

USAC Web Submission

July 2024

Idea/Question: Follow-up question regarding answer on short-term disability and sick leave for new employees.

Rationale/Reason: Why are pre-existing conditions excluded from the ST disability policy as this goes against the Affordable Care Act. Realizing disability policies are not health insurance, shouldn't all employees have access to the ST disability policy or at least a bank of sick leave pool to use so that they don't have to go without care for a health condition?

Response: Employee Short-Term and Long-Term Disability plans are not subject to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Our current STD plan does not have a general waiting period for new employees, which allows us to offer immediate coverage to employees unless they have a pre-existing condition. However, to maintain this level of accessibility and to manage the cost of these plans, the University includes a one-year waiting period for coverage of pre-existing conditions. All employees begin to accrue both sick and vacation time within their first month of employment and those days are available for use in the event of an absence.

Idea/Question: Summer Schedules

Rationale/Reason: Many universities have shortened workdays (e.g. 4 pm) or half-day Fridays (e.g., William and Mary) during the summer to allow employees much-needed time for well-being. This is not flex time but is university wide for all employees. Has UR ever given this consideration?

Response: This idea is not currently under consideration. Our campus serves a varied set of constituents, including current and prospective students, current and prospective employees, community visitors, etc. During the summer, we have classes in session with approximately 200 students on campus, we host summer programs, summer camps, and more. A university-wide full or half-day shutdown on Fridays would not be able to be implemented fairly and consistently across all employee groups and would limit the access to campus that we look to offer the community. With that said, many units do experience quieter periods on Fridays during the summer. We encourage employees and supervisors to work together to balance operational needs while allowing staff to leverage vacation or flex time to adjust summer schedules whenever possible. For other groups, like Facilities/Construction, the summer can be a very active part of the year.

Idea/Question: Clarification of sick leave policy for family members

Rationale/Reason: In the last web submission, it was stated that staff can use sick leave to care for parents, spouses, and children. What about siblings? It is not uncommon for siblings to have no family especially with elderly (or deceased parents). Does FMLA need to be completed if the care is more than 3 consecutive days? What if a caregiver needs to take their parent once per month (or every 2-3

months) for appointments or treatments and they leave out of town? Are FMLA forms required for this as well?

Response: The University allows sick leave to be used for the same family members permitted by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), children, spouses, and parents. We understand employees may need to take time off to care for others: siblings, partners, aunts, uncles, good friends, etc. An employee's vacation time may be requested for these instances. If there is no vacation balance, employees may request leave without pay.

Consistent with FMLA required administration, an employee should file an FMLA claim with New York Life if they need to be absent from work for three or more consecutive days or for intermittent leave for one of the following:

- a serious health condition
- to care for the employee's child after birth, adoption, or the state placement of a child with the employee for foster care. No intermittent leave is available for birth, foster care placement, or adoption events.
- to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition
- for any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status.

Idea/Question: Vacancy Stipends

Rationale/Reason: Something I've seen becoming more common at other organizations are vacancy stipends where employees are given additional money when asked to cover another person's role in addition to their own. When a person on the team leaves, typically one or more people are asked to cover their job. While it may be believed that this won't add extra hours to these people's work weeks, that is rarely the case and the rest of the team tends to work additional hours at no extra pay (if salaried), potentially leading to additional burnout and turnover. From a budget perspective, money is being saved from the person who leaves salary so the vacancy stipend is not putting un-due budget pressure on any department - it is simply redistributing a portion of that salary savings to those covering for the person who is out. I'm wondering if this is something we could explore as an added benefit so as not to burn out the remaining team members who are left and at least give them some incentive to cover for others. This could also be valuable in times of parental or medical leave where a person might only be gone for a short term basis but others are expected to cover their responsibilities on top of their own responsibilities.

Response: Our current policies allow managers to evaluate the impact of vacancies on current staff and determine whether interim pay or a bonus might be appropriate.

Please see the link to the to the policy:

https://policy.richmond.edu/documents/policy-pdfs/Public/HR/additional_compensation_for_staff.pdf

Within the roles and responsibilities section of the HR website under the compensation section, it helps clarify the role both managers and employees can play:

Managers and Supervisors: Understand the career, compensation, and performance management philosophy and policies, communicate effectively on matters relating to career and compensation, partner with HR to deliver consistent practices. Actively participate in the University's performance feedback and development program.

Employees: Understand the career, compensation, and performance management philosophy and policies, and ask questions to managers and supervisors when clarification is needed. Actively participate in the University's performance feedback and development process.