NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
# MERCER UNIVERSITY
## NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I wish to extend greetings to all employees of the University. To the experienced members of the community, I express appreciation for your contributions; and to you who are just now joining us, I offer a sincere welcome to the Mercer family.

No job at Mercer is unimportant or unrelated to the University’s pursuit of its purpose, and the successful achievement of its mission depends upon the dedicated performance of each one who serves here. Mercer also has much to give to you, and I hope you will take full advantage of the opportunities for education and enrichment available on campus.

If the University receives from us the best we can give and we fully share in what it has to offer, Mercer will be, for all of us, a happy and rewarding place to work.

William D. Underwood

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with information about Mercer University and its policies. Please read it carefully. The policies described in this Handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the University. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. Should you have any questions concerning any policies, please ask your supervisor or a Human Resources representative for assistance.

This Handbook is not a contract guaranteeing employment for any specific duration. Although we hope that your employment relationship with Mercer will be long-term, either you or the University may terminate the employment relationship at any time.

This Handbook is intended for non-faculty employees. While many of the policies and benefits described in this Handbook are the same for all employees of the University, there are some differences in the terms and conditions of employment for faculty members, and the University Faculty Handbook has been prepared for faculty employees. There are also some differences for employees at the Mercer Engineering Research Center (MERC), including different holidays and different tuition benefits.
MISSION STATEMENT  
(Updated 2013)

Mercer University’s mission is to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve.

In fulfilling this mission, the University supports undergraduate, graduate, and professional learning as well as basic research and its application in service to others. As a university committed to excellence and innovation, Mercer challenges members of its community to meet and exceed high standards in their teaching, learning, research, scholarship and service.

Founded by Baptists in 1833, Mercer is an independent university that remains grounded in a tradition that embraces freedom of the mind and spirit, cherishes the equal worth of every individual, and commits to serving the needs of humankind. As a reflection of this heritage:

- We encourage our students to discover and develop fully their unique combination of gifts and talents to become leaders who make a positive difference in the world.

- We seek to inspire members of our community to live virtuous and meaningful lives by using their gifts and talents to serve the needs of humankind as an expression of their love for God and neighbor.

- We seek to enrich the mind and spirit by promoting and facilitating an open and rigorous search for truth and understanding, including an examination of the moral, religious and ethical questions of this and every age.

- We affirm and respect the dignity and sacred worth of every person and celebrate both our commonalities and our differences.

http://about.mercer.edu/mission
2. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
(Updated 8/22/2018)

Mercer University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and does not discriminate against employees or students on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is both permitted by law and deemed appropriate as a matter of University policy). This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training programs.

In addition, as a federal contractor, the University has adopted an Affirmative Action Plan in accordance with applicable legal requirements. This plan is reviewed and updated annually. Employees and applicants may access, upon request, the full affirmative action plan (absent data metrics) at locations and times posted in the Human Resources office.

Mercer University’s EEO policy, as well as its affirmative action obligations, includes the full and complete support of all divisions of Mercer University, including its President.

Mercer University will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. Mercer University prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment based on race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion.

Any employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, the Equal Opportunity Officer, the supervisor of the person behaving objectionably, or for sexual violence/sexual harassment with the Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Civil Rights. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of any form of retaliation.

Mercer University maintains an audit and reporting system to determine overall compliance with its equal employment opportunity mandates and to respond to any specific complaints applicants or employees file with the Mercer University’s equal employment opportunity office. The Associate Vice President for Human Resources
[1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, GA 31207, phone (478) 301-2786] is the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer and is responsible for monitoring and coordinating compliance with this policy and applicable laws and regulations, including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Executive Order 11246, and along with Mercer University’s Title IX Coordinator, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

THE HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996 (HIPAA)
(Updated 9/23/2013)

Modification to the HIPAA Privacy, Security, Enforcement and Breach Notification Rules under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH Act) -- Effective Date of March 26, 2013 (Compliance Date September 23, 2013)

Overview:

The HIPAA Law is a regulatory requirement imposed on Healthcare organizations and other organizations that receive, store, and process medical information. The Law is designed to protect patients’ rights and to create the standardization of healthcare information. The Law regarding Healthcare Payment, Treatment, or Healthcare Operations is outlined as the Rules for Administrative Simplification.

The Law became effective in 1996, but the implementation of the Law has been rolled out into regulations since 2002. In addition, modifications were made effective March 26, 2013 (see Department of Health and Human Services 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164).

The regulations of the HIPAA Law cover the following areas of healthcare:

- Privacy of Health Related Information
- Standardization of Electronic Billing Transactions and Code Sets
- Standardization of Healthcare Identifiers
  - Plan
  - Employer (Plan Sponsor)
  - Provider
  - Patient
- Security of Healthcare Facilities and Healthcare Information
  - Physical
  - Electronic
The modifications, effective March 26, 2013:

- Make business associates of covered entities directly liable for compliance with certain of the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules’ requirements

- Strengthen the limitation on the use and disclosure of protected health information for marketing and fundraising purposes, and prohibit the sale of protected health information without individual authorization

- Adopt the additional HITECH Act enhancements to the Enforcement Rule not previously adopted in the October 30, 2009, interim final rule

- Final rule adopting changes to the HIPAA enforcement Rule to incorporate the increased and tiered civil money penalty structure provided by the HITECH Act

- Final rule on Breach Notification for Unsecured Protected Health Information under the HITECH Act

- Make additional modifications as explained in the Final Rule (45 CFR 160 & 164)

HIPAA is a regulatory requirement, and Mercer University mandates that all Health activities and Health (Medical) information be in compliance. All employees, including staff and faculty, need to be trained in the HIPAA Law and the Mercer HIPAA Policies and Procedures. Students who use, hold or come in contact with Medical information need to be trained in the HIPAA Law and the Mercer HIPAA Policies and Procedures.

Any questions about HIPAA or Mercer’s HIPAA Policies and Procedures need to be directed to the Mercer HIPAA Privacy Officer, Jim Calhoun.

**Procedure:**

Protected Health Information (PHI) is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services. The physical and electronic protection of PHI and transmission of PHI is required by Mercer University under its HIPAA Policies.
PHI must be physically and electronically secured in such a manner as to prevent unauthorized access. Guidelines for maintaining security include, but are not limited to the following:

Physical & Electronic Security of PHI:

- Each organization will designate faculty, staff, and students that have a need to know; the list of authorized individuals will be kept on file with the University HIPAA Privacy Officer.

- All physical PHI will be stored in locking file cabinets with access limited to those with proper authorization. Locking file cabinets should be uniquely keyed.

