July 29, 2025

TO: Division Heads, Deans, Directors and Department Chairpersons

FROM: Mathew Cox, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services

RE: 2025-2026 Personnel Policy for Undergraduate and Graduate Student Employees of the University of South Alabama

The following is the updated 2025-2026 Personnel Policy for Undergraduate and Graduate Student Employees of the University of South Alabama. This policy has been established for undergraduate and graduate student employees **only** and does **not** apply to Graduate Assistantships. The Deans of the Graduate School maintains the Graduate Assistantship Policy. Contact the Dean of the Graduate School at 460-6310 or view the graduate assistantship policy at https://www.southalabama.edu/graduatemajors/graduateschool.

I. Introduction

Student employment at the University of South Alabama is educational in nature and as such should afford students opportunities to use and further develop their skills, creativity, sense of awareness, and responsibilities while earning a portion of their educational costs. Student employee do not come under the umbrella of regular staff employees. Student employees are defined as those students who are employed as student assistants, have a paid internship through the University of South Alabama or employed in the Work-Study program. Nursing and Allied Health students employed by the University of South Alabama's hospitals as part of their training, elected SGA student officials, and Resident Assistants are not a part of this definition.

It is the responsibility of supervisors to give new student employees the proper orientation, counseling, and supervision that is needed to develop healthy attitudes toward their jobs. Students are to supplement rather than replace University of South Alabama staff. Any questions or concerns related to the guidelines should be forward to the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services.

II. The Meaning of "Hourly Employment"

Students are employed under "an hour's pay for an hour's work" arrangement. However, a department should not deny payments to students for brief interruptions in their daily schedules, such as rest periods or coffee breaks, if it is the department's policy and practice to permit such interruptions for its regular hourly employees. Students are not compensated under a salary, commission, or fee arrangement. In addition, fringe benefits such as paid sick leave, vacation pay, and holiday pay, which are provided benefits to eligible regular

employees, do not apply to student employment. Student assistants are not covered by Social Security as long as they are enrolled at least half-time and regularly attending classes. Student employees are not covered by Workers' Compensation insurance. This should be explained to students when hired.

Student employees are free to apply for Unemployment Compensation at www.labor.alabama.gov. When a student employee separates from employment, for any reason, the student employee's department must provide the Notice of Availability of Unemployment Compensation to individuals who separate from employment. The Notice of Availability of Unemployment Compensation may be in the form of a letter, email, text message, or flyer given or sent to each individual undergoing separation. The notice may be found here:

https:/www.southalabama.edu/departments/enrollmentservices/resources/noticeofavailabilityofunemploymentcompenstation.pdf

The decision regarding eligibility for Unemployment Compensation is made solely by the Alabama Department of Labor.

III. Hourly Wage Rates

Wages paid to students working under the student employee program must be paid the minimum wage **($7.25/hour)**; however, said hourly wage should not exceed **$5.75** per hour over the minimum wage for undergraduate student employees and **$10.25** per hour over minimum wage for graduate student employees without permission from the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services. A written memo requesting payment exceeding the standard hourly rates with justification must be sent to the Enrollment Services Unit, attn: AVP for Enrollment Services. Such approvals are required for hourly wages exceeding $13.00 for undergraduate student employees and $17.50 for graduate student employees. Once the justification memo has been approved by the Enrollment Services Unit AVP, it will be returned to the requesting department, at which time, that department should deliver the approved memo to the Payroll Office as well as submitting an electronic personnel action form (EPAF).

Wages under $13.00/hour for undergraduate employees and under $17.50 for graduate employees can be sent directly from the departments to the Payroll Office as long as it does not require a signature by the Grants and Contracts Office **(Student Personnel Action Forms with FUND # beginning with 2)**. Signature is required for all grants except Federal Work Study.

Students employed under the Work-Study program will be paid at least minimum wage as required under the federal guidelines to participate in the program. Employment under the Work-Study program is determined by the financial need of the family. The University of South Alabama is an equal opportunity employer and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, disabled veteran, Vietnam Era Veteran status, or sex.

