FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about ADMINISTRATIVE EXCEPTION TIME

Background

As a College employee, you are accountable for the time you are away (exception time) during your regularly scheduled work day. Vacation time is generally scheduled in advance, however, use of sick time is often unexpected and variable depending on the situation. You and your supervisor most likely have worked out a way for you to advise each other about your time off and/or need to be absent. In Human Resources we have learned that different departments handle absences in very different ways; in some cases, different managers within the same department handle absences in different ways.

The College appreciates the work of all employees and wants employees to understand their rights to time away from work for personal, family, community and other outside needs or obligations. At the same time, it is necessary to insure that ALL employees are treated fairly and consistently in dealing with time away from work for a wide variety of reasons. Time away from work must be approved and recorded in a manner that is in compliance with state and federal regulations and protects the interests of both the College and its employees.

Exempt employees are paid an established monthly salary and are expected to fulfill the duties of the position regardless of the number of hours worked. Exempt employees are "exempt" from overtime compensation and are not required to adhere to the strict time recordkeeping and attendance rules that are required for support staff. However, an exempt employee is expected to work an established work schedule according to his/her FTE (e.g., a minimum of 40 hours for an FTE = 1.0; a minimum of 32 hours for an FTE = 0.8; etc.) and meet expectations for attendance. We hope that exception time recording will assist all managers in viewing absences in a similar fashion.

Why must administrative staff begin recording exception time now?

For a decade, administrative employees have been recording one kind of exception time – vacation time. Now we are asking you to record other kinds of exception time to comply with new policies and state and federal regulations.

Some absences for your own serious illness or illness of a child, spouse or parent are eligible for the protection of the federal and state Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Human Resources must send eligibility and rights and responsibilities notices for FMLA absences within five days. In order to comply, your manager and Human Resources must understand when and why you are out.

Our enhanced Disability policy and program which will be rolled out 1/1/2014 requires the College and employees to indicate the date a disability begins, so it is imperative that employees record their days away from work due to illness or injury (SICK time). More information on the disability program will be available later this year. Administrative staff must record exception time so that they may reap the enhanced benefits of the new disability program.

Besides sick and vacation time, why do I have to record other absences?

Employees may be out of the office for all sorts of reasons. Probably you and your manager have already worked out how you accomplish your work despite absences. We ask you to record other kinds of absences since they do not really fall in the realm of sick OR vacation. For example, if you need to stay
home to care for an ill child for a day or two, it is really not a vacation and you can use Maine Family Care time (which is deducted from your absence or sick bank). You may need to be away from work for an unplanned personal emergency. Other examples which are not sick or vacation time include: jury duty, bereavement, and military leave. Please refer to the Administrative Staff TimePro® Pay Type Codes and Descriptions for a full list of administrative exception time.

Support staff has had the full advantage of Maine Family Care Act time and Personal Emergency time deducted from their SICK banks for several years. With exception time recording, these benefits will be available to administrative staff as well.

**Why do I need to enter my hours as vacation or absence when I am out of the office for less than four hours at a time?**

We used to only report time away in increments of half or full day increments so why are you asking me to report in hours now?

The new absence management policy provides generous absence banks. Recording time used in hours may actually help you conserve time. For example, if you were away from work for 6 hours, it makes the most sense to record that you were away for 6 hours rather than a whole day. Also, intermittent Family Medical Leave time may be taken in increments as short as one (1) hour so it makes sense to record exception time in hours.

**Where and when will I record my exception time?**

Support staff at the College currently use web based TimePro® to record their attendance. Many administrators serve as TimePro® approvers for support staff time records and are familiar with the program. We are rolling out a new administrative version of TimePro® to record exception time. It is similar to the version support staff use, but only requires you to record the day and the amount of time you were out. Administrative staff will log in at least once a month by a set date and time prior to the payroll processing to record time away from work. Your manager will be approving your time records by a set date and time, too.
Why is exception time recorded in hours?

Our TimePro® system records exception time in hours but does not require you to enter TIME IN/OUT, simply the number of hours. FMLA time may be used intermittently in time periods as short as an hour. The use of SICK TIME to attend a medical appointment may only require you to be away from work for an hour or two. It made the most sense to have the “hour” be our measure of exception time rather than “day” or “half day.”

Speak with your manager about how to record your time if you are away for a short while that is not typical.

How does SICK time accrue?

All full-time administrative employees will accrue SICK time at the rate of one (1) day or 8 hours per month. When you attain the maximum number of sick hours (480 hours), accruals will cease until your balance dips below 480 hours. Employees who work less than full time accrue SICK time on a prorated basis depending on their FTE.

How did Human Resources determine my current SICK time balance?

Current full-time administrative employees who have been at the College for more than one year will have 480 hours (60 days) added into their banks. Current administrative employees in their first year of employment will have 240 hours (30 days) added to their SICK bank and will accrue more SICK time each month. Employees who work less than full time will have pro-rated accruals and balances.