- All physical PHI will be stored in locking file cabinets in locations secured by locks during times when authorized personnel are not in the area.

- All physical PHI that is outside of the file cabinets during normal operations will be kept confidential and from the view of unauthorized individuals.

- All file folders or documents that contain PHI will be secured when all authorized personnel leave the work area.

- All computer screens containing PHI will have timeouts and screen savers installed that protect the viewing of the information by unauthorized personnel. Computer screens will be oriented in a manner that prevents unauthorized individuals from accessing PHI.

- When physical or electronic PHI is removed from a secured area, it will be transferred in a format that maintains its confidentiality. This can be accomplished by securing data in closed envelopes, folders, boxes, etc. This information must be kept from casual view. PHI stored or shared through electronic transmission, including e-mails and any other type of electronic transmission should be encrypted. PHI maintained on data storage devices, including tablets, flash drives, phones, laptops, etc., should be password protected. Only authorized users should have access to the password.

These guidelines are to be considered the minimum required by all schools, colleges, departments, or programs. If necessary, more stringent procedures may be initiated.
Communications Guidelines:

Purpose:
The purpose of this information is to provide guidelines on how to handle Protected Health Information that is provided by an individual (student, staff, and faculty) to another individual or authorized third party business associate for decision purposes. This guideline is to protect both the individual and Mercer University from the errant disclosure of Protected Health Information.

Definition:
**Protected Health Information (PHI):** Information that is covered under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Regulations (HIPAA) regarding privacy. The PHI consists of information regarding treatment, diagnosis, medication, or procedures that can be specifically identified to an individual through oral, written, or electronic communication.

Policy:
The following are the policies that govern the HIPAA Communications Guidelines:

- **Receiver’s Responsibility:** According to HIPAA law, the providing of Protected Health Information by the individual is considered confidential in a one on one basis. Therefore, there is no issue with receiving this information. The HIPAA Confidentiality and Privacy requirement is based on what one does with the information received

- **Communication of Protected Health Information:** If communication or transfer of the information received is required to perform work or accommodation for an individual, care must be exercised in the transmission of the PHI. PHI shared through electronic transmission, including e-mails and any other type of electronic transmission, should be encrypted.

- **HIPAA Privacy Baseline:** All identified Protected Health Information needs to be kept secure, private, confidential and communication of this information needs to follow all established Mercer University HIPAA Policies and Procedures.

All actual and suspected security breaches of Protected Health Information must be reported immediately to Mercer’s HIPAA Privacy Officer, Jim Calhoun, at 478-301-2325.
A. Employment of Relatives: Mercer University permits the employment of qualified relatives of employees only where such employment does not, in the opinion of the University, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Relatives should not be employed in regular positions in the same department, where one has direct or ultimate administrative responsibility over the other. That is, no employee should work in a regular position within the "chain of command" of a relative such that one relative's work responsibilities, salary, or career progress could be influenced by the other relative. If employment of a relative is proposed and is found to be in the best interest of the University, the recommendation of the department head must be accompanied by a written justification of the need for employment of the relative and approved by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

B. Employment of Minors: Federal law prohibits the hiring of persons under the age of 16 years for most occupations. In the case of hazardous occupations, this limit is 18 years. The employment of all persons under the age of 18 years must be in compliance with applicable law and approved by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

C. Employment of Students: Employment of students who are enrolled in the University is coordinated through the Student Financial Planning Office and the Office of Student Employment, which must approve hours of work and rates of pay, in accordance with Federal financial aid regulations. Undergraduate students currently enrolled at Mercer University may not be considered for regular employment with the University unless they are within 30 days of completing a degree.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

(Updated 12/16/2013)

An employee's job at the University is generally expected to be his or her primary occupation. However, outside employment is allowed if it does not interfere with the individual's University responsibilities and if it is approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Outside employment is not permitted where, in the opinion of the University, the outside job creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest or brings discredit to the University. No University funds, equipment, or facilities may be used in outside employment without appropriate payment or reimbursement to the University, unless otherwise authorized by the President of the University.

Non-exempt employees are not allowed to accept employment or perform services
for additional compensation from another department without prior approval from the current supervisor and the Associate Vice President for Human Resources. If approved, non-exempt employees must accurately report time worked on additional projects in compliance with the Wage and Hour Laws of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Non-exempt employees are discouraged from taking additional jobs at the University which would cause all hours to be paid at an overtime rate of pay.

**CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT**

*Updated 12/16/2013*

For purposes of human resource administration, including eligibility for overtime and employee benefits, the University categorizes its employees as follows:

A. **Full-time Regular Employees:** Employees hired to work a minimum of thirty (30) hours a week on a regular basis. Such employees may be "exempt" or "nonexempt."

B. **Part-time Employees:** Part-time employees may be "exempt" or "nonexempt" as defined below. There are two categories of part-time employees:

   **Category I** -- Employees hired to work less than thirty (30) hours a week on a regular basis, but who work at least 1000 hours a year. Employees in this category are sometimes referred to as regular part-time employees.

   **Category II** -- Employees hired to work less than 1000 hours a year, including those who work an irregular schedule or varied hours.

C. **Temporary Employees:** Employees engaged to work full time or part time on the University's payroll with the understanding that their employment will be terminated no later than upon completion of a specific assignment, or when the supervisor determines the services provided by the temporary employee are no longer needed. Temporary assignments are for durations of six months or less. Such employees may be "exempt" or "nonexempt" as defined below. (Note: Employees hired from temporary employment agencies for specific assignments are employees of the respective agency and not of the University.) Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits, other than those federally mandated, and service as a temporary employee is not credited for purposes of benefits or seniority if the temporary employee is subsequently employed as a regular employee, except for the eligibility for Family and Medical Leave Act leave as required by federal law.

D. **Student Employees:** Persons currently enrolled in the University on a full-time basis who work for the University in some capacity. Student employees must
register and coordinate employment activities through the appropriate Financial Aid Office of their college or school. Their hours of employment may be limited, they are not eligible for benefits, and service as a student employee is not credited for purposes of benefits or seniority if the student employee is subsequently employed as a regular employee. Full-time undergraduate students are not eligible for consideration for regular University positions unless they are within 30 days of completing their degree requirements.

E. Non-exempt Classified Employees: Employees who are “not exempt” from reporting all leave and hours worked through formal time-keeping methods and are paid overtime at the rate of time and one half (i.e. one and one-half times) their regular rate of pay for all hours worked beyond forty hours in a workweek, in accordance with applicable federal wage and hour laws, or they may opt for compensatory time as long as the time is compensated within the pay period in which it is earned.