IV. Mandatory Direct Deposit of Paychecks

All newly hired and current student employees will be required by the University to be paid by direct deposit. Student employees who are not already enrolled in direct deposit of paychecks will be required to do through PAWS. If a student employee is unable to secure an account at an eligible financial institution they can establish an account at the USA Federal Credit Union. There will be a one-time $25 share deposit required for opening the account. **STUDENTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS REQUIREMENT BEFORE HIRING.**

Failure to establish a direct deposit account will result in termination of the student appointment.

***NOTE: While direct deposit participation expedites payments and is encouraged for all student employees, Work-Study student employee participation, by law, is optional. If a Work-Study student employee chooses to participate, the participation may be cancelled at any time by indicating such cancellation on the form referred to in the link above.

V. Appointments

Each department should have on file a job description for each student employee position, including Work-Study. For student employees, the rate of pay can be based on job requirements and skills needed, but should not normally exceed minimum wage by more than **$5.75** per hour for undergraduate student employees and should not exceed **$10.25** per hour over minimum wage for graduate student employees. **ALL STUDENT PERSONNEL ACTION FORMS MUST REFLECT THE STUDENT I.D. NUMBER. The effective date on the Student Personnel Action Form should be the first day the student actually starts to work.**

At the time of appointment, the student employee must:

- Be enrolled at least half-time **(undergraduate 6 hours, and graduate 3 hours)**

  NOTE: Summer semester includes credit hours taken during the May semester and summer semester (June-July).

- Be a degree seeking student
- Have completed I-9 (refer to section **VIII**)

Work-Study student employees must be enrolled half-time (6+ credit hours as undergraduate student and 3+ hours as a graduate student.

If a graduate student employee is in their final semester, they may continue employment as long as they are registered in a minimum of 1 credit hour.

Student employees currently hired in a department have the option <u>not</u> to enroll for one semester each academic year (fall-summer). During this time, student employees may work up to a maximum of 56 hours per pay period with an average of 28 hours per week during the pay period. *This does <u>not</u> apply to students who have not been enrolled for two consecutive semesters.

- **<u>Example:</u> A student was not enrolled in spring semester or summer semester but wishes to use the following fall for their semester to opt out of enrollment**.

A student must be enrolled in the prior semester and registered for the upcoming semester before they are allowed to opt out a semester of being enrolled.

*For enrollment and employment requirements related to a student who is **NOT** a US citizen or a Legal Permanent Resident of the US please review the employment limitations below in Section VII.

Students admitted and registered to attend the University of South Alabama for the first time are not eligible to work as student employees until the first day of the semester.

Returning students who have applied for readmission and students who withdrew during a semester cannot begin working for the upcoming semester until the student has registered for classes for the upcoming semester. The student may not begin work until the first day of classes.

- **<u>Example 1:</u>** Student withdraws during spring semester and has to cease work immediately. Student registers for classes for summer semester but cannot begin working until after spring exams are over and until the first day of the semester.
- **<u>Example 2:</u>** Student has not been enrolled for several semesters and has applied for readmission and registered for classes for summer semester. The student cannot begin working until **<u>after exams are over</u>** for spring semester and until the first day of the semester.

It is recommended that student employees work no more than eight hours per day. Under special circumstances the supervisor may allow students to exceed the eight-hour limit. The maximum number of hours a student employee is allowed to work is 20 hours per week when classes are meeting. If a student holds more than **one** student employee job, the maximum combined hours a student may work between the jobs is **<u>still</u>** 20 hours per week, not to exceed 40 hours per pay period. If a department feels it is necessary to have a student work more than 20 hours per week or more than 40 hours per pay period, written approval must be granted in advance by the Provost and Executive President or their Vice President.

If approved, the student may work up to a maximum of 28 hours per week or a maximum of 56 hours per pay period. A list of students with their JAG numbers and copy of written approval must be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Services.

Student employees may **work up to a maximum of 56 hours per pay period with an average of not more than 28 hours per week during the pay period between semesters and during fall and spring breaks.** If a student enrolls for the May semester or summer semester and only take classes for one term, the student is allowed to work 20 hours while taking classes and allowed to work 28 hours when not taking classes during the summer. Students **must** wait until the final exams are completed for **all** students before they can begin working 28 hours per week. Students are not allowed to work more than 56 hours per pay period under any circumstance without permission from the Provost and Executive Vice President or their Vice President. If approved, a list of the students with their JAG numbers must be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Services.

