



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 4.6701

DIVISION: Finance and Administration

TITLE: Educational Leave of Absence

DATE: September 2, 1997

REVISED: March 27, 2024

Policy for: All Full-Time Non-Faculty Employees

Authorized by: Department of Human Resources

I. Purpose and Scope

In promoting our educational mission, Western Kentucky University encourages employees to take advantage of opportunities available for personal growth and professional development. The University offers several benefit programs and offers pay rewards for educational achievements. Employees, dependent children, and spouses are eligible for tuition scholarships for courses taken at WKU. Employees who complete degrees and/or receive certificates or licensure (from Western or another institution) are rewarded with pay.

II. Policy

1. An unpaid educational leave of absence may be granted to a full-time regular employee for a period of up to one (1) year at the discretion of the appropriate department head and upon approval through administrative channels. Leave will only be granted in cases where course work is considered to be related to the employee's current position.
2. For each leave request the department head shall consider the individual circumstances, including the impact the leave will have on the department, the specialization of the position, and the practicality of replacing the employee for the period of the leave. The leave will not be granted unless the employee intends to return to work at the University at the expiration of the leave period. The employee must be willing to return to employment for the same period of time as leave granted.

3. Upon return, the employee will be placed in his/her previous position or a comparable position at the same salary he/she was making at the time the leave period originated. In cases where unit reorganization and/or job elimination may have occurred, the employee returning from leave will be treated as similarly situated employees.
4. During an approved educational leave, the employee may continue his/her benefits by paying both the employee and employer's share of benefit cost. Retirement contributions will not be paid to KERS or KTRS for an educational leave of absence. However, the employee may purchase retirement credit by paying both the employee's and employer's share of contributions. Contact should be made with the Department of Human Resources for benefit arrangements prior to commencing an educational leave.

III. Procedure

1. Employees may apply for an unpaid educational leave by letter to the appropriate department head.
2. If the leave is approved by the department head, an Electronic Personnel Action Form should be prepared with the employee's letter attached and forwarded through administrative channels for approval or disapproval.
3. Upon the employee's return from leave, the department head should prepare an Electronic Personnel Action Form indicating that the employee is returning from leave so that the employee can be returned to the payroll.

IV. Exclusions

V. Related Policies

See also:

VI. Reason for Revision

March 27, 2024 – Revisions made to update correct title of form and remove outdated title, plus add clarification on use of an “Electronic Personnel Action” Form.

Appendices: