



# GREAT FALLS COLLEGE **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**  
MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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# GREAT FALLS COLLEGE

This handbook is your guide to the college's policies, procedures, and expectations. It covers topics such as our code of conduct, performance management, compensation and benefits, leave and more. Please read it carefully and familiarize yourself with the information and resources provided.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your manager or human resources. We are here to help you succeed and thrive in your role.



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# EMPLOYMENT

At Great Falls College, leave and benefit eligibility and retirement programs are dependent upon employment category, full time equivalency (FTE), and duration of employment. Any individual who works for Great Falls College, regardless of funding source, is an employee of Great Falls College.

## Employment Classifications

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Great Falls College has a number of employment classifications on campus. Below are definitions that will be used throughout the handbook to describe different types of employees.

### **Overtime Eligibility**

**Non-exempt:** Non-exempt jobs are paid on an hourly basis and compensation must be paid for all hours worked. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime. Overtime is defined as time worked by a non-exempt employee in excess of 40 hours per week. In some cases, under collective bargaining, positions are eligible for overtime after 8 hours in a day. Consult the appropriate collective bargaining agreement for further information.

**Exempt:** Jobs that involve functional decision making, supervise others, set and lead strategic vision, or have executive level responsibilities are paid on a salary basis. These positions meet the applicable Fair Labor Standards Act exemption test and criteria. Exempt employees are not eligible for compensation for hours worked beyond a 40-hour work week.

### **Employee Type**

**Classified:** Classified employees typically include those occupations that perform operational, administrative, functional, and technical duties. These are employees performing duties normally assigned to positions covered by the Montana University System Staff Compensation Plan. Most classified staff are non-exempt and covered by a collective bargaining agreement. The collective bargaining agreements contain the terms and conditions of employment included within the agreement. A link to the bargaining agreements can be found [here](#).

Unless otherwise specified in collective bargaining agreements or Montana State law, classified staff are subject to a six month probationary period. If requested by the supervisor, the six-month probationary period may be extended for a specified period of time not to exceed an additional three (3) months. During the probationary period, employees may be terminated for any non-discriminatory reason without a showing of cause and without recourse to any grievance procedure.

**Professional Staff:** Professional staff are non-faculty employees performing autonomous work. Professional staff are employed by a Board of Regents (BOR) Employment Contract, a Montana University System (MUS) Employment Contract, or a Letter of Appointment (LOA) under the criteria established in [BOR Policy 711.2](#) and [BOR Policy 711.1](#), respectively.

Administrative/Professional staff members, who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement, are on a yearly contract and do not have a probationary period.

**Faculty:** Faculty members are the college's academic personnel responsible for teaching, classroom and laboratory supervision, and curriculum development. Faculty may be tenure eligible or non-tenure eligible employees who are appointed on either a Montana University System Contract for tenure eligible faculty or Letter of Appointment for non-tenure eligible faculty. Faculty appointed on a MUS contract are represented through a collective bargaining agreement, [found here](#).

- Full-time faculty: faculty members who have contracts representing a full teaching load throughout the academic year.
- Part-time faculty: faculty members who have contracts that are half-time or greater, but less than full-time, for the academic year. Part-time faculty members are not eligible for tenure.
- Adjunct faculty: faculty members hired to teach a specific course, who are offered letters of employment for less than half-time during the academic year.

Faculty in full-time, tenure track positions are designated as probationary employees until tenure is granted in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Montana Two Year College Faculty Association (MTYCFA).

**Temporary or Short-Term Employees:** Employees hired to accommodate short term needs are considered temporary. Temporary employment does not have a probationary period can be terminated at any time as deemed necessary by the college.

## Workplace Accommodations

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As a campus community, Great Falls College values all employees and strives to meet all necessary accommodations. The college is committed to fostering a diverse and equitable working environment by providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace or through the application process. College [policy 401.4](#) outlines the process for determining accommodations in the workplace and the appeals for campus employees and applicants with disabilities, including faculty, contract, classified, temporary, and student employees. For students with a disability, please contact the Director of Academic Success and Accessibility.

## Work Schedules

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Great Falls College offices must be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at all times of the year except for college holidays in accordance the [Commissioner of Higher Education Commissioner Directive and Section 2-16-117](#), of Montana Code Annotated.

Each department is responsible for setting the schedule of its employees to provide the necessary access for students, faculty, staff, and patrons of the college. The department will designate the number of hours per day, the starting and ending times each day, and the scheduled days during the standard workweek for each overtime eligible employee. The hours and days in an employee's schedule may vary or be changed to meet departmental and college needs consistent with wage and hour laws and applicable [collective bargaining agreements](#).

Employees in overtime eligible positions are expected to work the schedule assigned to them. No change in the schedule may occur without the permission of the employee's supervisor. Supervisors may schedule hours in such a way as to avoid the need for overtime as long as it is consistent with state and federal law. Employees who are exempt from the overtime provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws are expected to work the hours necessary to complete assignments as needed by the department. Full time employment typically requires a minimum of forty (40) hours per week, but more work may be necessary to complete assignments. A department may require exempt employees to maintain an assigned schedule to

meet the needs of the department.

Information on work schedules for faculty can be found in the [faculty handbook](#), under workday expectations.

## Drug Free Workplace

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Great Falls College is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for all employees and students. The college prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance, including recreational or medical marijuana, on college premises or while conducting college business.

Although Montana state law permits the use of recreational and medical marijuana, federal laws prohibit marijuana use, possession and/or cultivation at educational institutions and on the premises of other recipients of federal funds. The use, possession or cultivation of marijuana for recreational or medical purposes is therefore not allowed in any Great Falls College buildings or on any other college property, nor is it allowed at any college-sponsored event or activity off campus.

For more information, see policy [403.8 Drug Free Workforce](#).