F. Exempt Professional Employees: Employees who are not required to be paid overtime, in accordance with applicable federal wage and hour laws, for work performed beyond forty hours in a workweek.

G. Exempt Administrative Employees: Employees who are not required to be paid overtime, in accordance with applicable federal wage and hour laws, for work performed beyond forty hours in a workweek. These employees include the President’s Executive Council, Deans, Vice Presidents and other executive level managers.

**ORIENTATION**  
*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

On the first day of employment, the employee should schedule time in the Human Resources Office to complete the I-9 as required by the Immigration and Naturalization Act as amended, and to complete other forms required for payroll purposes. Generally, during the first month of employment, the employee will be scheduled for a New Employee Orientation Program which will provide them with information regarding University policies, University culture, employee safety, benefit programs, and other information to acquaint them with the University.

We encourage the employee to ask any questions they may have during this orientation so that they will understand all the policies and benefits that affect and govern their employment relationship with the University.
PROBATIONARY PERIOD FOR NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEES  
(Updated 12/16/2013)

New non-faculty employees (with the exception of administrators) are required to serve a probationary period. Continuing non-faculty employees may be placed in a probationary status for disciplinary reasons at any time during their employment at the University.

Most non-faculty employees are in a probationary status during the first 90 work days of employment. Law enforcement employees are in an initial probationary status for 180 days. During this probationary period, an employee may not apply for a transfer or promotion outside of their initial employing department, or receive a salary increase. Before this probationary period ends, the employee should be evaluated by the supervisor, and a specific recommendation must be made for continued employment beyond the probationary period. In certain circumstances, such as when there has been a change of supervisors or when there have been deficiencies in performance, the probationary period may be extended. When extensions are granted, the additional probationary period shall include counseling of the employee in order to provide an opportunity to correct the apparent deficiency.

During this probationary period, if job performance is not satisfactory to the supervisor, the employee shall be terminated without prejudice and no formal evaluation of the employee is required. However, even during this period, discussion should be held with the employee notifying them of the performance or behavioral concerns so corrective measures may be taken. Termination of the probationary employee may be done summarily. The successful completion of this probationary or introductory period should not be construed as creating a contract or as guaranteeing employment for any specific duration or as establishing a just cause standard for termination.

A supervisor, with the approval of the next level of supervision and the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, may place a non-faculty employee in a probationary status at any time during the employment period to enforce work rules or performance standards. A written notification shall be forwarded to the employee, with a copy to the Human Resources Office, advising the employee that they are being placed on a probationary status for the amount of time specified. This written notification shall state concisely the reason for the probation.

A non-faculty employee who is placed back on probation may not apply for a transfer or promotion until their probationary status has been removed.
PROMOTIONAL AND TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEES  
(Updated 12/16/2013)

The University provides opportunities for internal transfers and promotions. Vacancies are normally posted on the Mercer University Jobs web site (https://www.mercerjobs.com) so that interested employees may apply.

As vacancies occur, employees interested in transfer or promotion should follow the procedures for application in the posting notice. Because of SACS standards, when a promotional opportunity requires a college degree, the employee must have a degree conferred from an accredited college or university and transcripts documenting degrees conferred must be on file with the Human Resources office within 60 days of employment.

Non-faculty staff who are on probation may not apply for transfer or promotional opportunities to other departments, but may be considered for opportunities within the department in which they are currently employed.

It is advised that employees who are applying for transfer or promotional opportunities outside of their department notify their supervisor if they are selected as a finalist. The employee’s present supervisor will be consulted prior to an offer being extended.

Non-exempt employees who are transferring or receiving a promotion must provide ten (10) working days advance notice, unless both the present and prospective supervisors agree to waive this requirement.

Exempt employees are encouraged to provide at least 30 days’ notice to the present supervisor, unless both the present and prospective supervisors agree to waive this requirement.

RESIGNATION OR TERMINATION OF NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEES  
(Updated 12/16/2013)

An employee may resign at any time during the employment period. For non-exempt employees, ten working days of notification should be given to the supervisor. For exempt staff, it is requested that at least 30 days’ notice be given to the supervisor. Accrued vacation is not regarded as part of the notice. A written resignation should be addressed to the supervisor, with a copy sent to Human Resources.
Non-faculty employment relationships at Mercer are on an at-will basis. Thus, although the University hopes that its relationships with employees are long-term and mutually rewarding, the University reserves the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time. Non-faculty employees may be terminated during the initial probationary period without being provided cause. Advance notice to the employee of the termination is not required.

After non-faculty employees have successfully completed the probationary period, if the employee is being terminated due to performance deficiencies or improper employee behavior, normally, corrective measures or disciplinary action short of termination may have been imposed before termination is approved. The recommendation must be reviewed with the Associate Vice President for Human Resources before it is implemented. Normally, ten working days of notification will be given to the employee prior to the actual termination date. In cases of serious misconduct, classified personnel may be terminated immediately. The recommendation for immediate termination must be coordinated with the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

PERSONNEL FILES
(Updated 12/16/2013)

A personnel record is maintained for each employee in the Human Resources Office and includes such information as the application for employment, resumes, transcripts if applicable, appointment letters, position assignments, transfers, promotions, evaluations, correspondence, and disciplinary actions, etc.

The supervisor must notify Human Resources of any employment related correspondence, i.e., disciplinary actions, etc. for maintenance in the employee’s personnel file.

To ensure that the employee’s personnel file is up to date, the employee should notify Human Resources of any change of name, address, telephone number, or any other relevant personal data, as soon as such a change occurs.

Employees have a right to review their files within normal business hours. No records shall be removed from the employee’s file. If a copy of the file is requested, the employee will be charged a reasonable fee for reproduction.
3. COMPENSATION POLICIES

WORK HOURS
(Updated 12/16/2013)

Monthly Employees:

The workweek is based on the calendar week, Sunday thru Saturday.

The normal workweek schedule for full-time employees is 37.5 or 40 hours, depending upon the job classification and specific departmental and college requirements. However, for purposes of benefit programs, the University considers an employee who works 30 hours a week a full-time employee as well. Employees are expected to report to work on time and to remain on the job throughout their regular working hours. The normal operating hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; however, departments in Physical Plant and the Campus Police may have shift hours, and hours which may shift to an earlier starting time due to the weather conditions.

Lunch breaks are normally taken between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Special arrangements may be made with advance approval of the department supervisor.

The workweek for an employee, or a group of employees, cannot be changed without the approval of an officer of the University for the area affected and with consultation of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

Biweekly Employees:

The workweek is based on the calendar week, Thursday through Wednesday.

