



Worcester State University  
Employee Handbook

**Worcester State University Employee Handbook**

**(Revised August 2024)**

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## Message from the University President



Dear Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to Worcester State University. It is a privilege to lead such an outstanding institution of higher learning. WSU is rated a "Best Value" college by the Princeton Review and is the only Massachusetts State University to earn a "Best in the Northeast" ranking for 12 consecutive years. Our sound liberal arts and sciences curriculum is led by gifted and talented faculty. You will find that there's no better place to use your knowledge and ambition to change the way the world works.

Our programs in biotechnology, nursing, occupational therapy, education, global studies and our new general education curriculum address the needs of Commonwealth employers with knowledge of concepts and new developments in science, technology and health care, teamwork skills, effective communication and awareness of global issues. Our faculty gathers annual data from employers to keep our curriculum relevant and engage our students in research across the curriculum—for graduate and undergraduate students alike. Our students and faculty contributed approximately 145,000 hours of service to the greater community last year. I'm proud that our students are learning by doing.

We've been a part of the fabric of our communities since our founding in 1874. Our collaborations with partners in education, health care, business, the non-profit sector and cultural institutions have strengthened us and the community we serve. Our strategic alliance with the Worcester Center for Crafts is an example of the kind of partnerships that exemplify our innovation.

The student is the most important person on our campus. We create opportunities and inspire students to achieve their goals. We recognize that in addition to our students' academic pursuits, they lead full, rich lives and need our support. On campus, our students engage in sports, clubs, performances, lectures, art gallery shows and more. They contribute approximately 150,000 hours of service through 380 partners in the greater Worcester community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Barry M. Maloney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barry M. Maloney  
President

## **SECTION 1: WELCOME**

### **Purpose of the Handbook**

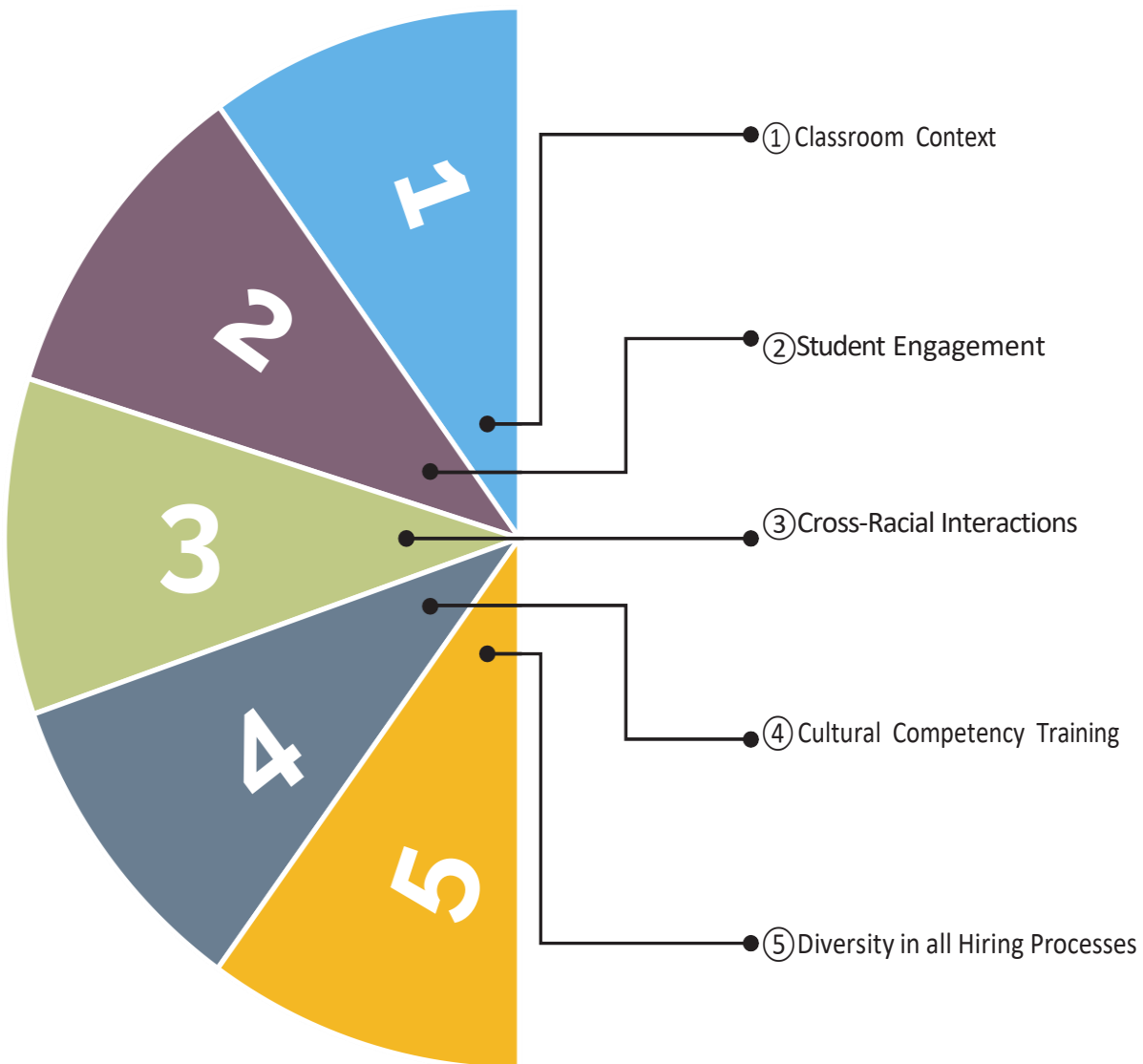
This handbook is intended only as a general summary of rights, responsibilities, benefits, and information for employees of Worcester State University. The contents of this handbook are considered guidelines. The handbook's provisions are not conditions of employment.

This handbook contains brief statements of policies. More complete details of policies may be obtained from the Office of Employee Services, the Office of the General Counsel, the applicable collective bargaining agreements, or in other official University policies and procedures. The collective bargaining agreements contain the official conditions of employment for bargaining unit members. This handbook does not supersede the collective bargaining agreements. A copy of the collective bargaining agreement (union contract) that governs your conditions of employment may be obtained through your union representative.

This handbook is not intended to substitute, replace, overrule, or modify any existing federal and state laws, agency rules, regulations or policies, or terms of a collective bargaining agreement (if relevant), nor be inclusive of every policy.

Questions or comments may be forwarded to: Worcester State University | 486 Chandler Street | Room A-313 | Worcester, MA 01602 | ATTENTION: Assistant Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer. For the most up-to-date Employee Handbook please log into the WSU Portal and visit: [www.worcester.edu/HR](http://www.worcester.edu/HR) > select [Employee Handbook](#).

## WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY'S 5 POINT PLAN OF ACTION



## **Mission**

Worcester State University champions academic excellence in a diverse, student-centered environment that fosters scholarship, creativity, and global awareness. A Worcester State education equips students with knowledge and skills necessary for lives of professional accomplishment, engaged citizenship, and intellectual growth.

## **Core Values**

As a public institution, Worcester State University embraces the belief that widespread access to high-quality educational opportunities is the cornerstone of a democratic society. Members of the Worcester State community share the following core values:

- **Academic Excellence:** We are committed to providing opportunities to excel in a close-knit learning environment characterized by distinguished faculty, excellent teaching, and creative linkages between classroom learning and real-world experiences.
- **Engaged Citizenship:** We are committed to promoting community service, social justice, the democratic process, environmental sustainability, and global awareness to prepare students to be active and informed citizens.
- **Open Exchange of Ideas:** We are committed to inviting and considering the most expansive range of perspectives in teaching and learning, in scholarly and creative work, and in the governance of a complex, diverse institution.
- **Diversity and Inclusiveness:** We are committed to being an inclusive community in which our diversity enhances learning for all and in which people from all cultures and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate fully and succeed.
- **Civility and Integrity:** We are committed to respecting the dignity of all members of our community and to demonstrating this commitment in our interactions, decisions, and structures.



## Worcester State University History

Founded in 1874 as a teacher-training school, Worcester State University has grown to become a traditional liberal arts and sciences university with programs spanning the biomedical sciences, business, humanities, behavioral sciences, the health professions, and, of course, education. We are woven in the fabric of the Worcester community through myriad partnerships, and have evolved to become a resource for lifelong learning throughout Worcester County—and beyond. The links below let you follow the important milestones that brought Worcester State to where we are today. See more at [www.worcester.edu/our-history](http://www.worcester.edu/our-history).



### Worcester State University's Early Years

Worcester State University was founded as the Worcester Normal School in 1874 as the fifth state-funded normal school in Massachusetts. We were among the dozens of teacher-training schools established during the 19th century. Our first campus was on St. Ann's Hill in Worcester. To read more, please visit: [www.worcester.edu/Worcester-State-University-History/#Early\\_Years](http://www.worcester.edu/Worcester-State-University-History/#Early_Years)



### Becoming Worcester State Teachers College

In 1932, we became Worcester State Teachers College and moved to our present location, which was owned by Worcester inventor and philanthropist George I. Rockwood. Our sole building, the Administration Building, housed classrooms, labs, faculty and offices, gymnasium, library, and assembly hall. To read more, please visit: [www.worcester.edu/Worcester-State-University-History/#Teachers\\_College](http://www.worcester.edu/Worcester-State-University-History/#Teachers_College)



### Transition to a Liberal Arts and Sciences College

By 1963, we had evolved into a liberal arts and sciences college, The Massachusetts Board of Education acknowledged this in 1963 when it voted to drop the word “teachers” and change our name to Worcester State College. To read more, please visit: [www.worcester.edu/worcester-state-university-history/?langtype=1033&liberal\\_arts\\_and\\_sciences\\_college](http://www.worcester.edu/worcester-state-university-history/?langtype=1033&liberal_arts_and_sciences_college)



### Recognition as a State University

We became Worcester State University in 2010 when the Massachusetts Legislature voted to grant university status to all Massachusetts state colleges. This recognized the fact that we qualified as a university according to the classification of institutions of higher education established by the Carnegie Foundation. To read more, please visit: [http://www.worcester.edu/Worcester-State-University-History/#State\\_University](http://www.worcester.edu/Worcester-State-University-History/#State_University).

## **SECTION 2: EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES**

### **Benefitted Employees**

A *benefitted employee* is a full-time faculty member with a one-year contract, or a full-time tenure-track or tenured faculty member, or a librarian, associate librarian, or assistant-librarian, or any employee who is *not* in a temporary status AND is scheduled to regularly work a minimum of 18.75 hours per week. Those employees are eligible for voluntary benefits, including: health insurance, leave accruals, etc.

Please visit the links below to access the official web sites, the respective collective bargaining agreements, and the Non-Unit Professional Handbook.

- For Administrators: the Association of Professional Administrators (APA) at <http://www.mass.edu/forfacstaff/collbargaining/APA.asp>
- For Faculty: the Massachusetts State Colleges Association (MSCA) at <https://mscaunion.org/day-dgce-contracts/>
- For Classified Employees: the American Federation of State, County, and Municipality Employees (AFSCME) at <http://www.mass.edu/forfacstaff/collbargaining/AFSCME.asp>
- Non-Unit Professionals – see the [Non-Unit Professional Handbook](https://www.mass.edu/forfacstaff/nonunit/home.asp) at <https://www.mass.edu/forfacstaff/nonunit/home.asp>.

### **Contracted Employees & Adjunct Faculty**

Employees belonging in any of the following two groups are only eligible for statutory benefits:

- A contract-employee or contractor, who is an employee hired for a specific job, which they will perform during a specific period of time. Such employee works under a contract.
- Adjunct Faculty are non-tenure track faculty members who are hired usually to cover a single lecture or to teach one particular subject. They are offered contracts on a per-semester basis.

### **Student-Employees**

- Federal Work Study (those who receive federal financial aid in the form of subsidized work)
  - Student contract-employees (those who are paid with university funds made available through the budget process).
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### **SECTION 3:**

## **FEDERAL, STATE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES, RULES AND GUIDELINES**

### **Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities**

WSU is committed to providing equal access to employment and educational opportunities for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. WSU recognizes that individuals with disabilities may need reasonable accommodations to have equally effective opportunities to participate in or benefit from educational programs, services, activities and employment.

The University encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in its educational programs and activities. If you anticipate needing an accommodation, have questions about the physical access provided, or require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, Large Print, Audio Tape, Sign Language Interpreter, etc.), please contact the ADA Coordinator, at the Student Accessibility Services Office at [accessibility@worchester.edu](mailto:accessibility@worchester.edu) or 508-929-8733.

Individuals who seek reasonable accommodations for a disability in order to gain equal access to employment, or believes they have experienced discrimination based upon their disability, should contact the Office of the General Counsel and Equal Opportunity, [diversity@worchester.edu](mailto:diversity@worchester.edu) 508-929-8053.

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity, and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

### **Age Discrimination**

In recognition of the current problems which exist in society today with respect to discrimination against persons over 40, and in accordance with federal and state law, Worcester State University has adopted a policy prohibiting discrimination based on age in the working, living and learning environment of our University campus. This policy specifically prohibits the use of age as a factor where prohibited by law, in decisions affecting the employment or educational status of a member of the University community or of an applicant for admission or employment. Any individual who feels they have been a victim of age discrimination or harassment should contact the Affirmative Action Office for guidelines and policy information or for processing a complaint.

### **Campaign and Political Activities**

The Campaign Finance Law (MGL 55) does not prohibit public employees from engaging in political activity, as long as such activity: 1.) is not undertaken during work hours or otherwise using public resources, and 2.) does not include soliciting or receiving political contributions.

No person employed for compensation for the Commonwealth, its cities, towns and counties, and public agencies, other than an elected official, may directly or indirectly solicit or receive a contribution or anything of value for any political purpose. Under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 55, the Campaign Finance Law regulates political activity by public employees and the use of public buildings and resources in campaigns.

Campaign finance law prohibits the use of public resources for political campaign purposes, such as influencing the nomination or election of a candidate, or the passage or defeat of a ballot in question, "Public Resources" encompass just about anything that is paid for by taxpayers, such as vehicles, office equipment and supplies, buildings and the paid time of public employees. For more information or a copy of the complete policy, please contact the Office of Employee Services.

For additional detail and guidelines about Use of Public Resources see this link: [www.state.ma.us/ocpf](http://www.state.ma.us/ocpf)

### **Children in the Workplace**

The University supports employees in balancing work lives and family lives. Employees are expected to find appropriate childcare arrangements rather than bringing children to work.

Occasionally, there may be a situation where you do not have daycare and you cannot be absent from work. On these rare occasions, speak with your supervisor to obtain permission to bring your child to the workplace.

### **Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure**

As public employees, University employees are subject to the provisions of the conflict of interest law. The law (MGL 268A) requires that state employees give undivided loyalty to the state and act in the public interest rather than for private gain the law sets forth a minimum standard of ethical conduct for all state employees and officials.

The purpose of the conflict law is to ensure that public employee's private financial interests and personal relationships do not conflict with their public obligations. The law is broadly written to prevent a public employee from becoming involved in a situation which could result in a conflict or give the appearance of a conflict. The law governs what you may do on the job, what you may do after hours or "on the side", and what you may do after you leave public service. The law is also applicable to University employment activities. In the event that a University employee appears to offer or improperly influence favoritism toward a candidate, the University employee must complete the Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest Form as required by G. L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3).

All employees are required to complete an online State Ethics Training and Quiz when first employed and every two years thereafter. The training and quiz are found at: [www.mass.gov/ethics](http://www.mass.gov/ethics).

Some employees may be required to file annual financial disclosure forms with the State Ethics Commission. You will be notified by the University President if you are subject to this requirement. For additional details and guidelines about the conflict of interest law, visit the State Ethics Commission at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/state-ethics-commission>.

The state ethics statute prohibits employees from divulging confidential information they happen to see or acquire in the course of their employment. Divulging such information not only violates the state ethics rules but may also violate a person's personal right to privacy in which case the employee divulging the information would not be protected from personal liability or suit. Therefore, it is unlawful to make disclosures of confidential information.

### **Consensual Relationships**

Consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships in which one party retains a direct supervisory or evaluative role over the other party are unethical and create a risk for real or perceived coercion. WSU does not intrude upon private choices regarding personal relationships when these relationships do not violate the University's policies, or cause harm or crease the risk of harm to the safety and wellbeing of members of the campus community.

### **Faculty/Administrator/Staff Member Relationships with Students**

No faculty member shall have a romantic and/or sexual relationship, consensual or otherwise, with a student who is being taught or advised by the faculty member or whose academic work is being supervised or evaluated, directly or indirectly, by the faculty member. No administrator or staff member shall have a romantic and/or sexual relationship, consensual or otherwise, with a student who the administrator or staff member supervises, evaluates, advises, or provides other professional advice or services as part of a University program or activity. A romantic and/or sexual relationship, consensual or otherwise, between a faculty member, administrator or staff member and a student is looked upon with disfavor and is strongly

discouraged.

### **Relationships between Supervisors and Subordinates or Between Co-Workers**

A consenting romantic and/or sexual relationship between a supervisor and subordinate or co-workers may interfere with or impair the performance of professional duties and responsibilities and/or create an appearance of bias or favoritism. Further, such relationships could implicate state ethics laws and/or result in claims of discrimination, sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and retaliation. Therefore, such workplace relationships are strongly discouraged.

Any member of the University community who has a question about their rights and/or responsibilities under this Policy should contact the Office of the General Counsel and Equal Opportunity, [diversity@worchester.edu](mailto:diversity@worchester.edu) 508-929-8053.

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

### **Drug Policy for a Drug Free Workplace**

The use of illicit drugs and of alcohol may pose serious health risks to the user, including serious damages to his/her vital organs and even central nervous systems. In addition, an individual who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol also poses a risk to others, as the substance may alter the individual's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle, or engage in work activities that require a high level of concentration on the part of the individual, and may cause the individual to become violent, etc.

Because Worcester State University (WSU) is committed to promoting a safe and healthful work environment for its employees, and because it must comply with federal law that requires universities who are the recipients of federal funds to meet the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, the University has adopted this Drug-Free Workplace Policy and certifies a good faith effort to maintain a drug free workplace in accordance with this policy.

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94 C, establishes five "classes" of drugs as controlled substances. These classes include, but are not limited to such substances as heroin, cocaine, LSD, marijuana and opium based drugs. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance by Worcester State University employees is prohibited on any premises occupied or controlled by the University. No employee will report to work while under the influence of illegal drugs. Any employee determined to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal.

In order to comply with the federal law, Worcester State University requires that an employee notify the employer of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction. Notice shall go to the Office of Employee Services. Worcester State University will notify any federal contracting agency within ten (10) days of having received notice that an employee engaged in the performance of such contract has had any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace. Worcester State University will impose assistance or a rehabilitation program on any employee who is convicted within thirty days of receiving notice of such conviction.

Each employee is notified that, as a condition of employment, they must abide by the policy and notify the employer of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such convictions. Failure to abide by the policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include but is not limited to warnings, suspensions, participation in a drug assistant rehabilitation program, or termination.

## POLICY STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The University is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. The University is dedicated to providing educational, working, and living environments that value the diverse backgrounds of all people.

The University does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital or parental status, or Veteran status.

The University prohibits discrimination or discriminatory harassment on all of those bases. Such behaviors violate the University's Policy of Nondiscrimination, will not be tolerated, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

The University has appointed an Equal Opportunity Officer ("EO Officer") to oversee its compliance of applicable policy, as well as the state and federal nondiscrimination and equal opportunity laws. Anyone with questions, concerns or complaints regarding discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or retaliation may contact the EO Officer at:

- Edgar Moros, Executive Director for Inclusive Excellence and Belonging  
Administration Bldg., Room 337  
508-929-8784  
[Emoros@worchester.edu](mailto:Emoros@worchester.edu).

Furthermore, the University does not discriminate in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its educational programs and activities on the basis of sex, including sex characteristics, sex stereotypes, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy, childbirth, and other related conditions, and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, including as required by Title IX and its regulations. Such behaviors violate the University's Policy of Nondiscrimination, will not be tolerated, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

The University has appointed a Title IX Coordinator to oversee its compliance with Title IX. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. The University's Title IX Coordinators are:

- Jennifer Quinn, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Compliance and Education  
Student Center, Office 344  
508- 929-8243  
[Jquinn@worchester.edu](mailto:Jquinn@worchester.edu)
- Stephanie Teixeira, Director of Military Affairs & Veteran Services /  
Title IX Coordinator for Students  
Student Center, Office 341  
508-929-8884  
[Steixeira1@worchester.edu](mailto:Steixeira1@worchester.edu).



Other contact and resources:

- **Discrimination:**  
The Office of the General Counsel and Equal Opportunity,  
508-929-8053  
[diversity@worchester.edu](mailto:diversity@worchester.edu)
- **Student Accessibility:**  
Rachel Graddy, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs / Director of Student Accessibility Services;  
508-929-8784

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

**Policy Against Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, and Retaliation (Statewide)**

**Prohibited Conduct**

The Policy prohibits all conditions and all actions or omissions, including all acts of discrimination, discriminatory harassment and retaliation, which deny or have the effect of denying to any person their rights to equity and security on the basis of their membership in or association with a member(s) of any protected class. This Policy reaffirms the values of civility, pluralism and pre-eminence of individual human dignity as preconditions to the achievement of an academic community, which recognizes and utilizes the resources of all people.

The prohibited conduct contained in this Policy shall apply to and be enforced against all members of the University community, including, but not limited to, faculty, librarians, administrators, staff, students, vendors, contractors and all others having dealings with the institution.

Examples of discrimination, all of which are prohibited by this Policy, include, but are not limited to:

- Differences in terms, conditions and privileges of employment (including, but not limited to hiring, promotion, reassignment, termination, salary, salary increases, discipline, granting of tenure, selection for awards, etc.) on a prohibited basis.
- Unlawful disparity of treatment in educational programs and related support services on the basis of membership in a protected class.
- Differences in salaries or other benefits that are paid to one or more men or women if the differences are not based on a bona fide occupational qualification.
- Developing position descriptions or qualifications, which, without lawful justification, are so specific as to have a disparate exclusionary impact on a group of individuals because of their membership in a protected class.
- Limiting access to housing, or participation in athletic, social, cultural or other activities to students because of membership in a protected class not based on a bona fide requirement or distinction.
- Failing or refusing to hire or promote a person because of their age.
- Classifying a position or positions as unsuitable for persons of certain religions.
- Excluding members of a certain race or national origin from a category of positions or from a department or division.
- Restricting the number of veterans or qualified persons with disabilities in a category of positions or in a department or division.

- Using information on marital or parental status for employment decisions where the use of such information has a disparate impact on persons of one gender or sexual orientation.
- Advising students of similar interests and backgrounds differently because of their gender or gender identity.
- Forcing female students to sit in the back of the class on the stereotyped assumption that each of them has a lower aptitude for learning that particular subject than male students.
  - Placing unreasonable expectations upon students of particular races or national origins on the basis of stereotyped assumptions that members of those protected classes have a better aptitude for certain academic subjects than students not of those races or national origins.

Examples of discriminatory harassment, all of which are prohibited by this Policy, include, but are not limited to:

- Physically harassing another individual or group because of that person's or persons' membership in a protected class by assaulting, touching, patting, pinching, grabbing, staring, leering at them, making lewd gestures, invading their personal space, blocking their normal movement, or other physical interference.
- Encouraging others to physically or verbally abuse an individual (or group of individuals) because of that person or persons' membership in a protected class.
- Threatening to harm an individual or group because of that person or persons' membership in a protected class.
- Directing epithets, slurs, derogatory comments, unwelcome jokes or stories at an individual or group because of that person or persons' membership in a protected class.
- Displaying hostile, derogatory and/or intimidating symbols/objects, such as offensive posters, cartoons, bulletins, drawings, photographs, magazines, written articles or stories, screen savers, or electronic communications, to an individual or group because of that person or persons' membership in a protected class.

Examples of retaliation, all of which are prohibited by this Policy, include, but are not limited to:

- Terminating an employee for stating an intention to file a complaint of discrimination or for assisting another employee in filing a discrimination complaint.
- Refusing to hire an employee because employee pursued an age discrimination charge against a former employer.
- Denying a promotion to an employee for complaining about alleged sexual orientation harassment.
- Refusing tenure to a faculty member for filing a complaint of sexual harassment pursuant to the Complaint Investigation and Resolution Procedures.
- Issuing an unjustified negative evaluation to an employee for testifying in a legal proceeding concerning a complaint of discrimination or harassment.
- Assigning a student an unearned poor grade for requesting a reasonable academic accommodation based on religion.
- Assigning a student an unearned failing grade for cooperating with an internal investigation of alleged discriminatory practices or a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

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## Policy Against Sexual Violence (Statewide)

Worcester State University is committed to maintaining safe and healthy learning, living and working environments that are free from all forms of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and retaliation. Consistent with this commitment, the University complies with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendment of 1972, which prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex in education programs and activities, as well as retaliation for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX. The University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admission to or employment in its education programs and activities.

This Policy prohibits all forms of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. These behaviors are antithetical to the University's educational mission and are prohibited forms of harassment under Title IX. The University provides educational and prevention programs, services for individuals who have been impacted by discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, and accessible, timely and equitable methods of investigation and resolution of complaints.

This Policy and the Complaint Investigation and Resolution Procedures are intended to comply with Title IX, the reauthorized Violence Against Women Act, including the Campus SaVE Act, the Clery Act, and the guidance documents on Title IX issued by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.

### *Policy Purposes*

The purpose of this Policy is for the University to educate about sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation, as well as their efforts to prevent, address, and remedy all forms of such prohibited conduct. Accordingly, this Policy:

- states that sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation are prohibited and will not be tolerated;
- defines and describes the conduct that is prohibited;
- explains what to do if one experiences sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and/or retaliation;
- identifies available on- and off-campus resources;
- identifies the persons with whom one may speak confidentially;
- describes all reporting options, including how to file a complaint with the University;
- specifies the rights of both complainants and respondents; and
- explains the University's response to alleged incidents, including how reports of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation are evaluated, investigated and resolved.

*Prohibition Against Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, Gender-Based Harassment, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking and Retaliation*

The University prohibits and will not tolerate sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. These behaviors violate this Policy, state and federal civil rights laws, and possibly the criminal laws of Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> These behaviors can occur between strangers or acquaintances, including between people involved in an intimate or sexual relationship. Victims<sup>2</sup> can be any gender. Any person, regardless of gender identity, can commit sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation, and these behaviors can occur between people of the same or different gender.

The University prohibits any student, faculty or staff member, visitor or contractor, regardless of gender, from sexually harassing, stalking, engaging in sexual violence toward or committing domestic or dating violence against another community member or anyone having dealings with the Universities. Any member of the University community who believes that s/he has been subjected to such misconduct is encouraged to report it as described in this Policy. Upon receiving a report, the University will respond quickly and seriously, and, where appropriate, will take steps to prevent the recurrence of the behavior, remedy its effects, and discipline individuals who violate this Policy.

The University prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation, who assists another in making a report, or who participates in an investigation of a report. All persons should feel free to report their concerns without fear of retribution or reprisal.

*Policy Application*

This Policy applies to all University community members, including students, faculty, staff, visitors, contractors and applicants for employment or admission, and without regard to a person's race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital or parental status, or veteran status. This Policy applies to all University programs and activities, both on and off campus.

Acts of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and retaliation that take place off campus may be subject to investigation and disciplinary action under this Policy when the conduct involves behavior by or toward a community member, which:

1. occurs during University- sponsored events or the events of organizations affiliated with the University, including study abroad and outside internships;
2. negatively impacts a person's access to education programs and activities;
3. adversely affects or disrupts the campus community; and/or (4) poses a threat of harm to the campus community.

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<sup>1</sup> Incidents of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or retaliation as described in this Policy may also constitute criminal acts when they meet the standards set forth in Massachusetts' criminal laws of this Policy. An individual can be prosecuted by the Commonwealth for violating a criminal law and simultaneously subject to discipline for Policy violations by the University.

<sup>2</sup> Although some prefer to use the term "survivor" to describe an individual who has been subjected to sexual violence, the term "victim" is also widely used. This Policy uses the term "victim" or "complainant," and does so with respect for those who have been subjected to sexual violence.

### *Title IX Coordinator*

Pursuant to Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, each University has appointed a Title IX Coordinator, who has the primary responsibility for coordinating the University's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX.

In this role, the Title IX Coordinator: administers this Policy; monitors the University's responsive actions to ensure that the learning, living and working environments are free of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and retaliation; and monitors the steps taken to remedy the effects of the misconduct on the complainant(s), including any investigation, resolution or disciplinary proceedings. The Title IX Coordinator also: provides information about reporting options and support resources; initiates interim protective measures; evaluates requests for confidentiality; coordinates appropriate accommodations; assists persons in filing complaints with law enforcement (when requested); provides or facilitates training for faculty, staff and students; and may investigate complaints.

The University has appointed an Equal Opportunity Officer ("EO Officer") to oversee its compliance with this Plan, as well as the state and federal non-discrimination and equal opportunity laws. Anyone with questions, concerns, or complaints regarding discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or retaliation may contact the EO Officer. Any person with questions or concerns about any form of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, stalking, and/or retaliation may also contact:

- **Discrimination: The Office of the General Counsel & Equal Opportunity,** [diversity@worchester.edu](mailto:diversity@worchester.edu), 508-929-8053
- **Student Accessibility:**  
Rachel Graddy; Assistant Dean for Student Affairs / Director of Student Accessibility Services;  
508-929-8784
- **Title IX/Sexual Violence:** Jennifer Quinn  
Associate Dean of Student Affairs/Title IX Coordinator / Room S-344 / 508-929-8243  
[jquinn@worchester.edu](mailto:jquinn@worchester.edu)
- Stephanie Teixeira, Title IX Coordinator for Students  
Student Center, 3rd floor  
508-929-8884  
[Wsu\\_TitleIX@worchester.edu](mailto:Wsu_TitleIX@worchester.edu)

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

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### Duty to Cooperate

Every faculty member, librarian, administrator, staff member, and University employee has a duty to cooperate fully and unconditionally in an investigation conducted pursuant to the Complaint Investigation and Resolution Procedures, subject to the provisions of any relevant collective bargaining agreements. This duty includes, among other things, speaking with the EO Officer, Administrative Investigator, reviewing or appellate body, and voluntarily providing all documentation that relates to the claim being investigated. The failure and/or refusal of any employee to cooperate in an investigation may result in a separate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### Duty to Report Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, or Retaliation

No member of the University community can ignore a report of discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or retaliation. They should provide the reporter as much assistance in bringing it to the attention of the EO Officer as is reasonably appropriate given their position at the University and relationship with the reporter. In terms of reports of discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or retaliation; any trustee, administrator, department chair, program coordinator, manager or supervisor who receives such a complaint from a student or other member of the University community is obligated to report the complaint to the EO Officer as soon as they become aware of it. Likewise, any member of the campus community is encouraged to report to the EO Officer any conduct of which they have direct knowledge and which they in good faith believe constitutes discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation in violation of this Policy.

Individuals with questions about their rights and/or responsibilities under this Policy should contact the Office of the General Counsel and Equal Opportunity, [diversity@worchester.edu](mailto:diversity@worchester.edu) 508-929-8053.

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

### **To Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse**

Worcester State University faculty and staff are encouraged to report, without fear of retaliation, behaviors or actions that are contrary to state laws or to the university's core values and standard practices. Examples of such behaviors and actions include instances of fraud, waste, abuse, and any other suspected illegal, unethical, or otherwise inappropriate activities.

- ✓ To report internally to Worcester State University, please contact the Office of Employee Services at [hr@worchester.edu](mailto:hr@worchester.edu) or 508-929-8117; or the Office of Diversity and inclusion at [diversity@worchester.edu](mailto:diversity@worchester.edu) or 508-929-8053.

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<sup>1</sup> In terms of reports of complaints of sexual violence, sexual or gender-based harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, those community members designated as Responsible Employees for the purposes of Title IX or Campus Security Authorities for the purposes of the Clery Act must act in accordance with their specific reporting obligations. All other community members are encouraged, in accordance with the level of confidentiality requested by the victim, to report reliable knowledge of an incident(s) of sexual violence and/or gender-based misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. See the Sexual Violence Policy at Section E for more information on employees' duty report conduct prohibited by that Policy.

- ✓ To report to the state directly, there are several statewide hotlines that are anonymous and are staffed by individuals trained in receiving such information; they include:

- **Office of the Attorney General—Fair Labor Helpline:** 617-727-3465, to report violations of minimum wage and overtime laws and requirements for timely payment of wages.
- **Office of the Inspector General—** 800-322-1323, to report suspected fraud, waste, or abuse in government.
- **Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC):** 800-445-3266. If you have reason to believe that public pension fraud may have occurred or is about to occur, notify PERAC's Fraud Prevention Unit. You can call 800-445-3266, file a written Referral Report of Potential Fraud, or email PensionFraud@per.state.ma.us.
- **Office of the State Auditor:** 617-727-6200, for state agencies to report variances, shortages or thefts of funds or property.
- **Division of Unemployment Assistance:** 800-354-9927 to report unreported wages or persons collecting benefits while working.

#### **OTHER RESOURCES:**

For more information in general and form information regarding protections against retaliation, please visit:

- <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/protections-against-retaliation>, or
- <https://www.whistleblowers.gov/>.
- For information on fraud prevention, go to <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/fraud-prevention-unit>.

#### **Network Acceptable Use**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for acceptable use of the University Network.

##### **Statement:**

This statement represents a guide to the acceptable use of the WSU Network for data communications. It is intended to address the use of the WSU Network only. Data communications carried across other networks such as local area networks, regional networks, or the Internet are subject to acceptable use policies of those other networks.

Acceptable use refers to whether the use of the network is consistent with the guidelines for each network that the traffic traverses. Given both the volatile nature of the technology employed and the demand that users make of networks, determining acceptable use is a dynamic and iterative process. The intended use of this policy is to make clear certain cases that are consistent or inconsistent with the purposes of the WSU Network, not to completely enumerate all such possible uses.

##### **Description:**

- All use of the WSU Network must comply with this policy.
- All users of the WSU Network must obtain a WSU Network username and account. Proper identification and proof of enrollment must be offered at the time of application.
- Users may not share or transfer network, user, or hardware account information under any circumstance. Users are obligated to keep all technology account information confidential.

- All use of the WSU Network must be consistent with the WSU Network's primary goals.
- It is not acceptable to use the WSU network for any illegal purposes, including the storage and transfer of copyrighted, restricted, or illegal materials.
- It is not acceptable to use the WSU Network to interfere with or disrupt network users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer worms and viruses, and using the network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the network.
- It is not acceptable to use the WSU Network to transmit threatening, obscene, or harassing materials.
- It is not acceptable to use the WSU Network to run any file servers, web servers, or file sharing services without written permission from the Information Security Officer.
- It is not acceptable to use the WSU Network for for-profit activities (consulting for pay, sales or administration of campus stores, etc.) or use by for-profit institutions except when engaged in open scholarly communication and research.
- It is not acceptable for users deemed to be "secure financial/data users" to access any non-WSU web email accounts.
- WSU at any time may make determinations that particular uses are not consistent with the purposes of the WSU network.
- As a state institution, WSU is obligated to maintain public records; any data residing on the University Network or any University equipment could be considered discoverable.
- Any communication that originates from, or is delivered to WSU could be considered as part of the public record.
- No user has a privacy interest in the use of any University electronic resource, such as email, voicemail, etc. All materials resident on the WSU Network or equipment are subject to both e-discovery and public records requests. Additionally, such materials may be used by WSU for disciplinary or legal purposes.
- WSU considers email to be a transitory medium and recommends that important information should be saved in a more permanent format. Worcester State University does not archive email for the purposes of data recovery and discover, other than VPs and above.

## **ADDITIONAL NETWORK INFORMATION**

### **WSU Network Primary Goals**

The WSU Network is a data communications network managed by Worcester State University to link together the WSU community. Access to the network is provided to active staff, faculty, and students of Worcester State University. The goal of the WSU Network is to support and enhance instruction and research activities at the University by providing access to computer mediated communication resources, shared resources, unique resources, and the opportunity for collaborative work. In addition to access to local-network shared resources, the WSU Network provides access to regional, national, and international resources.

### **Violation of Policy**

Any alleged violations of the *Network Acceptable Use Policy* will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Violations of this policy may result in action, such as the loss of electronic mail privileges, loss of University-owned computer access, loss of network privileges, and/or referral to appropriate University or legal authorities.

Information Technology Services ('ITS') supports computing, networking and information resources for the students, faculty and staff of Worcester State University. Access to the University's computer systems and networks owned and operated by WSU imposes certain responsibilities upon users, in accordance with existing WSU policies and local, state and federal law. Users accept the responsibility for utilizing services in ways that are ethical, that demonstrate academic integrity and respect for others who share this resource. This policy is the preview of the ITS Department and may be changed periodically to reflect the changing needs of the

University.

### **Pets in the Workplace**

In accordance with Massachusetts Law, pets are not allowed in state buildings unless they are classified as "service animals" in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

### **Religious Observances**

Individual employees may on occasion have personal preference with regard to their religious needs which, according to both federal and state laws, must be reasonably accommodated by an employer. "Reasonable accommodation" means such accommodation to the employee's religious needs "as shall not cause undue hardship in the conduct of the employer's business." Undue hardship includes situations where the employee's presence is necessary to the orderly transaction of the employer's business and the work cannot be performed by another employee of similar qualifications, or no such employee is available; situations where the employee's presence is required because of an emergency; and situations where such accommodation would result in significant added cost to the employer.

Leave may be granted to employees who have given reasonable notice of intention to be absent to observe, as a requirement of their religion or practice, a day of observance that falls on a workday. Generally, except in the case of members of the faculty, employees are not paid for such absence; the absence should, wherever practical in the judgment of the supervisor, be made up by working an equivalent amount of time without incurring overtime costs. Alternatively, an employee may elect to charge such absences for religious observances to vacation or, in the case of personal leave balances.

The rights of other employees may not be infringed upon in order to accommodate the religious needs of an employee.

### **Right to Know**

The University is committed to protecting its employees from recognized hazards in the workplace. The main federal law covering issues of workplace safety is the Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970 [OSHA]. Massachusetts has its own law called the Right-to-Know Law.

It is the University's responsibility to generally provide a workplace that is free of dangers that could physically harm an employee. Under the Massachusetts Right to Know Law and the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard you are entitled to receive information about the toxic substances that are used or stored in your workplace.

This information is available to you in the form of a Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) - a technical fact sheet that describes the health effects and safe uses of the toxic products on the job. The MSDS is written by the product manufacturer who must give it to the University.

In turn, the University must provide the MSDS to you, your union, or your doctor on request. If you feel your work area is unsafe, make your supervisor aware of the potential danger and allow them to correct the problem. You may also contact the University's Environmental Health and Safety Officer, Robert Daniels at [rdaniels@worchester.edu](mailto:rdaniels@worchester.edu) or 508-929-8099.

An employee, who believes they have been discharged, disciplined or discriminated against by the University for exercising rights granted under the law, has one hundred-eighty days to file a complaint with the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industries.

A copy of the verified complaint must be sent to the University at the same time by certified mail. Employee's rights are further defined under Chapter IIIF of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Code of

Massachusetts Regulations 441 CMR 21.0. For additional information you may call: the Emergency Response/Right-To-Know Program or the Bureau of Environmental Health Assessment at 617-624-5757.

### **Smoke-Free Workplace Policy**

The University promotes a healthy work environment for its employees. In compliance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37H, the buildings and grounds will be designated as a smoke-free environment.

Employees, students, and visitors are prohibited from smoking or using any and all tobacco products on campus grounds and university vehicles. These include, but are not limited to smoking or chewing tobacco, smoking cigarettes, cigars, and pipes, as well as electronic smoking devices, e-cigarettes, e-cigars, vape pens, e-hookahs, and any other products or devices associated with the act of smoking. This policy is binding upon all Worcester State students and employees as well as visitors to our school and buildings. Smoking is prohibited as well in all state vehicles.

### **Sunshine Policy (Disclosure of Relatives Working for the Commonwealth)**

Executive Order 444, section 1 states: "Each person applying for employment...must disclose in writing, upon such application, the names of all immediate family as well as persons related to the immediate family by marriage who serve as an employee or elected officials of the Commonwealth." *Immediate family member* is defined as a spouse, child, parent, or sibling and those related to individuals by marriage (i.e. the spouse's child, parent or sibling.) Under this policy:

- Employees who are related may not be in a supervisor/supervisee relationship with one another.
- Employees cannot be transferred, promoted or hired inside a reporting relationship with a relative.
- If two employees who are in a reporting relationship become relatives during the course of their employment, the supervisor must disclose the information to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) for follow-up action deemed necessary by the CHRO, which may include transfer of one of the two employees.
- An employee, who is serving on a hiring committee for a given position, is expected to act professionally and recuse self from the committee, if and when the employee becomes aware that a relative is being considered for the position.

### **Workplace Emergencies**

The following policy has been adopted to respond to inclement weather conditions, or impending inclement weather conditions that necessitate closing of the University.

In instances where the University is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency situations only "essential" personnel are required to report to work.

Those individuals who are essential will be notified that they have been so designated by their supervisors. On rare occasions, however, an emergency may arise where an employee who previously had not been designated as essential may be required to report to work. Any staff member who is required to report to work when classes have been canceled or the University has been closed will be paid overtime or be granted compensatory time (AFSCME) or flexible scheduling (APA).

Announcements regarding the cancellation of classes or the closing of the University are broadcast over local television and radio stations and are posted on the University's home and portal pages, recorded on the Inclement Weather line of the main telephone system and the WSU Alert system (to University email addresses and via cell phone text message to those who have registered for text service).



#### During Normal Office/Class Hours

If, during normal office/class hours on a work/class day (defined as Monday-Friday after 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.), the President or designee determines that the University should be closed due to inclement weather or other circumstances, all offices shall be notified of the time and duration of cancellation of normal activity via the WSU Alert system (be sure and register your cell phone # to receive text messages). Normal routine will be expected to commence on the next regular class/work day, unless notified otherwise.

#### During Other Hours

A decision to close the University or delay opening will generally be made between 5:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. by the President or the President's designee, generally, the Provost, in consultation with other members of the University staff. If a decision is made to close for the day, or delay opening, notice will be made for broadcast to the following locations:

- WSU Alert System (<https://www.getrave.com/login/worcester>) and on the internet at [mywsu.worcester.edu](https://mywsu.worcester.edu) and [www.worcester.edu](https://www.worcester.edu)
- AM Stations: WTAG 580 AM, WBZ 1030 AM, WORC 1310 FM Stations: WSRS 96.1 FM, WXLO 104.5 FM
- Television Stations: Channel 4 CBS, Channel 5 ABC, Channel 7 NBC, Channel 25 FOX

#### **Workplace Violence Prevention**

The University follows Executive Order 442 stating that the Commonwealth has a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence. The purpose of this policy is to prevent and minimize the risks associated with workplace violence and to ensure the safety of our employees, contractors and volunteers.

At Worcester State University no employee is expected to tolerate physical/verbal violent actions from other employees, students, faculty, administrators or any person with whom they come into contact throughout their employment. Employees should report any incident of violence to their immediate supervisor, the Office of Employee Services, or contact Campus Police for immediate assistance.

The University will act to protect its employees from physical and/or psychological abuse [defined as the intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress]. Any employee who is threatened with harm is to notify the appropriate administrator immediately, and steps will be taken to protect the employee's safety. A written report of any serious incidents shall be given to the President and the Vice President of the area.

## **SECTION 4: EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Appearance**

Your clothing and appearance should be appropriate and safe for the type of work you do. Your supervisor will let you know if there are any special clothing requirements. In general you are expected to dress professionally in a manner not offensive to others be they co-workers, students, or other members of the public and campus community.

### **Attendance**

All employees are expected to report to work on a regular and punctual basis. The length of the work week is specified in collective bargaining agreements and Board handbooks.

For administrators, librarians, and classified employees, specific work hours are determined by managers and supervisors in each department in consultation with each employee. Most administrative offices are required to be open from 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m., and work schedules should be planned accordingly. Faculty work hours are determined by class schedules and contract provisions. Changes to work schedules must be reported to the Office of Employee Services.

An accurate record of time worked is a matter of law. Administrators, AFSCME Unit I Staff, part-time contract employees, and student employees report their time electronically through the automated self-service time and attendance (SSTA) system. AFSCME Unit II Staff must report their time on paper time sheets requiring approval by their supervisor prior to submittal to Payroll. Faculty time records are summarized weekly by department clerical staff and submitted to Payroll.

Policies and procedures can be found on the Payroll Office web site at [www.worcester.edu/payroll](http://www.worcester.edu/payroll).

### **Conduct**

Standards of conduct are guidelines for all employees to follow in order to help create a safe, comfortable, and productive work environment that sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students. All staff members are expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern. The following paragraphs describe workplace behaviors and the expectations of the Worcester State University Administration for its staff.

Our hope and expectation are that all employees of Worcester State University will contribute to making our working climate one that is characterized by respectful interactions, cooperation among department personnel, open and constructive communication and trust. We will speak kindly with one another and acknowledge each other's talents and skills although we may have different ways of achieving the same goals. We will work collaboratively toward common goals, support one another and accept each other's ideas. We will communicate openly by seeking, giving and receiving feedback, and by sharing information necessary to successfully complete our tasks. We will be prompt in our dealings with one another and above all treat each other as we would want to be treated.

Worcester State University is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment of any nature including, but not limited to, racial, religious, sexual, age, national origin, ancestral veteran status, disability, or any other type of harassment.

Harassment is unwanted verbal, physical, or visual conduct relating to an individual's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, veteran status or disability.

The complete Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan can be found at [www.worcester.edu/diversity](http://www.worcester.edu/diversity)

**Expectations of Privacy**

Any documentary materials or data made or received by an employee of the University, regardless of physical form, may be considered a public record and subject to the Public Records law. In addition, you should be aware that the objects and areas in which you may keep personal belongings; including but not limited to desks, filing cabinets, voicemail, and email messages; are considered property of the Commonwealth and may be accessed by the University at any time.

**Flexible Work Arrangements**

Flexible work schedules are governed either by the various Collective Bargaining Agreements or by the President. Any flexible work schedule requested or agreed to must be reduced to writing with approval by the appropriate Vice President or the President. Such requests must include justification, duration and purpose, and must be kept on file in the Office of Employee Services once approved.

**Performance Appraisals**

Your job performance will be evaluated based on the various Collective Bargaining Agreements or at the President's directive for non-union employees. Performance Appraisals are intended to be a year-long process during which employees' goals are established, supported, and monitored.

- AFSCME Evaluations are due in Employee Services anytime within 30 days before to 30 days after the anniversary date of hire or promotion.
- APA Evaluations are due in Employee Services in April of each year. See the Department of Higher Education Appendix C for the Administrator Evaluation Form, Appendix D for the Administrator Self-Evaluation Form, and Appendix I for the Administrator Evaluation Schedule.
- NUP Evaluations are due in Employee Services in June of each year.

**Personnel Files**

You have a right, upon request, to examine and receive copies of any and all materials contained in your Personnel File relating to your employment. There may be a nominal fee charged for duplication. Please allow a reasonable amount of time for a file to be copied.

**Probationary Period**

Probationary periods, both for newly hired employees as well as those moving from one job to another after first being employed are specified in the respective Collective Bargaining Agreements.

**Work Week and Schedules**

Most employees of the University have a standard work week of 37.5 or 40 hours. Some may be required to work varying shifts and/or holidays. Your breaks are covered by your collective bargaining agreement or by state law (30-minute meal break required after six hours of work per state law).

In addition, Worcester State University allows a hybrid work model consisting of a combination of telework and in-office work where statutorily permissible and operationally feasible. However, employees of this university will observe telework practices only according to the needs of their respective departments. This practice is not applicable to positions with duties that require services to be provided entirely in-person.

Employees who are eligible for a hybrid work schedule are required to complete a Telework Request, Agreement, Authorization Form, which may be obtained online, or from the Office of Employee Services. However, regardless of any agreement, employees are expected to report to work in-person when their presence is necessary to ensure that their departments' needs are met.

## **SECTION 5--- RETIREMENT PROGRAMS**

### **A. BENEFITED EMPLOYEES**

#### **1) Core Retirement Plans**

As a Massachusetts state employee, you do not contribute to Social Security. Instead, you contribute to one of two other plans that are equivalent to the Social Security program: (i) the State Employee Retirement System (SERS), or (ii) the Optional Retirement Program (ORP). The rate of contribution to the two plans is the same: 9% on the first \$30,000 of earnings, plus 11% on everything any amount above \$30,000 of regular salary:

- If you are a classified employee, you contribute to the State Employee Retirement System (SERS), a defined benefit plan.
- If you are a faculty, administrator, or non-unit professional, you may choose between SERS and ORP. You have 180 days from the first day of employment to select a plan; during this period, SERS is the default account. If you do not make a decision within the 180-day window, you will remain in SERS irrevocably. If you do make a decision to switch to ORP, here, too, the decision is irrevocable.
- The Massachusetts State Treasurer administers the SERS program and makes all investment decisions. You are guaranteed full funding for promised benefits.
- The ORP allows you to manage the investment of your retirement funds by working with one of the approved financial advisors. There is also a 5% match to your contribution. The value of the funds at retirement will depend on the success of your investment strategy.

#### **2) Supplemental Retirement Plans**

As an employee of the University you may participate in supplemental retirement programs known as 457b, SMART Plan or 403b, tax deferred annuities. Both options allow you to save and invest before-tax dollars for retirement purposes through voluntary salary deferrals. You decide, within IRS limits, how much you want to defer. These accounts are solely funded by participants. There are no University matching contributions. The payroll department will reduce your paycheck by that amount before income taxes. Your contributions will be invested per your instructions in whatever options are available to you in either the 457b or 403b plans.

### **B. NON-BENEFITED EMPLOYEES**

If you are employed in a non-student contract position (contracted employees or adjunct faculty), you do not meet the membership criteria of the SERS or ORP programs. However, you are still required to contribute to a retirement program, and that is the state's Alternate Retirement Plan, also known as OBRA.

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## **SECTION 6: BENEFITS**

### **A. BENEFITED EMPLOYEES**

In addition to legally-mandated benefits, including: workers' compensation and unemployment benefits, benefited employees are eligible to participate in the insurance plans that follow.

#### **1) Insurance Plans**

The Group Insurance Commission (GIC) offers benefited employees insurance plans including: non-Medicare Health Insurance, Long Term Disability (LTD), Life Insurance and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D), Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), and the Mass4YOU Employee Assistance Program (EAP). For more information. Please visit the GIC webpage at <https://www.mass.gov/state-employee-benefits> for more details.

#### **2) Other Benefit Plans & Paid Holidays**

- ***Dental Insurance:***

- Members of the collective bargaining units receive dental insurance coverage, at no cost to them, once they have completed 180 days of employment. Coverage is provided by the employer through the collective bargaining process. The plans are administered by a group of trustees appointed from both labor and management.
- Non-Unit Professional and Non-Unit Classified employees may purchase dental insurance through the university benefits office. This plan is fully paid by participants.

- ***Paid Holidays***

The University is closed on the following dates in observance of the noted 12 holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Patriot's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

- ***AFLAC Plans***

The state has contracted with AFLAC to offer insurance plans which GIC does not offer. Those include Short Term Disability, Whole Life Insurance, Critical Illness Insurance, and Hospital Indemnity. Contact the Office of Employee Services for the AFLAC representative's contact information.

- ***Discount Programs and Services***

As a Worcester State University employee, you are eligible to receive discounts on a series of products and services. They include, but not limited to: wireless services, laptop repair service. Visit the Benefits webpage often to stay apprised of new discount programs.

- ***Sick Leave Extension & Sick Leave Bank Programs***

AFSCME employees are eligible to be considered for up to 60 days of extended sick leave upon approval of the President. Application for this leave, including medical necessity, is made through the union to the Chief Human Resources Officer, and then to the University's president. Terms and conditions can be found in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

APA and MSCA employees may become members of their respective sick leave banks by donating a sick day during their first year of service and then as needed in order to replenish the bank if necessary. Method of application, medical documentation and terms and conditions are included in the relevant Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Non-unit professionals are eligible for extended leave at the discretion and with the approval of the president, subject to ordinary medical justification.

- ***Tuition Remission***

Tuition Assistance is available to benefit-eligible employees who have completed at least six months of full time equivalent service as of the date of their enrollment in a course or courses. Tuition Waiver/Remission forms are available on the Employee Services website, or at the Office of Employee Services. Employees should refer to their Collective Bargaining Agreements for more details. Non-unit members may contact Employee Services.

- ***Professional development and talent management offerings***

The Professional Development program is administered by the Office of Employee Services. The program aims to help Worcester State employees sharpen their skills for better job performance, and acquire new ones in order to grow professionally. Inquiries about the program should be directed to the Office of Employee Services at [hr@worchester.edu](mailto:hr@worchester.edu) or to 508-929-8054.

- ***Use of University Facilities***

- **Library:** The Library is located in the Learning Resource Center. Employees may check out books and other materials from the library by presenting their University OneCard ID.
- **Bookstore:** The bookstore is located on the main floor of the Student Center. Employees receive a 10% discount on textbooks and on a variety of other items. The bookstore is operated by an independent contractor.
- **Lost and Found:** Items found on campus should be turned in to the University Police Department in Wasylean Hall. Lost items should also be reported to the University Police at ext.8911/8044.
- **Health Services:** Health Services is located in Sheehan Hall and provides assistance in emergency situations and first response. This office can be reached at ext.8875. The University Police respond to emergencies by calling ext.8911/8044.
- **Campus Mail:** The Mail Center is located on the first floor of the LRC. Campus mail is picked up and delivered twice daily to administrative and academic departments. USPS stamps and UPS mail services can be purchased at the Mail Center with OneCard common funds. In addition,

Student and Personal packages can be picked up in this location. For more information please visit: [www.worcester.edu/AdminServices](http://www.worcester.edu/AdminServices).

## **B. Contracted Employees**

You are also eligible to contribute to the Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP), and the Retirement Savings Plans (i.e. Tax-Sheltered Annuity-403(b) plan and the Massachusetts Deferred SMART Plan 457(b) plan).

You are entitled to legally-mandated benefits, including sick leave accrual, workers' compensation, and unemployment benefits.

## SECTION 7: SALARY & PAYROLL

### A. Bi-Weekly Pay

The University uses the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' bi-weekly (14 day) the Human Resources Compensation Management system (HRCMS). Under this system, you will receive payment on the Fridays following the end of each 14-day pay period (Sunday – Saturday). Using the Self-Service Time and Attendance (SSTA) feature of HRCMS, you can view your pay advice online from any computer with Internet access. The pay advice will display:

- Gross bi-weekly itemized earnings
- Year-to-date gross earnings
- Net earnings
- The type and amount of all deductions, including taxes
- Direct Deposit distributions

Please review your payroll advice each pay period to ensure the accuracy of the information contained therein since corrections may be prohibited after a period of time elapses. Please immediately notify the Payroll Office of any issues that you have with the accuracy of your pay advice.

All employees, including students, are encouraged to have direct deposit for your bi-weekly pay. Your net pay will be deposited to the checking and/or savings account(s) of your choice at a bank or credit union from the New England Automated Clearing House (NEACH) listing. Please remember to notify your payroll department before making changes to your bank account number or switching banks; never email bank account information for security reasons.

See the Payroll Office website (<http://www.worcester.edu/payroll>) for detailed information regarding paycheck processing, including payroll calendars and FAQs.

### B. Payroll Deductions Hierarchy

DEDUCTIONS	PRIORI TY	FEDERAL TAX	STATE TAX	PAY PERIOD
Federal Tax	1	N/A	N/A	Every
Medicare Tax	2	N/A	N/A	Every
State Tax	3	N/A	N/A	Every
Retirement	4	Pre	Pre (1)	Every
Adjustment to Retirement	5	Pre	Pre (1)	Every
Alternative Retirement	6	Pre	Pre (1)	Every
Wage Garnishment (determined by court order)	7	Post	Post	Every*
Dynacash	8	Post	Post	As necessary
Makeup Retirement	9	Post	Post	Every
Basic Life Ins	10	Post	Post	First
Basic Health	11	Pre	Pre	First/Second
Optional Life	12	Post	Post	Second
Long Term Disability	13	Post	Post	First
Special Insurance Deductions	14	Post	Post	First/Second
Union Dues	15	Post	Post	First/Second
Agency Fee	16	Post	Post	First/Second
DCAP	17	Pre	Pre	Every
DCAP Fee	18	Post	Post	Every
Tax Shelter Annuity	19	Pre	Pre	Every
Deferred Compensation	20	Pre	Pre	Every
COMECC	21	Post	Post	Every

The first \$2,000 in the total of all Retirement contributions is not subject to MA State Tax.



## **SECTION 8: LEAVES**

### **Absence from Work without Pay**

Absence from work without pay (authorized or unauthorized) may affect leave accruals, vacation status, salary adjustments, GIC benefits and/or other benefits. An employee on unpaid leave and who is enrolled in insurance plans may need to pay insurance premiums directly to the Group Insurance Commission.

### **Adjunct Faculty & Contracted Positions**

Adjunct faculty and contracted employees are entitled only to the following:

- They are paid for the first three days of jury duty in Massachusetts; and
- They accrue sick leave beginning on their first day of work at the rate of one hour of sick leave for each 30 hours they work. They may not use sick leave until after they have completed 90 days of service. Unused sick leave hours are forfeited upon termination of the contract.
- Student employees are not eligible to accrue sick leave.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Bereavement Leave is governed by the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement or by the Non-Unit handbook. All requests for bereavement leave are subject to providing proof of the relationship of the deceased to the employee as well as to the fact of the death.

### **Blood Donation Leave**

University employees are eligible for up to two hours of paid leave to donate blood.

### **Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking in the Workplace Leave**

Executive Order 491 provides for up to 15 days of paid domestic violence leave per calendar year if you and/or your children are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking, and need to go to court, attend medical appointments, etc.

### **Parental Leave**

An employee who has completed three months of service with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a full-time employee is eligible to take up to 8 weeks of unpaid parental leave, if the need arises. Parental leave may be taken only to give birth, to bond with or care for a newborn baby, or to bond with or care for a newly adopted child who is under the age of 18 (or under 23, if mentally or physically disabled). Rights and responsibilities are as follows:

- An employee seeking parental leave must notify Employee Services at least 2 weeks prior to the anticipated date of departure, or as soon as practicable. The employee must also notify the Office of Employee Services of their intent to return to work.
- If both the employee and their spouse work for Worcester State University, the two are entitled to an aggregate of 8 weeks of parental leave
- If an employee is eligible for both Parental Leave and for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the two leaves run concurrently.
- An employee on parental leave has the option of using accumulated leave time to cover their absence.
- An employee returning from parental leave will be restored to the same or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act**

An eligible employee may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid family/medical leave within a 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons as specified under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). The 12-month period is measured forward from the first day FMLA leave is taken. An employee is eligible if he/she: (1) has worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for at least one year; AND (2) has worked at least 1,250 hours over the 12 month period immediately preceding the need for FMLA; AND (3) can demonstrate that he/she or an eligible family member has a serious health condition. FMLA leave may be used to care for a newborn, adopted, or foster child; to care for a seriously ill parent, child, or spouse; or, because the employee is experiencing a serious medical condition.

FMLA leave is not an additional form of paid leave. An employee on FMLA leave for reasons other than to care for a newborn, adopted or foster child, is required to substitute any accrued paid personal, vacation, and sick leave for unpaid FMLA LEAVE. An employee is not required to substitute compensatory time for unpaid FMLA leave, but you may request to have compensatory time substituted for unpaid FMLA leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, employees, other than key employees, will be restored to the same or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Paid long term disability and workers' compensation leave run concurrently with FMLA leave. The use of accrued paid leave during an FMLA leave is subject to all the usual collective bargaining agreement stipulations and to University policies that normally apply to requesting and using such leaves.

The substitution of accrued paid leave time for unpaid leave time does not extend the 12-week leave period.

Employees are required to request such leaves at least thirty days in advance if the need for the leave can be anticipated. Otherwise, they should request the leave as soon as they become aware of the need to take it. Employees should contact the Office of Human Resources to obtain an FMLA leave request form as much in advance of the requested leave period as possible.

### **Jury Duty Leave**

You are entitled to leave with pay when called for jury service or when summoned as a witness on behalf of any city or town of the Commonwealth or the state or federal government.

If you receive jury fees for jury service and present the appropriate court certificate of service, you shall either retain such fees in lieu of pay for the period of jury service if the fees exceed your regular rate of compensation or remit to the University any fees if they are less than your regular compensation rate for the period involved.

### **Military Leave**

Regular part-time employees shall be entitled to all of the above military leave benefits. Upon returning to their state positions, employees who have been called to active military service by the United States of America shall be entitled to sick leave, vacation leave and personal leave that they would have accrued had they been on the payroll during their absence for military leave. See *Military Pay Provision* in this Handbook for additional information.

#### ***Military Pay Provision***

Employees are entitled to receiving their regular pay while performing certain duties in the armed forces of the Commonwealth. An employee shall be entitled to receive pay during the time of his/her service in the armed forces of the Commonwealth during the circumstances outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 33, §§ 38, 40, 41, or 60. Employees shall present their signed, official military orders to Employee Services.

Employees are entitled to receive their regular pay from the Commonwealth while performing their annual tour of duty (ATD). State employees are entitled to receive regular pay not exceeding thirty-four (34) days in

any state fiscal year and not exceeding seventeen (17) days in any federal fiscal year during their ATD.

Such employees shall also be entitled to the same leaves of absence and vacation with pay given other employees under Chapter 33, §59.

Regular part-time employees shall be entitled to all of the above military leave benefits. Upon returning to their state positions, employees who have been called to active military service by the United States of America shall be entitled to sick leave, vacation leave and personal leave that they would have accrued had they been on the payroll during their absence for military leave.

### **Personal Leave**

Personal leave accruals are governed by the respective Collective Bargaining Agreements.

### **Sick Leave**

Classified Staff (AFSCME) and Administrators (APA and NUP) earn 15 sick days per year. Faculty-Librarians also earn 15 sick days per year, while Teaching Faculty earn a total of 10 sick days per year. Part-time benefited employees accumulate sick time on a prorated basis based on their hours worked. When calling in sick, please contact your department and leave a message. Sick leave is allowed to accumulate from year to year and is paid out to employees at their retirement at the rate of 20% of the accumulated hours.

### **Small Necessities Leave**

University employees are entitled to 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period, in addition to leave available under the FMLA for the following purposes:

- To participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of your child
- To accompany your child or elderly relative to routine medical or dental appointments or for other professional health care services.

If you have accumulated sick, personal or vacation credits at the commencement of your Small Necessities Leave, you may use such credits for which you may be eligible under the applicable rules. The University is not obligated to provide paid sick leave or paid medical leave in any situation where the University would not normally provide such paid leave.

### **Voting Leave**

University employees are eligible for up to two hours of paid leave to vote.

### **Workers' Compensation Leave**

Workers' Compensation Insurance provides salary protection and medical coverage for injuries and illnesses occurring from work-related accidents or exposures. If you suffer an on-the-job injury or job-related illness, you must report it within 24 hours to the Office of Employee Services so a report may be filed with the state's Human Resources Department's Division of Workers' Compensation (HRD) in a timely manner.

HRD will review your claim, and if approved you may receive benefits to cover medical costs and offset loss of wages during your period of disability. Injuries or illnesses resulting from serious or willful misconduct or those occurring outside the scope of employment will not be covered.

You may report a Workplace Injury by submitting a completed incident report form to the Office of Employee Services. The form is available online, and hard copies are also available in the Office of Employee Services.

## Vacation Leave

Unit and non-unit classified personnel and professional employees (excluding faculty members) begin to accrue vacation leave on the first pay period of employment **for every hour on the payroll**. The following are the accrual rates for each employee category:

### MSCA Librarians

YEARS OF SERVICE	ACCRUAL RATE
0-8	6.346 hours per pay period or 22 days/year (165 total hours)
8-16	6.634 hours per pay period or 23 days/year (172.5 total hours)
16-25	7.211 hours per pay period or 25 days/year (187.5 total hours)
25+	8.653 hours per pay period or 30 days/year (225 total hours)

### APA Unit Administrators

YEARS OF SERVICE	ACCRUAL RATE
0-1	5.769 hours per pay period or 20 days/year (150 total hours)
1-8	6.346 hours per pay period or 22 days/year (165 total hours)
8-16	6.634 hours per pay period or 23 days/year (172.5 total hours)
16-25	7.211 hours per pay period or 25 days/year (187.5 total hours)
25+	8.653 hours per pay period or 30 days/year (225 total hours)

### Classified Employees working 40 hours per week

YEARS OF SERVICE	ACCRUAL RATE
0-4.5	3.076 hours per pay period or 10 days/year (80 total hours)
4.5-9.5	4.615 hours per pay period or 15 days/year (120 total hours)
9.5-19.5	6.153 hours per pay period or 20 days/year (160 total hours)
19.5+	7.692 hours per pay period or 25 days/year (200 total hours)

### Unit and Non-Unit Classified Employees working a 37.5 hour week

YEARS OF SERVICE	ACCRUAL RATE
0-4.5	2.884 hours per pay period or 10 days/year (75 total hours)
4.5-9.5	4.326 hours per pay period or 15 days/year (112.5 total hours)
9.5-19.5	5.769 hours per pay period or 20 days/year (150 total hours)
19.5+	7.211 hours per pay period or 25 days/year (187.5 total hours)

### Non-Unit Professional Administrators

YEARS OF SERVICE	ACCRUAL RATE
0-5 years of service	0.076923 per hour or 20 days per year
5 years but less than 10 years	0.085 per hour or 22 days per year
10 years but less than 15 years	0.08846 per hour or 23 days per year
15 years but less than 20 years	0.09230 per hour or 24 days per year
20 or more years	0.096153 per hour or 25 days per year

University employees from AFSCME Unit I and non-unit classified employees (37.5 hours per week), MSCA Librarians, and APA Administrators may accumulate up to 375 hours of vacation time. Unit II Classified (40 hours per week) may accumulate up to 400 hours of vacation time. Excess accruals above the limit will be converted to sick hours twice per year in April and October.

Non-unit Professionals may carry no more than 375 hours of vacation. Excess accruals will be forfeited each December 31.

## **SECTION 9: LEAVING WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

### **A. GENERAL**

The Office of Employee Services will provide all employees leaving Worcester State University, voluntarily or involuntarily, with information, including:

- Information on their insurance plans, and the date coverage will end;
- a copy of the State Retirement Board's "Refund/Rollover Request Form," for employees who were participants of the SERS program;
- a copy of the Department of Unemployment Assurance brochure, which contains information on how to apply for unemployment insurance benefits;
- information on the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 or COBRA (continued health insurance coverage), for employees who were participants in a health insurance plan or flexible spending account plan.

### **B. TYPES OF SEPARATIONS**

#### **1) Involuntary Separations**

Massachusetts is an at-will state, which means that an employee may decide to leave at any time, and the university may, in some cases, terminate an employment relationship with or without cause. Where the university deems necessary to terminate an employee, the employee will be paid for all hours worked and for all vacation leave hours, if any, still unused at the time of termination on the employee's last day on the WSU payroll, consistent with Massachusetts Wage and Hour Law.

#### **2) Resignations**

Employees are asked to provide the University with written notice of their intent to resign. Customarily this notice is sent to the President with copies to the supervisor and Employee Services. Classified employees are asked to provide a minimum of two weeks' notice when they resign from their positions at the University. Professional administrators are asked to provide one month's notice and faculty members are asked to give a full semester of notice, if possible.

An appointment with the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee should be arranged during the last scheduled workweek. Resigning employees are invited to sit in for an exit interview, and they are required to accept the invitation.

#### **3) Transfer to another state agency**

A resigning employee who is transferring to another state agency must notify Employee Services so the employee's record may be transferred over to the new agency in a manner that will not cause a break in service or in insurance coverage.

#### **4) Reductions in Force (Retrenchments)**

If a reduction in the workforce occurs due to fiscal exigencies, reorganization or program changes, the reduction will be administered in accordance with all applicable collective bargaining agreements and Board handbooks. An appointment with the Office of Employee Services will be scheduled for each employee who is affected by a reduction-in-force.

## **5) Retirement**

Employees are asked to provide the University with written notice of their intent to retire from state service as much in advance as possible. Customarily, this notice is sent to the President with copies to the supervisor and Employee Services. This request is made because of the need to begin searches as early as possible, and to plan for the substantial costs to the University that result from retirement provisions, such as vacation leave payments and sick leave buybacks. (Specific notice is required under each collective bargaining agreement or Board handbook to be eligible for sick leave buyback.)

Employees who wish to retire should contact the Benefits Administrator for assistance with the process.

**Office of Employee Services**

**Sathi Mitra, Assistant Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer**

Administration Building, Room A-313

Ph: 508-929-8117

Fx: 508-929-81

