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UHD is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational and working environment where students, faculty, staff and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual misconduct, a form of sex discrimination, is antithetical to the standards and ideals of the University. The University will take appropriate action in an effort to eliminate sexual misconduct from happening, prevent its recurrence and address its effects. 

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This Staff Handbook has been prepared by Employment Services and Operations (ESO) and it summarizes University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) employment policies and procedures for current and prospective employees. It also provides important information regarding benefits, resources, and services that are available to staff.

The Handbook is designed to also serve as a useful source of reference regarding relevant state and federal laws, UH System and UHD policies and procedures that govern interactions between the University and its staff. The University values greatly its relationship with its employees and consistently strives to create and maintain a positive working environment.

This edition of the Staff Handbook continues the tradition of the University and ESO to always provide valuable and helpful information to the staff. I wish to sincerely thank all of the ESO staff for assisting in the high-quality and in-depth production of this handbook, under the guidance of Betty Powell, Assistant Vice President, ESO, who headed the project this year. I also extend special thanks to all UHD staff members outside ESO for their assistance.

This Handbook and detailed information relating to employment laws, policies and procedures may be found on the ESO website.

Ivonne Montalbano

Ivonne Montalbano
Vice President
Employment Services and Operations
Statement of Acceptance (Mandatory)

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD or University) Staff Handbook provides information about UHD’s policies, procedures, benefits, and working conditions. The Staff Handbook is not intended to be a contract of employment, nor is it intended to create any type of contractual obligation(s).

UHD reserves the right to revise the information provided in this staff handbook. Furthermore, UHD reserves the right to withdraw or change policies, procedures, benefits, and working conditions described in this handbook at any time. UHD will attempt to make every effort to notify employees when an official change in policy or procedure has taken place; however employees are responsible for keeping themselves up to date on all UHD policies, procedures, benefits, and working conditions.

UHD strives to provide an employee-friendly environment so that goal-oriented individuals can thrive and achieve ever more demanding challenges. UHD values the talents and abilities of its employees and seeks to foster an open, cooperative, and dynamic environment. Management encourages employees to resolve their problems with his or her immediate supervisor, and, if unable to resolve the conflict with his or her immediate supervisor, employees are encouraged to take the problem/issue to the next managerial level or the Campus Relations Officer.

The University of Houston-Downtown is compliant with applicable state, federal and local labor laws. Furthermore, UHD does not make personnel decisions based on race, religion, gender, age, national origin, color, disability, sexual orientation, or U.S. veteran status.

By signing this document you affirm that you have received, read and understand all the policies, procedures, working conditions, and benefits described in this staff handbook. You also acknowledge that you agree to abide by all the policies and procedures set forth in this staff handbook and the UHD Policy Statements.

_________________________________________  ________________
Signature                                      Date

_________________________________________  _______________________
Print Name                                    Employee ID
Welcome from the UHD President

Welcome to the University of Houston-Downtown! You are now part of an exceptional city university dedicated to ensuring your personal and professional success.

All of us – administrators, faculty, and staff, alike – play a vital role in creating a university climate that fosters excellence. This Staff Handbook will serve as a roadmap for you as you acclimate to the University, and as a helpful resource throughout your tenure at UHD.

I invite you to continually look for ways that you can apply your innovative ideas and leadership skills to enhance the University.

I look forward to working with you to move our university toward becoming a nationally recognized model of excellence, access and inclusion. Together, we will build upon our proud tradition as one of the most diverse, affordable, quality institutions of higher education in the Greater Houston Metropolitan region.

Sincerely,

Juan Sánchez Muñoz
President
April 2017
Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook, available online, is to describe the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD or University) administrative policies and procedures that affect staff employees.

This handbook provides basic information on the University, summarizes key policies, outlines job expectations, and reviews the benefits available to eligible employees.

Whether you are a new employee, a prospective employee, or a continuing employee, you may have questions about your employment with UHD.

This handbook will provide you with many answers. It also suggests whom to contact if your questions are not answered. We hope you refer to it often.

Relationship to Policies

The information in this handbook is subject to change without notice and does not constitute a contract, express or implied, with UHD or the University of Houston System (UHS or System). UHD also reserves the right and discretion to amend, delete, deviate from, or change benefits, compensation, and policies at the sole discretion of the University.

The University will update the on-line version of the handbook as necessary. However, if at any time the information in the on-line version of the handbook is in conflict with official policies and procedures of UHD, the UH System, state or federal regulations, the official policies, procedures, and regulations will prevail. Departments are responsible for notifying ESO when changes should be made to the handbook for their areas.

This handbook is not intended to explain each subject fully. Rather, to make it easier for employees to understand its content, policies have been paraphrased. Hyperlinks to UHD policies are readily available within the handbook to support the information provided.

Revisions and Changes

Revisions and changes to the handbook or institutional policies may be required in order for UHD to remain in compliance with state and federal laws, as well as with the UH System and the UHS Board of Regents’ rules and regulations. The major review responsibility for Policy Statements lies with the responsible party identified in the “Review Process” section of the PS, although proposals to revise or update policies may be made at any time by any member of the university community.

UHS Policy Statements will be updated, revised, or rescinded after being reviewed by the appropriate administrators in accordance with an established revision schedule. Following approval of an updated,
revised or rescinded policy by the President’s Cabinet and signed by the President, the policy statement will be posted online, showing the revised date.

**History of the University of Houston-Downtown**

In 1974, the University of Houston acquired the assets of South Texas Junior College and opened the University of Houston - Downtown College (UHDC) at One Main Street as a four-year institution. The Texas Legislature eventually approved UHDC as a freestanding university in the UH System.

The early University focused on meeting the needs of Houston’s diverse and dynamic work force. The college’s first four-year degree was a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice, and resident students attended for $4 per credit hour. During the first five years, degree programs expanded quickly to include accounting, office management, real estate, business services, and engineering technology. Soon the college received full accreditation, and enrollment reached 5,000.

By the early 1980s, it was clear that UHDC was more than a college. Therefore, UHDC officially dropped “college” from the institution’s name. During this decade, Houston was booming, UHD succeeded in having the M & M building named to the National Register of Historic Places, and degree programs continued to grow. UHD’s outreach to the community remained strong, and Houston PREP—a pre-freshman engineering program for talented middle and high school minority students—began.

UHD moved into the 1990s as the state’s third-fastest-growing university. During that time, UHD focused on becoming a premier, metropolitan university, appealing to traditional students as well as to working professionals. Technology became one of UHD’s hallmarks. UHD also began key partnerships with community colleges and moved to meet the Greater Houston Metropolitan Area demand for qualified teachers when it added a teacher certification program in urban education. During this time, the Weekend College Program began, and a new Academic Building and the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center opened.

UHD continued to move ahead, earning full approval from the Texas Legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer graduate programs; the University’s first master’s degree in criminal justice was approved. UHD also began offering degree programs at The University Center in the Woodlands.

UHD’s expansion and growth continued as a new millennium arrived. A master’s degree program in teaching was added. Physical growth also continued, and the Willow Street Pump Station was renovated while a new brick Commerce Street Building opened at the corner of Commerce and Main Streets, providing a new home for the College of Public Service. As UHD grew, so did the number of students participating in commencement. In 2002, UHD became the first university to hold graduation ceremonies at Minute Maid Park. UHD won national recognition for its wireless campus and the Bachelor of Business Administration degree in general business became UHD’s first of several on-line degrees. An impressive Shea Street Building opened in August 2007 as the new home of the College of Business, and the Master of Business Administration degree was added in 2011.
Today, while degrees and buildings continue to evolve, students remain at the heart of UHD’s traditions. UHD now offers more online degree programs than any public university in the region, and over 50 degree programs, including several master’s degree programs.

UHD is one of the most diverse institutions in the nation and ranked 33rd nationally for graduating Hispanics and 37th for graduating African Americans with a Bachelor’s degree. UHD is a Carnegie-classified engaged university committed to civic engagement and is on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. In 2012, UHD was the only public university in the state to have received the President’s Honor Roll with distinction.

**UHD’s Mission Statement**
The University of Houston-Downtown is a comprehensive four-year university offering bachelor’s and selected master’s degree programs, and providing strong academic and career preparation as well as life-long learning opportunities. Located in the heart of the city, the University reflects the diversity of the Greater Houston Metropolitan Area and, through its academic programs, engages with the community to address the needs and advance the development of the region. UHD is an inclusive community dedicated to integrating teaching, service, and scholarly research to develop students’ talents and prepare them for success in a dynamic global society.

The University of Houston-Downtown’s organizational charts illustrate the structure of the University in terms of relationships among departments and personnel.

**UH System**
The University of Houston System (System) is comprised of four separate and distinct universities that offer degree programs. The Universities that make up the System are the University of Houston, University of Houston-Downtown, University of Houston-Clear Lake, and the University of Houston-Victoria.

Relationships among System institutions are collegial and collaborative. Credits transfer easily from one to another, and students move freely from one campus library to another. Each institute within the System has a distinct mission; together, the institution’s missions and programs complement and support one another. The System also has off-campus centers, including UHS-Northwest, UH Sugarland, UHS-Cinco Ranch, UHCL-Pearland, and UHS-Medical Center.

**UHD’s Connection**
The University of Houston System (System) is a group of six public institutions of higher learning in the Houston area that share common goals and are governed by the System’s Board of Regents.

The System comprises four universities and two multi-institutional teaching centers that offer degrees in partnership with the universities.
Relationships among System institutions are collegial and collaborative. Credits transfer easily from one to another, and students move freely from one campus library to another. Each institution within the System has a distinct mission; together, the institutions’ missions and programs complement and support one another.

Together with UH, the universities that make up the System are UH-Clear Lake, UH-Downtown, and UH-Victoria, each with its own president and administration. The established teaching center is the UH System at Sugar Land.
Diversity and Equity

Equal Opportunity Employer

UHD embraces diversity as a defining characteristic of our institutional mission. We are committed to the building and preservation of a diverse, civil, and supportive campus community that seeks out employees with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.

To this end, the University of Houston-Downtown provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, except where such distinction is required by law, in any aspect of the terms, conditions, and/or privileges of employment, including recruitment, appointment, benefits, training, promotion, retention, discipline, or termination in accordance with state and federal law.

UHD believes the inclusion of diversity of backgrounds and ideas are fundamental to the promotion of intergroup respect, understanding, and tolerance, which leads to enlightened individuals and a positive overall campus community. The University continually strives to expand as an inclusive organization. It is our belief that inclusiveness is the cornerstone of any successful institution, as diversity affords the organization the opportunity to draw upon the many valuable skills, experiences, talents and perspectives unique to each employee.

An inclusive campus community is more than simply adhering to policies and procedures that discourage harassment and other behaviors that infringe upon the freedom and respect of the individual and his/her differences; rather it is an active promotion that results in the celebration of differences. UHD recognizes that this process requires a significant amount of dialogue and a continual commitment of each employee and supervisor. As a result, UHD will continue to provide learning opportunities for its employees and will continue to work collaboratively to seek out solutions and actions that are sensitive to others’ differences, making UHD an equal opportunity employer for all people.
At-Will Employment

The policies referenced in this Staff Handbook are intended for all staff at the University of Houston-Downtown. The University reserves the right to revise, change, or rescind policies or procedures at any time, with or without notice.

Nothing contained in this Staff Handbook or in any other materials or information distributed by UHD creates a contract of employment between an employee and the University. Employment at UHD is on an “at will” basis.

The basic rule of Texas employment law is employment “at will,” which applies to all phases of the employment relationship. In the absence of a statute or an express agreement (such as an employment contract) to the contrary, the employer may modify any of the terms or conditions of employment, or terminate the relationship altogether, for any reason, or no particular reason at all, with or without advance notice.

The University and the employee retain the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, for any reason, or no reason, without incurring any legal liability to the other. No statements made to the contrary, either written or oral, either before or during an individual’s employment, can change this rule. Furthermore, no individual supervisor or manager can make a contrary agreement to change the “at will” nature of the employment relationship, unless made in writing and signed by the employee and the University President.

Employment Process

The Employment Services and Operations (ESO) staff at UHD is dedicated to the recruitment and retention of qualified individuals. ESO is continually searching for talented individuals to join our superior working environment. Information on becoming a UHD employee may be found on the UHD employment webpage.

Employment Eligibility

UHD complies with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Each employee must provide evidence that he or she is eligible to work in the United States within three business days of the employment start date.

Employees must complete a Department of Homeland Security Form I-9. ESO maintains a complete list of documents that are accepted by the University as proof of identity and eligibility.
NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION (SAM 02.A.36)
Newly hired employees are expected to attend an orientation session conducted by Employment Services and Operations. Orientations are typically held every Monday, except on holidays.

Mandatory Training
In accordance with the State of Texas (Texas Administrative Code, § 21.010.C) and University of Houston System institutional compliance requirements, all UHD employees are required to complete the following training within the first 30 days of employment and annually thereafter.

- Code of Ethics - Explains ethical conduct requirements found in UH System policies, which apply to all employees.
- FERPA - Sets forth requirements regarding the privacy of student records. FERPA governs: (1) the release of these records (known as education records) maintained by an educational institution, and (2) access to these records.
- Fraud Awareness – Explains the different types of occupational fraud, why they occur, and how to reduce the risk of fraud.
- Secure Our Systems – Educates employees on how to protect sensitive information.
- Employees may also be required to complete additional training based on their role at the University, especially those having financial accountability or administrative responsibility in PeopleSoft. Employees should consult with their supervisor regarding any additional training required of their position and/or security access needed to complete this training.

UHD employees are also required to read and acknowledge their understanding of the UHD Employee Compliance & Ethics Guide, and the State Office of Risk Management Workers’ Compensation Physician Network requirements.

Employees who meet at least one of the following criteria are also required to complete the Consulting and Outside Employment Application and Approval Form.

- Full-time faculty (excludes adjunct faculty)
- Exempt (salaried) employees
- Non-exempt (bi-weekly) employees with purchasing responsibilities

Employees who do not complete annual mandatory training by the published deadline will not have met their job expectations and will therefore not be eligible for merit increases, as outlined in PS 02.B.12 and SAM 02.A.26.

Selective Service
Federal law requires that all males between the ages of 18 and 25 be registered with the U.S. Selective Service System, unless they meet certain exemptions under Selective Service law. Employees who
knowingly and willfully fail to register are ineligible for employment with the University. Any offer of employment is contingent upon compliance with Selective Service law.

**SECURITY-SENSITIVE POSITIONS (PS 02.A.17)**

All UHD positions are designated as security sensitive; as a result, all finalists are required to undergo a criminal background investigation prior to receiving a formal job offer. As a result of certain job duties and responsibilities, some positions may also require a [motor vehicle records check](#) and/or credit check.