The normal workweek schedule for full-time employees is 40 hours, depending upon the job classification and specific departmental and college requirements. However, for purposes of benefit programs, the University considers an employee who works 30 hours a week a full-time employee as well. Employees are expected to report to work on time and to remain on the job throughout their regular working hours. Departments in Physical Plant and the Campus Police may have shift hours, and hours which may shift to an earlier starting time due to the weather conditions.

Lunch breaks are normally taken between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Special arrangements may be made with advance approval of the department supervisor.

The workweek for an employee, or a group of employees, cannot be changed
without the approval of an officer of the University for the area affected and with consultation of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

**TIME RECORDS**
(Updated 12/16/2013)

In order to comply with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, federal legislation, and related regulations, the University must require employees who are designated as non-exempt (see Categories of Employment - Section 2) to submit a time record for each pay period. The time record is the official document for determining the amount of pay an employee is due for work performed during a given pay period. After reviewing the form and resolving any discrepancies, the supervisor signs the form and forwards it to payroll. Authorizing signatures must be in original form. Signature stamps are not acceptable.

Employees must ensure that their actual hours worked and leave time taken are recorded accurately. Falsification of a time record is a breach of University policy and is grounds for disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination.

Where time clocks are used, employees are responsible for clocking in at the appointed starting time, clocking out for lunch, clocking in after lunch, and clocking out at the end of work time.

**PAY PERIODS AND RECEIPT OF CHECKS**
(Updated 10/2015)

Non-faculty employees are normally paid by check either on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. Employees paid on a bi-weekly basis normally receive paychecks every other Friday. Employees paid on a monthly basis normally receive paychecks on the last working day of the calendar month. Exceptions may be made when the employee designates in writing another individual to receive the check or when the employee will be on an extended leave of absence. All required deductions (such as for federal and state taxes) and all authorized voluntary deductions will be withheld automatically from employee paychecks. Paychecks are generally sent to a designated departmental representative for distribution to individual employees.

All regular employees may authorize direct deposit of their paychecks to their personal bank accounts. Information on direct deposit procedures and authorization forms are available in the Benefits & Payroll Office or online at http://benefitspayroll.mercer.edu/payroll/.

All employees should review their paycheck for errors. If a mistake is found or
there are questions, the employee should contact his/her supervisor, the Payroll Office, or the Human Resource Office immediately to answer questions and to make corrections.

Questions regarding time and/or hours worked, holiday pay or sick leave pay can be discussed by the employee with his/her supervisor or department head, the Human Resource Office, or the Payroll Office for clarification of questions regarding salary and paychecks.

**PAY TRANSPARENCY NONDISCRIMINATION PROVISION**  
*(Updated 01/19/2016)*

As a federal contractor, Mercer University will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against employees or applicants because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their own pay or the pay of another employee or applicant. However, employees who have access to the compensation information of other employees or applicants as a part of their essential job functions cannot disclose the pay of other employees or applicants to individuals who do not otherwise have access to compensation information, unless the disclosure is (a) in response to a formal complaint or charge, (b) in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action, including an investigation conducted by the employer, or (c) consistent with the contractor’s legal duty to furnish information.

**POLICY OF DEDUCTIONS FROM SALARIES**  
*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

Mercer University is committed to compliance with all provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Mercer University intends to pay salaried, exempt employees on a salary basis and will not make deductions from salary that are prohibited under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees who believe that improper deductions from their salary have been made should notify the Payroll Administrator or the Associate Vice President of Benefits and Payroll as soon as possible. If an investigation reveals a salary was reduced in error, the University will reimburse the employee for any improper deductions and take good faith measures to prevent improper deductions in the future.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**  
*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

Mercer University has operations throughout the state; and the decision to close each facility due to inclement weather will be made by the Dean of the respective school.
or college, Executive Director, or Presidential designee, after consultation with the President or his designee.

Normally, employees excused from work will be paid for such absences.

Essential service personnel include, but are not limited to: Student Health Clinic, Physical Plant, Residence Hall employees and Police. All essential non-exempt personnel will be paid for hours worked as well as time for inclement weather. Compensatory time may be allowed as long as University policies are followed. (See Section 3, Overtime.)

Essential service personnel unable to report during extreme weather conditions must consult their supervisors for instructions.

OVERTIME (Updated 12/16/2013)

Non-exempt employees may be required to work overtime when the need arises. When overtime is necessary, supervisors will attempt whenever possible to provide reasonable advance notice to the affected employees. Overtime work must be authorized in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Overtime is all work performed by an employee in excess of the employee's regular budgeted hours per week. All overtime up to and including 40 total hours worked in a workweek will be compensated at the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. All overtime in excess of 40 total hours worked in a workweek will be compensated at one and one-half times the employee's regular hourly rate of pay.

When overtime hours have been worked, they must be recorded on the employee's time record form for each workweek. Compensation for overtime is normally paid on the overtime payroll run for monthly employees and on the regular payroll run for bi-weekly employees, unless the overtime hours are offset by a proportionate number of time-off hours in accordance with the following Time-Off Plan.

Time-Off Plan for Overtime: A supervisor may schedule time off within the same pay period to offset the overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees, as long as all the following conditions are met:

1. The employee must either be paid at a fixed hourly rate or paid a regular salary for a fixed number of hours per week.

2. The employee's regular pay period must be longer than a week (i.e. bi-weekly or monthly).
3. The time off granted must be at the rate of one hour off for every hour of overtime worked up to 40 hours in a workweek, and at the rate of one and one-half hours off for every hour of overtime worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. Time off should be granted at a time agreeable to both the supervisor and the employee.

4. The offsetting time off must be taken during the same pay period in which the overtime was worked. The time off may be spread over several days of the pay period, and it may be granted before or after the overtime work is performed, as long as it is taken within the same pay period. Any overtime which has not been offset by time off taken within the pay period must be paid in cash on the employee's regular payday.

5. The time report must accurately record hours worked, on the days they are actually worked, and time off taken.
4. **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

**ABSENTEEISM AND TARDINESS**

*(Updated 05/01/2020)*

Employees are required to report for work and to be prepared for duty at the beginning of the work period. If the employee expects to be absent or tardy, they should notify their supervisor before the work period begins unless circumstances make this impossible or they are granted an authorized medical leave.

Absenteism or tardiness that is unexcused or excessive may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Absent a known serious health condition, Mercer considers consistent use of more than one day of sick leave a month as potential abuse of our sick leave policy.

Employees having an urgent reason for leaving the work site must have authorization from their supervisors prior to departure. Failure to notify the supervisor could result in disciplinary action.

**GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

Employees of the University are expected to accept certain responsibilities, adhere to acceptable principles in matters of personal conduct, and exhibit a high degree of integrity at all times. Whether they are on duty or off, their conduct reflects on Mercer University. Employees are, therefore, encouraged to observe the highest standards of professionalism at all times.

Types of behavior and conduct that are considered inappropriate for University employees include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Falsifying employment or other University records, including time cards or time sheets.
2. Violating the University's nondiscrimination and/or harassment policies (described in this Handbook).
3. Soliciting or accepting money and/or gratuities from students or vendors.
4. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
5. Excessive, unnecessary or unauthorized use of University supplies or equipment, especially for personal purposes.
6. Reporting to work with prohibited substances or alcohol in your system is prohibited.
7. Violating the University’s drug-free workplace and campus program (described later in this Handbook).
8. Fighting or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures.
9. Theft of property from co-workers, students or the University.
10. Unauthorized possession of firearms, weapons of any kind, or explosives on University premises or while on University business.
11. Disregarding safety, fire, traffic or parking rules.
12. Smoking in an unauthorized area.
13. Insubordination.
14. Willful failure to perform assigned duties or to follow instructions.
15. Lending or permitting the duplication of University keys to an unauthorized person.
16. Manipulation of computer data banks by causing false input or removal of computer data.
17. Gambling or conducting games of chance on University premises.
18. Conviction of a felony.
19. Charging telephone calls or personal expenses to University accounts.

Should the employee’s performance, work habits, overall attitude, conduct or demeanor become unsatisfactory in the judgment of the University, based on violations of the above or of any other University policies, rules or regulations, they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

SAFEGUARDING UNIVERSITY PROPERTY

(Updated 12/16/2013)

All employees who use University property are responsible for its care and security while it is subject to their control.

Employees are not permitted to use University property for personal purposes, and unauthorized use or removal of such property may be cause for immediate dismissal.

Employees who willfully or carelessly destroy University property will be required to pay for the repair, recovery, or replacement of such equipment. In addition, such activity may be construed as cause for immediate dismissal.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FOR NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEES

(Updated 12/16/2013)

The purpose of the performance evaluation is to provide non-faculty employees with clear job expectations and meaningful feedback regarding how well employees have
performed their assigned job duties and their established goals. Performance evaluations are an ongoing process that contributes to positive communication, mutual respect, improved performance, individual growth, and career development.

Non-faculty employees in the initial probationary period shall be evaluated just prior to the completion of the probationary period. Such evaluations shall contain specific recommendations for either continued employment or termination.

Performance Evaluation Forms are made available online to each supervisor. Non-faculty employees (except for administrators) are evaluated by their supervisor on an annual basis. Administrators (as defined in Section 2: Categories of Employment) are evaluated on a regular basis, but not less than every three years.

After completing the Evaluation Form, the supervisor must discuss the contents with the employee and set objectives for the coming period. The employee should acknowledge this discussion by signing the form. The employee’s signature does not imply agreement with the evaluation, but only acknowledges that the contents have been reviewed by the employee. If the employee refuses to sign the Evaluation Form, the supervisor should so note on the form before it is sent to the Human Resources Office. The employee may, within five working days, note objections to the evaluation on the form or on a separate memorandum which should be attached to the form. These objections noted by the employee will become a part of the employee's personnel file.

Once the employee has signed the completed form, no changes, additions, or deletions shall be made without the employee's knowledge. Copies of these evaluative documents must be sent to Human Resources for retention in the personnel files for SACS Accreditation Reviews.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR NON-FACULTY EMPLOYEES
(Updated 8/8/2014)

The University has established the following grievance procedures in an effort to resolve complaints by non-faculty employees:

1. These procedures apply to all complaints by non-faculty employees alleging violation of University policies prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is both permitted by law and deemed appropriate as a matter of University policy). This procedure is intended to provide the grievance procedure required under Title IX, Section 504 and similar Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in employment. These procedures also apply to other complaints by employees involving adverse employment actions, including actions
with respect to salary, fringe benefits, workload and work assignment. Any complaint must be brought by an individual and shall not be brought on behalf of a class.

2. This procedure is designed to be used only after full consultation and informal negotiation or mediation has failed to produce an acceptable resolution of the complaint. Employees who believe they have been discriminated against in violation of the University's policy of equal employment opportunity should contact the Equal Opportunity Officer (see Section 2 of this Handbook). The Equal Opportunity Officer will discuss the matter with the employee's supervisor and/or with the supervisor's supervisor, as deemed appropriate, in an attempt to resolve the matter informally. The Equal Opportunity Officer may involve an external mediator in an effort to reach a resolution on which the parties can agree. In cases not alleging discrimination, the complaining employee should contact his or her supervisor in an effort to resolve the matter informally.

3. After a period of informal discussion, but within 90 days after the occurrence of the action complained of, an employee who wishes to invoke the formal grievance procedure shall file a written complaint with the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

4. The complaint shall identify the complainant and the respondent and shall describe the action complained of and the desired remedy. The respondent will generally be the individual responsible for the action that is the subject of the complaint. In questionable cases, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources will designate the respondent. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources shall promptly send copies to the respondent and to the appropriate Dean, Director or other unit head.

5. Within 30 days of receipt of a copy of the written complaint, the respondent shall submit to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources a written answer to the complaint. The Associate Vice President for Human Resources shall promptly send copies of the answer to the complainant and the unit head.

6. Within 30 days of receipt of the written answer, unless the complainant withdraws the complaint, a grievance committee shall be selected. Arrangements for such selection shall be made by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources. The grievance committee shall consist of three employees who have not been involved in the grievance. The manner of selection of the committee shall be as follows:

(a) One member shall be selected by the complainant;
(b) One member shall be selected by the Dean, Director or other head of the unit in which the complainant works;
(c) The third member, who shall chair the committee, shall be selected by the two members selected in steps (a) and (b) above.
7. The grievance committee shall receive copies of the complaint and answer and shall have broad power, in its discretion, to request additional evidence, to conduct personal interviews with the parties to the grievance and with witnesses, and/or to hold a hearing on the matter. Any hearing shall be conducted by the chair under informal procedures. The parties may be assisted in preparation for any hearing by legal counsel of their choice or by other advisors within the University; but in order to preserve the informal, non-judicial nature of these procedures, legal representation shall not be allowed at any hearings that may be conducted.

