National Institute on Drug Abuse | 1.800.662.HELP(4357) |
| • Alcohol Addiction Hotline | 1.855.504.6815 |
| • Reach-Out Hotline | 1.800.552.9054 |

Any questions regarding the rules, regulations, and policies concerning the Drug-Free Schools or the Drug-Free Community standards of SWOSU may be referred to the HR Office.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Standards of Performance and Conduct

The contents included in this Handbook in no way modify or amend the right of SWOSU as an at-will employer in originating or terminating employment of personnel. At-will employment is for no specified term and is terminable at the will of either the employee or the employer. Only the President may alter an individual's employment at-will status and will only do so in writing. No other process, expressed or implied, will negate the right of SWOSU to terminate employment at any time, without notice and without cause.

Disciplinary procedures in this Handbook are advisory and not binding and may be adjusted or modified at the discretion of the President, the senior officers, and/or their designees.

The need for disciplinary procedures may arise for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to, concerns arising from an individual's unacceptable performance, conduct, and/or attendance.

When discipline is necessary, steps may include, but are not limited to, verbal warning, written warning, administrative leave, and/or termination. The guidelines are not expected to be rigidly applied but may be suitable for many disciplinary situations. Depending upon circumstances in individual cases, repeating a step, deleting a step(s), or moving to immediate termination may be appropriate. Should an employee's conduct warrant, directors and/or supervisors may authorize leave for up to one day. In such an event, the supervisor should notify HR. Additionally, the actions identified above do not prohibit SWOSU from pursuing other corrective measures.

The refusal to perform an illegal act shall not be regarded as insubordination. An employee directed to perform an illegal act should report such information to HR or one of the senior administrators.

Harassment

SWOSU affirms its commitment to ensuring an environment for employees and students that is fair and respectful. Additionally, SWOSU is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination. Demeaning actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or status as a veteran will not be tolerated.

Sexual Harassment

SWOSU affirms its commitment to an environment for employees and students which is safe, fair, humane, and respectful and which supports and rewards employee and student performance on the basis of relevant considerations such as ability and effort. Behaviors which inappropriately assert sexuality as relevant to employee or student performance are damaging to this environment. Sexual harassment by members of the University community is a violation of both law and RUSO Board policy and will not be tolerated. Employees must refrain from harassment or discriminatory treatment of students or other employees. Sexual harassment will be dealt with promptly and confidentially by SWOSU.

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment shall be defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature in the following context:

- when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing
- when submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual or
- when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Examples of Prohibited Conduct: Whether in person, in writing, by telephone, through social media, by electronic means, or otherwise, conduct prohibited by this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- unwelcome sexual flirtation; advances or propositions for sexual activity
- continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, such as suggestive comments and sexually explicit jokes
- sexually degrading language to describe an individual
- remarks of sexual nature to describe a person's body or clothing
- display of sexually demeaning objects and pictures
- offensive physical contact, such as unwelcome touching, pinching, brushing the body
- coerced sexual intercourse
- sexual assault
- actions indicating that benefits will be gained or lost based on response to sexual advances

Sexual Violence Prohibited: Sexual violence is a particularly malicious form of sexual harassment. Sexual violence on campus, at SWOSU related events, and against students or employees constitutes an emergency that will be reported to proper law enforcement authorities. The University may immediately suspend any employee or student reasonably believed to have committed sexual violence

against a person in violation of this policy, with notice and hearing to follow promptly. SWOSU has established procedures for timely reporting, investigation, and resolution of sexual violence incidents.

Definition of Sexual Violence: Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to, rape as defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 1111; rape by instrumentation as defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 1111.1; forcible sodomy as defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 888, assault defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 641 when committed in a sexual context, in furtherance of sexual demands, or because of a person's sex or sexual orientation; battery as defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 642 when committed in a sexual context, in furtherance of sexual demands, or because of a person's sex or sexual orientation; aggravated assault and battery as defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 646 when committed in a sexual context, in furtherance of sexual demands, or because of a person's sex or sexual orientation; stalking as described by 21 Okla. Stat. § 1173 when committed in a sexual context, in furtherance of sexual demands, or because of a person's sex or sexual orientation; sexual battery as defined by 21 Okla. Stat. § 1123(B); any sexual act involving a child as described in 21 Okla. Stat. 1123(A); maliciously intimidating or harassing or attempting to maliciously intimidate or harass another person because of that person's sex or sexual orientation; or inciting others, or attempting to incite others to maliciously intimidate or harass another person because of that person's sex or sexual orientation.

Retaliation: An attempt to penalize or retaliate against a person for filing a complaint or participating in the investigation of a complaint of prohibited sexual conduct with a student or employee, sexual violence, or other sexual harassment will be treated as a separate and distinct violation of policy.

Sanctions: Appropriate disciplinary action may include a range of actions, up to and including termination of employment.

Complaint Process: This policy is in addition to the current RUSO Board and University policies concerning discrimination and applies to students, faculty, staff, guests, and visitors. Complaints alleging prohibited sexual conduct with a student or employee, sexual violence, or other violation of the sexual harassment policy will be reviewed and investigated by the appropriate University office.