Background investigation(s) will occur after a contingent job offer has been extended by the Employment Coordinator. Applicants failing to submit to the requested background investigation will not be considered for employment. The results of the background investigation will be reviewed by the Chief of Police and the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations to determine employment eligibility.

**PRIOR STATE SERVICE**

Staff employees with previous State of Texas employment are entitled to receive previously earned vacation and longevity service credits. ESO Personnel Records staff will assist employees in establishing their records of prior state service upon receipt of the name(s) of each state agency and the approximate dates of employment with each agency. Prior state service information should be included on the Employee Data Sheet.

**PERSONNEL RECORDS AND EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION**

UHD establishes and maintains electronic personnel files for each of its current and former employees, with access limited to certain administrative and support staff in ESO. Some records, including benefits records, medical records, affirmative action records related to investigation and/or pending litigation, and payroll records, are maintained in ESO either electronically or in hard copy, but separately from the employee’s personnel file. Those records that are maintained electronically in the Fortis electronic records system are indexed separately from the electronic personnel file.

The University complies with the Texas Public Information Act pertaining to access and maintenance of personnel-related information. Requests for information covered by the Public Information Act are subject to the provisions of SAM 03.H.02, Open Records. Maintenance of electronic records is also subject to SAM 03.H.01, Records Retention, and SAM 02.A.31, Access to and Maintenance of Personnel Files.

It is the responsibility of the employee and/or immediate supervisor of the employee to notify ESO of any additions to and corrections of information in the employee’s personnel file, including verification of degrees, certifications, and/or licenses earned.

Each employee or a designated representative of the employee (with prior written designation and approval) is entitled to review the entire contents of his/her own personnel file, and to obtain a copy of any document(s) in the file. Access to the Fortis electronic records system is restricted and employees may view their file by appointment only.
ESO also provides employment verification for current and former employees.

Please see UHS PS 02.A.19, Access to and Maintenance of Personnel Files, for additional information.

Staff members are required to have a valid UHD identification (ID) card. ID cards are needed for a variety of services, including checking out books in the W. I. Dykes Library, purchasing parking permits, accessing the Academic Computing Lab, and the Sports and Fitness facility.

**Probationary Period (SAM 02.A.18)**

Probation begins on the first day of work. The initial six (6) months of employment at UHD for each new benefits-eligible non-exempt staff employee is probationary. The initial twelve (12) months of employment for each new benefits-eligible exempt staff employee is probationary. Police officers, although non-exempt, will serve a twelve-month probationary period. During the probationary period, the supervisor will monitor the employee’s performance to determine whether employment should continue.

At any time during a probationary period, an employee may be dismissed with or without cause, without application of the discipline and dismissal procedures, except that any such dismissal may not be based on illegal discrimination or retaliation.

Employees may not transfer or be promoted to another position during their probationary periods. Exceptions to this restriction may be granted by the President, or designee, in consultation with the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations on a case-by-case basis.

Please refer to SAM 02.A.18, Probationary Period for Regular Staff Employees, for additional information.

**Resignation**

UHD employees who resign or retire from their positions are encouraged to provide their supervisors with a written resignation letter at least two weeks prior to the date of his/her intent to leave. Employees must complete the Separation Clearance Form whenever they resign from the University or transfer to another position on campus. Employees must complete the termination clearance process by securing clearance from all areas identified on the Separation Clearance Form, and submitting it to ESO on or before the last day of employment. (Please see PS 02.A.22 for detailed policy and required procedures to be followed to complete the termination clearance process.)

Terminating benefits-eligible employees should meet with the Benefits Department to handle insurance, retirement and other benefits matters. After the terminating employee has met with the Benefits Department, the employee should contact the Talent Management Coordinator to complete the Separation Survey and schedule time for his/her exit interview. The exit interview and separation survey provide feedback to the University, department, and/or supervisor on possible improvements, and his/her reasons for leaving.
Terminating employees must return all University property, and settle all debts to the University of Houston System in order to complete the exit clearance process.

**REEMPLOYMENT**

Former employees who wish to return to work at UHD must apply online through the employment application system. If the former employee meets the position’s minimum requirements, is eligible for rehire, and has satisfactory prior UHD employment, ESO will release the on-line application to the hiring department.

**REDUCTION IN FORCE**

Reduction in Force (RIF) is defined as the elimination of an occupied position or positions resulting from an administrative decision when lack of funds or sufficient work, reorganization, changes in technology or research needs, or other factors require a reduction in the University’s investment in non-faculty personnel.

Employees affected by a reduction in force will be given written notice as soon as practical, but not less than thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of the action. An employee affected by a RIF decision may appeal this action in writing to the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations within five (5) working days of receipt of the written notice of reduction in force. Failure to comply with this requirement will be deemed a waiver of the right to appeal. See **SAM 02.A.06 Reduction in Force of Regular Staff Employees**, for specific information.

**CONSULTING AND PAID PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (PS 02.A.04)**

Consulting and paid Professional Service are activities undertaken for compensation from a third party outside the UH System, where said activity falls within the scope of activities, functions, or expertise for which the individual is compensated by the University.

The Board of Regents of the University of Houston System recognizes that full-time members of the professional or administrative (exempt) staff, except executive management employees as defined by UH Board Policy 57.10, may be asked to provide consultation or other professional services on a private basis outside the University and/or System. Such activities, if properly conducted can benefit the institution and its students by enriching the educational environment, and thus, may support the basic purposes of the University. For this reason, faculty and exempt staff are permitted to engage in a limited amount of consulting and paid professional service. Those individuals requesting to provide outside consulting must complete and submit the Consulting and Paid Professional Service Application and Approval form to their supervisors for prior written approval before beginning such activities.

While consulting is a recognized aspect of faculty activity, within limitations noted in the University’s policy, consulting by exempt staff must be justified on an individual basis by clear and direct benefit to the institution.
Permission for outside employment is left to the discretion of the University. Outside employment shall not interfere with the performance of the employee’s duties at UHD, and shall be performed outside the normal working hours of the employee, or by the use of vacation time or leave without pay, in accordance with university leave entitlement guidelines.

The Standards of Conduct of State Officers and Employees, which are provided by state law, deal with the conflict of an employee’s private interests with the interests of the State of Texas. No employee shall accept consulting or paid professional service duties which could result in any conflict of interest (SAM 02.A.09) that would impair his/her independence of judgment in the performance of university duties, or induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired through his/her position. This provision is in accordance with SAM 02.A.29, Ethical Conduct of Employees. An employee who violates any of these standards is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment with the university, regardless of whether the request to engage in such activities was approved. Such dismissal will be conducted in accordance with PS 02.B.05, Discipline and Dismissal of Regular Staff Employees, for more information.

All faculty and exempt staff must annually complete the online UHS External Consulting form as part of mandatory training.

**Multiple Employment (SAM 02.A.08)**

Work performed for another component university of the UH System within the scope of activities, functions, or expertise for which the component university compensates the individual is considered to be consulting or outside employment (see SAM 02.A.08, Consulting and Paid Professional Service). Consulting activities must be non-regular, part-time appointments, or temporary appointments as defined in SAM 02.A.34, Types of Staff Employment. Prior written approval to engage in these activities is required. Compensation for these services must be made through the component university’s payroll system, and are subject to withholding and other payroll deductions.

Multiple employment is a category of Consulting and Paid Professional Service, and employees who wish to participate in multiple employment within the University of Houston System must comply with the policy and procedures of Consulting and Paid Professional Service. Please see PS 02.A.04, Consulting and Paid Professional Service, for more information. “Additional Compensation” is different from “Multiple Employment,” and is handled differently.

Individuals requesting multiple employment within the University of Houston System must complete and submit the [Consulting and Paid Professional Service Application and Approval form](#) to their supervisors.

**Dual Employment (SAM 02.A.08)**

Dual Office Holding is defined as any officer of any component of the University of Houston System holding other non-elective state or federal office or position of honor, trust, or profit, which requires prior approval by the Chancellor. (Or designee). Approval must include formal findings that the dual office holding is of benefit to the state, or required by state or federal law and creates no conflict of interest.
Dual office holding is a category of Consulting and Paid Professional Service, and is covered in PS 02.A.04. and SAM 02.A.08.
Employee Status

Employment Categories
In accordance with the rules and regulations mandated by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the University of Houston-Downtown has designated the following employment categories for its employees:

Staff: Employees employed on a regular basis for a period of at least four and one-half months, excluding students employed in positions that require student status as a condition for employment and those holding teaching and/or research positions, classified as faculty.

Exempt Employees: Employees in positions that are not subject to overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt employees are paid on a monthly basis and include employees who are employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity, including certain computer employees.

Non-Exempt Employees: Employees who are paid hourly according to FLSA and who are subject to receive overtime compensation (pay or compensatory time at a rate of 1.5 times) when they work over forty hours in a given work week.

Benefits-Eligible Employees: Employees who are employed for 20 hours or more per week for a period of at least four and one-half continuous months, excluding students employed in positions that require student status as a condition of employment, and employees holding teaching and/or research positions, classified as faculty.

Other types of employment at UHD include temporary appointments, term appointments, student workers, and faculty positions.

- Temporary appointments typically occur when a person is appointed to a position of limited duration (less than 4.5 months). Temporary appointments may also include positions that are intermittent or non-recurring in nature, or positions that are impractical to employ an individual on a continuing basis.

- Term appointments are created for positions that will be needed for a specific period of time, and typically longer than 4.5 months.

- Student positions include college work study and non-college work study. These positions require that, as a condition of employment, the incumbent be a UHD student and that the incumbent work no more than 20 hours per week during the regular academic session.

- Faculty positions are those positions that are actively involved in academic instruction or research, and are either ranked or unranked.

- Unranked faculty titles include adjuncts, visiting, and lecturers.
- **Ranked faculty** positions may include instructors, assistant professors, associate professors and professors.

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is committed to equality of opportunity in all areas of education and employment and as such, does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, veteran’s status, sex, or sexual orientation, except where such distinction is required by law. UHD supports the protections available to members of its community under all applicable state and federal laws including the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act of 1983, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Equal Pay and Age Discrimination Acts, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, and Executive Order No. 11246, as amended by Executive Order No. 11375 and Executive Order No. 12086.
**PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS**
The use of University telephones for local personal calls is a privilege that should not be abused. Personal calls should be limited to ensure that telephone lines are open to receive business calls.

Personal cell phone usage should also be limited to emergencies and meal and break times. Employees should be considerate of their colleagues by keeping cell phone rings low or on vibrate while in their work areas.

Personal long distance telephone calls on University phones are strictly prohibited. Should an emergency situation occur requiring an employee to make a long distance call while at work, the call must be charged to the employee’s personal long distance calling card.

Employees not adhering to the guidelines for personal telephone calls are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**UNIVERSITY COMPUTER USE**
UHD computer systems exist to provide computing services to the University community and should be used in support of instruction, research, and other work-related activities.

UHD employees as users have the responsibility to use UHD’s Computing Systems in an effective, efficient, ethical, and lawful manner. The University’s computer systems are a State resource, and should not be used by unauthorized personnel or for personal or corporate profit. Access to and use of computing resources is restricted to appropriately identified, authenticated, and authorized users only. UHD must adhere to the copyright laws concerning computer software. Unauthorized use or duplication of software is a federal crime, and must not occur.

Wireless access at UHD must be managed by and coordinated through UHD’s Department of Information Technology to ensure compliance with appropriate security standards and requirements defined by the State.

Ongoing or serious problems regarding electronic mail should be reported to the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations.

Incidental personal use of UHS’s computing systems is an exception to the general policy rule. Incidental personal use of UHD’s computing systems must not interfere with assigned job duties and responsibilities, or be in violation of existing UH System or UHD policies, or applicable State or federal law.
Employees have a responsibility to use the University computing systems in an ethical, and legal manner and comply with the user agreements outlined in PS 08.A.04 Computer Access, Security and Use Policy.

**Work Hours (PS 02.A.01)**

The UHD workweek for timekeeping purposes begins on Wednesday at 12:01 a.m. and extends through a seven-day period ending at midnight the following Tuesday. The University’s normal working hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, for regular full-time staff employees.

Because of the nature of services rendered, some areas may begin earlier or end later.

In an effort to improve productivity and a positive attitude toward work, the University allows employees to participate in flextime. Department managers may approve flextime for personnel in those positions where business necessity does not require normal work hours.

Flextime considerations should be in the interest of departmental efficiency, business necessity, public safety, and the approved work related preferences of employees, as long as the department remains open and adequately staffed between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Breaks (PS 02.A.01)**

Non-exempt employees may take periodic rest breaks, which are considered time worked and are not recorded on timesheets. The rest breaks for non-exempt employees are scheduled by department supervisors with appropriate regard for work load.

Full-time employees are provided meal breaks that typically occur near the middle of the work day and that are not considered time worked.

All full-time hourly employees are required to take a meal break each work day, as scheduled by their supervisors. During meal breaks, employees must be relieved of all duties; otherwise, they must be compensated for this time as “hours worked.” Compensation may be made by either granting compensatory time or paying overtime.

Aside from rest and meal breaks, any other time spent by a non-exempt employee away from the work area (e.g., deliveries and office errands) must be approved by the supervisor.

Management may schedule meal and rest breaks to ensure efficient operations.

**Tardiness and Job Abandonment (PS 02.A.01)**

Tardiness is defined as being late to work, returning late from a lunch break, or returning late from any other absence from work. Tardiness generally applies only to non-exempt employees.
An employee is required to call his or her supervisor within the hour of the employee’s scheduled start time to report absences or tardiness and give explanations. An employee who is unable to reach his or her supervisor directly must notify someone in the department of his or her late arrival or absence.

An employee who leaves work without authorization or who fails to report to work and notify his or her supervisor for more than three continuous work days may be considered to have abandoned the job and his or her employment may be terminated.

**STAFF DRESS CODE STATEMENT**
The University strives to maintain an image that projects professionalism and upholds the University values of excellence, student success, inclusiveness, respect, and integrity.

During business hours and business-related events, employees are expected to dress in a way that is appropriate to their position and department, and the University’s mission. Employees are expected to use good judgement at all times regarding their personal appearance, dress appropriately, be neat, wear clean clothing and be mindful of personal hygiene. Employees are expected to adhere to this standard. If a dress code has been established in the employee’s department, it must also be followed. For more information, visit the [Staff Dress Code Statement](#).

