



OU Staff Handbook

(Document Updated 3/18/2024)

1.0- Handbook Introduction

The University of Oklahoma provides this Staff Handbook in an effort to educate current and prospective employees as to the relevant laws, policies, and procedures that govern interactions between the institution and the employee. The University values its relationship with its employees and strives to create and maintain a positive working environment.

1.1 Handbook Usage

The Staff Handbook summarizes University of Oklahoma policies and procedures for current and prospective staff employees. In some sections of the Staff Handbook you will find summaries with references to the University of Oklahoma Regents' Policy Manual or applicable state or federal statutes. Every effort has been made to present the key elements of these summaries accurately, but the actual policies, procedures, or laws are to be consulted as the authoritative source of information, as they may provide more detail and are themselves subject to independent review and revision. Policies and procedures summarized in this handbook have been approved by the President and/or the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma. Given the breadth and variety of different staff positions at the University, additional policies and operating procedures not detailed in the Staff Handbook may be implemented at the departmental level. Those procedures should be communicated and consistent with the Staff Handbook.

This Staff Handbook shall apply to all covered situations from the time of its adoption. The University reserves the right to change this Staff Handbook at any time, and any alterations, eliminations, or additions shall apply from the time of their adoption. New and revised policies approved by the President and/or the Board of Regents may be added, substituted, summarized, and/or cross-referenced without separate requirement for amendment of the Staff Handbook. The official copy of the Staff Handbook is available in Human Resources and on its website at WWW.HR.OU.EDU. Should any provision of the Staff Handbook require interpretation, the department responsible for implementing that particular procedure or provision will issue the interpretation. The Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) is responsible for interpreting personnel policy sections of this handbook. All references to the CHRO or responsible administrator shall include that person's designee.

This handbook is not a contract and is not intended to create any contractual rights in favor of either the university or the employee. The State of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma are at-will employers. An employment relationship, therefore, may be terminated at the will of the employee as well as by the employer. Although policies and procedures have been established to provide guidance for university administrators and employees, the policies herein shall not be construed to limit or abrogate the rights of the University of Oklahoma.

1.2 The University Overview

Created by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature in 1890, the University of Oklahoma is a doctoral degree-granting research university serving the educational, cultural, economic, and healthcare needs of the state, region, and nation. Over time, the University has experienced tremendous growth. The Norman campus serves as home to the majority of the University's academic programs except health-related fields. The OU Health Sciences Center, which is located in Oklahoma City, is one of the nation's few comprehensive academic health centers. Both the Norman and Health Sciences Center colleges offer programs at the Schusterman Center, the site of OU-Tulsa. Other research and study facilities are found in multiple locations in Oklahoma, other states, and internationally.

2.0 University Government and Administration

2.1 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

The University of Oklahoma is part of a state-wide educational program called the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education. Having been established by constitutional authority in 1941, the state system is younger than the University of Oklahoma and is made up of all institutions of higher education supported wholly or partially by legislative appropriations. The coordinating body, called the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, is composed of nine members. Following appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the State Senate, members serve nine-year terms. One member of the board is replaced each year. Responsibilities of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education include setting standards of higher education (including requirements for the admission of students), determining the functions and courses of study at each institution, granting degrees and other forms of academic recognition, recommending higher education's funding needs to the legislature, allocating state appropriations to individual institutions, and determining the fees of all institutions of the system.

2.2 The Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

By constitutional authority, the governance of the University is vested in the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma. The Board is composed of seven members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Oklahoma Senate. Each member serves a seven-year term unless appointed to fill an unexpired term. One member is replaced each year. The powers and duties of the board are set out in Oklahoma's constitution and statutes (Article XIII, Section 8, Constitution of Oklahoma; Title 70, Section 3301, et seq, Oklahoma Statutes).

2.3 Administrative Organization

The administrative organization exists to provide leadership and to facilitate University of Oklahoma goals, objectives, and services. As an operating philosophy, the University's purposes can best be achieved in an atmosphere of shared governance, mutual planning and implementation of decisions, and the recognition and encouragement of contributions by members of the University community.

2.4 President

As the chief executive and academic officer of the University, the President is responsible to the Board of Regents of the University for the administration of the institution. All authority delegated by the Regents is administered through the President, who may in turn delegate responsibility and authority to other University administrative officials.

[2.1.1.1 Staff Senates](#)

2.6 Councils and Committees

A system of councils and committees is essential to the University's operation. They are basic to a collegial environment and assure participation by all segments of the University community in the interest of achieving institutional goals and objectives. They also serve to keep the faculty and staff advised of current issues, utilize the unique talents and expertise available on the campuses, and provide interaction among faculty, students, staff, and administrators.

Councils and committees are given clearly stated assignments in writing, and they are asked to give periodic reports to their constituencies. The committee structure of the institution is kept flexible and is subject to periodic review and revision. A current listing of councils and committees, their assignments, and their membership is available in the Office of the President. Councils make recommendations to the President on policy and programs in areas of vital significance to the functioning of the University as an educational institution as well as in special extracurricular areas that require the attention of the full representation of the University community. Certain councils are created by the Board of Regents, some are created by the President, and others are established upon recommendation of the Faculty and Staff Senates and approval by the President.

Standing committees provide the President and other members of the administration with advice and assistance regarding areas of University activity that are important to the fulfillment of an educational mission but are of less fundamental significance than the areas of council concern. Administrative advisory committees are established by officers of the University for subjects not covered by the council or standing committee structure. These committees are composed of members selected by the establishing official. The number and purposes of these committees are regularly reviewed by the President.

Task forces are established from time to time as ad hoc committees designed to accomplish a specific purpose. Members of a task force are selected by the appointing body or officer. Dissolution occurs when the assigned task is completed or at the discretion of the appointing body or officer. Administrative search committees are formed to assist in the selection of the President, Senior Vice President and Provosts, vice presidents, provosts, vice provosts, and academic deans. Search committees may also be used in the search for any other unique positions.

Human Resources Policies – Section 7 of OU Policy and Procedure Manual

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Additional Staff Handbook Policies

Non-Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination & Harassment Policies

[15.1.1.1 Non-Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination & Harassment Policies](#)

Key Policy

Visit the Facilities Management webpage to read the OU Key Policy:

https://www.ou.edu/facilities/services/custodial_services/lock_shop_services

Conflict of Interest Policy

[Norman Conflict of Interest policy](#)

[Health Sciences Center Conflict of Interest policy](#)

Consensual Sexual Relationships Policy

[15.1.1, Consensual Sexual Relationships Policy, Formerly policy 3.2.9](#)

Grievance Procedure for Equal Opportunity

[15.1.1, Grievance Procedure for Equal Opportunity, Formerly policy 3.2.10](#)

University Ombuds Service

[15.1.1, University Ombuds Service, Formerly Staff Handbook policy 5.26](#)

The University Ombudsperson serves employees on the Norman campus in the areas of dispute resolution and mediation of campus-related issues. The Ombudsperson also provides information about employee dispute resolution procedures and the administrative appeals process.

Communicable Disease Policy

[Communicable Disease Policy, Formerly Staff Handbook policy 5.27](#)

Advertising and Promotion Policy

11.1.2.1, Formerly BOR Section 3.4.2, FHPN 5.18.1, FHPHSC 5.24

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=361&public=true>

University Name, Logos, Other Identifying Marks, and Seal Policy

11.1.3.1, Formerly BOR Policy Section 3.4.5

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=168&public=true>

Use of State Vehicles for Private Purposes

6.6.1.2, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.11

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=259&public=true>

Texting Policy

6.6.1.5, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.11.1

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=265&public=true>

Liability Insurance Policy

6.6.1.4, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.12

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=261&public=true>

Personal Vehicle Use Policy

6.6.1.1, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.12.1

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=258&public=true>

Leased/Rented Vehicles Policy

6.6.1.3, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.12.2

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=260&public=true>

Travel Reimbursement Policy

6.3.4.2, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.13

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=254&public=true>

University of Oklahoma Tobacco-Free Policy

1.1.1.3, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.18

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=154&public=true>

Reasonable Accommodations Policy

13.2.3.1, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.24

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=48&public=true>

Bicycle Policy

3.2.2.2, Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 5.30

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=266&public=true>

Required Athlete Agent Disclosure

10.2.1.1, Formerly Staff Handbook policy 5.3.1

<https://universityok.navexone.com/content/dotNet/documents/?docid=264&public=true>

Employee Financial Obligations

Formerly Staff Handbook policy 5.28

Employees, including student employees of the University, shall be required to pay all outstanding financial obligations due the University in accordance with the due dates established for such obligations. Those who do not pay their past due financial obligations as indicated on the billing statement will be subject to the University's collection processes, including paying any collections costs. The administration is directed to establish procedures at the Norman, Tulsa, and Health Sciences Center campuses to provide the means for the University to gain access to funds to which it is entitled.

Norman Campus Procedure:

Communication of Policy

Employees should be informed of this policy at the time of their appointment and at the time they purchase goods and services from University departments.

Determination of Account Status

University departments selling goods or services to University employees are responsible for determining the ability of the employee to pay. Prior to the provision of goods or services to an employee, the selling department should access the University's accounts receivable system to determine if the employee is past due on any University charges. Based upon the status of the

employee's account, the selling department shall make a managerial decision as to whether or not to sell goods and services to the employee.

Collection Procedures

For purposes of implementing this policy, the following account-aging guidelines shall apply: Charges appearing on a Bursar statement for the first time are considered to be Current charges. Charges are considered to be 30 Days Past Due if they are outstanding on the second Bursar statement. Charges are considered to be 60 Days Past Due if they are outstanding on the third Bursar statement. Charges are considered to be 90 Day Past Due if they are outstanding on the fourth Bursar statement. Monthly, after the mailing of the Bursar statements, the Bursar's Office will identify University employees with outstanding charges that are 90 or more days past due. Excluded from this process are student employees (including graduate assistants) who are paying their accounts in accordance with the University's tuition and fee payment plan, or who have made alternative payment arrangements. The accounts will be referred to University Collections, a division of Legal Counsel.

Overpayments

Any University employee who receives an overpayment through his or her payroll for whatever reason (e.g., termination of employment, overestimate of hours, or clerical error) will be responsible for repaying all amounts owed, including any collection costs and/or tax consequences that result from the overpayment. However, if it is determined that the department is responsible for the error that resulted in an overpayment, the department shall bear the associated collection costs.

Health Sciences Center Procedure:

Communication of Policy

Employees should be informed of this policy at the time of their appointment.

Collection Procedures

For purposes of implementing this policy, the following account-aging guidelines will apply to accounts turned over to the HSC Bursar's Office for collection. Charges appearing on a billing statement for the first time are considered to be Current charges. Charges are considered to be 30 Days Past Due if they are outstanding on the second billing statement. Charges are considered to be 60 Days Past Due if they are outstanding on the third billing statement. Charges are considered to be 90 Days Past Due if they are outstanding on the fourth billing statement.

Each month after the billing statements are mailed, the Bursar's Office will identify University employee accounts with outstanding charges that are 90 or more days past due. Excluded from this process are student employees (including graduate assistants) who are paying their accounts in accordance with the University's tuition and fee payment plan, or who have made alternative payment arrangements with the Bursar's Office.

The Bursar's Office will send a letter to each employee identified above requiring immediate payment in full. If the employee does not pay the outstanding debt in full, the Bursar's Office will follow its normal procedure for collection accounts, including, but not limited to, referral to University Collections, a division of Legal Counsel.