8. The grievance committee and the parties shall not discuss information of a private or confidential nature obtained in the course of these procedures. Any such disclosure, except where required by law, shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

9. The grievance committee shall prepare a written report of its findings and recommendations within 30 days of its receipt of the complaint and answer unless more time is reasonably required by either party or by the committee. The report shall be sent to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, the complainant, the respondent, and the appropriate unit head.

10. Within 30 days of receipt of the committee's report of findings and recommendations, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources shall make a decision accepting, rejecting or modifying the committee's findings or recommendations. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the individuals who received the committee's report.

11. Either the complainant or the respondent shall have 10 days after receipt of the decision to request review by the President. Any such request shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the President, who shall make a decision within 30 days of receipt of the request. The President's decision is final.
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE POLICY
(Includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, intimate partner violence, and gender-based harassment)

For full policy, please view https://titleix.mercer.edu/policy.cfm.

POLICY PROHIBITING OTHER DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT
(Updated 8/2016)

Harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender (i.e. gender-based harassment that is non-sexual in nature), sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion constitutes discrimination in employment and as such violates the University's equal opportunity policy as well as federal and state laws.

Definition

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion, or that of his or her relatives, friends or associates, and that:

(a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;

(b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or

(c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Examples

Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

(a) epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion; and

(b) written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on University premises or is circulated in the workplace.
The standard for determining whether conduct relating to race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a hostile or abusive work environment is whether a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would find the conduct intimidating, hostile or abusive. This standard includes consideration of the perspective of persons of the alleged victim's race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, age or religion.

The responsibilities of members of the University community to prevent and eliminate harassment on these bases; the procedures for counseling, advice and informal resolution; and formal grievance procedures are the same as those described above under the Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy.

**SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE**

*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

In the interest of maintaining a proper campus environment and preventing interference with work and inconvenience to others, the University regulates solicitation and distribution of literature on its campuses.

For purposes of this policy, solicitation includes (1) soliciting business of any type, including the selling of products or services; (2) soliciting funds, including debt collection, or political or petitionary support of any kind; and (3) conducting opinion, investigatory or other types of surveys or polls. Distribution includes posting, placing on cars, stuffing university mailboxes, handing out or otherwise distributing any type of literature, pamphlets, product samples or other materials.

**By non-employees:** Unauthorized solicitation or distribution for any purposes on the University's property by non-employees is prohibited. Business contacts by unauthorized sales representatives during normal business hours with University employees are not permitted.

**By employees:** Solicitation by the University's employees in working areas during the working time of either the person soliciting or the person being solicited is prohibited. Distribution by employees of materials unrelated to work performance is not permitted in working areas of the University at any time. Solicitation and distribution during non-working time in non-working areas (e.g. cafeterias, break rooms and similar areas) are permitted.

Banners and posters which announce events of interest to students and employees may be displayed in designated areas on the campus after approval. Individuals who have approval to put up banners and posters must take them down at a designated time.
agreed upon when approval is granted.

REPORTING SUSPECTED IMPROPER CONDUCT  
(Updated 10/8/2019)

In all its business practices, and particularly in its dealings with the Government, the University seeks to conduct itself with the highest degree of integrity and honesty. Through its Internal Audit Department and through external audits, the University periodically reviews its business practices, policies, procedures and internal controls for compliance with standards of business ethics and with the special requirements of Government contracting.

Any employee who suspects that improper or illegal conduct or any other irregularities have occurred, especially in connection with Government contracts, is expected and encouraged to promptly report such concerns so that the matter may be investigated and corrective action taken where appropriate. Such reports may be made to your supervisor, who will refer the matter to the Internal Auditor for investigation, or you may report suspected improper conduct directly to the Internal Auditor (see audit.mercer.edu for contact information). You may file an anonymous report through an independent provider, NAVEXGlobal’s Ethics Point. The link for filing a report can be found on the Audit & Compliance website at https://audit.mercer.edu and selecting EthicsPoint Fraud and Abuse Hotline.

The University will not discharge or otherwise retaliate against any employee for disclosing information to appropriate University or Government officials which the employee reasonably believes evidences a violation of any Federal law or regulation relating to Federal contract procurement, charges to the Government, or the subject matter of Federal contracts.

GIFTS AND GRATUITIES  
(Updated 12/16/2013)

Mercer University requires all employees to act with integrity and good judgment and to recognize that accepting personal gifts from current or prospective vendors may cause legitimate concerns about a conflict of interest. In order to avoid a perceived conflict of interest, at no time should an officer or employee of Mercer University solicit or accept any gift, gratuity, or offer of entertainment having a value in excess of $250 from any individual or company that is doing, or seeking to do, business with the University.

Exceptions to this policy may be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to the requirement that the employee discloses the proposed gift or gratuity in advance, and that acceptance of the gift or gratuity is pre-approved by the employee’s supervisor.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
(Effective 8/6/2013)

Policy on Inventions, Patents and Licensing

I. Preamble and Objectives

Mercer University is dedicated to teaching, research and the expansion of knowledge. Although the University does not undertake research or developmental work principally for the purpose of developing patents and commercial applications, patentable inventions sometimes result from the research activities carried out wholly or in part with University funds and facilities. It is the policy of the University to assure the utilization of such inventions for the common good and, where appropriate, to pursue patents and licenses to encourage their development and marketing.

Mercer University has established the following policies and procedures with respect to inventions, patents and licensing in order to:

A. promote the University’s academic policy of encouraging research and scholarship;

B. serve the public interest by providing an organizational structure and procedures through which inventions which arise in the course of University research may be made available to the public through established channels of commerce;

C. encourage, assist, and provide tangible rewards to members of the University community — faculty, staff, and students — who make inventions processed under this policy;

D. establish principles and uniform procedures for determining the rights and obligations of the University, inventors, and research sponsors;

E. enable the University to retain title to inventions resulting from federally sponsored research; and

F. produce funds for further investigation and research and for the overall needs of the University.

II. Ownership of Inventions
A. Inventions arising from research financed by the Government are controlled by the terms of the applicable grant or contract. Where the University is permitted to retain title to such inventions and chooses to do so, University patent policies will control.

B. Inventions arising from research or other work sponsored by nongovernmental entities are controlled by the terms of the sponsored agreement, if applicable, and if not, by University patent policies.

C. Inventions arising from research or other work conducted by University employees or students on their own time and without significant use of University funds or facilities shall be considered the sole property of the inventor and may be commercialized by the inventor at his or her own expense. However, by mutual agreement such inventions may be managed by the University under the terms of this policy. The University will not construe the payment of salary from unrestricted funds or the provision of office or library facilities as constituting significant use of University funds or facilities.