**SMOKING** *(PS 01.A.09)*
The University of Houston-Downtown is a smoke-free campus. Smoking and/or use of tobacco products is not permitted within any building that is the property of the University. It is allowed at designated outdoor areas and must be at least 25 feet from any doorway or building entrance. The sale or free distribution of tobacco products or merchandise on University property is prohibited.

The policy does not apply to smokeless nicotine replacement therapy products (e.g., skin patches, lozenges, and gum).

The policy applies to all employees, students, independent contractors, and visitors at all times.

**ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE WORKPLACE** *(PS 01.A.05)*
It is the policy of the University of Houston-Downtown that the unlawful use, manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, or possession of any illegal drug in the workplace, on campus, or as part of any campus activities is prohibited. Alcohol is included in this policy unless it is formally approved for a specific activity at a designated time and location.

Any employee engaged in the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol on campus or at campus-sponsored events held off-campus will be subject to disciplinary action and referral to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, if deemed necessary. Disciplinary measures may include written reprimand, suspension without pay, or termination, depending upon the severity of the infraction. Employees referred for assistance must satisfactorily participate in a drug and alcohol abuse rehabilitation program.
program, as agreed upon between the employee, Employment Services and Operations, and the University’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The University is committed to the maintenance of a drug-free environment, the dissemination of drug awareness information to the members of the campus community, and the enforcement of the provisions of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989.

**MOTOR VEHICLE RECORD EVALUATION POLICY (PS 02.A.16)**

No employee, potential employee, student or volunteer is allowed to operate a university-owned or leased vehicle until a Motor Vehicle Record (MRV) has been completed, the results evaluated, and authorization has been obtained.

The MVR is a record that contains information about a person’s driving history, including information about traffic violations, arrests and convictions for driving-related incidents.

MVR checks are conducted annually on those employees whose jobs require driving a university-owned or leased vehicle as an essential part of their jobs, and on those employees who have used fleet vehicles during the previous year. MVRs may be requested more frequently on employees with accidents or moving violations reported on their MVRs.

Drivers whose MVR checks do not meet the acceptability criteria will receive written notification, and employment-related driving will be forbidden at that time. If current duties cannot be performed without driving responsibility, the employee may be reassigned to an available non-driving position for which the employee is qualified. If no such position is available, the employee will be terminated.

**NEPOTISM (PS 02.A.03)**

Nepotism in employment is a violation of state law, University of Houston System Board of Regents policy, and University of Houston System policy.

The University strictly prohibits the employment of relatives within a supervisory chain. Relatives of University employees shall not be employed by the University in positions, permanent or temporary, where an employee has the official authority to hire, recommend or approve the hiring, salary, or promotions of the relative. Relatives shall not be employed in the supervisory-subordinate relationship even if it results from marriage after the employment relationship was formed.

A relative is defined as anyone related to the employee within the second degree of kinship or the third degree of lineage and includes the employee’s spouse, the employee or the spouse’s natural and adopted children, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, brothers, sisters, half brothers and sisters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, second cousins, and persons married to these.
**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT (SAM 01.D.08)**

UDH is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational and working environment where students, faculty, staff and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual misconduct, a form of sex discrimination, is antithetical to the standards and ideals of the University. The University will take appropriate action in an effort to eliminate sexual misconduct from happening, prevent its recurrence and address its effects.

Consistent with its commitment to addressing sex discrimination and harassment, UHD complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VII”), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment. Sexual misconduct constitutes a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and Title VII.

The University aims to eradicate sexual misconduct through education, training, clear policies and serious consequences for violations of its policies. The University will conduct educational programs, including ongoing prevention and awareness campaigns, designed to promote awareness and prevent sexual misconduct. The Sexual Misconduct Policy defines and describes prohibited sexual conduct, and establishes a procedural mechanism for processing complaints of sexual misconduct.

In order to assist the University community in preventing and reducing the risk of sexual misconduct throughout the University System, the University has developed a program of risk reduction strategies. As a part of that effort, every new student and employee shall attend a prevention and education program about sexual misconduct. The program will incorporate the risk reduction strategies with bystander intervention training which enables community members to take a role in preventing and interrupting incidents of sexual misconduct.

Harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of University policy and the law. Sexual harassment by a public official may also be a criminal offense. Any employee who violates the Sexual Misconduct Policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, under the University’s Discipline and Dismissal policy, which governs the conduct of staff employees.

All members of the University are expected to 1) adhere to the Sexual Misconduct Policy; 2) cooperate with the procedures for responding to complaints; and 3) report conduct or behavior that they believe to be in violation of this Policy to the Title IX Coordinator, Ivonne Montalbano, at 713-221-8060 or via email to Montalbanol@uhd.edu.

UDH takes reports of sexual misconduct very seriously, and will conduct investigations and work to ensure that all persons are given appropriate support and fair treatment. The University will not tolerate retaliation against those who make such reports or participate in the investigatory or adjudicatory process. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any adverse employment or educational action taken for making a report of sexual misconduct, or otherwise participating under this Policy. Any actual or
threatened retaliation, or any act of intimidation to prevent or otherwise obstruct the reporting of sexual misconduct or the participation in proceedings relating to sexual misconduct, may be considered a separate violation of this Policy and may result in disciplinary sanctions. Any person who believes that he/she has been subjected to retaliation should immediately report this concern to the Title IX Coordinator.

The University provides the exclusive mechanism for handling the non-criminal investigation of any alleged Sexual Misconduct, the determination of whether the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy was violated, and the appeal of Equal Opportunity Services’ (EOS) finding as to whether there was violation or no violation of the Policy.

Please see SAM 01.D.08, Sexual Misconduct Policy, for detailed information regarding the policy.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT (SAM 01.D.08)**

Sexual assault is any form of *non-consensual* sexual activity. Sexual assault represents a continuum of conduct from forcible rape to non-physical forms of pressure that compel individuals to engage in sexual activity against their will. Examples of sexual assault under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following non-consensual sexual activity:

a) Sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal);
b) Oral sex;
c) Rape or attempted rape;
d) Penetration of an orifice (anal, vaginal, oral) with the penis, finger or other object;
e) Unwanted touching of a sexual nature;
f) Use of coercion, manipulation or force to make someone else engage in sexual touching, including breasts, chest and buttocks;
g) Engaging in sexual activity with a person who is unable to provide consent; or
h) Knowingly transmitting a sexually-transmitted disease to another.

SAM 01.D.08, Sexual Misconduct Policy, contains extensive definitions of various sexual activities for determining whether such activities were non-consensual. The policy also sets out the procedures to be followed to engage in the University’s risk reduction strategies program, to file complaints, and how the complaint review process works.

**DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT (SAM 01.D.07)**

UHD is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational working environment where students, faculty, staff and visitors are free from discrimination and harassment of any kind. Discrimination and harassment is antithetical to the standards and ideals of the University. The University will take appropriate action in an effort to eliminate discrimination and harassment from happening, prevent its recurrence and address its effects.
All members of the University community are expected to adhere to this Policy, to cooperate with the procedures for responding to complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment and to report conduct or behavior that they believe to be in violation of this Policy to their component institution’s Equal Opportunity Coordinator who will coordinate its investigation and response as necessary with the appropriate individuals from the applicable campus. The Equal Opportunity Coordinator is responsible for conducting the administrative investigation of reports of discrimination or harassment and is available to discuss options, provide support, explain University policies and procedures and provide education on relevant issues. The Equal Opportunity Coordinator may designate one or more Assistant Equal Opportunity Coordinators. UHD’s Equal Opportunity Coordinator is Ivonne Montalbano. Contact her via email at Montalbanol@uhd.edu or phone, 713-221-8060.

All UHD employees have the duty to act and must take reasonable and necessary action(s) to prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment and for responding promptly and thoroughly to any such claims. Upon learning directly or indirectly of conduct or behavior that might violate this Policy, all persons shall report the conduct or behavior to the Equal Opportunity Coordinator for advice and assistance on addressing the matter. A person who fails to act may be found to have violated this Policy, even if the underlying event does not constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment.

Harassment is subjecting an individual, based on her or his membership in a protected class, to unlawful severe, pervasive, or persistent treatment that is:

- Humiliating, abusive or threatening conduct or behavior that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group;
- Intimidating, hostile or abusive learning, living or working environment or an environment that alters the conditions of learning, living or working; or
- Unreasonable interference with an individual’s academic or work performance.

Harassment that satisfies this legal standard includes, but is not limited to, epithets or slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, denigrating jokes and display or circulation (including through e-mail) of written or graphic material in the learning, living or working environment.

Protected class is defined as a class of persons who are protected under applicable federal or state laws against discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, genetic information, religion, age, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected status. Additionally, for purposes of this Policy, the term “protected class” includes sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Any UHD student or employee who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or harassed based on any of the protected classes listed above, may file a complaint by contacting the Equal Opportunity Coordinator.

The University takes reports of discrimination or harassment very seriously and will not tolerate retaliation against those who make reports or who participate in the investigatory or adjudicatory process. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any adverse employment or educational action taken for making
a report of unlawful discrimination or harassment, or for otherwise participating under this Policy. Any actual or threatened retaliation or any act of intimidation to prevent or otherwise obstruct the reporting of unlawful discrimination or harassment or the participation in proceedings relating to unlawful discrimination or harassment, may be considered a separate violation of this Policy and may result in disciplinary sanctions. Any person who believes that he/she have been subjected to retaliation should immediately report this concern to the Equal Opportunity Coordinator.

Please refer to SAM 01.D.07, Discrimination and Harassment Policy, for additional information,

**REASONABLE WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES (SAM 02.E.09)**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance pursuant to Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and to establish procedures for reasonable accommodation under ADA. This policy applies to all UHD employees and applicants for vacant positions.

A request for a reasonable workplace accommodation should begin with the employee. The employee should contact the ADA Coordinator at UHDcoordinator@uhd.edu to obtain and thereafter complete the Request for Workplace Accommodation form and then submit a copy of the completed form to his/her supervisor, with the original of the completed form going to the ADA Coordinator at UHDcoordinator@uhd.edu. Supervisors who receive a request for an accommodation from an employee shall immediately notify the ADA Coordinator.

Please refer to SAM 02.E.09, Reasonable Workplace Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities, for additional information.

**FEDERAL/STATE EMPLOYMENT LAWS**

Confidentiality, FERPA, HIPAA, and the Texas Public Information Act

Two of the most important federal laws that employee members should know about concerning the privacy of students and the confidentiality of student records are the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (commonly called FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (or HIPAA, Public Law 104-191, 104th Congress, especially Sec. 264). One of the most important state laws concerning confidentiality and public records is the Texas Public Information Act (the PIA, Texas Government Code §552).

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA protects student educational records from disclosure to third-parties not affiliated with an educational institution in which a student is or has been enrolled. For example, FERPA prohibits Section
IV 31 universities and its employees from divulging information about a student's course schedule, academic or financial standing, grade history, course attendance, or any disciplinary actions taken against the student. Universities and its employees thus cannot legally divulge information to parents, employers, prospective employers, or law enforcement agencies without prior written consent to the student.

There are some exceptions to FERPA guidelines. For example, if a student is classified as a dependent under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code, universities may divulge educational records to parents. University employees can also disclose, without a student's consent, certain "directory" information like names, addresses, dates of attendance, and degree awards. At the same time, universities must allow students and parents (in the case of "dependent students") reasonable time to elect to have even "directory" information protected. Otherwise, staff members must have prior written consent from the student before releasing the student’s academic records.

University employees, may access and divulge or access information without a student's written consent under the following conditions (this list is not exhaustive):

- When other school officials such as advisors have legitimate educational interest in reviewing student records;
- When schools to which a student is transferring request copies of academic records;
- When school officials are conducting audits or evaluations;
- When school officials are reviewing the financial aid eligibility of a student;
- When accrediting agencies are conducting audits of a university;
- When university officials must comply with judicial orders or subpoenas;
- When a health and safety emergency requires disclosure of student records.

In any case, employees as well as administrators must first confirm with their supervisors or with UH System Counsel that exceptions apply before divulging information to parties who are not part of the University. Employees should assume and act as if all student records are protected from disclosure.

FERPA also prohibits universities from withholding certain kinds of information from students themselves. Students have the right to inspect any of their own educational records maintained by the university. Students also have the right to request changes to any of their own information when they believe that information is inaccurate or misleading.

The non-exhaustive list below includes common examples of when FERPA restricts information:

1. Professors cannot respond to e-mails from personal accounts if those e-mails include any request for information that is protected by FERPA. For example, you cannot e-mail a corrected copy of an essay to a student via personal e-mail. This is because the university cannot reliably verify the identity of the owner of a personal e-mail account. Even confirming that a student is enrolled in your class violates this law.
2. Professors can send information, such as course syllabi, that is already in the public Section IV 32 domain to personal e-mail accounts, and can inform recipients that professors can only conduct official business via GatorMail accounts. Professors should insist that students contact them via official UHD e-mail accounts to discuss things like academic standing, absences, grade history, and so forth.

3. Professors cannot post grades in public places, nor leave corrected assignments that identify individual students outside their office doors, or in other public places.

4. Professors cannot respond to telephone or mail queries from prospective employers about a student’s academic standing unless the student has consented in writing to the release of that information.

5. Professors and other university employees acting in the capacity of a retention officer can call students using phone numbers that are listed as part of a student’s official record. However, if a parent, family member, or other third-party answers the call, professors may not divulge the nature of their call. In those circumstances, they should instead leave a message and ask the student to return the phone call.

**Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

HIPAA applies mostly to hospitals and medical clinics that maintain medical records. However, it does have implications for universities and their employees as well. For example, HIPAA includes privacy requirements that restrict an institution’s ability to divulge medically-related information about its employees. In most cases, records that include medical or other health information about students are protected by FERPA laws and cannot be divulged to third parties, including other university employees.

When a university employee requests medical leave, the university may require documentation from care-givers or other health-care providers as a means of verifying that the employee is eligible for leave. However, those university employees may not divulge that information to other university employees without the prior written consent of the person who has requested medical leave. Professors should never divulge any student’s medical condition to any other student or university employee without prior written consent of the student.

**Texas Public Information Act (PIA)**

Staff members at state-supported colleges and universities in Texas are state employees and therefore subject to the Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 552). The law grants anyone access state government records, including records maintained by universities, subject to the restrictions of other federal laws like FERPA and HIPAA. Other restrictions apply. For example, tests and quizzes that professors are planning to administer to classes are exempt.