## Remote Work

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The college recognizes there may be circumstances in the college's interest to allow employees to work from alternate work sites for part or all of a work week.

Great Falls College follows Montana Board of Regents policy, [715 Remote Work Arrangements](#), when determining alternative work locations. Remote work requests must be approved by the appropriate manager, human resources and the CEO/Dean. With the exception of faculty who teach in entirely online programs, no permanent remote work arrangements will be approved.

Guidelines for reviewing, approving, and administering remote work arrangements with college employees pursuant with the [Board of Regents policy 715](#) can be found in [policy 403.13](#) and procedure [403.13.1](#).

## Training & Professional Development

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Great Falls College recognizes the importance of training and professional development activities which maintain and advance employee skills, knowledge, and competencies.

The college may ask employees to attend professional development activities and training as part of their work assignments. Attendance will be considered work time and the employee will be compensated for the attendance as required under relevant wage and hour laws, regulations, and college policies.

Employees may request approval from their supervisor to attend training or professional development activities that will improve their job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities. If approved, attendance will be considered work time and the employee will be compensated for the attendance as required under relevant wage and hour laws, regulations, and college policies.

Employees may wish to take time off to attend personal development activities or training to advance their own personal or professional development or to advance their personal educational goals, including taking college courses. Employees may request approval to attend training or college courses during their regular work schedule. If the supervisor approves the request, the time away from work duties may be covered as follows:

- The employee will take annual leave for the work time missed.
- The employee will make up the work time missed if it is possible to do so without accruing overtime.

Please work with your supervisor for your specific professional development requests.

## Resignations / Separation from Employment

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There may come a time when you decide to leave your employment with Great Falls College. We respect your decision and wish you the best in your future endeavors. However, we ask that you follow some

guidelines to ensure a smooth and professional transition.

**Resignation:** an employee who intends to resign or retire from their position are asked to submit written notice to their immediate supervisor. The letter must include the effective date of their resignation/retirement. The original letter should be sent to human resources to begin the off-boarding process.

**Timeliness and Effective Date:** employees who are appointed on a Board of Regents Contract, MUS Contract, or Letter of Appointment are expected to complete the established term of appointment. Faculty members and employees with teaching responsibilities, due to the extreme hardship that can be caused by untimely resignation, are asked to provide the earliest possible notice of their intent to resign at the end of a semester (no fewer than 60 days when conceivable).

Faculty members may request to leave prior to the end of a semester in cases of extreme hardship or in a situation where otherwise substantial professional advancement or other opportunity would be denied. Staff employees who do not teach or direct programs should give adequate notice prior to the effective date of their resignation. Typically, this would be two to four weeks.

**Benefits and Leave Payout:** an employee's health insurance benefits will remain in effect until the last day of the month in which they are terminating. Deductions will be taken appropriately to cover premiums through the end of that month.

Any remaining leave balances will be paid out as follows:

- 100% remaining annual leave balance
- 100% remaining compensatory leave balance
- 25% of remaining sick leave balance

Employee transferring to another agency within the Montana University System, with five days or less of a break in service, will have their balances transferred to the new employer in lieu of payout.

In order to be eligible for a sick leave payout, the employee must have completed three months of service with the college. In order to be eligible for an annual leave payout, the employee must have completed six months of service.

If an employee held a position that received relocation reimbursement, the employee would be responsible for paying back those funds if they resign from employment from the college before completion of one year of service.

When an employee terminates employment with Great Falls College the final wage payment is issued in the next regularly scheduled pay period that includes their final working day.





# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Great Falls College encourages regular feedback and evaluation of employee performance throughout the year. An evaluation of performance is required for classified employees and contract professional employees each year. The formal annual evaluation will identify job responsibilities and performance objectives and measure actual performance against identified job duties and expectations. Evaluation forms for classified and contract professionals can be found on the human resources website, [here](#).

- **Classified Employees:** Each employee will have their performance evaluated by their immediate supervisor and submitted to human resources no later than May 31 of each year. Probationary classified employees will have their performance evaluated by their immediate supervisor at least one time during their probationary period and again prior to completion of the 6-month probationary period. Probationary evaluations should be submitted to human resources before the last day of their 6-month probationary period.
- **Contract Professional Employees:** Each contract professional employee whose appointment is at least .5 FTE will have their performance evaluated and submitted to human resources no later than June 30 of each year. An annual performance evaluation is required before an across the board/merit increase may be authorized.
- **Faculty:** Faculty performance evaluation processes are outlined in the MF MTYCFA PE collective bargaining agreement [here](#)

## Employee Request for Evaluation

Any employee who does not receive a performance evaluation by the deadline referenced in this policy may submit a written request for performance evaluation to their supervisor with a copy to the supervisor's supervisor. The supervisor will have 30 days in which to complete the evaluation and submit to Human Resources.

## Disciplinary Procedures

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Great Falls College supports the use of performance management to address and correct employee performance problems, where appropriate for employees who have completed the probationary period and contract employees. For employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement, the provisions of the applicable agreement must be followed for any disciplinary action. Recognized misconduct, violations of policies and procedures, and continued failure to correct performance problems may require disciplinary action.

Employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for:

- failure to perform job duties in a satisfactory manner;
- violation of work rules, policies, laws, CBA provisions, supervisory orders or directives, or other forms of inappropriate job-related conduct;
- failure to meet applicable professional and performance standards; or
- any behavior that interferes with or disrupts the efficient operation of the university, including off-duty conduct when it is harmful to the college's operation or reputation.

Human resources will provide assistance and guidance to supervisors encountering performance problems with employees they supervise. Human resources must be consulted prior to imposing disciplinary action to assure compliance with collective bargaining agreements and applicable state and federal laws.