How does VACATION time accrue?

Currently full-time administrative staff members receive 20 days of vacation each year in quarterly accruals of 5 days (part time employees receive a prorated amount). Going forward, your VACATION accrual will be added to your bank each month. Full time employees will receive 1.66 days (13.33 hours) per month at the beginning of the month (to be reported in the previous month’s paycheck). For example, the 13.33 hours accrual for the month of July will appear as an accrual on your June earnings statement and will be reflected in your June balance as well.

This method of vacation accrual will benefit all employees who are at or near their maximum balance (40 days or 320 hours for full-time employees). Instead of losing the full quarterly accrual, employees will only lose one month’s accrual (i.e., 1.66 days or 13.33 hours of vacation for full-time employees).

How did Human Resources determine my current VACATION balance?

All administrative staff members were asked to report their anticipated use of vacation time for June by June 15, 2013. Human Resources used this number of days and converted it to hours (1 day x 8 hrs in a day) to arrive at your current balance. The maximum VACATION balance an employee may carry is twice the annual accrual (e.g., a full time employee may only keep 40 days (320 hours) as a maximum balance). Employees who have less than full time schedules will have prorated maximum balances.

How will I know how much SICK and VACATION time I have used and what my balances are?

You will be able to view information about your SICK and VACATION time on your earnings statement available through HRforYOU. The SPECIAL INFORMATION section on the top right of the statement will show accruals, usage, and current balances for both SICK and VACATION.
There may be some additional information in the Special Information section of your check. In this example, FID-EMPLOYER displays the College’s contribution to this employee’s Bowdoin College Retirement Account. GTL refers to the value of group term life insurance greater than $50,000 for this employee.

The HRforYOU Vacation Report (Personal Information/Reports/Vacation History) will still be available but the balances will be incorrect. Eventually we will remove this report from the HRforYOU site.

**Who do I contact if I think there is a mistake with my current balances of SICK or VACATION time?**

Please contact Cindy Bessmer (cbessmer@bowdoin.edu, x3911) if you believe an error has been made in determining your SICK or VACATION usage or balances.

**What if I forget to record my exception time during a month?**

You will be responsible for recording your exception time each month by 10:00 am on the dates listed in the TimePro® Schedule. We recommend that you log in weekly to accurately remember and record time away. Your manager may also request that you submit your time several days before the final due date to ascertain timely approval of your records. It is required that you make an entry if you did not take any time at all. In this case you will use Pay Code = Zip. Your manager is responsible for approving the exception time you entered by noon on the dates listed in the TimePro® schedule. Payroll and/or Human Resources will contact your manager if your exception time is not approved. Your manager will contact you if your exception time is not recorded at all. Payroll will have an online adjustment form to record exception time that was not recorded appropriately by the TimePro® Schedule closing date.

**Why doesn’t the 2013 TimePro® Schedule of Exception Time Reporting Date include the last week of the month in most cases?**

Administrative employees are paid once a month on the last business day of the month. The payroll is actually processed four days before pay day. To insure that your earnings statement reflects the most current usage, balance, and accruals, the date to record your exception time and have it approved must fall before the payroll is processed. The 2013 TimePro® Schedule for Recording Administrative Staff Exception Time lists pay days and the specific weeks to be included in your exception time recording by the deadline date and time. The week(s) of the month not included will be included in your next month’s recording of exception time.
How does my recording of exception time affect my monthly paycheck?

As an administrative employee, exempt from overtime, you receive 1/12 of your annual salary every month on the last business day of the month. This will not change when you begin recording exception time, but Human Resources and your managers will be better able to understand any absences away from your office during regularly scheduled work time that might affect compliance with federal and state FMLA regulations or disability waiting periods.

Do I still use the Administrative Vacation Report each month to record vacation time I used in the previous month?

No, you will no longer need to submit the online form for vacation. This action will be replaced by logging into TimePro® to record ALL of your exception time, including any vacation, by the exception reporting due date.

Why do I have to add a record in weeks when I did not use any time at all?

We had several issues with the current Administrative Vacation Report. The instructions did not make it clear that employees should submit the report every month even if no vacation time was used. Sometimes the reports were submitted to the manager but never made it all the way to HR. Sometimes employees submitted multiple forms months after they were due. If HR did not receive a form, we were uncertain whether the employee did not take any vacation time at all or forgot to record that (s)he took vacation. By indicating you did not use any exception time (using the pay type code ZIP), it makes it clear to your manager and HR that you did not forget to log in to record your time.

How do I log into TimePro® to record my own exception time?

Check out the link to RECORD time at the bottom of the RESOURCE page.

Please do not hesitate to contact Cindy Bessmer (x3911 or cbessmer@bowdoin.edu) with your questions, comments and concerns.