On the other hand, the personnel files of employees, including job performance evaluations, letters of dismissal, demotion, promotion, or resignation, are considered open records under this law. The university may not legally deny access to this information to anyone. The PIA covers not merely written information, but information in electronic form, including e-mails, web browser histories and caches, and audio recordings. The PIA allows civil and criminal penalties for state employees who do not comply with open records requests. In some cases, state institutions may legally redact information of an intimate or
embarrassing nature Section IV 33 when the public has no legitimate interest in knowing that information. However, they may not do so on their own, without a ruling from the Office of the State Attorney General.

Three of the most important requirements of this law are:

1. Anyone may request access to state governmental records.

2. Public information officers are not allowed to ask any individual why he or she wants access to public records.

3. All state government information is presumed to be public information unless it is specifically exempt, or ruled exempt by the State Attorney General.

Under state law, there is no special form that an individual must complete to make a request for public information. Requests do not have to be in writing. Any inquiry from any person that can reasonably be interpreted as a request for information is covered by the PIA. For that reason, any employer who receives a request for information must immediately inform the office of UH System Counsel and refer the person making the request to that office. Requests that are received via e-mail or fax must be forwarded immediately to the office of UH System Counsel.

Once a state employee has received a request, he or she may not delete or otherwise destroy any records that have been requested. It is important to note as well that the law does not require state employees to create new records that did not exist when the request for information was made.

**Relevant Statutes**

- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996** (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, 104th Congress, especially §264
- **Texas Public Information Act** (PIA), Texas Government Code §552

**Additional Resources**

Texas Office of the Attorney General, [Public Information Act Handbook 2014](#)

Texas Department of State Health Services. [HIPAA at DSHS](#). Last updated November 20, 2012.

**Insurance Programs**

**Insurance Eligibility**
UHD offers a variety of insurance programs to benefits-eligible employees as part of its employment and compensation package. Employees have the ability to select benefits that may be individualized to meet their needs and those of their dependents.

To be eligible, employees must be:

- employed at least one-half time (50% full-time equivalent); and
- hired in a position that does not require student status as a condition of employment.

New employees have a 60-day waiting period for medical insurance. The 60-day waiting period is waived for employees transferring directly from another state agency.

Eligible full-time employees are automatically enrolled in basic plan medical coverage for themselves on the first day of the month following the waiting period. Once applied, the State credit pays in full the premium cost for the employee’s basic plan coverage.

**Health Insurance**
A variety of insurance programs are available to University employees through the Texas Employees Group Benefits Program (GBP).

- **Full-time employees:** the state pays 100% of the employee’s medical premium and 50% of their dependent(s)’ premium(s). Employees working thirty (30) hours or more per week will be considered full-time for insurance purposes, and will receive the 100% state contribution on their medical premium and 50% contribution on their dependent(s)’ premium(s).
- **Part-time employees:** the State pays 50% of the employee’s medical premium and 25% of their dependent(s)’ premium(s). Employees working less than thirty (30) hours per week are still considered part-time for insurance purposes, and will continue to receive the same percentage rate of state contribution toward medical premiums.

Coverage must be selected by new employees within the first thirty (30) days after their hire dates and becomes effective the first day of the following month, excluding the medical insurance which becomes effective the first day of the month following a 60-day waiting period. A complete list of insurance rates may be found on the Health Insurance link on ESO’s website.

Current employees can add or make changes to their insurance plans during summer enrollment, which is usually during July and/or August of each year.
The University of Houston-Downtown offers two health plan options.

Optional coverages and flexible spending accounts do not require the 60-day waiting period as required for medical insurance. However, enrollment forms must be submitted within the first 30 days after hire date.

Opt-out credit is available to employees who choose not to enroll in medical insurance, whereby employees are eligible to receive a portion of the State funding toward the purchase of dental and Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage.

For detailed information on the plans, visit the ERS website or click on the Employment Services and Operations Benefits webpage. For detailed information on the policy and required procedures, please see PS 02.A.12, Employee Fringe Benefits Policy.

**Dental Insurance**

Eligible employees have a choice of two dental plans:

- Dental Maintenance Plan-Humana DMO
- Dental Choice Plan-Humana
- Dental Discount Plan

The Dental Maintenance Plan provides dental coverage to employees and their covered dependents through a network of participating dentists. A fee schedule and list of providers are available at Humana Dental DMO.

The Dental Choice Plan does not restrict the choice of dentists, but provides a larger benefit payment if services are obtained at a Humana participating dentist. Detailed information can be found at Humana Dental choice.

The Dental Discount Plan is not a dental plan, it is a discount plan. The discount plan provides employees with discounted prices on the usual and customary charges for dental treatment and services. They pay the pre-negotiated discounted rate at the time of services. The opt-out credit does not apply toward this plan.

**Life Insurance**

Employees enrolled in a medical plan receive $5,000 in term life insurance with $5,000 in accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Optional term life insurance can be purchased by employees up to four times their annual salaries (up to a maximum of $400,000). Employees have the option of purchasing dependent term life insurance and additional accident and dismemberment insurance. Details are provided on the Benefits webpage.
ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE
Employees may purchase up to $200,000 of Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance. Family coverage is also available as a percentage of the total value of the employee’s coverage. Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance pays if the cause of death or dismemberment is a direct result of an accident.

SHORT AND LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE – KNOWN AS THE TEXAS INCOME PROTECTION PROGRAM (TIPP)
The Short and Long Term Disability benefit provides protection from loss of income due to disability resulting from illness or accident. This benefit pays 60% to 70% of gross salary upon completion of a designated waiting period. Additional information on Short and Long Term Disability is provided in the Benefits Summary section of the ESO website.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION (PS 02.A.25)
UHD is committed to maintaining a safe working environment free of hazardous conditions for all faculty, staff, and students. However, when unavoidable incidents arise, it is important that employees suffering from a work-related occupational injury or illness receive proper medical attention, and that the proper documentation is completed and forwarded to the State Office of Risk Management (SORM) so that compensation may be paid should the employee be temporarily or permanently disabled.

Employees must report any occupational injury, illness or exposure to their immediate supervisor within 24 hours of the incident, even if there is no medical treatment or lost time. Various other documents are required to be filed and actions taken within a specified time schedule in connection with workers’ compensation incidents. Please see PS 02.A.24 for detailed information on the policy, required procedures and schedules for filing all necessary documents.

If medical treatment is required, the employee can seek treatment at any hospital emergency room. In the event of non-emergency medical treatment, the employee should seek treatment with a health care provider within the SORM Health Care Network. The SORM Health Care Network of physicians was initiated on October 1, 2011.

SHORT-TERM MEDICAL INSURANCE
The UHD Short-term Medical or Gap Insurance Program will reimburse up to $500 per month of the cost to purchase individual health coverage to cover the 60-day waiting period of the ERS group health insurance. It is the responsibility of the employee to purchase medical insurance through an individual plan or a COBRA plan from the previous employer and submit proof of coverage and payment amount directly to ESO. A written receipt of statement from the insurance company is required.
Retirement Benefits

**Teacher Retirement System**
Depending upon the employee’s position, a new employee is required to contribute to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) or Optional Retirement Program (ORP) effective with his or her date of hire in a benefits-eligible position. ORP-eligible employees will have 90 days to enroll in an ORP plan in lieu of the TRS plan. For a complete overview of both programs, click [here](#).

The Teacher Retirement System of Texas is a defined-benefits plan. Employees contribute 7.2% of their pre-tax gross salary, and the state contributes 6.8% of the employee’s gross salary to a state account to pay retirement benefits. The TRS contribution percentage is set by the State Legislature and may change without prior notice. Rights to benefits are vested upon completion of five (5) years of creditable service. Other benefits included in the TRS program for the active member are life insurance equal to twice an employee’s annual salary to a maximum of $80,000 and disability income benefits. For more information, log on to the [TRS](#) website.

**Optional Retirement Program**
The Optional Retirement Program is a defined-contribution plan and is available to full-time (100% FTE) benefits-eligible faculty members and certain professional/administrative staff under the provisions of state laws. Employees contribute 6.65% of their pre-tax gross salary, and the state contributes 6.6% of the employee’s gross salary to the ORP account. Employees who were in the Optional Retirement Program prior to September 1, 1994, are grandfathered at an 8.5% state contribution amount. Contributions made by the University to the ORP are vested after one year and one day of participation in the program. Click [here](#) to view a list of ORP carriers.

**403(b) Supplemental Program**
The 403(b) program is offered to all benefits-eligible employees. Investments are through life insurance and mutual fund companies licensed to do business in the State of Texas and approved by the University of Houston System. Employees may select from a traditional 403(b), in which all contributions are excluded from taxable income until distributed from the account to the employee, or a Roth 403(b), which is an after-tax investment program allowing tax-free benefits at retirement. The University does not contribute to the employee’s 403(b) Supplemental Program.

**State of Texas Deferred Compensation Plan (457 Plan)**
Employees may enroll in a deferred compensation plan, also known as the [TexaSaver 457 Plan](#). This plan is a supplemental retirement program that allows the employee to defer a portion of his or her income and deposit it with a company approved by the State of Texas. Benefits paid to the employee or beneficiary equal the value of the deferred compensation account. The state’s liability will never exceed the value of that account, and the state will not be liable for any losses resulting from depreciation or a loss in value of the account.
**Maximum Contribution Limits**

Employees may contribute to both 403(b) and 457 plans. However, there are limits set each year by the IRS for voluntary contributions to the 403(b) supplemental plan and the 457 deferred compensation.

For calendar year 2018, both plans have a maximum deferral amount of $18,500. Employees age 50 and over who are trying to catch up may defer an additional $6,000. The combined contribution limit for all qualified plan contributions is $55,000, and the annual salary limit is $275,000.

**Social Security**

The University of Houston-Downtown complies with the relevant provisions of the federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). All employees are required to participate in the federal Social Security program as a condition of employment. Under the current limits established by federal regulations, 7.65% of each employee’s paycheck is withheld to pay for social security, and the State of Texas matches an additional 7.65%. For calendar years 2011 and 2012, all employees receive a 0.2% break in the required Social Security tax. The rates increased to the full 7.65% in 2013.
Vacation and Holidays

Vacation (SAM 02.D.01)

UHD benefits-eligible employees earn paid vacation each year. Vacation leave accrual rates are based on years of total state service and are the same for exempt and non-exempt employees. Part-time employees whose FTE is at least 50% are also eligible to accrue vacation time; the accrual rate is proportionate to the number of actual hours worked.

Although vacation hours are earned during the first six months of employment, employees are not eligible to take vacation until they have completed six months of continuous employment with the State of Texas. Staff employees with previous State of Texas service are entitled to receive previously earned vacation service credits. Prior state service must be confirmed by ESO staff.

A vacation accrual schedule is provided in the Benefits section of the Employment Services and Operations website.

Paid Holidays (SAM 02.E.03)

An annual holiday schedule is established by the University of Houston System Board of Regents based on the recommendation from the component university presidents within the UH System. The state authorizes certain legal holidays but provides that educational institutions may adjust the actual observance of these holidays to permit the most efficient operation. A schedule of paid holidays can be found on the ESO website.

Benefits-eligible staff employees, regardless of length of service, are entitled to paid holidays as authorized by state law. Part-time (less than 50% FTE), temporary (less than 4.5 months), and student employees are not eligible for holiday pay.

Paid holiday provisions include:

- Workdays before and after scheduled holidays. In order to qualify for holiday pay, an eligible employee must work the regularly scheduled workday immediately before a holiday period or be in a paid leave status for such scheduled workday.
- Work on a scheduled holiday. Eligible employees who are required to work on a scheduled holiday will be entitled to equivalent time off with pay to be taken during the 12-month period following the end of the workweek in which the holiday occurred or compensatory time pay in lieu of equivalent time off.
- Holiday entitlement for new hires. If an eligible employee begins work on the first workday of the month, the employee is entitled to be paid for a UHS-designated holiday that occurs before the first workday if the holiday occurs during the same month and does not fall on a Saturday or a Sunday.
• Holiday entitlements for terminating employees. An eligible employee who terminates employment on the last workday of the month is entitled to be paid for a UHS-designated holiday that occurs after the last workday if the holiday falls within that month and does not fall on a Saturday or Sunday.

• Holiday entitlements for employees working non-standard schedules. An eligible employee who normally works on a schedule other than 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, is entitled to paid holiday time off that is equivalent to the holiday time that employees who work normal schedules receive and that is proportionate to the percentage of full-time effort.

• Holiday entitlements for employees in approved leave status. When a UHS-designated holiday occurs during an eligible employee’s approved vacation period or sick leave, the holiday is not counted as a day of vacation or sick leave. However, when a System-designated holiday occurs during an employee’s approved unpaid leave of absence, the employee is not entitled to holiday pay.

• Optional holidays. A UHD employee is entitled to observe Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Good Friday and/or Cesar Chavez Day by using accrued vacation leave or leave without pay if all accrued vacation leave has been exhausted, or by working on a holiday in which a skeleton workforce is required by UHD. An employee who wishes to observe these optional holidays must provide reasonable advance written notice to his or her supervisor.

• Premium pay exclusions. Holiday pay is calculated at the straight rate and does not include shift differential or other premium pay.
Employee Benefits

**College Release Time (PS 02.B.12)**

The State Employees Training Act (SETA) authorizes state employers to use public funds to provide training and education to their employees. The College Release Program is available during regular semesters (fall and spring) only. Classroom time and travel to and from class may not exceed three hours per week.

The College Release Program (CRP) at UHD is an educational benefit for full-time, benefits-eligible staff who have completed their initial probationary period. If eligible, staff may receive up to three (3) hours per week release time from normal work duties to take credit-bearing courses toward a degree plan at UHD or another accredited institution of higher learning. This release time may be treated as hours worked for overtime pay where applicable. Supervisory approval is needed before registering for classes by completing the College Release Program form and submitting it to ESO.

Participants in the program must reflect College Release Time on their absence request.

**Staff Education Reimbursement (PS 02.B.12)**

Full-time, benefits-eligible, non-probationary UHD staff may be eligible to receive a staff education reimbursement, subject to availability of funds, on a first come, first served basis, provided they are: employed at UHD in a non-probationary capacity prior to the beginning of the semester for which they are seeking reimbursement; employed in a full-time (40 hours per week), benefits-eligible position; enrolled at an accredited institution of higher learning in credit-bearing classes leading to a degree, or professional development courses applicable to their job; employed at UHD through the official close of the term (as shown on the official semester class schedule) for a specific semester; earned a “C” grade or better in the specified semester; and have no prior financial obligations to UHD or other components of the UH System.

A College Release Program and Staff Education Reimbursement Request form must be completed by the employee, approved by the supervisor and submitted to ESO, along with a copy of his/her class registration and fee statement, before the semester for which the employee seeks reimbursement begins.

Employees who did not earn a “C” or better for the specified semester, or who dropped/withdrew from classes approved under the College Release Program, will not be eligible for College Release Time nor Staff Education Reimbursement the following semester.

**Fitness Release Time (PS 02.B.13)**

Full-time, non-probationary, benefits-eligible staff who are approved to participate in the Employee Wellness Program may be eligible to receive up to thirty (30) minutes, three times per week of Fitness Release Time to participate in a fitness activity offered in University of Houston-Downtown’s Student Life Center. Staff employees must have completed their probationary period before requesting authorization.
for Fitness Release Time. FRT is counted as hours worked but not for the purposes of overtime pay or compensatory time, where applicable.

FRT may not interfere with the employee’s duties or the department’s responsibilities. Supervisory approval is required before the employee may begin this program.

FRT cannot be requested in conjunction with the College Release Program. To request fitness release time, employees must complete the FRT Application for approval by supervisor, and the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) form, and submit both forms to the Benefits Office at ESO.

Employees must request the time off for FRT for each thirty (30) minute session via the Time Reporting and Absence Management (TRAM) system.

**Wellness Leave Incentive Program**

The UHD Employee Wellness Program strives to increase the well-being and productivity of all employees, through enhancement of all aspects of health. The program seeks to increase awareness of positive health behaviors, motivate employees to voluntarily adopt healthier behaviors, provide opportunities and a supportive environment to foster positive lifestyle changes, and reduce or eliminate problems affecting employee health and work productivity.

The program provides a wellness leave incentive of up to eight (8) hours paid leave to employees who complete an online health risk assessment (HRA) and receive an annual comprehensive physical exam.

The wellness leave time of eight (8) hours per year is available to full-time, benefits-eligible staff and may be used for any purpose.

To request up to eight (8) hours of Wellness Leave Time, the employee must complete the Health Risk Assessment and Physician Certification of Routine Physical Exam Affidavit, and follow other required procedures shown in PS 02.B.13, Employee Wellness Program.

**Employee Assistance Program**

UHD partners with the University of Texas Employee Assistance Program (UTEAP) to provide employees possible solutions to complex problems affecting their work and personal lives.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential counseling and referral program available to employees and their families. Whether employees want to resolve a stressful work situation, find legal resources, or get advice about a financial concern, EAP can help. This service is offered at no cost to
employees. Visit the UTEAP website for more information, additional available resources, and other self-help tools.

**Tex-Flex Reimbursement Accounts**
The Tex-Flex Program offers two types of reimbursement accounts; the Health Care Reimbursement Account (HCRA) and the Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCRA). A reimbursement account allows the employee to set aside tax-free money to cover certain eligible expenses. Money set aside in these accounts can only be spent on eligible expenses incurred during the plan year (September through August).
SICK LEAVE (SAM 02.D.01) (PS 02.A.01)

UHD full-time employees earn eight hours of sick leave per month of employment. Part-time employees earn pro-rated sick leave hours based on the percentage of time worked. There is no maximum sick leave accrual; however, there is no payment for unused sick leave upon termination of employment.

Sick leave with pay may be taken when sickness, injury, or pregnancy and confinement prevent the employee’s performance of duty or when the employee is needed to care for and assist a member of the employee’s immediate family who is actually ill.

For purposes relating to regular sick leave, immediate family is defined as those individuals who reside in the same household and are related by kinship, adoption, or marriage, as well as foster children certified by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Minor children of the employee, whether or not living in the same household, will be considered immediate family for purposes of regular sick leave. An employee’s use of sick leave for family members not residing in that employee’s household is strictly limited to the time necessary to provide care and assistance to a spouse, child, or parent of the employee who needs such assistance as a direct result of a documented medical condition. For the purpose of this policy, parent does not cover parents-in-law of the employee.

As per PS 02.A.01, all employees are required to call their supervisors by no later than one hour following the scheduled starting time to report absence. If the employee is unable to reach the supervisor directly, the employee is required to report to someone within the department and then make personal contact with the supervisor as soon as reasonably possible.

*Immediately upon returning to work, employees must submit an absence request in TRAM for review and approval by their supervisor.*

After a period of more than three consecutive days of sick leave, a doctor’s release to return to regular duty must be submitted by the employee to the supervisor before the employee may return to work and be eligible for accumulated sick leave with pay. Additional information on sick leave may be found in the Benefits section of the ESO website and in SAM 02.D.01.

In the unfortunate event that an employee dies, the beneficiary or estate of the deceased employee is entitled to payment of one-half of unused accrued sick leave, or 336 hours of sick leave, whichever is less, provided the employee had continuous state employment for at least six months at the time of death.

EXTENDED SICK LEAVE (SAM 02.D.01)

Long service employees in good standing who have become disabled may apply for extended sick leave to provide continued income during the waiting period before long-term disability benefits begin. An
employee is eligible to apply for extended sick leave even if she/he is not enrolled in the group long-term disability program. However, extended sick leave cannot exceed 90 calendar days and is subject to approval by the University president.

**Sick Leave Pool (SAM 02.D.02)**

Any benefits-eligible employee who has exhausted all earned leave may apply for benefits from the sick leave pool in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury to the employee or employee’s immediate family. The illness/injury must require the services of a licensed physician for a prolonged period of time and last in excess of thirty (30) days.

The maximum amount of sick leave pool pay that may be granted is ninety (90) days. Employees who meet these criteria may request time from the pool by completing a Sick Leave Pool Withdrawal Request and submitting it to the Benefits Office.

Hours in the sick leave pool are donated by employees from their own personal sick leave balance. All benefits-eligible employees may voluntarily transfer sick leave hours from their accrued balance to the sick leave pool. There is no limit on the number of hours an employee may donate to the sick leave pool. Employees who are retiring or have resigned are encouraged to donate their sick leave balance to the sick leave pool.

**Family and Medical Leave (PS 02.A.11)**

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 requires that an employer grant up to 12 weeks (26 weeks for military caregiver leave) of job-protected leave to eligible employees for certain qualified medical conditions. The amount of leave granted is based on what is verified as medically necessary on the required physician statement. According to State of Texas rules, Family and Medical Leave is an unpaid leave.

Family and Medical Leave is provided to eligible employees for any of the following qualifying events or conditions:

- The birth or care of a child;
- The placement of a child for adoption or foster care of the child by the employee;
- The serious health condition of a child, parent, or
- Spouse of the employee; and,
- A serious health condition of the employee.

An eligible employee is defined as having at least 12 calendar months of service with the State of Texas prior to the date of leave and having worked at least 1,250 hours for the State of Texas in the 12 months immediately preceding commencement of the leave. Employees must use all applicable accrued paid leave balances at the beginning of the leave, including sick and vacation leave, before taking unpaid family
and medical leave. During an approved leave, the employee is eligible to receive the state contribution toward the cost of medical insurance.

Also, there are two Military Leaves that fall under FMLA. These are:

- **Active Duty Leave**: Up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave may be granted because of any qualifying exigency for a spouse, child, or parent of a service member who is on active duty, or notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces (including the Reserves and National Guard, in support of a contingency operation); and,

- **Military Caregiver Leave**: Up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period may be granted to an employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a service member undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, who is otherwise in outpatient status, or who is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious illness.

**Parental Leave (PS 02.A.27)**

Employees with less than twelve (12) months of state service or who have worked less than 1,250 hours in the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of leave are eligible to take a parental leave of absence for the birth of a child to the employee or spouse, and care of the newborn; or the placement of a child under three (3) years of age with an employee in connection with the adoption or state-approved foster care of the child. The parental leave is not to exceed 12 weeks, provided that the employee utilizes all available paid vacation and sick leave. Employees who meet the eligibility requirements for Family and Medical Leave are entitled to benefits under the University’s Family and Medical Leave policy. If no paid leave is available, then the parental leave will be designated as unpaid leave.

Requests for parental leave must be submitted on the Family and Medical Leave form and the Parental Leave Request, along with proper documentation. The employee is responsible for submitting both forms to the Benefits Department of ESO at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the leave, where possible.

Sick Leave Pool hours may be available in those cases where severe illness or prolonged complications due to pregnancy or childbirth arise with respect to either the mother or the child.

Please see PS 02.A.27 for detailed information regarding the policy and required procedures for Parental Leave requests, including the requirements for documentation when the employee returns to work.

**Foster Parent Leave (PS 02.A.09)**

An employee who is a foster parent to a child under the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is entitled to a leave of absence with full pay to attend staff meetings regarding the child held by the DFPS, or to attend admission, review and dismissal (ARD) meetings held by a school district regarding the child. An employee requesting foster parent leave must obtain approval before taking time off. This leave must be coded as emergency leave on the Leave Absence Request.
Military Leave (PS 02.A.09)

Military leave may be granted to employees to accommodate authorized training or duty for the State’s military forces and members of any reserve branch of the U.S. Armed Forces; activation of the State’s National Guard by the Governor; or national emergency activation for members of a reserve branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

An employee who is called to active duty or authorized military training is entitled to a leave of absence of fifteen (15) business days in each federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). This leave must be coded as Military Leave on the Leave Absence Request.

Requests for military leave must be submitted in writing to the employee’s supervisor as far in advance as possible. A copy of the official military orders must accompany the request. Please see PS 02.A.09, Miscellaneous Leave Policy, for additional information regarding other available benefits under the Military Leave Policy and required procedures to be followed.

Voluntary Firefighter, EMT Leave (PS 02.A.09)

An employee attending volunteer firefighter and emergency medical services training is entitled to paid leave not to exceed five working days each fiscal year. The employee shall submit appropriate documentation of the training to his/her supervisor in advance. Upon returning to work, the employee must submit documentation showing that the training was successfully completed. This leave must be coded as other paid duty leave on the Leave Absence Request.

Jury and Witness Duty Leave (PS 02.A.09)

Employees called to jury duty should submit appropriate documentation of the jury/court duty to their supervisors in advance. No deduction shall be made from the salary or wages of a UHD regular staff employee for jury duty. The employee is not required to account to the University for any fee or compensation received for jury duty. Upon return to work, the employee must submit a letter or certificate from the court showing the length of service as juror to his or her supervisor. This leave must be coded as jury duty leave on the Leave Absence Request.

An employee who is asked to serve as an uncompensated witness, but who is not appearing in an official capacity on behalf of the University, must request vacation, compensatory time or unpaid leave to perform this service. The employee shall provide the supervisor with a copy of the subpoena or summons and shall promptly and accurately record the use of leave. However, time away for this type of service must be with the supervisor’s prior approval, and normal request procedures for use of compensatory time, leave without pay, or vacation apply. This leave must be coded accordingly on the Leave Absence Request.
**Voting Leave (PS 02.A.09)**

An employee must be allowed sufficient time off to vote in each national, state, and local election. Employees requesting leave to vote must obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor before taking time off from work. This leave must be coded as other paid duty leave on the Leave Absence Request.

**Bereavement Leave (PS 02.A.09)**

Bereavement leave may be granted by the immediate supervisor in the event of the death of an employee’s spouse, or the employee’s or employee’s spouse’s children, grandchildren, parents, brothers, sisters, or grandparents.

Leave may also be granted for the employee to take care of personal responsibilities surrounding a death. Request for bereavement leave shall be submitted to the employee’s supervisor as early as possible, identifying the relationship of the deceased to the employee. Upon return from leave, the employee may be asked to furnish acceptable documentation to his/her supervisor. The amount of time allowed will depend on the circumstances and is at the discretion of the supervisor, not to exceed five (5) days. This leave must be coded as bereavement leave on the Leave Absence Request.

**Emergency Leave (PS 02.A.09)**

Emergency Leave will be granted in the event of an emergency closing of the campus or a portion of the campus declared by the President or his/her designee. The President or his/her designee may authorize emergency leave in other circumstances when the employee shows good cause for such leave.

In the event that an employee should require emergency leave for other circumstances not relating to a University closure, the employee will need to request approval from the President through ESO. This leave must be coded as emergency leave on the Leave Absence Request.

**Parent-Teacher Conference Leave (PS 02.A.09)**

An employee may use up to eight hours of sick leave each fiscal year to attend parent-teacher conference sessions for the employee’s children who are in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. This leave is defined in the Vacation and Sick Leave Policy, SAM 02.D.01

Employees requesting parent-teacher leave must obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor before taking time off from work. This leave must be coded as sick leave on the Leave Absence Request.
**ASSISTANCE DOG TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES LEAVE (PS 02.A.09)**

An employee with a disability as defined by Texas Human Resources Code, Section 121.002, may be granted paid leave not to exceed ten (10) days in a fiscal year to attend training necessary to acquaint the employee with an assistance dog to be used by the employee.

Employees requesting leave to attend training for an assistance dog must obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor before taking time off from work. This leave must be coded as other paid leave on the Leave Absence Request.

**BLOOD DONATION LEAVE (PS 02.A.09)**

Employees must be allowed time, without a deduction in salary or accrued leave, to donate blood. Employees may receive time off to donate blood not more than four (4) times in a fiscal year.

An employee requesting time off to donate blood must obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor before taking time off from work. Upon returning to work, the employee shall provide his/her supervisor with proof that the employee donated blood during the time off. This leave must be coded as blood donation on the Leave Absence Request.

**BONE MARROW AND ORGAN DONATION LEAVE (PS 02.A.09)**

UHD employees are entitled to a leave of absence with pay for the time necessary to serve as bone marrow or organ donor. Bone marrow donors are allowed a maximum of five (5) working days in a fiscal year, and organ donors are provided with a maximum of thirty (30) working days in a fiscal year.

An employee requesting leave of absence for bone marrow or organ donor must obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor, and complete the required paperwork through ESO before taking time off. Prior to returning to work, the employee must submit to ESO a doctor’s statement giving the employee full release to return to work. This leave must be coded as bone marrow leave on the Leave Absence Request.

**RED CROSS DISASTER SERVICE VOLUNTEER LEAVE (SAM 02.D.04 – Section 4.5)**

Employees who are certified disaster service volunteers of the American Red Cross or who are in training to become volunteers, may be granted paid leave, not to exceed ten (10) days each fiscal year, to participate in specialized disaster relief services for the American Red Cross. Employees must have supervisor authorization, formal request of the American Red Cross, and approval of the Governor.

The division of emergency management in the Governor’s Office shall coordinate the establishment and maintenance of a list of eligible employees. This leave must be coded as other paid leave on the Leave Absence Request.
**Leave Without Pay (PS 02.A.13)**

Extended leave of absence without pay may be granted to benefits-eligible UHD employees for purposes of education or research and writing, in order to enhance the employee’s contribution to the institution. Also, benefits-eligible employees requesting leave for personal reasons may qualify depending upon the circumstances.

