

STAFF HANDBOOK

Section 3 of 4: Policies and Procedures Specific to Staff
Effective July 2023

In order to promote the health and welfare of all persons in the Blackburn College community and to protect College assets, the administration is committed to a policy of promoting safe working conditions on the campus. Everyone in the College community should share this commitment; it is expected that everyone will continue to work toward providing a safe working environment and promoting safe working practices in all departments.

3.1 Changes to the Staff Handbook

Changes to the Staff Handbook will be made as needed pursuant to official actions that modify existing policy and procedure.

Proposals for changes to the Staff Handbook may originate in any staff committee or any body having responsibility for areas of campus life covered in this section. The normal path these proposals should take is as follows: When a proposal is developed, committee representatives seek input from staff individuals. The proposal is put into final form, reviewed by the Staff Assembly Officers for inconsistencies and then is presented to the Staff Assembly for action. If inconsistencies exist, they shall be brought to the Staff Assembly for reconciliation. Approved proposals go forward to the President and, if necessary, the Faculty Assembly and the Board of Trustees. Such changes shall become effective when designated by the President of the College.

All proposed revisions to the Staff Handbook are to be sent to the Office of the President, which office will keep track of and make needed revisions and maintain historical handbook files. Revised pages will make official notification of changes to the Staff Handbook.

3.2 Operations of the Staff Assembly

[*See handbook section 1.6.4.1.*](#)

3.3 General Employment Information

3.3.1 Definitions

3.3.1.1 Employee

An applicant who is hired by the College to work for a salary or wage. Generally, students participating in the Work Program are not considered "employees", except for purposes of Workers' Compensation insurance. If, however, a student is hired for pay, they are then an "employee."

3.3.1.2 Full-Time Employee

An employee is considered as "full-time" when they are hired for a regular position that normally requires more than 30 hours of work per week.

3.3.1.3 Part-Time Employee

An employee is considered as "part-time" when they are hired for a regular position that normally requires up to 30 hours of work per week.

3.3.1.4 Temporary Employee

An employee is considered as "temporary" when they are hired for a position that is temporary in nature; hours of work per week may vary. "Temporary" is defined as less than 32 weeks per calendar year. For purposes of this section all policies/procedures are applicable to all staff, whether "Full-time", "Part-time", or "Temporary", unless otherwise noted.

3.3.1.5 Salary

Compensation for services of an employee. An employee's salary is often expressed as an annual amount based on a certain number of hours, if the position is non-exempt. However, termination before completion of an annual term will result in prorating of the annual salary over the period actually worked.

3.3.1.6 Benefits

Those employment-related payments made by the employee and/or College for mandated and non-mandated deductions/withholdings/payments, other than salaries/wages.

3.3.1.7 Mandated/Non-Mandated Deductions/Withholdings/Payments

"Mandated" are those that are required by law, *e.g.*, social security taxes; "non-mandated" are not required by law, *e.g.*, disability insurance premiums.

3.3.1.8 Exempt Employee (often referred to as "salaried personnel")

An employee who by virtue of their position description is exempt from certain provisions (such as eligibility for overtime pay) of the federal Wage and Hour law. Such an exemption is usually granted to certain supervisory personnel, professionals (such as teachers, coaches), administrative officers, and others as provided for in the Wage and Hour Acts.

3.3.1.9 Non-Exempt Employee (often referred to as "hourly personnel")

An employee who by virtue of their position description is not exempt from certain provisions (such as eligibility for overtime pay) of the federal Wage and Hour Law.

3.3.1.10 Hiring/Employment Relation

Only the President has authority to hire, or terminate the employment of, anyone at Blackburn College. Illinois is an "at will" employment state. This means that, unless an employment contract has been made by the President, any employment situation is for an indefinite duration, terminable at the will of either party. Under the laws of the State of Illinois, employment and compensation is terminable at any time and for any reason whatsoever, with or without good cause at the option of either the employer or the employee. No implied, oral, or written agreements contrary to the express language of hire and rehire letters are valid unless they are in writing and signed by the President of Blackburn College.

3.3.1.11 Position Descriptions

There will be a written position description for each employment position at the College. Such descriptions should be updated at least tri-annually. All position descriptions and subsequent updates are to be forwarded to the President for approval and filing in the Office of the President.