D. Inventions resulting from research or other work conducted by University employees or students on University time or with significant use of University funds or facilities shall be considered the property of the University. Any income received by the University as a result of licensing or otherwise commercializing these inventions shall be shared with the inventor as provided below. If the University does not wish to undertake patenting and commercialization of such an invention, and if there are no restrictions by any outside sponsor, the University may release its proprietary interest to the inventor.

E. Any use of the University’s name in connection with the commercialization of an invention by an individual shall be approved in advance by the University.

III. Division of Income

A. Any income resulting from inventions managed by the University under this policy shall be shared as follows:

1. First $10,000 of Net Income received:
   (a) 75% to the inventor
   (b) 15% to the inventor’s College or School
   (c) 10% to the University

2. Net Income received above $10,000:
   (a) 50% to the inventor
   (b) 25% to the inventor’s College or School
   (c) 25% to the University

B. “Net Income” is defined as gross royalties and/or other receipts minus the costs
incurred by the University for the patent application, interferences, development, licensing and patent enforcement.

C. Co-inventors share the inventor’s portion in proportions agreeable to themselves.

D. The College or School share shall be administered by the Dean to support research programs in the inventor’s department or division.

E. Fifty percent (50%) of the University’s share, after defrayment of patent-related costs not otherwise covered, shall be used to support, or offset the costs of, research in the inventor’s College or School, with the advice and counsel of the Dean.

IV. Disclosure

A. Inventions arising in the course of sponsored projects should be promptly disclosed to the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research, with simultaneous disclosure to the principal investigator or project supervisor where applicable. The circumstances of the invention will be reviewed with those involved and the inventor will be notified in writing of the proposed disposition.

B. Inventions falling within Section D of Article II above, or about which there is a doubt as to ownership, or which the inventor wishes to have managed by the University, should be promptly disclosed to the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research. Within six weeks of the receipt of the disclosure, the inventor will be notified in writing of the determination of ownership (if in doubt) and the proposed disposition.

V. Invention Management

A. For all inventions managed by the University under this policy, the University will at no expense to the inventor make reasonable efforts to evaluate the interest of others in commercializing the invention, seek licenses and options for licenses, have applications for patents filed and prosecuted, and otherwise manage the inventions or arrange for their management by recognized patent management organizations.

B. The University will normally evaluate potential commercial use of an invention prior to the filing of a patent application. Options to license and other contractual arrangements appropriate in the circumstances will normally be sought as early as possible as a validation of potential commercial use. If the University determines that neither commercial possibilities nor the potential contribution to the public good warrants proceeding further, the invention will be returned to the inventor and shall belong to the inventor unless such action is precluded by prior agreement with sponsors.

C. In licensing, sale or other disposition of rights to inventions, the University will seek to guard against repressive practices. Royalty rates shall be reasonable and consistent
with the goal of effectively transferring technology in the public interest. Where feasible, the University will grant nonexclusive, reasonable royalty-bearing licenses to all qualified licensees. The University recognizes, however, that nonexclusive licensing may not always be effective in bringing the invention to the commercial market in a satisfactory manner, and thus may grant an exclusive license if it determines that such is required in the public interest to encourage the marketing and eventual public use of the invention. In all cases, the University shall reserve to itself a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to make or have made and to use the invention within Mercer University for its own purposes.

D. In those cases where the University has obtained a patent without obligation to sponsors, if no arrangement has been made for commercial development within a reasonable period from the date of issuance of the patent, ownership of the patent will revert to the inventor upon request.

VI. Publication

Inventors should be aware that a publication disclosing the invention prior to the filing of a U. S. patent application is a bar to the grant of certain foreign patents and can bar the grant of a U. S. patent if the publication occurred a year prior to the filing date. Accordingly, the University may request a temporarily delay in a publication which discloses an invention to permit a U. S. patent application to be filed, but in no event longer than three months.

VII. Disputes

Any disagreement between an inventor and the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Research concerning rights in an invention shall be resolved by the President, who may appoint an ad hoc committee to make findings of fact and recommendations to him.

VIII. Revision or Termination

This policy may be changed or discontinued at any time by action of the Board of Trustees. Any such change or discontinuance shall not affect rights accrued prior to the date of such action.

IX. Patent Agreements

This policy, as amended from time to time, shall be deemed to be a condition of initial or continuing employment of every University employee and a condition of enrollment and attendance of every student who works on any research project under University control. All such employees and students will be expected, upon request, to sign agreements incorporating the terms of this policy. Failure to sign such agreements, however, shall not affect the applicability of the policy nor relieve any employee or student from the
Copyright Policy

Mercer University’s academic mission is to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower, and to serve. This mission is best promoted by creating an intellectual environment that encourages and rewards creativity and innovation. Mercer supports the development, production, and dissemination of intellectual property by its faculty, staff, and students.

Mercer affirms its commitment to the personal ownership of original works of authorship by their individual creators, whether the creators work alone or with others, and whether they work privately or as members of the Mercer community (faculty, staff, and students). Accordingly, copyright to unpublished works is held by the author or creator, or heirs or assigns, unless a written transfer of copyright has been made to another party.
5. EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE AND CAMPUS PROGRAM

Introduction and Purpose

Mercer University shares the widespread national concern with the serious threat to health, safety, and welfare posed by the unlawful use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol, especially in the workplace and on college campuses. As a matter of University policy, growing out of the University’s historic mission and character, and in keeping with applicable Federal and State laws, the University has adopted and has implemented the following program to provide a drug-free workplace and campus/center for all its students and employees and to prevent the illicit use of drugs and abuse of alcohol.

For the full policy, please view https://hr.mercer.edu/policies/upload/Drug-FreeProgram.pdf.

TOBACCO AND SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT POLICY
(Updated 9/6/2016)

Mercer University is committed to the health and well-being of the members of its student body, faculty, and staff. The University not only has a vested interest in the vitality of its students and those who administer and operate the University’s programs of education, research, and service, but also wishes to promote the advancement of health in general and the maintenance of a healthful environment. The University and its medical, nursing, pharmacy and health professions schools, moreover, have substantial commitments to health-related research and teaching.

The Surgeon General of the United States has determined that cigarette smoking is the largest preventable cause of illness and premature death in the United States; it is associated annually with the unnecessary deaths of thousands of Americans. Research findings now indicate that users of smokeless tobacco and non-smokers who are regularly exposed to tobacco smoke are also at increased risk.