Overpayments

Any University employee who receives an overpayment through his or her payroll for whatever reason (e.g., termination of employment, overestimate of hours, or clerical error) will be responsible for repaying all amounts owed, including any collection costs and/or tax consequences that result from the overpayment. However, if it is determined that the department is responsible for the error that resulted in an overpayment, the department shall bear the associated collection costs.

Media Sanitization and Electronic Data Disposal Policy

Formerly Staff Handbook policy 5.31

When declaring electronic devices or media (computers, copy machines which store data, hard drives, floppy diskettes, CDs, DVDs, flash drives, tapes, cell phones, mobile devices, etc.) as excess, departments must ensure that all electronic data contained on these items is disposed properly and not vulnerable to theft or electronic compromise. This is called media sanitization or electronic data disposal.

According to the Information Technology policy definitions document, sensitive data include but are not limited to social security numbers; driver's license or state ID card numbers; any financial account numbers; any credit or debit card numbers; any security code, access code, or password; any health-related data; and any critical infrastructure details. Media sanitization/electronic data disposal comprises all actions necessary to protect data on surplus or end-of-life University-owned media from unauthorized access.

Prior to electronic data disposal, a department should ensure compliance with any known Legal Hold Notices and records-retention requirements for data contained on the media by consulting with designated OU officials (e.g., Open Records Act Officer, Legal Counsel, records retention officers, or departmental or University privacy officers). Following disposal, departments must maintain a disposal record for each item. The record should detail the type of device or media, date, disposal method, and the final disposition of the media (sold, recycled, returned, etc.). The full Media Sanitization and Electronic Data Disposal Policy and other policy documents; as well as, more information about data classification, can be found on the Information Technology Website for each campus:

Norman Campus: <https://www.ou.edu/ouit>

OUHSC Campus: <https://it.ouhsc.edu/>

OU Tulsa Campus: <https://www.ou.edu/tulsa/it>

Fraud Prevention, Reporting, and Whistleblower Protection Policy

The University prohibits fraudulent and dishonest behavior in the conduct of University business. It is the policy of the University to prevent, deter, and detect dishonest and fraudulent activities and consistently investigate suspected fraud. For the purposes of this policy, fraud is defined as the intentional, false representation or concealment of a material fact for the purpose of inducing another to act upon it. Fraudulent activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Misappropriation of University property or other fiscal irregularities;
- Intentional misrepresentation in, or forgery or inappropriate alteration of, any document used for University business, including, but not limited to: checks, promissory notes, or securities; purchasing and procurement materials; employee benefit or salary-related items such as time sheets, billings, claims, assignments, or changes in beneficiary; records relating to health; student-related items, such as grades, transcripts, loans, or fee/tuition documents; and
- Willful and unauthorized destruction of records, property, or equipment with the intent to conceal evidence of fraud, dishonest behavior, or irregularities in the conduct of University business.

Fraud detected or suspected by a University employee must be reported immediately to the University's Internal Audit or the University Fraud Reporting Hotline. University employees are prohibited from taking any retaliatory action against an individual for good faith reporting, or causing to be reported, suspected fraud. Any person who has been subjected to retaliation in violation of this policy should notify any of the following responsible offices: Internal Audit, Legal Counsel, the University President, or the Board of Regents. If confirmed, retaliation in violation of this policy shall result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The Chief Audit Executive shall be responsible for managing investigations in response to reports of fraud, except when a real or reasonably perceived conflict of interest could compromise the validity of an investigation, as determined by the President of the University or the Board of Regents, in consultation with the General Counsel. In cases where a report of fraud implicates specialized subject matter or an area in which the University has established investigatory or review procedures (e.g., Academic Integrity, Compliance, Ethics in Research, Institutional Equity), the matter should be referred accordingly unless, as determined by the Chief Audit Executive in consultation with the General Counsel, such a referral is not in the best interest of the University.