3.3.1.12 Evaluations

All employees have the right to an annual evaluation of their job performance. These evaluations will include a look-back at past performance and goal setting for the future. Evaluations will be conducted by each employee and their supervisor using the form in [Appendix 3A](#) and made a part of the employee's full time record.

3.3.1.13 Contracts

Non-faculty employees are issued hire letters, not employment contracts. No contract is intended to be expressed or implied by this manual or any other written or verbal statements made by College officers, trustees, or others.

3.3.1.14 Salaries

Salaries are based on education, qualifications, experience, and prevailing rates for the position in this area. The Board of Trustees makes final decisions on all salaries.

- a. Each year all salaries are reviewed. Adjustments to individual salaries are made on the basis of merit, longevity, and financial condition of the College.
- b. Individual salary information is confidential and will not be shared (by anyone) with others, except as may otherwise be required by law.

3.3.1.15 Work Week

The College work week is normally forty hours per week; eight hours per day, five days per week. However, all employees should expect to be available as needed to adequately perform their function. The College encourages flexible scheduling for all personnel. Creative work arrangements will be approved if it can be shown that individual jobs can be performed as well or better and undue hardships on others will not be created.

3.3.1.16 Vacations

The College provides paid vacations to eligible employees. Personnel are encouraged to take vacations in blocks of one week or more at a time.

3.3.1.16.1 Vacation Eligibility

All full-time non-faculty employees are eligible for paid vacation time. Part-time and temporary employees may take time off for a vacation, but will not be granted vacation pay (see the PTO policy in section 1.8.12)

3.3.1.16.2 Vacation Requests

Each year employees will be asked to provide requests for vacation time. Personnel are asked to take vacation days in conjunction with departmental labor needs. Every effort will be made to honor requests; however, in cases of conflict with the vacation request of another person, the senior employee should be given preference.

3.3.1.16.3 Vacation Accrual

"Accrued vacation days" are earned vacation days, less vacation days used.

- Full-time personnel earn twenty (20) vacation days during each year of service, except as noted below. Vacation days are earned each month at a rate of approximately 1.67 days per month. Vacation days used are subtracted each month.
- New full-time personnel earn 10 vacation days (approximately .84 days per month) during the first year.

3.3.1.16.4 Carry-over

All employees are encouraged to take vacation time each year as it is earned. No more than 20 accrued vacation days may be carried forward into the next fiscal year. Accrued vacation days not taken in excess of 20 will be forfeited.

3.3.1.17 Termination

Accrued vacation time will be paid on the next regularly scheduled pay date after termination according to the formula in *handbook section [3.3.1.16.3](#)*.

3.3.2 Travel Time Policy

overtime pay under applicable federal, and state law. Whether and to what extent a non-exempt employee receives pay for travel time depends upon a number of factors including the kind of travel and whether the travel time takes place within normal (regular) work hours.

This policy is intended to summarize and provide guidance regarding how the College will compensate employees in order to comply with applicable law. Nothing in this policy is intended to confer any contractual rights or constitute an agreement to pay any compensation beyond that required under applicable federal and state law including the Fair Labor Standards Act or Illinois Minimum Wage Law. If anything in this policy conflicts with any applicable law in effect now or in the future, the College will pay employees according to the requirements of all applicable laws in effect at the time of payment.

Normal (Regular) Work Hours

The hours that an employee is regularly scheduled to work on a typical work day. For most employees, regular hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Alternate “normal” schedules should be agreed upon ahead of time with an employee’s direct supervisor (i.e. working Tuesday-Saturday or 7:00 am to 4:00 p.m.).

Regular Commute Travel

Normal travel from home to work and travel from work to home at the end of a regular workday is considered normal commuting time and is not paid time.

Emergency Call-Back

Travel from home back to work to perform an emergency job after an employee has already completed a regular day’s work and gone home for the day is paid time.

Travel During the Work Day

Once an employee starts working for the day, time spent traveling for work purposes (like traveling between work locations) is paid time.

Single-Day Travel

If the employee is required to travel to a metropolitan area beyond their usual work location and return home in the same day, the travel time to and from the alternate work location is paid time.

If the employee uses public transportation for such a trip, the travel time between the employee’s home and the point where they obtain this transportation (i.e. bus station, airport, etc.) is not considered paid time.

Travel Away From Home Overnight

Employees will be paid for travel time associated with a trip involving an overnight stay away from their home area when the hours of travel correspond to the employee’s regular work hours, or equivalent hours on a non-working day.