Approval also will be contingent upon the department’s ability to reschedule the workload satisfactorily. Such leaves are the prerogative of the University and are not an inherent right of employment.

Leaves without pay shall be limited in duration to twelve months and shall have specific effective dates. As required by state law, all accrued paid leave entitlements, with the exception of Workers’ Compensation, must be exhausted prior to taking leave without pay. Group insurance may be continued by advance monthly payment of full premiums by the employee, paid directly to ERS. Funds cannot be withdrawn from Teacher Retirement or Optional Retirement programs during the leave. Tax deferred annuities become inactive. Seniority is not interrupted, but pay increases and associated benefits are.

Employees unable to return to work on the specified return date must provide documentation for an extension which is acceptable to the appropriate administrative officer. This documentation should be submitted prior to the expiration of the original leave, or as soon as possible thereafter. Failure to comply with the conditions of the leave will result in forfeiting the privileges of the leave, and may be considered a voluntary resignation of employment.

The leave request should be submitted in advance allowing sufficient time for administrative consideration and/or the appointment of temporary replacement, if necessary. Employees approved for leave of absence without pay should contact ESO immediately to discuss benefits during leave. Employees approved for extended leave of absence without pay (4.5 months or longer) must complete the separation clearance process as outlined in PS 02.A.22, Termination Clearance Guidelines.

Please see PS 02.A.13, Leave without Pay Policy, for detailed information regarding the policy and required procedures to be followed.

**Amateur Radio Operator Leave (PS 02.A.09)**

An employee with an amateur radio station license issued by the Federal Communications Commission may be granted leave not to exceed ten (10) days each fiscal year to participate in specialized disaster relief services.

The division of emergency management in the Governor’s Office is responsible for coordinating the establishment and maintenance of a list of employees eligible for amateur radio operator leave. The Amateur Radio Operator Leave must be authorized by the employee’s supervisor and the Office of the Governor. This leave must be coded as other paid leave on the Leave Absence Request.
COURT APPointed SPECIAL ADVocates VOLUnTEER LEAVE (PS 02.A.09)

Employees may be granted leave not to exceed five (5) hours each month to participate in mandatory training or perform volunteer services for Court Appointed Special Advocates.

An employee requesting time off to participate in mandatory training or to perform volunteer services for Court Appointed Special Advocates must obtain prior approval from his/her supervisor before taking time off. This leave must be coded as other paid leave on the Leave Absence Request.
Time and Effort Reporting – Timesheets

The TRAM (Time Reporting and Absence Management) system is an automated PeopleSoft application for capturing and processing time worked and paid or unpaid leaves. TRAM is comprised of two functions: Time Reporting, which is the automated time reporting and on-line timesheet, and Absence Management, the on-line Leave Request Form. The benefits of TRAM include:

- Decreases paper flow
- Elimination of paper timesheets
- Elimination of manual keying of time worked and leave taken. (TRAM reporting feeds hours worked and leave reported directly to an online timesheet that updates the pay system once approved.)
- Decreased chances of time-reporting errors
- Online validation of reported hours worked and reported leave 24 hours a day.
- Online history of leave requests and time worked available to employees and managers

Non-exempt employees, including regular benefits-eligible staff, student employees and temporary staff paid hourly through payroll must record hours worked by clocking in and out via a Web clock in P.A.S.S. or a biometric time collection device (TCD) to which they are assigned by the Payroll Department. All benefits eligible employees must request leave through the completion on an online electronic leave request form. Since the time reporting process is automated, employees have the ability to view their timesheets in P.A.S.S. but may not make changes to them. The Absence Management process allows employees to request leave up to ninety (90) days in advance.
**People Advantage Self Service (PASS)**

People Advantage Self Service (PASS) allows employees access to manage personal information online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in real time. Employees can make changes or updates to personal information or W-4s, and view/print pay history, earning statements, and benefits information. Employees can request changes in name, marital status, and educational level online, but appropriate documentation is required before these changes are approved. To learn more about PASS advantages and how it works, click the PASS webpage.

**W-2 Tax Forms**

The University offers employees options for receiving W-2 tax forms. An employee may choose to receive his/her W-2 form in the mail or electronically through PASS.

Electronic W-2 consent applies only for the January 31 immediately following the date of the consent. Employees who choose to print their W-2 through PASS should complete the electronic W-2 Consent Agreement in PASS each year. Employees will automatically receive a copy of the current W-2 form in the mail if the consent is not submitted.

Additional information on W-2 electronic printouts and withdrawal of consent is provided at the PASS webpage.

**Payroll Deductions**

By law, UHD is required to make certain deductions from an employee’s pay. These include the following:

- Federal Income Tax (FIT);
- Social Security (FICA);
- Medicare Tax;
- TRS or ORP retirement program (if required, based on employment status); and,
- Court-ordered garnishments (child support and IRS levy).

Employees have the option of requesting additional deductions, such as:

- Health insurance;
- Voluntary life, accident, and disability insurance;
- Dental insurance;
- State Employee Charitable Campaign; and,
- Annuities.

**Pay Days**

UHD employees are paid either biweekly or monthly depending on their job classifications. Employees in exempt positions are paid monthly on the first working day of the month. Employees in non-exempt
positions are paid biweekly on alternate Fridays. If a Friday falls on a holiday, the pay day will be the last workday immediately preceding the holiday. Special provisions may apply during Christmas holidays.

**DIRECT PAYROLL DEPOSIT**

In order to reduce the cost of processing paper checks and making progress in efforts to achieve a paperless environment, UHD requires all employees to have their pay deposited electronically to their personal bank account. Employees may sign up for direct deposit by logging on to PASS or completing a Direct Deposit Authorization Form and submitting it to the Payroll Department, located in 910-S.

There is no cost to employees for direct deposit and many banks offer free checking services to individuals who are paid via direct deposit. Direct deposit assures the employee will receive their pay timely, especially in the event of a disaster such as a hurricane, and payments can be divided automatically among designated employee accounts.

Employees who do not want to enroll in direct deposit may have their pay deposited through the UHS PayCard program, sponsored by Bank of America. This is a Visa-branded card that will be issued in the employee’s name. The PayCard will be loaded by electronic funds transfer with the amount of the employee’s pay due on a standard pay day.
Compensation/Performance Appraisals

Staff Pay Plan
It is the University’s policy and objective to establish and maintain a salary administration program that is structured to be externally competitive, internally equitable and fairly administered. In order to provide fair and competitive compensation, UHD utilizes a competitive approach by analyzing market salary data from within and outside the university environment, as available. External competitiveness of UHD salaries for jobs is determined by comparing its pay rates and practices with local, regional, and national market survey data reflecting salaries paid to positions by other comparable employers. Factors such as recruiting locale, availability of relevant market data, and market demand for position typically determine source of market data.

The basic compensation objectives of the University’s pay plan are to assist in attracting, retaining, and motivating qualified staff employees through the annual review of salaries and the salary adjustment process. This mechanism is based primarily on the University’s goal of providing career incentives, motivating top performance, and insuring equity in all positions.

In this connection, UHD has established and maintains salary ranges for all positions that fairly reflects the value of each position, relative to all other positions at UHD. The University shall also conduct a pay grade structure review every five years.

Overtime
UHD managers should organize and schedule departmental activities so that overtime work is only assigned when it is absolutely necessary. The University complies with all the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. All overtime must be approved verbally in advance by the supervisor. The supervisor completes the Advance Authorization for Overtime Form and forwards it to the appropriate Vice President for approval. A copy of the approved form is sent to the Vice President for Administration and Finance. Employees may not make unauthorized decisions to work overtime.

In certain circumstances, such as emergencies or peak load periods, non-exempt employees may be asked to work overtime and will be compensated for overtime work in accordance with the provisions of PS 02.A.01, Policy on Working Hours and SAM 02.B.02, Overtime and Compensatory Time. Exempt employees are paid a monthly salary for all hours worked during the month in performance of normal duties, as opposed to being paid for each hour that is worked per week. It is commonplace for an exempt employee to exceed 40 hours in a normal workweek, and in such cases, the exempt employee is not entitled to overtime.
No professional or administrative (exempt) employee is eligible for additional compensation for work that is part of normal job responsibilities. See PS 02.A.05, Additional Compensation for Faculty and Professional/ Administrative Employees, for more information.

**NEW EMPLOYEES**

Staff new to UHD and whose knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience meet the minimum requirements of the job should be hired at the minimum of the grade for the job for which they are being hired. An employee may be hired at a higher starting salary based on years of directly related and documented work experience and/or additional education that may be “value added” to the job. However, the starting salary may not exceed the midpoint for the expected position or exceed that of an incumbent in the same position within the same department.

Any exception for a new employee’s salary must be based on the recommendation of the hiring manager and department head and approval by the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations. The [Pay Grade Structure](#) is available on the ESO website.

**PROMOTION**

A promotion is a change in duty assignment of an employee from one pay grade to a higher pay grade within the same pay grade structure. When an employee moves to a different pay grade structure (i.e., from staff pay structure to IT pay structure), the move will be considered a promotion when the new grade has a higher midpoint. To be considered for a promotion, an employee must meet the minimum qualifications for the higher classification.

Any UHD employee appointed to a new position in a job at a higher grade may receive a pay increase not to exceed 20% of their current base pay. The resulting salary must fall between the minimum and midpoint of the new grade, and may not exceed the salary of an incumbent in the same position within the same department. In isolated situations, if an individual’s base pay is at a higher level than rates paid to incumbents, or above maximum of the new grade, an individual may be granted a promotion with no change in pay. All promotions must be approved in advance by ESO.

**DEMOTION**

Demotion is a change in duty assignment from a job in one classification to a job in another classification in a lower pay grade. Such a demotion may involve a decrease in compensation.

A demotion shall result in a reduction in the employee’s base pay when an administrative action is taken against the employee for poor performance in the current position, or when a job is evaluated as a result of management initiative and reassigned to a lower job classification and pay grade.

Any UHD employee demoted to a new position at a lower grade shall receive a pay reduction not to exceed 20% of their current base pay. All demotions must be approved in advance by ESO.
**TRANSFER**

A lateral transfer is the movement of an employee to a position with the same pay grade. If moving to a different pay grade structure (i.e., from staff pay structure to IT pay structure), the move will be considered a lateral transfer when the new grade has a comparable midpoint.

Typically, there is no change in pay associated with a lateral transfer. Hiring managers who believe circumstances warrant additional compensation above that which is outlined may seek review and approval for an exception to the policy from the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations.

**RECLASSIFICATION**

A reclassification occurs when a job is placed in a different pay grade because a job evaluation indicates the major duties and responsibilities have increased significantly. The job’s title and/or pay grade may change. If a salary increase is in order, the resulting salary shall fall between the minimum and midpoint of the new grade, and may not exceed the salary of an incumbent in the same position within the same department, unless an exception is granted approval by the Compensation Unit of a request from the hiring manager outlining how the job candidate’s knowledge and experience in the job-related field, and/or education exceeds the incumbent’s. In order to request that a position be reclassified, a Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) and a Position Request (PR) should be completed and submitted to ESO for evaluation and review.

When an employee’s position is reclassified to a lower grade because a re-evaluation indicates reduced duties (e.g., due to a program cutback), a salary adjustment may occur to ensure compliance with UHD’s compensation plan. In these circumstances, if the current employee’s pay is above the new maximum, the employee’s pay will be “red-lined” and all increases, with the exception of state-mandated increases, will be withheld until the compensation level is less than the new maximum.

**ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR NON-FACULTY EXEMPT EMPLOYEES (PS 02.A.05)**

The respective dean or director and the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost must approve in advance extra compensation to professional or administrative employees (exempt staff) assigned to teach credit courses not included in their job descriptions. The department requesting additional compensation must submit a Request for Additional Compensation form prior to the employee performing the additional assignment. Exempt staff approved to teach credit courses outside their normal working hours will be compensated at the rate for adjunct lecturers, but may not receive additional compensation for any teaching done during their normal working hours. Exempt staff may teach a maximum of two (2) classes outside their normal working hours.

Other University activities performed outside the normal work day may be compensated if the activities are clearly outside the employee’s job description. No exempt staff member is eligible for additional compensation for work that is part of his or her normal job responsibility. Please see PS 02.A.05 for detailed policy and required procedures.
**HAZARDOUS DUTY PAY**

In accordance with the Texas Government Code, Section 659.301, all commissioned peace officers of the University of Houston-Downtown who are certified as law enforcement officers are entitled to hazardous duty pay upon completion of 12 months of State of Texas service in a qualifying hazardous duty position. Commissioned peace officers include the Police Chief, Assistant Police Chief, Lieutenants, Sergeants, Corporals and Police Officers. Commissioned peace officers do not include guards, communication specialists, and records specialists, clerical or other administrative personnel.

All eligible law enforcement officers receive hazardous duty pay at the rate of pay in accordance with the statute for each year of service with the State of Texas in a hazardous duty position. Increments in pay accrue each year after one full year of service at the University.

Prior service in a hazardous duty position within the State shall count toward service credit. Employees must provide the University ESO Department with verification of such service. Additional information regarding the policy and required procedures for hazardous duty pay may be found in SAM 02.B.08. Questions about hazardous duty pay should be directed to ESO at 713-221-8060.

**LONGEVITY PAY**

All regular full-time employees, with the exception of faculty and commissioned peace officers, who have a minimum of two years of service with the State of Texas are entitled to longevity pay at a rate of $20.00 per month for every two years of service up to and including 42 years of service, for a maximum of $420 per month. Longevity pay commences the month following the second year of service anniversary date unless the anniversary date falls on the first day of the month. If the anniversary date occurs on the first day of the month, then longevity pay commences that month. Employees must inform ESO of other state of Texas services in order to adjust leave date.

The present schedule for longevity pay is located on the ESO website.

**ON-CALL, CALL-OUT-TIME, OFF-THE-CLOCK**

The time an employee is required to be on-call by telephone, beeper, or other electronic device and available to return to the work site may be compensable. On-call duty restricts the employee from traveling outside the range of the electronic device, provided the range includes the location of the employee’s residence and surrounding area. The employee must be provided a reasonable amount of time to respond to the call depending on the distance between the employee’s residence and the work site.

Call-out time occurs when an employee is called out to the work site after normal working hours or on a non-workday. The time the employee is at the work site is compensable time. The employee will be paid for a minimum of three hours if the actual hours worked are less than three. Travel time to the work site is not compensable.
Employees are considered off-the-clock for periods of time that are over thirty (30) minutes when the employee is relieved from all duties and free to leave the University’s premises. Such time is not compensable.