Progressive discipline will be used when appropriate. Progressive discipline is a process of applying the appropriate type of discipline based on the severity of the employee misconduct or performance deficiencies and the employee's work history. Progressive discipline may range from letters of warning to involuntary termination of employment. The number of steps may vary, and steps may be repeated or skipped.

Disciplinary action will be taken only for good cause. Disciplinary actions can include letters of warning, suspension without pay, and termination of employment. Disciplinary actions may be combined and may include other requirements such as mandatory training, job transfer or reassignment, cancellation of leave, last chance agreement, requirement to provide a doctor's verification of illnesses, etc. Notice of non-renewal of an employment contract and expiration of an employment contract are not disciplinary actions.

Employees will be provided written notice of the disciplinary action.

When it becomes necessary to take disciplinary action, each situation will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with human resources to determine what step or steps may be appropriate.

### Level 1. Letter of Warning:

Letters of warning are issued when an employee fails to correct a problem or engages in misconduct. It may be used as the first step of progressive discipline, if appropriate. Employees have the right to request the letter of warning be removed from their personnel file after one (1) year if the reason for the warning letter has been corrected and the employee has no other performance deficiencies or disciplinary actions.

### Level 2. Suspension:

Suspension with Pay – Suspension with pay is not a disciplinary action but may be appropriate when it is necessary to remove the employee from the workplace during an investigation or while information is being gathered. If the investigation exonerates the employee, the employee will be reinstated without discipline. If misconduct or other inappropriate conduct is verified, the employee may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Suspension without Pay – Suspension without pay is a disciplinary action which removes the employee from the workplace and results in reducing the employee's salary for the period of suspension. Suspension without pay may be appropriate if an employee fails to correct the issues identified in a letter of warning or as the first step of progressive discipline for misconduct or inappropriate behavior. The length of the suspension will depend upon the nature of the employee's unacceptable behavior and any previous disciplinary action that may have been taken. Suspensions normally will not exceed ten (10) days.



### Level 3. Involuntary Termination of Employment:

Involuntary termination of employment may result after other disciplinary action has failed to return the employee to acceptable levels of performance or as the first and only step of discipline in response to serious types of misconduct or inappropriate behavior, such as:

1. endangering or threatening the health or safety of others,
2. using illegal drugs on college property or during work hours or reporting for duty under the influence thereof,
3. falsifying official records,
4. sick leave abuse,
5. unauthorized absence from work in excess of three (3) working days,
6. using or authorizing another to use college property for other than college purposes,
7. physical violence or fighting on the employer's premises,
8. brandishing any firearm or weapon on the employer's premises,
9. immoral or indecent conduct on the employer's premises,
10. serious or pervasive sexual harassment,
11. theft,
12. willful destruction or abuse of the employer's or another employee's property or materials,
13. failure to maintain a valid and current MT driver's license or other professional license when required to perform job duties, or
14. other conduct that interferes with or disrupts the efficient operation of the college, its students, employees, or visitors, including off-duty conduct when it is harmful to the college's operation or reputation.

### Pre-Termination Meeting

Prior to an involuntary termination of employment, an employee will be offered a pre-termination meeting to give the employee an opportunity to respond to the reasons for termination of employment with an administrator (other than the supervisor who is recommending termination) or human resources.

### Grievance Procedures

The college strives to treat each of its employees fairly. If an employee has a concern or problem, he or she is encouraged to discuss the matter with his or her immediate supervisor. Early communication often helps resolve an issue quickly. If an employee is reluctant to approach his or her immediate supervisor or is dissatisfied with problem resolution through an immediate supervisor, he or she may seek assistance from the next level supervisor or human resources.

Any employee of Great Falls College who feels that informal problem solving has been unsuccessful or that they have been unfairly disciplined or terminated may file a grievance.

The grievance procedure and time limits for filing a grievance for faculty, maintenance and support staff are described in the collective bargaining agreements for each of these covered groups of employees. Copies of the collective bargaining agreement are available from each union's campus representative and/or human resources and are also available on our website. The college maintains, in a file separate from the employee's personnel file, all grievance documents and records dealing with the processing of a grievance.





# EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

## Public Employee Responsibility

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The below outlines the important, and sometimes unique, responsibilities of college employees as employees of the state of Montana. “The holding of public...employment is a public trust, created by the confidence that the electorate reposes in the integrity of public officers, legislators, and public employees. A public officer, legislator, or public employee shall carry out the individual’s duties for the benefit of the people of the state.” ([Section 2-2-103, MCA](#)). All college employees are public employees who carry out their duties for the benefit of the public. As such, they are subject to certain statutes, policies, and directives related to their status as a public employee. This policy below outlines the most significant of those responsibilities.

**Ethical Responsibilities:** Employees are bound by the ethical standards set forth in state law (Sections [2-2-105](#), [2-2-121](#), and [2-2-201](#), MCA), as well as the conflict of interest policies of the [Board of Regents](#) and the [college](#).

**Public Records and Public Participation:** [Article II, Sections 8](#) and [9](#) of the Montana Constitution grants the public the right to have a “reasonable opportunity” for public participation in the operation of public entities and the right to examine documents or to observe the deliberations of all public bodies or agencies of state government, except when the demand of individual privacy clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure.

[Article II, Section 10](#) recognizes the right of individual privacy, which shall not be infringed upon without the showing of a compelling state interest. Information, including electronic information and email, prepared, owned, used, or retained by the college related to the transaction of official business and designated for retention is considered a public record. Information generated in connection with the transaction of official college business by college employees that is not constitutionally protected or otherwise excepted by law, may be a public record that the public would have the right to examine. See Sections [2-6-1002](#) and [1003](#), MCA.

The Montana University System has adopted [Public Records Request Response Guidelines](#) which the college uses when public record requests are made. Employees are obligated to maintain public records, and retain such records, in accordance with the [Montana University System General Record Retention Schedule](#).

