

Armstrong Atlantic State University

Sick Leave Pool for Faculty and Staff

Purpose

To establish a policy for a voluntary sick leave pool for full-time and part-time benefits-eligible AASU employees.

Objective

To allow AASU employees to contribute their unused sick leave to a pool, and, upon depletion of their own sick AND annual leave, draw leave credits from the pool.

Duration

The sick leave pool established by this procedure shall automatically continue at the end of each fiscal year.

Definitions

Physician – a physician licensed by his/her respective state.

Catastrophic personal injury or illness – a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of an employee and has had a major impact on life functions.

Procedure

The President shall appoint two AASU faculty members and two staff members who have elected to participate in the pool to serve as the pool's committee. Each member will be appointed to serve alternating two-year terms. A fifth member shall be appointed each year by and from the membership of the Staff Advisory Council to serve for one year. Each term will commence on July 1st and end on June 30th.

If a member of the pool committee becomes ineligible or unable to continue as a member of the committee, the President shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term of a presidential appointee. The Staff Advisory Council shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term of a Staff Advisory Council appointee.

The University's Director of Human Resources shall serve as pool administrator and shall:

- Be responsible for maintenance of accurate and complete records relative to all functions of the pool;
- Ensure that the establishment of internal procedures is in accordance with University System of Georgia policies and
- Have the authority to implement the decisions of the Sick Leave Pool Committee.

The duties of the Sick Leave Pool Committee and the administrator shall be as described in the appropriate statutes and rules.

Policy Provisions

The provisions of this policy do not extend to conditions affecting anyone other than the pool member.

Membership

The sick leave pool policy applies to all full-time and part-time benefits-eligible AASU employees, who

are employed continuously for at least one year with the University. An exception to the one-year requirement can be made if an employee has transferred from another position within the University System of Georgia with the requisite number of sick leave hours for joining the pool.

Participation in the pool is voluntary.

Full-time benefits-eligible employees must have accumulated at least 64 hours of unused sick leave at the time of enrollment. Part-time benefits-eligible employees must have accumulated at least 32 hours of sick leave at the time of enrollment.

Upon enrollment, full-time members shall contribute 16 hours of sick leave; part-time members shall contribute 8 hours of sick leave.

Enrollment

An employee who meets the above requirements and wishes to be a member of the sick leave pool shall submit an AASU Sick Leave Pool Open Enrollment Application to the administrator of the pool during the open enrollment period or upon employment with AASU if the exception stated under the "Membership" section has been met.

Enrollment in the sick leave pool shall only be allowed during the open enrollment periods conducted during the months of October and November of each year or at other times established by the sick leave pool committee.

No employee shall be denied membership in the sick leave pool if the membership criteria are met.

A participating employee shall not be allowed to donate to the pool any unused or unpaid sick leave from the employee's personal account at the time of separation from AASU, including retirement.

Should membership drop below 50 employees, the pool shall become inactive. At such time as the pool becomes inactive, the remaining leave shall be divided among the remaining members with part-time employees receiving one-half the amount of full-time employees. If at least 50 employees enroll during the following open enrollment period, the pool shall be reactivated.

Pool Depletion

A balance of less than 120 hours in the pool will constitute depletion.

Full-time participants shall contribute 8 hours of unused sick leave each time the pool is depleted; part-time participants shall contribute 4 hours of sick leave each time the pool is depleted.

Upon depletion, the pool members will be notified at least five (5) business days in advance that 8 hours of sick leave credit for full time employees and 4 hours for part-time employees will be deducted from their personal sick leave account.

Eligibility

Only participating employees who require hospitalization or extended medical care as the result of any catastrophic personal injury or illness which exhausts all of their accrued personal sick, annual, and compensatory leave credits and which results in serious or major medical or health problems, may request to utilize leave credits from the pool. The provisions of this policy do not extend to conditions affecting anyone other than the pool member.

Utilization

All applications to use sick leave pool credits shall be made in writing by, or for, the employee to the sick leave pool administrator, and shall be accompanied by a completed Physician Certification Form that documents the illness or injury.

Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received, and a response will be mailed to the applicant's address on file in the Office of Human Resources within ten (10) business days from the date of application.

A majority vote of the sick leave pool committee shall be required for determination of the number of hours to be granted to the requesting employee and so delivers the decision(s) to the administrator.

Sick leave from the pool shall be used only for the employee's personal illness or injury.

A participating employee who withdraws sick leave hours from the pool shall not be required to replace those hours.

The number of hours a member can withdraw from the pool will be determined by the employee's highest personal sick leave balance during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding his/her request.

For an employee who has not been a member for twelve (12) continuous months, the highest accrual since joining the pool will determine potential usage.

During a twelve (12) month period, beginning with the date the pool is first used, an employee will be eligible to use one day from the pool for each day of personal sick leave accrued, as outlined above, up to a maximum of 480 hours.

An employee who has less than 120 hours accrued shall be able to use a maximum of 120 hours from the pool.

An employee utilizing the sick leave pool will continue to accrue leave; once accrued, personal sick, annual and compensatory leave must be exhausted before using any additional days from the sick leave pool.

An employee using leave credits from the pool is obligated to report any changes in health status to the Director of Human Resources. For example, an employee who is awarded sick leave from the pool and does not need to use all of the allotment shall return the unused portion to the pool.

The estate of an employee, who is awarded sick leave credits and dies before exhausting the allotment, shall not be entitled to any compensation for unused leave credits from the pool. Upon the death of an employee, the pool administrator shall return any unused leave credits from the pool back to the pool.

Termination of Membership

An employee may withdraw from the pool at any time by sending a written request for withdrawal to the Director of Human Resources. Any leave contributed to the pool prior to withdrawal shall be forfeited.

When a participating employee withdraws the maximum number of hours for which he/she is eligible, his/her membership in the pool will automatically terminate. The maximum withdrawal amount during a calendar year is 480 hours. To re-enroll, the employee will be subject to the initial enrollment requirements for membership.

When a sick leave pool member is eligible for workers' compensation benefits, he/she shall not be granted sick leave pool credits.

Alleged abuse of sick leave pool credits shall be investigated by the administrator and, if warranted, the participating employee shall repay all sick leave drawn from the pool and may have his/her membership in the pool terminated by a majority vote of the committee. In addition, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's disciplinary procedures.

Confidentiality

Any medical information forwarded to the pool administrator and committee shall remain confidential. Applicants acknowledge the right of the pool administrator to review the medical documentation. Applicant names will be removed from applications prior to review by the committee, so the applicant will be anonymous to the committee.

Administration of Policy

The Office of Human Resources shall be responsible for:

- Interpreting policy and recommending changes to policy;
- Obtaining approval for sick leave pool procedures;
- Designing and implementing a records maintenance system;
- Maintaining sick leave pool records;
- Ensuring that contributions and withdrawals are conducted according to policy;
- Communicating sick leave pool program policies and operating procedures to employees;
- Interpreting procedures and rules;
- Ensuring that a decision in response to an application is mailed within ten (10) business days from the date of application.
- Approving withdrawals from the sick leave pool and
- Ensuring that all employees eligible for participation in the sick leave pool program are treated equitably according to established procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca N. Carroll, Director of Human Resources, 912.927.5267.