Complaints may be resolved informally or may proceed through the applicable formal complaint proceedings. Complaints may be filed in the following manner:

- Complaints against students or student organizations shall be filed with the Dean of Students for review and investigation. The Dean of Students may assist in the informal resolution of the complaint or in processing a complaint through HR, SWOSU deans, or any of SWOSU's executive officers.
- Complaints against faculty or staff shall be filed with HR. The designated official may assist in the informal resolution of the complaint or in processing a formal complaint through the chain-of-command above their supervisor, up to and including the President. Additionally, the complaint may be taken to SWOSU's executive officers.
- Complaints against visitors, guests, vendors, contractors, or any other person should be directed to the Campus Police Department, HR, SWOSU deans, or any of SWOSU's executive officers.
- Any other appropriate process as established by SWOSU policy.

Sexual Relationship

SWOSU affirms its commitment to the fair exercise of academic and employment power and adequate protection of individuals with limited power. SWOSU employees, including administrators; faculty; coaches; extracurricular, extramural, and intramural activities supervisors; graduate assistants; and staff should demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as academic guides, counselors, and facilitators. Employees must refrain from any exploitation of students and other employees. Such use of power to create sexual relationships will be dealt with promptly and confidentially by SWOSU employees.

Sexual Conduct with Students Prohibited: No employee shall knowingly engage or knowingly attempt to engage in consensual or nonconsensual sexual conduct with a student whom the employee supervises, acts as academic advisor for, or over whom the employee has any power to determine the student's grade; honors; discipline; research opportunity; scholarship opportunity; acceptance in a graduate or other program of study; participation in arts, athletic, academic, or extracurricular competition; work-study assignment; or similar education-related matter. University employees' sexual liaisons with students in such situations exploit position, abuse power, and fundamentally harm the academic relationship. Voluntary intoxication with drugs, alcohol, or other substances shall not negate knowledge.

Sexual Conduct with Supervisee Prohibited: Supervisors' sexual liaisons with their supervisees may exploit position, abuse power, and fundamentally harm the working environment. No supervisor may knowingly engage or knowingly attempt to engage in consensual or non-consensual sexual conduct with an employee, not his or her spouse, whom he or she supervises, directly or indirectly. Voluntary intoxication with drugs, alcohol, or other substances shall not negate knowledge.

Definition of Sexual Conduct: Sexual conduct includes, but is not limited to, any sex act, erotic touching, romantic flirtation, conversation of a carnal nature, advance or proposition for sensual activity, erotically explicit joke, remark of a carnal nature describing a person's body or clothing, display of an erotic object or picture, and physical contact reasonably believed to be of a sensual or flirtatious manner.

Sexual conduct does not include reasonable use or delivery of bona fide lecture and/or instructional acts, statements, or materials.

Sanctions: Sexual conduct with students or employees in violation of this policy will not be tolerated. Appropriate disciplinary action may include a range of actions, up to and including dismissal and/or expulsion.

Exceptions: Exceptions to sexual conduct prohibitions consistent with state and federal law may be granted in appropriate circumstances by SWOSU's President. The RUSO Board shall be notified of any such exceptions in a written, confidential personnel record at least one week prior to the next RUSO Board meeting. Exceptions involving Presidents may be granted by the RUSO Board only.

Grievance Procedure

Individuals are available to advise and assist employees who have a question, problem, or complaint about working conditions. Most concerns can be resolved by informal discussions between the parties involved. Employees may prefer to seek assistance from their supervisor on such matters. Additionally, HR is available to assist employees.

Informal Grievance: Employees are encouraged to resolve matters in an informal manner by seeking direction from their immediate supervisor to resolve concerns as they arise. However, should an employee's supervisor not address the matter to an individual's satisfaction, or should an individual prefer, they may contact an administrator in their supervisor's chain-of-command, HR, and/or a senior administrator.

Formal Grievance: A formal complaint may be presented due to the dissatisfaction that occurs when an employee believes a condition of their employment is unjust, inequitable, or a substantial hindrance to effective operation. The employee shall present the facts, in writing, to the Vice President of Human Resources. A formal complaint must contain the following:

- a clear, detailed, signed, and dated statement of the complaint,
- a summary outlining with whom the points of dissatisfaction were discussed and what results were realized from these discussions and
- the specific remedial action or relief sought.

The Vice President of Human Resources or appropriate designee will consider the formal grievance. A written response will be provided to the employee. Should the employee so desire, an appeal may be filed with the Vice President of Administration and Finance within 10 working days. Should the Vice President of Human Resources or the Vice President of Administration and Finance be named in the formal grievance and/or have such a relationship with the accused or the accuser that a report could legitimately be contested on the grounds of bias, an alternate decision maker shall be appointed.

Knowingly providing false information or failure to cooperate with a SWOSU review may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Retaliation: An attempt to penalize or retaliate against a person for filing a complaint or participating in the investigation of a complaint will be treated as a separate and distinct violation of SWOSU policy. As such, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, may occur.

Violence in the Workplace

SWOSU forbids verbal or written threats or behavior that is likely to lead to violence. An employee who feels they have been the victim of a violent act should notify their immediate supervisor and/or the Vice President of Human Resources. In a severe instance, where immediate response or assistance is required, the employee can access the Campus Police Department at 580.774.311 and/or local law enforcement by dialing 911.

Employees who are the victim of a violent act should be prepared to report who the assailant(s) was, name(s) of witnesses, and information detailing the events that led up to the violent act.

Employees seeking additional or more detailed information regarding violence in the workplace may contact the Campus Police Department.

Thank you for being a part of Southwestern Oklahoma State University!
Should you have any questions, contact Human Resources 580.774.3275.