The college’s [Public Participation Policy](#) outlines the processes and procedures related to the public’s participation in college decisions of significant interest to the public.

**Employee Email:** Great Falls college provided e-mail systems are to be used by employees for their job-related activities. ([BOR Policy 1303.3](#)) Employees are strongly encouraged not to use the college email system for any purpose other than official college business. State law related to public records extends to private email systems if used for college business. In such case, private email may be reviewed to obtain any public records. Emails that are determined to be public records will be subject to the [Record Retention Schedules](#) of the Montana University System. See also Montana Secretary of State's, [Email Guidelines](#).

**Campaigning and Political Activity:** As public employees, college employees may not engage in certain political and campaign activities. Public employees may not use public time, facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, or funds to solicit support or opposition to any political committee, the nomination or election of any person to public office, or passage of a ballot issue. ([Section 2-2-121\(3\), MCA](#))

Montana law does not restrict the right of a public employee to express personal political beliefs at work or elsewhere, as long as public time, facilities, equipment, and supplies are not used. A public employee may engage in political activities outside of work and may give or use their title while doing so. See, [AG Opinions, Vol.51, Op.No.1](#). College employees are also subject to the [Commissioner's Directive on Political Activity of Public Employees](#).

**Gratuities and Donations:** College personnel are not permitted to accept money, goods, unrelated services, entertainment, or any form of gratuity, either directly or indirectly, from any individual or company interested in business or financial relations with the college. Any such gift must be returned to the donor.

**Use of College Property, Services and Resources:** Montana state law prohibits a public officer or public employee from using "public time, facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, or funds for the officer's or employee's private business purposes." ([Section 2-2-121, MCA](#)) In addition, the Board of Regents has adopted various policies related to the use of the college's internet and email systems which restrict the use to job related activities. See, [Policies 1303.1, 1303.2 and 1303.3, BOR Policies and Procedures Manual](#). This policy governs the personal or private business use of college property, services, and/or resources.

## Employee Standards of Conduct

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In accordance with MCA 39-2-404, 39-2-405, and appropriate collective bargaining agreements, all employees of the college should be constantly mindful of the fact that, as a tax-supported institution, Great Falls College is responsible to establish standards of conduct for its employees that engender public confidence in the institution. The college expects all employees to serve students and the public with courtesy and professionalism and to contribute to an atmosphere of institutional harmony that allows each employee to work productively.

As a public institution, Great Falls College must also conduct its business in a manner that is beyond reproach. The actions of college employees must be in compliance with all policies of the Montana Board of Regents, as well as with federal and state laws and civil rights regulations. Employees at all levels of the college are expected to treat each other with civility and to adhere to the work rules of the College and their respective departments. The success of the college depends on cooperation and team work.

**Personal Appearance/Dress:** There are many different work environments at the college. How employees dress depends on what their duties are and in what area they work. In all cases, it is important that employees maintain an acceptable standard of dress and grooming. Supervisors will advise employees of appropriate attire for their jobs.

**Inappropriate Behavior:** Employees must conduct themselves within this framework of expectations, exercising professional judgment and seeking guidance from their supervisors when issues of potential misconduct arise. Although it is impossible to provide a complete list that identifies every type of misconduct, the following sections provide examples of misconduct that may result in the application of discipline sanctions.

Inappropriate **conduct** includes, but is not limited to:

- discourtesy toward others (e.g., failure to work harmoniously with fellow employees or serve the public with courtesy) where violation creates substantial inefficiency and/or unacceptable work atmosphere at the college.

- gambling while on duty
- hindering or limiting normal operations or interfering with another employee's work
- illegal conduct, conduct unbecoming to a college employee, or conduct damaging to the college's public relations
- incompetency, neglect of duty, or unsatisfactory performance of assigned job duties
- insubordination (i.e., failure or refusal to comply with a supervisor's instructions, unless the instructions are illegal or endangering)
- threatening or committing acts of intimidation or violence
- refusal to obey the normal or emergency instructions of law enforcement officials or other proper authorities
- smoking in unauthorized areas
- sleeping on duty
- unlawful or unauthorized use, carrying, or possession of firearms, explosives, or other potentially dangerous weapons on property owned or leased by the college and
- permitting or creating a personal obligation that would lead any person to expect official favors.

Inappropriate behavior related to **property** includes, but is not limited to:

- carelessness, inattention to duty, or purposeful acts resulting in injury to property or person(s)
- failure to maintain prescribed records
- concealing, falsifying, altering, misusing, or removing records, including electronic data records
- theft of property
- unauthorized use of college vehicles or failure to possess a valid and current Montana driver's license, if required as a job qualification and/or condition of employment
- direct or indirect use or misuse of college resources, including property leased to the college, for other than officially approved activities and
- misappropriation of college property or the property of others.

Inappropriate behavior related to **rules and regulations** includes, but is not limited to:

- failure to follow prescribed rules and regulations, or violation of college policy and procedure
- discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, national origin, citizenship, disability, and/or Vietnam-era veteran status
- violation of safety rules or common safety practices
- taking an adverse personnel action against an employee in retaliation for disclosing alleged wrongful conduct to a public body
- falsification of résumé or application materials or omission of material factual information
- violation of the college purchasing policies and procedures.

Inappropriate behavior related to **substance abuse** includes, but is not limited to:

- consuming alcoholic beverages or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages while on duty
- unlawfully manufacturing, selling, possessing, distributing, dispensing, using, or purchasing a controlled substance
- unlawfully conspiring, negotiating, or arranging to purchase, sell, possess, distribute, dispense, or use a controlled substance
- being under the influence of a controlled substance not authorized by a physician.

**Note:** Employees must notify their immediate supervisors and the human resources within five days of receiving any criminal drug conviction resulting from a drug violation in the workplace. See policy [403.8 Drug Free Workplace](#) for more information.