Travel time spent riding in a vehicle (car, train, plane, etc.) as a passenger, performing no other work, outside of the employee’s regular working hours (or corresponding hours on a non-work day) is not paid time.

If the employee uses public transportation for an overnight trip, the travel time between the employee's home and the point where they obtain this transportation (i.e. bus station, airport, etc.) is not considered paid time. All other driving time for an overnight trip will be considered paid time.

Activities Performed During a Trip

Time spent performing any work (i.e. attending meetings or trainings, staffing a booth or table at an event, attending conference session, meeting with an individual or group) while traveling is considered hours worked even if these hours are outside their normal work schedule.

Meals, breaks, sleep, or down time during which an employee is completely free of all responsibilities while on a trip is not considered hours worked and is not compensable provided that the break is at least 30 minutes in duration. This would include breaks for meals during a one-day or out of town trip.

Voluntary Activities and Travel

Voluntary attendance at a social event (i.e. convention dinners, cocktail hours, sporting events, etc.) that is primarily for the benefit of the employee rather than the College is not paid time.

Travel and voluntary attendance at an independent training or conference at the employee's own initiative, and not organized or paid for by the employer is not considered hours worked.

3.4 Other Time Off

3.4.1 Holidays

The College provides approximately 21 paid days off for holiday observances each year. The College offices are closed from at least Christmas Eve through New Year's Day every year, the number of days off/the dates for Christmas Break will vary from year to year. Christmas Break is paid time off for all full-time personnel, and it does not affect accrued vacation days. A complete list of observed holidays is included with the June paychecks each year.

3.4.2 Breaks

Wage and Hour laws mandate at least one 20-minute break near the middle of any work shift which is seven and one-half hours or longer. Blackburn College's break policy is considerably more liberal.

a. The lunch break is normally 1 hour and is taken near the middle of the work day. This is unpaid time to use as you please. In some cases, Department Heads may allow shorter lunch breaks in exchange for time off at another time, (i.e. the end of the day). Except in unusual circumstances, all non-exempt personnel must take at least 20 minutes of this time off away from the work area, if no other breaks equal to a minimum of 20 minutes will be available during the day.

b. Morning and afternoon "coffee" breaks are not required by law, but are accorded by the College as an accommodation to allow personnel a few minutes to refresh themselves and return to work with renewed vigor.

1. Coffee breaks (if taken) should be no longer than 15 minutes, near the middle of the morning and/or afternoon work periods. These breaks are taken only on College property.

2. Since coffee breaks are not required and are taken on work time, **one cannot forgo coffee breaks in exchange for other time off.**

3.4.3 Absence Notification

When an employee must be absent from work, they will contact the department supervisor as soon as possible to notify them of the absence.

3.4.4 Sick Days

Sick Days are paid days off work, granted to full-time personnel. Sick Days may be used for an illness of the employee, birth or adoption of a child, or for the employee to care for an immediate family member who is ill.

- a. Sick Days accumulate at the rate of one day for each month of service. Sick Days taken will be deducted from accumulated Sick Days, leaving accrued Sick Days. One may accrue up to 115 sick days. This is about 6 months of work time, with holidays and vacations.
- b. After three consecutive Sick Days, an employee may be required to provide a physician's certification of an illness in order to be paid for additional days.
- c. In the case of a birth or adoption of a child, paid sick days will be limited to the primary care giver and to a maximum of 30 accrued days. Additional unpaid leave may be taken by the mother or father under the FMLA leave provisions.
- d. Receiving payment for Sick Days when no illness actually existed is considered a major violation of College policies and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3.4.5 Personal Leave

The College under certain circumstances may grant Leave of Absence without pay for personal reasons.

- a. Such leaves may be for several weeks or months if needed, provided a temporary replacement can be found.
- b. No pay or benefits will be allowed, although health insurance may be continued at the employee's expense through the C.O.B.R.A. program.
- c. Written application for a Leave of Absence will be made to one's department supervisor who will make a recommendation to the President.

3.4.6 Funeral Leave

A full-time employee will be accorded up to five (5) days of paid time off for the funeral of an immediate family member. The immediate family includes spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild (and step relatives or in-laws), or other relative living in the household. Full-time employee will also be accorded one (1) day of paid time off for the funeral of an extended family member (aunt, uncle, cousin, in-laws, etc.).