**TRAVEL TIME**

UHD recognizes that business travel is essential to its operation. Employees who are required to perform official duties of the university position held must follow the policies and procedures of the university to ensure that all business travel is conducted in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 55.03, Travel Reimbursement, SAM 03.A.03, Business Travel, Texas Government Code, Chapter 660, and UHD PS 01.A.08, Travel Policy.

Employees travelling on official university business that involves any university source of funding must obtain advanced approval by all appropriate levels of administrators prior to beginning the trip. The required approval is documented by the completion and submission of a UHD Travel Request Form. The purpose of the trip must be for official university business.

UHD employees must follow the required procedures set forth in PS 01.A.08, Travel Policy, including the submission and approval of the Travel Request Form and the Travel Voucher Form for reimbursement of travel expenses. Failure to comply with the Travel Policy may result in an employee being unable to recover travel expenses.

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS**

As mandated by PS 02.B.06, all non-probationary UHD staff employees shall participate in the annual performance appraisal process. Performance appraisals shall be completed for all probationary staff employees one month prior to completion of the probationary period. Staff performance appraisals provide an opportunity for communication between supervisors and employees to discuss expectations, goals, and objectives of job performance and how well these are being met. They serve to highlight employees’ strengths and areas that require improvement. They also provide the tools for establishing appropriate goals and objectives to achieve job gratification, personal growth, and satisfactory job performance. Performance appraisal documents may be a factor in making personnel decisions including, but not limited to, continued employment, training needs, merit pay increases, promotions, transfers, initiation of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), or terminations.

An interactive web-based performance appraisal system is used to evaluate the job performance of UHD staff. The e-Appraisal system has a rating scale of 1 to 4 for regular staff, and a rating scale of 1 to 3 for administrative staff.

All benefits-eligible staff employees participating in the staff performance appraisal process must complete a Self-Appraisal Form, as prompted by e-Appraisal. The employee’s manager then completes the employee’s appraisal and reviews the employee’s self-appraisal before submitting the employee’s performance appraisal to the second line manager. The second line manager reviews the appraisal, and
if he/she approves, signs off and returns the appraisal to the first manager who meets with the employee to discuss the appraisal. If there are any questionable issues resulting from the appraisal, the manager meets with ESO for further review and discussion of the matter before final closure with the employee.

**Performance Improvement Plan**

Employees whose performance appraisal overall score is less than “2”, or who have had critical deficiencies in performance and/or behavior shall be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

- ESO shall be responsible for initiating the PIP process in collaboration with the employee’s manager once these employees have been identified at the completion of the performance appraisal cycle.
- This process requires a commitment to improvement. Failure to achieve the expected improvements will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Once the plan has been implemented, supervisors should have ongoing dialogues (weekly or biweekly) with the employee until expectations are at an acceptable level of performance.
- The Performance Improvement Plan shall last up to six months from the effective date of implementation.
Discipline, Dismissal, and Grievance Process

**DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL (PS 02.B.03)**
UHD is committed to fair, efficient, and equitable solutions to problems arising out of the employment relationship. Clear guidelines providing for both informal and formal disciplinary measures have been developed at UHD to ensure that fair and equitable treatment is provided; that requirements of the laws are met; and that the rights of both management and employees are honored during the discipline and dismissal process.

It is UHD policy to formulate, publish, and enforce rules and regulations that are essential to the safe and efficient conduct of institutional operations. Supervisory personnel are responsible for informing employees of rules to be followed, standards of conduct to be met, and work performance to be achieved. Employees are responsible for learning and abiding by the policies, procedures, and standards of UHD and its departments and constituents. Employees who fail to abide by such rules, regulations, and standards may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Adherence to regulations and procedures provided in the Discipline and Dismissal policy, PS.02.B.03, will ensure a progressive system of discipline designed to remedy deficiencies when possible and practicable to the mutual advantage of the University and the employee; an orderly routine for fair, consistent, and impartial treatment of disciplinary matters; and a mechanism for ensuring that consideration is given to employee concerns in disciplinary matters.

**Responsibilities in Imposing Discipline**

The University is responsible for explaining why an employee should be disciplined. Since the purpose of the disciplinary process is to provide remedial action whenever possible, no disciplinary measures will be undertaken without the employee’s knowledge. Employees will be given the opportunity to respond, in writing, to any disciplinary action taken against them.

When possible and practical, disciplinary action will follow a progressive sequence, including verbal counseling, written reprimand, suspension without pay, and dismissal from employment.

Disciplinary measures and employee conferences shall at a minimum:

- Identify the problem to be corrected or the standard to be met and the rule, policy, or procedure that has been violated;
- Recommend a course of action to correct the problem;
- Provide a statement of the consequences in the absence of improvement; and
• Provide notification that further disciplinary action, up to and including termination from employment, may occur if immediate improvement in the employee’s work performance or noted deficiencies does not occur and/or if new performance deficiencies surface.

All documents pertaining to the disciplinary action will be signed both by the supervisory authority and the employee. The employee’s signature will acknowledge receipt of the disciplinary notice but may not necessarily indicate agreement with the action. If the employee refuses to sign the notice, that fact should be noted on the documents.

A supervisor may recommend dismissal of a regular staff employee after progressive disciplinary measures have proven to be unsuccessful. Any recommendation for dismissal must be approved by the department head, appropriate vice president and VPESO prior to taking any action. Discharge without prior warnings or suspension may be justified for certain significant rule violations or significant acts of misconduct. The supervisor and department head will give written notice to the employee of the dismissal from employment.

The dismissed employee is required to meet the requirements of all clearance procedures, including return of University keys, identification cards, uniforms, parking gate cards, library books, etc.

Please see PS 02.B.03, Discipline and Dismissal of Regular Staff Employees Policy for, detailed information regarding the policy and required procedures.

Dismissal of Probationary Employees

Heads of departments may authorize dismissal of probationary employees after obtaining approval from the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations. The department head will then give the employee written notice of dismissal and its effective date. A dismissed probationary employee is not entitled to invoke the grievance policy to contest dismissal unless he/she claims and presents evidence to indicate that the claim merits inquiry and that he/she would not have been dismissed but for his/her race, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The Campus Relations Officer will determine the availability of the grievance process in such cases.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

UHD is committed to establishing and maintaining a constructive problem-solving mechanism for the resolution of staff grievances. A staff member is defined as an employee employed on a regular basis for a period of at least four and one-half months, excluding students employed in positions that require student status as a condition for employment and those holding teaching and/or research positions, classified as faculty.
It is the policy of UHD that all employees be treated fairly and consistently in all matters related to their employment, that employment decisions are made on lawful, job-related and non-discriminatory criteria, and that employees have the right to express grievances through informal and formal avenues.

For the purposes of the Staff Grievance policy, PS 02.B.01, a grievance is defined as a disagreement between an employee and management on the terms or conditions of employment. A grievance may be filed as a result of one of the following adverse employment actions: written reprimand, suspension without pay, demotion, involuntary transfer to a different job classification, denial of promotion, or termination. The assignment of duties, performance evaluations/appraisals, scheduling of work hours, rate of pay, and other management decisions are reserved as management rights and cannot be appealed through the grievance process. Complaints involving allegations of discrimination/harassment are administered as outlined in SAM 01.D.08, Discrimination and Harassment Policy, or SAM 01.D.08, Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Employees on probationary status are ineligible to file formal grievances related to disciplinary or discharge actions unless the employee believes that unlawful discrimination/harassment was a factor in the personnel action(s).

**Staff Grievance Procedures**—The Staff Grievance process consists of three steps: the preliminary appeal, the administrative appeal, and the formal appeal.

**Preliminary Appeal**—Any staff employee who wishes to grieve/appeal any of the actions described above may do so by providing a written request to his or her second-level supervisor setting forth the issues the employee (grievant) believes need to be addressed, as well as the proposed resolution, no later than ten (10) working days following the grievant’s notification of the act, event, decision, or condition that is the basis of the appeal.

**Administrative Appeal**—If the grievant’s petition to the second-level supervisor does not resolve the grievance, s/he may proceed to the administrative appeal by submitting a written administrative appeal to the respective vice president or division head, by no later than ten (10) working days after receiving notice from the second-level supervisor on the grievant’s appeal.

**Formal Appeal**—If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision resulting from the administrative appeal process, the grievant may seek resolution of the grievance through the formal appeal process. This will result in a hearing and is the final step in the grievance process.

To initiate the formal appeal process, the grievant shall complete the t Staff Grievance Intake and Resolution Form, stating the details of the grievance, the names of any witnesses who the grievant believes may have knowledge of the nature of the grievance, and the relief sought.
The Staff Grievance Intake and Resolution Form must be submitted by the grievant to the Campus Relations Officer (CRO) within ten (10) working days of the grievant’s receipt of the decision on the grievant’s administrative appeal.

Failure to submit the Staff Grievance Intake and Resolution Form to the CRO within ten (10) working days from receipt of the decision from the administrative appeal, as established in the Staff Grievance policy, will be deemed a waiver of the right to pursue a formal grievance.

The Hearing

A hearing to review the issues surrounding the grievant’s complaint will be scheduled by the CRO and the Staff Hearing Panel appointed no later than thirty (30) working days, absent extenuating circumstances, of the CRO’s receipt of the Grievance Complaint Form. The CRO or his/her designee will identify five (5) members of the Staff Grievance Committee to serve as the hearing panel and hear the grievance. An alternate member will be selected to replace a regular member of the hearing panel if a regular member is unable to serve or when a potential conflict of interest exists.

The following restrictions will apply:

- No member of the hearing panel may be involved in any of the events surrounding the grievance.
- Neither the grievant’s nor the respondent’s department may be represented on the hearing panel.
- The hearing panel must represent a broad cross section of University staff.
- No more than one member of any department may serve on the hearing panel.

After all the evidence has been presented at the hearing and the hearing panel members have no further questions of either party or any of the witnesses, the hearing panel chair will adjourn the hearing, ensuring that the tape recording has ceased. After meeting with the CRO or his/her designee, who will address policy/procedural questions, the hearing panel members will proceed to closed session deliberations.

No later than three (3) working days following the conclusion of the hearing, the panel will make a recommended finding on the Staff Grievance Intake and Resolution Form as to whether or not university policy was violated. The chair will communicate the panel’s recommended findings on the form to the CRO for final review. The CRO will submit the full review findings on the Staff Grievance Intake and Resolution Form to the Vice President for Employment Services and Operations (VPESO), who will deliver the form to the President or designee.

No later than ten (10) working days after receipt of the hearing panel’s recommended finding, the President or designee will take one of the following actions and communicate his/her decision in writing to the grievant, the respondent, both parties’ attorneys (as appropriate), and the CRO:

- Accept the panel’s recommended finding;
• Reject the panel’s recommended finding; or
• Remand the case to the panel with instructions to reopen the hearing, conduct further deliberations, or answer specific questions posed by the President.

The President’s decision is final and binding to all parties.

Please see PS 02.B.01, Staff Grievance Policy, for additional information on the policy and procedures.
Safety and Emergency Preparedness

**SAFETY PROCESSES**
The University of Houston Downtown’s Environmental Health and Safety programs, processes, and procedures are detailed on the [Environmental Health and Safety](#) website.

The environmental health and safety process is organized around a two-tiered plan:

**Tier 1**—Manager of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS). EHS is a service organization that works to provide every student, faculty member, and employee with a safe and healthy learning and working environment. Our responsibilities include:

- Interpreting and complying with regulations, rules and guidelines from federal, state and local agencies,
- Promoting and supporting UHD policies, and efforts to protect occupant health, safety and environmental safety,
- Conducting inspections to proactively prevent accident, or conducting investigations to understand needed corrective actions,
- Consulting with employees, departments, and vendors on issues involving a safe and healthy working environment, and
- Conducting training on work practices that protect individuals as well as the environment.

We work to identify and eliminate hazards, and correct unsafe practices.

**Tier 2**—Safety Culture. Our goal at UHD is to promote a culture that is committed to building, promoting and maintaining the University community’s interest in safety by identifying safety issues on campus, promoting education, and supporting safety projects. An ideal safety culture will deliver a clearer and more wide-ranging picture of operational risk, one that takes in all aspects of the activities of the organization. This is possible through the achievement of a better information flow and the maintenance of an effective dialogue within the organization about safety performance as a priority. Areas of high risk like Natural Science, Engineering Technology, and Facilities Management will create Safety Committees to discuss issues that affect not only their staff and faculty, but also students and the community.

**WEATHER RELATED EMERGENCIES**
As part of the University’s Disaster Preparedness Plan, UHD receives information regarding storm movement from the media and the U.S. Weather Service. When the possibility of a storm hit is predicted within 96 hours, UHD’s Emergency Management Team is placed on Emergency Alert to monitor the situation. When a hurricane or tropical storm is expected to impact the Houston area within 36 to 48 hours, the President or his/her designee will decide whether the University will close so that faculty, staff, and students may leave to prepare for the storm.
An Emergency Preparedness Checklist, published by the federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross, provides information on how to protect yourself and cope with disaster by planning ahead. The checklist may be printed for use at home and in the office.

Additional information on Safety and Emergency Preparedness for employees, families, and pets is provided on various local websites.

**Emergency Closing**

While every effort will be made to maintain normal operations at all times, there may be instances when emergencies warrant closure of UHD. Emergency situations include, but are not limited to hurricanes, flooding, fire, tornadoes, ice storms, chemical releases, explosions, violence, and other situations that affect the overall operation of the University. In the event of an emergency situation that has the potential to subject all or part of the University community to danger, the primary concern will be the safety of all members of the University community.

Assessing the Emergency—when an emergency or a potential emergency affecting UHD develops, UHD will activate its Emergency Management Board.

The Emergency Management Board is composed of the following staff:

- President
- Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost
- Vice President for Administration and Finance
- Vice President for Advancement and External Relations
- Vice President for Employment Services and Operations
- Director, Emergency Management
- Chief of Police
- Executive Director of University Relations
- Associate Vice President for Information Technology
- Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management
- Manager of Environmental Health and Safety

The President or designee shall have the sole authority to close the University or to order its evacuation. Decisions regarding the evacuation and/or closing of the University will be made by the President (or the President’s authorized designee) in consultation with top executive staff.

In the event that an emergency requires campus closure, the Division of the Vice President for Advancement and External Relations will notify the University community by way of:

- The University’s Home Page—A message will be posted as soon as possible at www.uhd.edu.
- DT_ALL_USERS and Gator Mail—A broadcast e-mail message will be sent to Outlook accounts and Gator Mail explaining the nature of the emergency.
• Broadcast Phone Message—A phone message will be sent to all office extension numbers, which may be retrieved by dialing 713-223-7999.
• UHD’s Main Switchboard—An outgoing message will be left on the University’s main telephone line, 713-221-8000.
• Flash Message—An emergency message will be posted at bottom center of UHD home page (www.uhd.edu); you may click on the message for more detailed information.
• External Media—Television, radio, and the Houston Chronicle online will be alerted.