Violations of the employee standards of conduct, when documented, will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation

Great Falls College is committed to a learning and working environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community that is free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based upon race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation

(taken together, generally, “protected-class harm”). An inclusive environment is necessary to a healthy and productive college community. The college will take appropriate action to prevent, resolve, and remediate protected-class harm.

In order to maintain consistency across the Montana State University affiliation, Great Falls College follows a 4-campus policy in regard to discrimination, harassment, and retaliation policy. The policy can be found on Montana State University’s policy page, [here](#).

## Relationships with Students

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Interactions between faculty/staff and students at Great Falls College depend upon mutual trust, confidence, and professional ethics. An inherent power differential exists between faculty/staff members and students. As a result, faculty-student and faculty-staff interactions that go beyond a professional relationship carry risks of conflict of interest, breach of trust, abuse of power, and breach of professional ethics.

Great Falls College [Policy 407.2 Relationships with Students](#) states that no faculty member shall engage in a romantic, sexual, or exploitive relationship with a student when that faculty member has a professional “position of authority” with respect to that student in such matters as teaching a course, or evaluating, supervising, or advising as part of a school program. Should such a consensual relationship develop, or appear likely to develop while the faculty member is in a position of authority, the faculty member and/or the student shall take steps to dissolve the position of authority. Even when the faculty member has no professional responsibility for a student, they should be sensitive to the perceptions on the part of other students that a student engaged in a consensual relationship with a faculty member may receive preferential treatment from the faculty member and/or the faculty member’s colleagues.

Failure to comply with this policy will subject the faculty member to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

This policy also applies to other college employees who have a supervisory or advisory responsibility in relation to students.

There are exceptional circumstances in which a student at the college is a spouse, partner or other individual with a previously established close personal tie to a faculty member or other employee with a supervisory/advisory responsibility. This policy does not apply in such circumstances, but the circumstance should be disclosed to the CEO/Dean as soon as the employee is aware of the close relation’s enrollment. The CEO/Dean is the administrative officer who determines whether an exceptional circumstance exists and, if so, the extent to which it governs employee conduct.

## Confidentiality

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As a part of an employee’s job responsibilities, they may have access to or become aware of confidential information about students or other employees—e.g., grades, test scores, disciplinary proceedings, family history, medical information, age, religion, etc. The [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) requires that employees treat this information properly and not release it, formally or informally, to unauthorized persons. If in doubt as to whether information is confidential or not, the best course of action is not to release it without authorization from a supervisor. Additionally, any medical records kept by the institution are subject to the restrictions detailed in the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act \(HIPAA\)](#).

For information about this institution’s policy with regard to personal information, a copy of [Great Falls College MSU’s Gramm-Leach-Bliley \(GLB\) Act](#) policy may be found on the website. Further information about FERPA may be obtained from the Registrar. HIPAA information may be obtained from the Health Sciences Department Chair.

## Nepotism

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No employee of Great Falls College may participate in decisions which would involve a direct benefit or detriment (appointment, hiring, retention, promotion, salary, leave of absence, contracting) to a relative as defined in policy [407.9 Nepotism](#). If a relative applies for a position which is supervised by a relative, the

immediate senior to such a supervisor or other designated authority will institute procedures to assure compliance with college policy.

## Conflict of Interest

The administration, faculty, and staff of Great Falls College bear the responsibility of serving the respective teaching and service missions of the campus. That mission is enhanced by the sustained, active interaction of members of the college community with business, government, not-for-profit groups, professional societies, academic institutions, and other individuals and organizations. Therefore, entrepreneurial activities are encouraged that support the college's mission through dissemination of knowledge, enhancement of educational opportunities for students, and economic development.

The many interactions and activities can, however, create the potential for conflict of interest in which college employees' external activities or interests could influence—or could appear to influence—the manner or extent to which those individuals carry out their college responsibilities. Such influences—real or apparent—may undermine public and professional confidence in the college, diminish the college's ability to accomplish its mission, and violate state or federal law. Typically, conflicts of interest can be dealt with effectively through disclosure and other steps to resolve or manage the conflict.

Additional information on conflict of interest can be found in policy [402.4 Conflict of Interest](#), and it's aligned procedure [402.4.1](#). Additional information on consulting activities can be found in policy [402.45 Consulting Activities](#).





## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits for Great Falls College employees are overseen by the human resources and payroll department. Benefits of employment that are provided to all college employees include workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, and social security benefits. Eligible employees receive sick and annual leave, membership in a retirement plan, and health and dental insurance coverage through the Montana University System. Dependent coverage, vision, additional group term life insurance, and accidental death insurance are also available to eligible employees.

The college is committed to administering the benefit program in accordance with Montana University System policies and applicable state and federal laws. Employees are generally eligible for benefits if they are a regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week or 40 hours over two weeks for a continuous period of more than six months in a 12-month period. Benefits include the following:

### Required:

- Medical
- Dental (Select or Basic)
- Long Term Disability
- Basic Life Insurance and AD&D

\*\*If you do not want Great Falls College's medical insurance, you must waive all coverage listed above.

### Voluntary:

- Flexible spending account
- Vision hardware
- Supplemental life for employee, spouse, and children
- Additional AD&D for employee, spouse, and children

## Health Insurance

The Montana University System's benefits program allows you to choose the coverage that is appropriate for your individual and family needs. Please visit the [Choices website](#) to learn more about our benefit programs and eligibility requirements for dependents. To get the most out of this opportunity to design your own benefits package, consider your benefits needs, compare them to the options available under Choices, and enroll for the chosen benefits.

**Eligible Dependents:** Eligible dependents include the employee's legal spouse as defined under Montana law, or one other unrelated adult dependent as defined in the summary plan description. To enroll an adult dependent other than a spouse, you will need to obtain criteria from human resources.