Investigations of suspected fraud shall, to the extent reasonably practicable and to the extent permitted by law, be conducted in a manner that protects both the participants in an investigation and the reputation of the person(s) who are the subject of an investigation. If an investigation reveals evidence that supports a finding of fraud, the investigative report shall be referred to the executive officer over the area, the President, and/or the Board of Regents for corrective action. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, disciplinary action against the perpetrator and/or adjustments to policies, procedures, or controls, or referral to law enforcement.

The Chief Audit Executive is empowered to 1) make recommendations to academic and administrative

units to promote fraud prevention and deterrence, 2) adopt procedures consistent with generally accepted standards of fraud investigation to govern its conduct of fraud investigations, 3) manage the appropriate referral of reports.

Income Tax Withholding

Formerly Staff Handbook Policy 4.4

Each employee, upon being hired, must complete an Employee's Withholding Certificate, Form W-4. The form, which the employee uses to identify for tax purposes the number of eligible exemptions, is also the means by which eligible employees can claim tax exemptions or withhold specified amounts.

Contact with Reporters

On occasion, reporters for print, broadcast, and emerging or social media contact University staff members directly instead of working through the University's Public Affairs Office. There is no objection to this procedure. However, any staff member who is contacted and either gives a statement to the press or arranges for a subsequent interview is requested to inform the Vice President for Public Affairs. This is an informational procedure only, and the cooperation of the staff is requested.

Computer Use Policy, Formerly Staff Handbook 5.8

Employees should make themselves aware of the University's Computer Use and other related communications policies located on the University's Information Technology website. To safeguard the University's network and all of its computer resources (the System), appropriate University discipline and or criminal and civil penalties may be sought and imposed for illegal or unauthorized use. To protect the integrity, reliability, and security of the System for lawful and authorized use, monitoring and auditing are necessary. By accessing the System, an employee expressly consents to these measures.

Should we also point employees to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#)?

Parking Regulations

Norman Campus

The Parking Office maintains and controls parking facilities on the University of Oklahoma Norman campus. The Parking Office is located on the first level of the Jenkins Avenue Parking Facility, 1332 Jenkins Ave. The University of Oklahoma Parking regulations are published annually and approved by the president for the Board of Regents for each academic year. The president of the university may revise, alter, or amend these regulations when conditions warrant. The regulations are required to be reviewed by each individual upon purchase of their parking permit and copies are available on the Parking Services

website at <https://www.ou.edu/parking>. An online Norman campus parking map is available on the Parking Services website at <https://www.ou.edu/parking>.

Health Sciences Center and OU Tulsa

Any employee or student who wishes to park a motor vehicle in any of the parking lots operated by the Health Sciences Center must have a parking permit and decal, which may be obtained by making application at the Health Sciences Center Parking Office. Any faculty, staff, or student who parks a personal motor vehicle in any of the lots on the Health Sciences Center, Tulsa campus, must complete a short form of vehicle identification and attach a small identification sticker to the vehicle(s). Additional information may be found in Parking: Policies and Procedures, which is available at the Parking Office.

Communication with State Officials

The proper channel through which recommendations concerning the policies and/or administration of the University, its governed entities as a whole, or any of its parts should be communicated to the legislature or other state officials is the President or the Board of Regents. Further, any official statement made on behalf of the Board to the public through the press or otherwise shall be made only by the chair of the Board, provided the President may publicly explain prior Board action as deemed necessary and proper. Nothing in the preceding subsection is intended to or should be construed to abridge the rights and privileges of regents to publicly express their personal opinions on any matter or to abridge constitutional rights of employees to comment on matters of public concern or to prohibit any other rights of communication established by law.

Intellectual Property Policy

Formerly Staff Handbook policy 3.14

The University's Intellectual Property Policy, which applies to faculty, staff, and applicable students, is listed in its entirety for Norman campus employees in the Norman Campus Faculty Handbook located on the Office of The Senior Vice President and Provost website. Policy subsections describe the policy specifics for patents, trademarks, and copyrights, respectively. Health Sciences Center employees can find this information in the Health Sciences Center Faculty Handbook on Office of The Senior Vice President and Provost website.