In response to these considerations, the University has adopted as its goal that of achieving an environment as close to tobacco-free as possible. The following guidelines

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1 Including the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, the Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990 (Georgia), and related laws and regulations.
are designed to achieve a relatively tobacco-free environment on the Mercer campuses:

- Smoking is prohibited in all indoor locations. All buildings on all campuses are tobacco and smoke-free environments. This includes vapor/electronic smoking devices.
- Smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of all building entrances, air intakes, and windows.
- Residence hall public spaces (lobbies, hallways, lounges, recreation areas, restrooms) and rooms are tobacco-free.
- Use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in all University facilities, except in individual residence hall rooms and apartments.

It is the responsibility of each member of the Mercer community to observe this Tobacco-Free Policy and these guidelines. This policy relies on the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of smokers and non-smokers for its success. Individuals who are smoking inside a building must be directed to the outdoors. Visitors must observe this Tobacco-Free Policy. Department heads, building stewards, and sponsors/hosts of University events are responsible for visitors’ compliance with the University’s Tobacco-Free Policy. The University expects a good faith, common sense, and courteous approach by students and employees in resolving conflicts within the requirements of this policy.

Violation of policies should be reported to Student Affairs for students and Human Resources for employees.

**CRIME AWARENESS AND CAMPUS SECURITY**  
*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

Mercer University places a high priority on keeping its campus safe for its students, employees and visitors. The Mercer Police Department has primary responsibility for the security of the campus. Mercer Police officers are all certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council as having met the qualifications and training requirements for police officers in Georgia, and they are authorized to exercise law enforcement powers on the campus, including the power of arrest.

More information on campus security policies, crime prevention programs, and campus crime statistics is provided and distributed annually in a Crime Awareness and Campus Security Report for each campus and is available in the Mercer Police Office.
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAMS
(Updated 11/15/2013)

The University offers programs and plans to recognize and minimize the risks to specific employees or groups of employees who may be exposed to specific hazards while performing assigned tasks and regular duties. The Environmental, Health & Safety Office offers an OSHA Hazard Communication Program, OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Program, General Laboratory Safety Program, and other associated Occupational Health Programs which are custom designed for the various specialized work environments within the University. Employees and/or job classifications identified to have potential exposure to hazardous conditions in the workplace can receive information concerning their rights and responsibilities from the Human Resources Office, the Environmental, Health & Safety Office, and the Office of Research Compliance.

JOB RELATED EMPLOYEE ACCIDENT AND INJURY/WORKERS’ COMPENSATION
(Updated 10/2015)

For information on Workers’ Compensation, please visit:
http://benefitspayroll.mercer.edu/benefits/workcomp.cfm

APPROVED DRIVERS POLICY
(Updated 10/2015)

To view the Approved Drivers Policy, please visit:
http://benefitspayroll.mercer.edu/benefits/approved-drivers.cfm
6. **TIME-OFF BENEFITS**

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**VACATION**

*(Updated 10/2015)*

Because we recognize the importance of vacation time in providing the opportunity for rest, recreation and personal activities, the University grants paid vacations to its regular full-time employees and part-time employees defined as Category I (see Section 2 of this Handbook).

For the full vacation leave policy, please visit:

**HOLIDAY POLICY AND SCHEDULE**

*(Updated 10/2015)*

The University usually provides paid time off to all full-time regular employees and Category I part-time employees (see "Categories of Employment" in Section 2 of this Handbook). Category II part-time employees are eligible for holiday pay only if the University is closed on a day they are normally scheduled to work. Temporary and student employees are not eligible for holiday pay.

To see a list of approved holidays and the official holiday policy, please visit:

**MEDICAL AND FAMILY LEAVE POLICIES**

*(Updated 2/13/2018)*

The University recognizes that inability to work because of illness or injury or because of pressing family needs may cause hardship to employees. In an effort to accommodate employees’ medical and family leave needs, the University provides paid and unpaid leaves for eligible employees, as follows:

A. **Paid Sick Leave**

See the Sick & Vacation Leave Policy for accrual rates for eligible non-faculty staff:
B. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), as amended, Mercer University provides up to 12 workweeks of FMLA leave to eligible employees for specified family and medical reasons or up to 26 workweeks for the care of a covered service member during a rolling 12-month calendar. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave as specified in this policy.

To view the full policy:
https://hr.mercer.edu/mu-hr/policies/upload/FMLA.pdf.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

To view the full policy:
http://benefitspayroll.mercer.edu/payroll/upload/Bereavement.pdf.

MILITARY LEAVE
(Updated 5/12/2014)

Reserve Duty

Regular employees will be paid while engaged in the performance of military duty in the reserves, and while going to and from such duty during normal working hours, but the maximum length of military leave with pay is eighteen (18) eight-hour workdays in any one fiscal year. This paid military leave may not exceed eighteen (18) workdays in any one continuous period of absence. At the expiration of paid military leave, at the employee’s discretion, he or she may use accrued annual leave to cover unpaid military leave absences.

Active Duty

Notwithstanding the paid reserve duty military leave limitation of eighteen (18) days set forth above, in the event that the employee is called up to active military duty, the employee shall be paid his or her salary for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days in any one fiscal year, and not exceeding 30 days in any one continuous period of such active duty service. At the expiration of paid military leave, at the employee’s discretion, he or she may use accrued annual leave to cover unpaid military leave absences.

Employees returning from an active duty military leave of absence will be rehired in accordance with applicable federal and state laws pertaining to re-employment rights. Personal leave without pay may be granted for a period not to exceed one (1) year. Under
federal law, individuals returning from up to five (5) year’s active duty may have certain re-employment rights for a period of time.

An employee’s request for a military leave of absence must be accompanied by a written copy of orders placing the employee on active duty. These orders are to be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for inclusion in the employee’s personnel file. The employee’s department must also submit a payroll action form documenting the anticipated dates of absence with orders attached.

**JURY AND WITNESS DUTY LEAVE**  
*(Updated 12/16/2013)*

When an employee is summoned to jury duty or subpoenaed to appear as a witness in a court action in which neither the University nor the employee is a party, the University will continue to pay the employee’s regular salary. The employee is responsible for notifying his or her supervisor or department head of impending jury or witness duty immediately upon receipt of the notice to serve. In any case where jury duty is expected to extend beyond two weeks, the employee should contact his or her supervisor and Human Resources to make special arrangements for extended leave (with pay). Mercer will make no attempt to have the employee’s service on a jury postponed except where University conditions necessitate such action. If an employee is temporarily relieved of jury duty on any given day, but still is subject to subpoena, the employee should return to work for the remainder of the day, unless the court directs otherwise.
7. OTHER EMPLOYEE SERVICES AND BENEFITS

To view a full list of employee benefits, please visit:
http://benefitspayroll.mercer.edu/benefits