The employee's unmarried children under age 26 are eligible. Children include your natural children, stepchildren, and children placed in your home for adoption before age 18 or for whom you have court ordered custody or you are the legal guardian.

**Effective Dates:** Newly eligible employees have the options of 1) enrolling themselves and any eligible dependents as plan participants or 2) waiving all coverage during a thirty (30) day initial benefits enrollment period. The initial enrollment period begins the day following the date of hire or the first date of eligibility under the plan, even if coverage is waived.

Insurance coverage (medical, prescription, dental and vision), flexible spending account plans, holiday pay, vacation and sick leave accrual, qualified tuition reduction benefit, basic life insurance, supplemental life and long-term disability insurance begin on the employee's first day of employment. Elections MUST be made within 31 days of eligibility. If you fail to enroll within the 31-day enrollment period, you will NOT have insurance until the next annual enrollment period or qualifying event.

**Mid-Year Changes and Qualifying Events:** Your health insurance elections will remain in effect for the entire plan benefit period following initial or annual enrollment unless you have a change in status (qualifying event) in accordance with the Montana University System plan. Listed here are examples of qualifying events:

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Birth of a child
- Adoption of a child
- Loss of Eligibility for other health insurance coverage – voluntarily canceling other health insurance does not constitute loss of eligibility.

Please contact human resources with any questions about qualifying events. A mid-year change request will need to be completed within the time period defined by the Montana University System plan along with applicable supporting documentation. If a mid-year change request is not completed in a timely manner, you cannot not make changes to your benefits until the next annual enrollment period and any changes must be in accordance to the MUS Plan.

**Annual Enrollment:** Annual enrollment for healthcare benefits is closed enrollment for legal spouses. You can only add legal spouses with a qualifying event. Children under the age of 26 may be added during the annual benefits enrollment period.

## Retirement

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Eligible employees must participate in one of the MUS retirement plans (Montana Public Employee Retirement Association, TIAA-CREF, or TRS). Employee and employer contribution rates are determined by the State of Montana. Great Falls College administers retirement programs for staff, faculty and administrators in accordance with applicable Federal and State law and Montana University System policies. Specific details regarding retirement plans can be found on the [Montana University System benefits website](#) or by contacting payroll.

Supplemental Retirement Plans (called SRA's) are also available to Great Falls College employees. These plans allow you to save extra money for retirement over and above any contributions you may make to an employer mandated retirement plan. Contributions are pre-tax and must be made through payroll deduction. All non-student employees who receive paychecks through Great Falls are eligible to contribute to either a tax-sheltered annuity 403(b) or tax deferred compensation 457 (b). The Montana University System has issued an approved list of eligible carriers that may be obtained through payroll.

## Workers Compensation

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Great Falls College promotes a safe and healthy work environment for all employees to foster a positive atmosphere for learning and the educational process. The college administers workers' compensation coverage in accordance with applicable Montana state law, Montana State University policies, and collective bargaining agreements. Safety, health and wellness efforts will focus on prevention of accidents and illnesses.



Each department, manager, supervisor and individual employee will be held accountable for safety and health efforts. In event of a work-related injury or illness, employees shall promptly report the injury to their supervisor; supervisors shall ensure that a [First Report of Injury \(FROI\)](#) is completed.

## Stay at Work / Return to Work

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The Great Falls College stay-at-work/return-to-work policy has its basis in current Montana statutes and rules, Board of Regents' policy and the policies set forth by the Montana University Systems self-funded workers' compensation program. Great Falls College has developed practices to assure compliance with the stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW) assistance requirements listed in [MCA Section 39-71-10](#) and [ARM 24.29.1801-1821](#).

The 2011 Legislature established SAW/RTW assistance to be made available upon request to help injured employees return to meaningful, productive employment as soon as it is safe to do so following a compensable work-related injury or occupational disease, even if they are not yet able to perform 100% of their regular work duties.

Staying at work or returning to work helps to reduce the impact of workplace injuries on workers, their families, their employers and their communities. A SAW/RTW program is a practical approach to returning injured employees to a safe and productive work environment, and is intended to be time-limited and temporary. Although injured employees may be unable to perform their time-of-injury job, they can often do alternative, productive work while recovering from injuries. Services extended as part of SAW/RTW assistance are provided in addition to or prior to rehabilitation services and are intended to help an injured worker return to work.

### College Responsibilities:

- The college shall provide assistance to help employees stay at or return to meaningful, productive employment as soon as medically able following an injury or illness.
- The college is responsible for administering Workers' Compensation programs. Human Resources will coordinate claims.

### Work Assignments:

- If an injured employee is not capable of immediately returning to his/her regular position, the college may place the employee in a temporary assignment in which the employee's regular position or hours are modified to accommodate the employee's temporary physical abilities or identify alternate work that is better suited to the employee's temporary physical abilities. The employee shall receive the same base rate of pay as was earned during his/her time-of-injury position, dependent upon hours worked.
- The SAW/RTW program is a management tool, not an employee right or benefit. As a management tool, this program does not require the college to create a position for the sole purpose of accommodating an injured employee or to extend employment to an injured employee when no meaningful work is available. Transitional employment might not be available for every injured employee.
- Job modifications or initial transitional employment assignments will only be provided for a specified period of time with an option to renew and have a typical duration of six (6) to twelve (12) weeks. Extensions are considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Accidents:** College employees must report accidents that involve themselves, students or visitors. All accidents should be reported no matter how minor they seem. Reports of accidents should include the time, place, witnesses, a description of the accident, and any injury incurred.

Depending on the nature of the accident, a [First Report of Injury](#) may also need to be filed. Failure to report an accident that later develops into a serious injury may result in difficulties in receiving applicable insurance benefits as well as a delay in the correction of an unsafe condition.