Students who are participating in a paid internship program through the University of South Alabama while taking classes are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week or 40 hours per pay period. However, students who are participating in an internship program through the University of South Alabama and are not enrolled in any other classes may work up to 28 hours per week or 56 hour per pay period.

Work-Study student employees are allowed to work a maximum of twenty hours per week. International student employee limitations are defined in Section VII.

Work-Study student employees generally are not allowed to work between semester or other periods of non-enrollment.

Student employees, if they desire, may work during official University of South Alabama holidays if the office in which they are hired remains open during the holidays. Students cannot be required to work during official University of South Alabama holidays.

Students holding both a part-time staff position and a student employee position may work no more than 20 hours in their student appointment with the combined total hours worked not to exceed 56 hours per pay period with an average of 28 per week during the pay period.

Students who are enrolled in on-line classes are only allowed to work 20 hours per week not to exceed 40 hours per pay period. Students who enroll in less than 6 hours for undergraduate or 3 hours for graduate on-line or campus classes must have written approval in advance by the Provost and Executive Vice President or their Vice President. If approved, the student may work up to a maximum of 28 hours per week or a maximum of 56 hours per pay period.

A list of students with their JAG numbers and a copy of the written approval must be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Services.

Students who completely withdraw during a semester or who are suspended should cease working immediately.

Students **may not** continue to work after they graduate.

Each department must submit a new Student Personnel Action appointment form when a student is hired. The student employment date will only be required at time of termination unless the student is a work study student, in which case an end date is required for each year. See Section VIII for instructions on the mandatory I-9 policy. In addition, Payroll must be notified (for FICA withholding purposes) when a student employee is not enrolled. The original or a copy of the social security card must be presented to the Payroll Office for social security number and name verification. When employment ends for the student a termination PA must be completed. (See Section XIII)

Changes to a current student employee's PA (i.e. current student employee hired at pay rate of $7.25 per hour and you wish to increase the rate of pay to $9.40 per hour) should be made effective with the beginning of a pay period. A link to USA's biweekly payroll calendar is on the website at

www.southalabama.edu/financialaffairs/payrollaccounting/calendar.html.

Departments and divisions should observe the University and state laws regarding **nepotism**. Students who have a relative working in the same department **cannot** be supervised or take directions from their relative. Refer to Section 2.1.4 of the Staff Employee Handbook for more information.

VI. Breaks and Lunch

When working conditions warrant and the student employee's supervisor agrees, a student employee may take the following:

- A one 15-minute unpaid break if the student assistant works at least a 4-hour shift.
- Two 15-minute unpaid breaks if the student assistant works a full 8-hour shift.

A student assistant who works a full 8-hour shift may be provided an unpaid meal period. Length of meal periods is at the discretion of the supervisor.

VII. International Student employment

United States immigration regulation ***8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(i)*** limits the employment eligibility of international students. International students who maintain their F-1 or J-1 immigration status are eligible to work part-time on the premises of the institution that issued their current, valid I-20 or DS-2019. On- or off-campus employment must be "incident to status" and cannot affect the international student's course work or studies. F-1 students do not require authorization or updates to their SEVIS record (I-20) from the Office of Immigration prior to accepting on-campus employment. However, J-1 students require authorization and updates to their SEVIS record (DS-2019) from the Office of Immigration prior to accepting on-campus employment. International students may only work "on campus" (academic department, bookstore, cafeteria, Aramark, Starbucks, etc.) a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session. According to University of South Alabama policy, on-campus student employees may work up to a maximum of 56 hours per pay period with an average of not more than 28 hours per week during the pay period between semesters and during fall and spring breaks as long as students who eligible and demonstrate an intent to register for the subsequent academic semester. For any international student awarded a scholarship, fellowship, or assistantship, there is **no exception** to the overall 20 hours per week cap for on- **or** off-campus employment. International students may be subject to U.S. tax withholdings and should speak with USA Tax Accounting to discuss their requirements. International students with questions regarding their eligibility for on- or off-campus employment should be referred to the Office of Immigration.

