PERSONAL LEAVES

I. General Policy

This policy applies to all Rice University staff that are eligible for benefits.

Personal leaves, including professional/educational leaves, may be granted for periods of up to one year based upon the nature of the employee's need for the leave, department staffing, and other relevant considerations. Reasons for requesting personal leave include, but are not limited to, further education or professional development. Personal leaves alone or in conjunction with other leaves may not be longer than one year. Personal leaves are unpaid.

How are leaves approved?
Approval of the leave is recommended by the employee's supervisor, department chair, or director for action by the dean or appropriate administrative officer in consultation with the director of Human Resources.

When are staff members eligible for a personal leave?
Staff members are eligible for personal leave after they complete the initial probationary period of six months.

Who replaces a person on personal leave?
Generally, other staff members may be asked to do the work of an individual on leave. However, if the position is to be filled, reasonable efforts will be made to fill it with temporary or casual/on-call personnel.

Is reinstatement guaranteed after a personal leave?
The University attempts to place employees returning from personal leave in the same or an equivalent position of employment. However, the University does not guarantee reinstatement at the end of a personal leave.

Can payments from accumulated benefit time be received during a personal leave?
While on personal leave, staff members may use or may be required to use accumulated benefit time. Salary payments stop when all accumulated benefit time has been used.

How does a personal leave affect insurance?
While employees are on approved personal leaves, the University continues payment of its share of group health, basic life, and long-term disability insurance premiums for the duration of the leave. The employee remains responsible for his or her share of insurance premiums while on leave. Failure to pay these premiums on time may result in the loss of insurance coverage.

The period during which the University continues to share benefit costs with employees shall be considered part of the eligibility period established by the Congressional Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 and later Amendments for the purpose of continuation of health insurance benefits.

How are personal leaves related to termination of employment?
Employment may be terminated if:

- The individual resigns
- The individual fails to report for work when not on leave
- No position is available when the employee is able to or desires to return to work
- At the time the individual is able to return to work, no position acceptable to the employee is available and he or she refuses the position offered, or a disabled employee with accommodations (that are not an undue burden) is unable to perform the essential functions of the job or to perform his or her duties without endangering the health and safety of the employee or of others.

What alternatives are there to taking a personal leave?
Staff members may request a temporary reduction in hours as an alternative to personal leave. The request may be approved by the department director in consultation with the appropriate vice president, taking into consideration departmental work load and staffing levels. Pay and benefits are adjusted as is appropriate for the change in hours.

**How may decisions about leaves be appealed?**
Administrative decisions relating to leaves of absence may be appealed through the problem-solving procedures available to employees.

**II. Responsible Official and Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation**

Responsible Official: Vice President for Administration
Key Office: Human Resources

See also:
- Benefit Time Policy
- Family/Medical Leaves
- Short-Term Disability
- Procedures for Personal or Professional/Educational Leaves of Absence.

**Policy History**
Clerical Change: January 24, 2018
Supersedes:
- Policy No. 420-94, Personal/Family Leaves
- Policy Memoranda No. 401-82 and No. 420-93
- Re-employment Rights of Disabled Employee
- Short-Term Disability Leave
- Leave of Absence Without Salary