## Tuition Assistance

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College employees are eligible for a partial tuition waiver benefit for themselves and their dependents at any of the Montana University System institutions. The waiver does not apply to non-credit, continuing

education or other self-supporting courses. Employment is verified by human resources and forwarded as required.

Great Falls College follows the Board of Regents policy in regards tuition waivers. The [Tuition Waivers for Dependent](#) policy and the [Tuition Waivers and Discounts](#) policy can be found on the Montana University System's policies and procedures page.

**College Employees:** Permanent college employees employed at least three-quarter time (.75 FTE) are eligible for a waiver of resident tuition. The following categories of employees are eligible for the tuition waiver: classified employees, tenure and tenure track faculty, non-tenure track faculty and contract professional employees during their contract term. Student, temporary, seasonal or fixed term employees are not eligible to receive a faculty and staff tuition waiver.

With the permission of the employee's supervisor and appropriate executive council member, employees may take courses for undergraduate or graduate credit and receive a tuition waiver for up to six (6) credits of resident tuition. Under Board of Regents policy, only resident tuition is waived. No fees, including mandatory, program fees or any other charges will be waived. If an employee takes a course that is offered only during regularly scheduled work hours, the employee must take annual leave or approved leave without pay for all hours absent from the regular work schedule or make up the time absent from work.

Applications for tuition waivers can be found on the websites of the institution where the employee is enrolled. Great Falls College human resources will verify employment and forward to the appropriate financial aid office.

**Dependents of College Employees:** After 4 months of continuous employment, college employees may be eligible for a partial tuition waiver benefit for their dependents. Conditions can be found in the Montana University System [policy 940.32](#).

The dependent tuition waiver benefit is 50% of the residential tuition. Registration, course fees, and any other mandatory or miscellaneous fees will not be waived. The dependent waiver may be used at any Montana University System institution to obtain a first undergraduate degree. The waiver cannot be used to attend law school or obtain a graduate degree.

Up to two dependents may utilize the dependent tuition waiver simultaneously in an academic term. Employees who utilize the faculty and staff waiver are eligible for a single (one) dependent waiver during the same academic term.

## Wellness and Employee Assistance Plan

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The Montana University System offers a number of programs to help employees stay healthy. Preventative health screenings, healthy lifestyle education and support and disease prevention & management programs are all offered through MUS Wellness. Additional information can be found on the [wellness website](#).

Montana University System Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits are available to ALL MUS employees and their household members. The EAP offers confidential advice, counseling, support, referrals, and practical solutions to real-life issues. Deer Oaks EAP Services are available at any time and can assist with work-related concerns, personal problems, and other issues affecting your well-being. Examples of services Deer Oaks EAP include:

### Health & Well-being Consultation & Referrals

- Work/life balance
- Substance abuse
- Emotional & psychological issues
- Life changes & transitions
- Stress & time management
- Family & marital problems
- Loss & grief
- Alternate modes of support

## Legal & Financial Consultation & Resources

- Identity theft prevention & recovery assistance
- Online credit monitoring
- Online simple will preparation as well as access to several other legal forms
- Financial counseling

## Daily Living & Convenience Consultation & Referrals

- Healthy life styles
- Child/elder/adult care issues
- Preparing for retirement
- Interactive online tools, resources and skill builders
- Continued access to the EAP for up to 6 months post-employment

Information on accessing Deer Oaks EAP can be found on the [Choices website](#).





# LEAVE

As an employee of Great Falls College, you are entitled to various types of leave depending on your eligibility, length of service, and personal or professional needs. Leave is a benefit that allows you to balance your work and life commitments, as well as to take care of your health and well-being. This section explains the different types of leave that are available to you and the procedures for requesting and approving leave. Please read this section carefully and contact human resources if you have any questions or concerns.

## Annual Leave

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In accordance with State of Montana and Board of Regents policy, each non-faculty employee earns annual vacation leave from the first day of employment. Vacation leave earned is credited at the end of each pay period. Employees are not entitled to any vacation leave with pay until they have been continuously employed for a period of six (6) calendar months.

Permanent part-time employees earn prorated annual vacation leave credits if they have worked the qualifying period.

Vacation leave credits are earned at a yearly rate calculated in accordance with the following schedule which applies to the total years of an employee's employment whether the employment is continuous or not:

<b>YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>WORKING DAYS CREDITED</b>
1 Day - 10 Years	15
10 - 15 Years	18
15 - 20 Years	21
20+ Years	24

Employees applying for annual leave time should use the following procedure to ensure that leave time is coordinated with appropriate staff and that there is adequate coverage of duties:

- Leave requests should be submitted to the immediate supervisor at least five (5) days in advance of the requested date, and as early as possible to facilitate planning;
- Avoid asking for leave during the first or last week of a semester. It is recognized that there may be circumstances that require exception to this guideline and these will be addressed on an individual basis.

Whenever possible, approval of annual leave request will be acted upon within five days. Every attempt will be made to work with employees to approve leave requests especially in regards to special occasions. It is a policy on this campus not to allow the use of annual leave or compensatory time to extend the official date of termination beyond the actual last day worked.

## Sick Leave

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Full-time administrative, maintenance, and support staff earn sick leave from the first day of employment. Sick leave is credited at the end of each pay period. Sick leave credits shall be earned at a rate of twelve (12) working days per year without restriction as to the number of working days that may be accumulated. Employees are not entitled to be paid sick leave until they have been continuously employed 90 days.

Part-time administrative, maintenance and support staff earn sick leave from the first day of employment and are entitled to prorated leave benefits based on the number of days and portion of days worked. Full-time faculty accrue sick leave at a rate of one day per each month of employment. Part-time faculty on contract earn prorated sick leave based on the number and portion of days worked.

Unused sick leave days accumulate without limitations. Eligible employees may start using paid sick leave after three months of continuous employment.