Please check these sites for updates:

• KPRC NBC 2 (www.click2houston.com)
• KHOU CBS 11 (www.khou.com)
• KTRK ABC 13 (www.abc13.com)
• KRIV FOX 26 (www.myfoxhouston.com)
• KHCW WB 39 (http://39online.com)
• KTRK ABC 13 (www.abc13.com)
• KHOU CBS 11 (www.khou.com)
• KTRH 740 AM (www.ktrh.com)
• Houston Chronicle (www.chron.com)

If an emergency occurs after regular work hours but while classes are in session, the Division of Advancement and External Relations will notify the UHD Police Department, which will notify all individuals still on campus of any decision regarding closure or evacuation.

During emergency situations, employees will be paid at their regular rate during the period of closure, and timesheets should reflect such time as emergency leave. Employees may, at their option, elect to leave their posts prior to the official closing and/or remain absent beyond the official reopening. Payment for such absences will be charged to vacation accrual. If there is no vacation balance, the absence will be considered leave without pay.

It is important that all faculty, staff and students provide up-to-date contact information in My UHD to receive timely information on emergencies that may affect the University.

**Fraud and Non-Compliance Hotline**

Fraud and Non-Compliance Hotline is an anonymous reporting system that provides a way for students and employees to report anonymously and confidentially issues such as harassment, burglary, theft, hazing, rape, stalking, hate crimes, date violence, domestic violence, property vandalism, and substance abuse. Through a secure system, the Fraud and Non-Compliance Hotline transmits information to the appropriate campus personnel while protecting the identity of the person reporting the incident. For more information, visit the [Fraud and Non-Compliance Hotline website](#).
**Crime Reports**

The personal safety and security of students, employees, and the campus community are of vital concern and importance to UHD.

In compliance with applicable federal laws, including the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act), UHD collects and reports specific statistical information on crimes committed on campus or within the University’s Clery Geography which involve criminal homicide (murder and manslaughter), sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, hate crimes, vandalism of property, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking; and arrests and referrals for disciplinary action for liquor law violations, drug law violations, and carrying and possessing illegal weapons.

An annual security report is created for the United States Department of Education, and is disclosed and made available to the University community and the public by October 1 of each year, on such crimes considered to be a threat to students and employees, and reported to local police agencies. This annual report includes statistics for the most recent three-year period concerning reported Clery crimes that have occurred within the University community.

In accordance with the Clery Act, the University will issue timely warnings alerting the University community of Clery crimes that pose a serious or continuing threat to the community; and will issue emergency notifications to immediately notify the University community of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students and employees on campus or within the University community.

The University will conduct programs for the University community to prevent dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. A clear statement of policy and procedures for institutional disciplinary action will be included in the annual Clery security report. The policy prohibits retaliation against any individual exercising their rights or responsibilities under any provision of this Act.

For additional information, please visit the UHD Policy Department website, and PS 01.D.02, Crime Awareness and Campus Security, and the Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting.

**Campus Carry**

In June 2015, the 84th Texas Legislature passed, and Governor Greg Abbott signed, Senate Bill 11 (S.B. 11), also referred to as Campus Carry. S.B. 11 expands the areas on public university campuses where people who hold a License to Carry (LTC) may carry concealed handguns, provided the area has not been designated by the University as a gun-free area.

Campus Carry became effective on August 1, 2016, for public universities, including UHD. Any individual who holds a current or valid License to Carry (LTC) may carry a concealed handgun on or about the license holder’s person where permitted on University property. A LTC holder must be 21 or older (with a few exceptions) and must maintain the license in good standing. The handgun must be wholly concealed on
or about the license holder’s person. The license holder must not intentionally or knowingly reveal or display the handgun, even if the handgun is holstered. Accidental exposure of a handgun by a person holding a current and valid LTC is not a violation of the law.

While required to comply, universities had discretion to implement the law based on the culture unique to the respective campus and taking into account a focus on maintaining safety and gathering input from the greater campus community. UHD established areas on campus where handguns will not be permitted for reason of campus safety. S.B. 11 requires that the University give notice to license holders for each building or area restricting the concealed carry of a weapon. Notice is defined under Texas Penal Code Section 30.06 to include a sign posted on university property that contains the following language in Spanish and English or written communication such as a card or other document on which is written language identical to the following: “Pursuant to Section 30.06, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with a concealed handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a concealed handgun.”

The University will use multiple methods of notice to ensure the University community is aware of the gun-free areas, which may include posting a sign near buildings where the entire building is excluded; providing cards to individuals; and placing notices on doors or other areas inside or outside buildings, in University handbooks (student, staff and faculty), student life materials, ticketed events, flyers for events, email communications to the University community and via training provided to University faculty, staff, and students.

For more information on Campus Carry, please review UHD’s Campus Carry Policy, visit the Campus Carry website, or contact the UHD Police Department at 713-221-8065 or campuscarry@uhd.edu.
POLICE DEPARTMENT
The mission of the University Police Department is to provide a safe environment for people and property on the campus. University police services are available 24 hours a day; services include escorting staff to their cars upon request, ensuring safety and security, providing vehicle assistance services to the UH-Downtown community, maintaining records of accident/incident/information reports at UHD, and publishing a report of crimes committed on campus.

Police officers are available to conduct safety programs and seminars to inform members of the University community about safety and security practices and procedures.

Yellow Police call boxes are located near all entrances/exits to all buildings on campus, on all floors of all buildings on campus, at the entrance and exit to the parking garages and satellite parking areas. Police call boxes are also located in all elevators. Police assistance may be requested by activating any call box.

Employees and students should report suspicious persons, activities, and criminal offenses to the Police Department, by calling 713-221-8911 for emergency assistance or 713-221-8065 for non-emergency situations.

LOST AND FOUND
The Police Department Records Division, Suite 118-North, provides lost and found services for the University. All lost and found items received by the Records Division are stored for a period of 30 calendar days. After 30 days, unclaimed items are destroyed.

The W. I. Dykes Library, Academic Computing Lab, and some other departments operate separate lost and found services. At the end of the semester, these departments turn items over to the Police Department’s lost and found. Since these items have been kept for an extended time period, they are immediately destroyed.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
Facilities Management services include work requests, issuance of keys and access codes, housekeeping, electrical and mechanical maintenance, and building construction and renovations. It is also responsible for the campus recycling program for metal and plastic products.

To initiate a work request or report issues requiring an immediate response, such as water/spills, broken glass, power outages, lights out, or broken door locks, contact by emailing workorder@dt.uh.edu, call 713-221-8026 or visit the department in the One Main Building, Room S-101.
**Parking**

UHD-designated parking garages and lots are accessible to University employees by purchasing a parking permit. Parking fees vary by semester and are subject to change. Complete information regarding parking costs, locations, and permits may be obtained from the Parking and Transportation Services Office, Room N-354, or by calling 713-221-8127.

All parking at the University of Houston-Downtown is by permit. Employees must present vehicle information (make, model, year, and license plate number), driver’s license, and payment for the parking fee in order to obtain a permit.

Employee parking is available at the One Main Parking Garage, the Shea Street Building Parking Garage, and auxiliary lots at the Washington Street and Wood Street lots.

**Information Technology**

The Information Technology (IT) department plays an integral role in identifying opportunities for the University to meet its goals through the strategic use of technology.

The IT department provides the University with hardware/software support, user training, staff productivity administrative applications, and a centralized Help Desk for all technology support requests.

For additional information about the Help Desk, multimedia services, computer discounts available to staff, training/seminars, and other IT topics of interest, visit the Information Technology website.

**Staff Council**

The Staff Council at the University of Houston-Downtown acts as an advisory body to the President of the University. The Staff Council’s purpose is to promote a positive and meaningful exchange among staff, faculty, and students, and to formulate and recommend policies that affect staff. It also promotes recognition of staff contributions to the mission of the University of Houston-Downtown, and recommends individuals to serve on committees where policies and procedures affecting staff will be discussed.

The Staff Council coordinates the annual staff awards ceremony and sponsors the Edge award, a grant available to full-time staff members interested in attending seminars, training and other professional development courses. The Staff Council meets once a month and meetings are open to all staff. For more information, visit the Staff Council website.

**Health Services**

Student Health Services provides medical information and limited healthcare services at low cost to faculty and staff. Advanced practice nurse practitioners and registered nurses staff the health facility. For further information, visit the Student Health Services website.
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON OPTOMETRY CLINIC
The University of Houston Eye Institute provides a variety of optical services to employees of UHS and its component institutions, such as UHD, at reduced fees. Employees and their families can schedule complete vision exams, fill contact lens and eyeglass prescriptions, and seek medical and surgical help with eye disorders. The clinic accepts Medicare, Medicaid, personal checks, cash, major credit cards, and most insurance plans. To take advantage of this great opportunity, visit the University of Houston Eye Institute or call 713-743-1837.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND HEARING CLINIC
The University of Houston Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic is available to all UHD employees and their families, and offers services to infants, children, and adults with speech, language, and/or hearing impairments. These services include testing and treatment. The clinic also offers assistance with the fitting and sales of hearing aids.

This agency is partially funded by the United Way of Greater Houston and is staffed by professionals certified in the fields of audiology and speech-language pathology. Visit the University of Houston Speech, Language, and Hearing Clinic website or call 713-743-0915 for additional information or to schedule an appointment.

SPORTS AND FITNESS
The Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center is a three-level, 30,000 square-foot, fitness center that includes facilities for basketball, volleyball, badminton, aerobics, martial arts, and dance, as well as weight equipment and cardiovascular units. Personal trainers and a variety of fitness and sports programs are offered throughout the year. Lockers and showers are provided to employees and students. For more information visit the Sports and Fitness website.

Full-time, benefits-eligible staff are encouraged to take advantage of the Fitness Release Time provided through the Employee Wellness Program.

Employees can participate in an exercise program or fitness activity at the Student Life Center. See the Fitness Release Time section of this handbook for additional information.

FOOD SERVICES
The University Food Court provides students and employees with a wide selection of healthy food choices at reasonable rates.

The Food Court is located on the third floor of the Academic Building and features Starbucks, Salad Garden, Subway, Chick-fil-A, Bene, and Grille Works, among other vendors. The Shea Street Cafe Express (C3 Express) is located in the Shea Street Building, Room 135. It offers a variety of quick grab-and-go selections including gourmet coffees, cold drinks, wrapped sandwiches, and snacks. Coffee/tea and snacks are also available at Java City in the W. I. Dykes Library on the fourth floor of the One Main Building.
addition, one of several local food trucks parks outside the Shea Street Building, Monday through Thursday, to offer lunch service. For more information on the complete dining experience, visit the Dining Services website.

**CHECK-CASHING SERVICES**
The Cashier’s Office provides check-cashing services to benefits-eligible employees at no cost. Employees may cash personal checks up to $50 per day at the check-cashing window located in the One Main Building, Room S-310. A valid driver’s license and UHD identification card are required at the time of service. For more information, contact the Cashier’s Office at 713-221-8196.

**CONTINUING EDUCATION**
Continuing Education provides employees with professional and personal development opportunities through the English Language Institute (ELI), Applied Business and Technology Center, College of Business Continuing and Professional Education and Criminal Justice Training Center.

The English Language Institute is designed to support staff members working on writing and/or grammar improvement, reading and vocabulary building, and/or an overall understanding of the English language. The institute offers special one-on-one classes for business employees and managers who need to improve their English language skills for their professions.

The Applied Business and Technology Center is a self-sustaining, non-credit granting center of the University of Houston-Downtown. The center offers courses at various levels, from entry to advance. Courses include Computer Aided Design, Microsoft Desktop Applications, and Project Management, just to name a few. For those seeking a more self-directed, flexible schedule, eLearning classes are also provided; however, in addition to eLearning, many courses are available in the traditional classroom setting.

The College of Business Continuing and Professional Education offers non-credit courses that use a hands-on, outcome-based approach. Faculty and industry experts assist students with building relevant professional development and industry skills. Individual courses, as well as full certificates, are offered.

The Criminal Justice Training Center provides training and educational opportunities outside the academic curriculum. Programs and courses are offered in basic peace officer training, continuing education and state licensing review for Texas peace officers.

**UHD BOOKSTORE**
The University of Houston-Downtown Bookstore, located in the One Main Building, Room N-351, is home to exclusive UHD clothing, new/used textbooks, school supplies, electronics, graduation regalia, magazines, snacks, and souvenirs. UHD employees receive discounts on some purchases made at the bookstore upon presentation of a valid UHD identification card.
**O'Kane Gallery**
The O'Kane Gallery is the University’s conduit for the visual arts and contemporary culture. The gallery’s innovative, challenging exhibitions, programs, and publications bring artists, the University community, and the people of Houston into closer engagement with each other and with the important cultural issues of our time. Exhibits and hours of operation may be found on the O’Kane Gallery website.

**O’Kane Theatre**
The O’Kane Theatre is part of the Department of Arts and Humanities and has been part of the University for over thirty-five years. The theatre is located in the One Main Building and provides its patrons with an intimate environment suitable for an involving theatre experience. For information on performances and times, visit the O’Kane Theatre website or call 713-221-8104.

**Automatic Teller Machines**
There are four Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) on campus for the use of the University community. The ATM machines are conveniently located in the One Stop Student Service Center (near the Cashier’s Office), one in the dining area of the Food Court, one in the Shea Street Building, and one in the Commerce Street Building.

**Shipping/Receiving Mail Services**
The Shipping/Receiving Mail Services unit is responsible for the processing and distribution of packages, inter-office, express courier, and U.S. mail to all departmental offices. The mail services unit is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 713-221-8049 for rates and other information.

**W.I. Dykes Library**
The W.I. Dykes Library is located on the fourth and fifth floors of the One Main Building. The library offers access to more than 340,000 electronic and print books, CDs, videos, and special collections such as leisure reading, juvenile literature and a K-12 textbook collection. The staff ID is used as a library card to check out materials, and may be used at other UH System libraries at UH-Main and UH-Clear Lake. While on campus, staff may access databases with a wide variety of contents, as well as electronic books and online reference sources. Interlibrary Loan services are available to provide access to materials from outside the W.I. Dykes Library’s collection. For more information, please visit the W.I. Dykes Library website (http://www.uhd.edu/library) or contact a librarian (http://www.uhd.edu/library/ask.html).
Who’s Who in ESO

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