On-campus employment must be performed on the school's premises (including on-campus commercial firms that provide services for students on campus, such as, the bookstore or cafeteria), or at **off-campus** locations that are approved by the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services as educationally affiliated with the University of South Alabama. Employment with privately-owned sporting camps operated on the university premises as coach-owned LLC do not constitute eligible on-campus employment.

VIII. Mandatory I-9 Policy

All new hire employees are required by federal law (IRCA) to complete a government Form I-9 to verify their identity and authorization to work in the U.S. It is a federal requirement, due at the start of employment within strict deadlines in order to continue employment. Noncompliance of completion requirements is a violation of federal law and subject to federal fines for the University. Noncompliance by hiring managers is subject to disciplinary action.

1. The hiring manager or designee must intruct their new hire student employee – regardless of other current student positions the new hire has – to report to the Human Resources Office **before or on their first day of employment (official hire date)** prior to reporting to his/her work location. Student nurses/workers located at the hospitals may go to USA Health Human Resources. **The student employee is not allowed to begin work until they provide the hiring department with an I-9 status receipt issued to them by Human Resources.**
2. Upon completion of Section 1 (or Sections 1 & 2) the new hire student employee will be given an I-9 status receipt to provide to the hiring department, indicating their I-9 status as either partially or fully complete. **The student employee is not allowed to begin work until they provide the hiring department with an I-9 status receipt issued by Human Resources.**

3. All new hire employees must provide acceptable documentation to complete Section 2 of the I-9. Those who did not provide the required documentation by the first day of employment (official hire date) when completing Section 1, must provide acceptable documentation in person no later than three business days following their first day of employment (official hire date), to complete Section 2 and continue employment.

Per federal policy, failure to provide acceptable documentation for Section 2 by the deadline requires immediate termination of employment; the student employee cannot report to work for a fourth working day. The Human Resources Office will notify hiring manager/designees of any student employees who fail to comply within federal completion deadlines and advise the department that the new hire is to be terminated immediately.

IX. On-the-Job Injury (OJI)

The University of South Alabama strives to protect its employees from undue financial hardship resulting from qualified job-related injuries. Student employees are eligible for benefits provided by the OJI program. The injury must occur in the course and scope of duties as a University employee. For additional information and instructions on how to apply, please visit the University's Accidents While on the Worksite website at https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/financialaffairs/hr/accidents.html.

X. FICA Taxes

The IRS has announced through a private letter ruling that student employees who are enrolled less than half-time (less than three hours graduate or six hours undergraduate) are subject to FICA taxes. To comply with this ruling, student employees' enrollment status will be verified each payroll period.

XI. Graduation

A student employee cannot work after they graduate from the University of South Alabama. Students must cease employment on the last day of finals during the student's last semester. If a student chooses to continue their education at the University of South Alabama, they must be degree-seeking and cannot begin employment until the first day of classes.

XII. Voluntary Services

Student employees will be allowed to participate in voluntary services under the following conditions:

- The volunteer service is not something in which the department would have otherwise paid an employee or student worker.
- The volunteer service is not something an employee or student employee is normally paid to perform.
- The volunteer service is not related to the student worker's job duties.
- The volunteer service does not conflict with the student employee's job.

XIII. Pay Policy and Procedure

Student employees must be paid through normal student personnel/payroll procedures initiated by completing an Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF). A paper personnel action form must be used if an EPAF is not submitted and approved before the pay period deadline.

A Termination/Resignation Student Personnel Action Form must be completed and submitted to the Payroll Office when a student is no longer employed with the University of South Alabama or has graduated.

Students should not be paid by a requisition. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services.

Students are paid every two weeks. Payroll authorization (electronic time sheets) must be approved by the student and supervisor (except for off-campus work-study STAY students) and received by the Payroll Office before 9:00 a.m. on Monday before payday. Changes to the timesheet deadline will be posted on the Payroll website www.southalabama.edu/financialaffairs/payrollaccounting/calendar.html. Student employees must have direct deposit and check stubs can be accessed through their PAWS account.

If the hiring department fails to meet deadlines for the Electronic Personnel Action Forms (EPAFs) and/or timesheets, the student employees' pay will be deferred to the following pay date. No manual checks will be issues.

Student employees must complete their electronic time on Web Time by the Payroll deadlines. Non-compliance of student regulations may result in termination of the student appointment.

See Section IV for the mandatory direct deposit for paychecks requirement.

Students unable to work because of a natural disaster or other causes beyond their control **will not** be paid for lost work. The students may be allowed to make up the lost work during the semester at the discretion of the supervisor.

XIV. Supervision

The employing department must provide sufficient staff to adequately supervise the work performed by student employees, set work schedules including and ending time, arrange for

absences when necessary, see that pay procedures are followed, and in general ensure that a reasonable work relationship is developed and maintained between the student employee and the department.

Student employees are not allowed to work at home. **All work must be conducted under departmental supervision.**

XV. Grievances

Student employees may use the grievance procedure to seek redress of grievances arising out of terms or conditions of student employment. A student employee having a complaint or grievance should first discuss the matter orally with the immediate supervisor within ten working days after the incident. The supervisor should consider the grievant's request and render an oral decision with five working days of the discussion. Failing satisfactory adjustment from the supervisor, the aggrieved student employee shall, within five working days following receipt of the supervisor's decision, reduce the grievance to writing stating (1) the facts of the case, (2) the nature of the complaint, and (3) the adjustment desired. The written grievance shall be presented to the department head who shall give a written response to the grievant with five working days. (NOTE: if the department head is the immediate supervisor, initial grievance may be oral, followed by a written grievance to the dean or director).

Failing satisfactory adjustment from the department head, the aggrieved employee shall, within five working days after receipt of the department head's response, present the written grievance to the appropriate dean or director who shall render a written statement to the grievant within five working days. If satisfactory adjustment is not forthcoming from the dean or director, the grievant shall, within five working days after receiving the dean's or director's response, submit the grievance to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs shall thoroughly investigate the case and render a written answer within ten working days.

Work-Study student employees should follow the same grievance procedure as student assistants. Rather than submit the grievance to the Vice President for Student Affairs, the grievance should first be presented to the coordinator of the Work-Study program. The case shall be investigated thoroughly and presented to the chief student personnel officer. A written answer shall be rendered to the aggrieved employee within ten working days.

XVI. Terminations

Student employees are considered to serve at the pleasure of the University of South Alabama and are “at will” employees.

Ending Employment:

The following constitute ending employment with the University of South Alabama:

- The student graduates
- The student is no longer enrolled
- The student resigns from employment
- The department no longer needs the student’s services

A termination/resignation student personnel action form SPAF must be completed for the above occurrences.

https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/eforms/enrollmentservices/studentpaform.pdf

Disciplinary:

In the event that need arises to terminate a student employee, the supervisor should discuss with the student the on-the-job problem and corrective action necessary to maintain job and appropriate time-line to correct problems before termination. Proper documentation supporting any or all disciplinary actions should be maintained by the department. Their employment must not violate Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations. The filing and resolution of grievances shall be done in accordance with the terms of Section XV of this policy.

Grounds for immediate termination would include, but not be limited to

- Student who falsifies their time sheet.
- Theft or misuse of university property.
- Disclosure of confidential records which the student may be privileged to in the scope of their student employment

In cases involving student misconduct, the matter will be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee for adjudication as outlined in the Student Handbook. The University reserves the right to suspend the student employee job related activity without pay pending the outcome of the University Disciplinary Committee hearing process.

In terminations involving students on the Work-Study program, the supervisor will complete the evaluation sheet to be returned with the termination papers.

XVII. Child Labor

All departments hiring student employees must post the following script regarding Chile Labor. A printable copy is available at www.southalabama.edu/departments/enrollmentservices/studentemployeepolicy.html

Per Alabama child labor laws: Workers under 18 cannot do the following: work in or around steam boilers; operate any power-driven woodworking, bakery, or paper-products machinery; operate any paper cutting, stapling, corrugating or punching machines; operate any stamping machines use in sheet metal or tin ware, or in paper or leather manufacturing or washer or nut factories; operate any power-driven metal forming, cutting, straightening, drawing, punching or shearing machines; assemble, adjust, clean, oil or service machinery in motion or serve as a model in a nude or nearly nude condition (as defined by Alabama law). Certain time and hour restrictions apply to any models under age 18.

XVIII. Summary

The basic guidelines for student employees are:

1. **The policy must be reviewed with the student at time of employment.**

2. **As hourly employees, student assistants must be paid only for hours actually worked.**

3. **The hourly pay rate should not normally exceed the current minimum wage ($7.25/hour) by more than $5.75/hour for undergraduate student employees or $10.25/hour for graduate student employees. A written justification along with the Student Personnel Action form MUST be sent to the Office of Enrollment Services first for hourly wages exceeding $13.00/hour for undergraduate student employees and $17.50/hour for graduate student employees.**

   Once the written justification and student personnel action form has been approved by the appropriate office (Provost and Executive Vice President, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Vice President for Health Sciences), the Office of Enrollment Services will submit to the Payroll Office.

4. **Student employees are limited to a 20 hours per week when classes are meeting. If a student holds more than one student employee job, the total maximum hours to work between the jobs is still 20 hours per week.**

5. **International student employees cannot work more than 20 hours a week during the fall and springs semesters. Prior to employment, check with the Office of Immigration for any further limitations or exceptions.**

6. **Student employees must be enrolled at half-time and be a degree seeking student.**

7. **Student employees must meet Department of Labor and Immigration regulations.**

8. **The University of South Alabama's policy and state laws regarding nepotism must be followed.**

9. **Student employees may work (maximum of 56 hours per pay period with an average of 28 hours per week during a pay period) and not be enrolled for one semester each academic year (Fall-Summer). This does not apply to International students during the fall and spring semesters.**

10. **Student employees <u>may not</u> work after they graduate from the University of South Alabama. Student employee must cease employment on the last day of finals during the student's last semester. If a student chooses to continue their education at the University of South Alabama they must be degree-seeking and cannot begin employment until the first day of classes. If a graduate student employee is in their final semester, they may continue employment as long as they are registered in a minimum of 1 credit hour.**

11. **Student employees who are enrolled in on-line classes are only allowed to work 20 hours per week not to exceed 40 hours per pay period. Students who enroll in less than 6 hours for undergraduate or 3 hours for graduate on-line or campus classes must have written approval in advance by the Provost and Executive President or their Vice President. If approved, the student may work p to a maximum of 28 hours per week or a maximum of 56 hours per pay period. A list of students with their JAG numbers and a copy of the written approval must be submitted to Office of Enrollment Services.**

12. **Termination/Resignation Electronic Personnel Action Forms (EPAFs) or a paper personnel action form if electronic not available for all jobs must be completed and submitted to the Payroll Office when a student is no long employed with the University of South Alabama or has graduated.**

13. **Students who are working and not enrolled at the University are not eligible to utilize the University of South Alabama's Student Health and are not exempt from FICA.**

14. **Students enrolled less than half-time are subject to FICA taxes.**

15. **Student employees are free to apply for Unemployment Compensation at www.labor.alabama.gov. When a student employee separates from employment, for any reason, the student employee's department must provide the Notice of Availability of Unemployment Compensation to individuals who separate from employment. The Notice of Availability of Unemployment compensation may be in the form of a letter, email, text message, or flyer given or sent to each individual undergoing separation. The notice may be found here: https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/enrollmentservices/studentemployeepolicy.html**
    The decision regarding eligibility for Unemployment Compensation is made solely by the Alabama Department of Labor.

16. **All new hire employees, to begin employment, are required by federal law (IRCA) to complete a government Form I-9 to verify their identity and authorization to work in the U.S. A new hire student employee is not allowed to begin work until they provide the hiring department with an I-9 status receipt issued to them by Human Resources. The student employee must report to the Human Resources Office before or on their first day of employment (official hire date).**

Any questions or concerns related to these guidelines should be forward to the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services.

www.southalabama.edu/departments/enrollmentservices/studentemployeepolicy.html

revised 7/29/25