**Calling in Sick:** An employee who becomes ill unexpectedly should notify his or her supervisor or a departmental representative as soon as possible. Employees should work with their supervisor to determine the preferred method of notification.

If the absence can be anticipated beforehand, the employee is ask to turn in a leave request to their supervisor prior to the planned absence. [Leave request forms](#) are available on our website. Absences of three or more consecutive days may require a statement from your medical provider.

### Appropriate Uses:

- **Personal Use:** Sick leave may be used for the necessary absence from duty caused by illness, injury, pregnancy-related illness or disability, exposure to contagious disease which requires quarantine, or the necessary absence to receive medical or dental examination or treatment.
- **Immediate Family:** Sick leave may be used for the necessary care of or attendance to the illness of an immediate family member until other assistance can be reasonably arranged. Immediate family includes the employee's spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or corresponding in-law or another member of the employee's household.
- **Critical Illness/Bereavement:** Sick leave may also be used by employees to attend to a critical illness or death for an immediate family member. Critical illness means illness the attending physician considers sufficiently serious to require the employee's presence at the bedside and shall include attendance at a spouse's childbirth.

**Abuse of Sick Leave:** Abuse of sick leave is cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and forfeiture of the lump-sum payment provision. A physician's statement may be required when questions of abuse of sick leave exist to substantiate the need for sick leave usage in the case of a lengthy illness or to verify an employee's fitness for work.

**Sick Leave Donation:** College employees may donate sick leave to another employee who has exhausted their sick leave due to a serious illness according to guidelines developed by the Board of Regents to comply with 2-18-618, M.C.A. Since the department employing the recipient of sick leave donations must pay all costs for the use of that sick leave, department head/director approval must be obtained before an employee can accept the donation of any sick leave.

**Eligibility to Receive Sick Leave Donations:** To be eligible to receive donated sick leave, the receiving employee must:

- be a current employee of Great Falls College
- have completed the 90 day qualifying period to use sick leave
- suffer from an extensive illness or accident, or pregnancy or childbirth related health condition which results in absence from work of at least 10 consecutive working days
- not be on a long term leave of absence which is unrelated to the extensive illness or accident
- not be on a layoff or in a no-pay status

- not be eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits
- exhaust all personally accrued sick leave, annual leave, personal leave, and compensatory time
- provide Human Resources a physician's certification of extensive illness or accident, pregnancy or childbirth related health condition

An employee may also receive donated sick leave when a member of the employee's immediate family is suffering from an extensive illness or accident which requires the attendance of the employee until professional or other assistance can be obtained.

If the employee meets the eligibility requirements and the donation of sick leave is approved, the sick leave will be added to the recipient employee's sick leave balance on an as-needed basis at the end of each pay period. Employees may receive a maximum of 240 hours of donated sick leave during any 12 month period, calculated from the first day the employee uses donated sick leave. The maximum allowable leave for part time employees shall be prorated according to FTE status.

**Eligibility to Contribute Sick Leave:** To donate sick leave, an employee must:

- be a current employee of Great Falls College
- complete the 90 day qualifying period to use sick leave
- have a minimum balance of 40 hours of sick leave after donation; the minimum balance for part-time employees is prorated according to their FTE.

The maximum sick leave an employee may contribute is 40 hours in any 12 month period. All contributions are voluntary.

**Direct Sick Leave Donation Form:** The [direct sick leave donation form](#) can be used to donate sick leave to another individual. The contributor and recipient must be indicated on the form. An employee may have personal reasons for not accepting donated sick leave or may have exceeded the maximum receipt of sick leave donations. In these cases, contributions will not be deducted from the donor's sick leave balance. Upon receipt of the completed [direct sick leave donation form](#), the donated leave will be deducted from the contributor's sick leave and credit the sick leave to the recipient in the order the forms are received, on an as-needed basis. Use of sick leave should be indicated on the receiving employee's timesheet.

**Prohibited Uses of Donated Sick Leave:** An employee may not use donated sick leave:

- if the employee is eligible for workers' compensation wage loss benefits
- during a leave of absence without pay which was approved for reasons other than an extensive illness, or accident
- when the employee has annual leave, sick leave or compensatory time available; if an employee has leave available that accrued while the employee was using donated sick leave, the accrued leave must be exhausted before using any additional donated sick leave
- retroactively to a previous pay period in which the employee was in a leave without pay status and had not yet become eligible to receive a sick leave donation; applying donated sick leave to time spent in a leave without pay status in the same pay period that the employee becomes eligible is not considered retroactive use of sick leave

Great Falls College will not cash out donated sick leave at termination of employment under Section 2-18-618, MCA.

## Family Medical Leave

The [Family Medical Leave Act](#) allows eligible employees to take reasonable, job-protected leave for qualifying family and medical reasons and requires group health benefits to be maintained during the leave. In order to maintain consistency across the Montana State University affiliation, Great Falls College follows a 4-campus policy for Family Medical Leave. The policy can be found on Montana State University's policy page, [here](#).

## Personal Leave

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Full-time faculty covered by the MTYCFA collective bargaining agreement are granted up to three (3) days per year of personal leave without loss of pay. Part-time faculty members covered by the collective bargaining agreement are entitled to pro rated personal leave based on the number and portion of days worked. Personal Leave is not cumulative and follows the college's fiscal year, which is July 1 through June 30. Faculty members who have personal leave time remaining at the end of the fiscal year may convert unused personal leave to replace sick leave days used during the year.

Faculty members requesting personal leave should utilize a [leave request form](#). The leave request is directed to the appropriate division director for signature and approval.

Whenever possible, approval of a leave request will be acted upon within five (5) days. Personal leave days may be taken consecutively, subject to approval. In the case of emergencies, requests and approval can take place after the fact.

Faculty members are asked to follow these guidelines when requesting personal leave:

- Whenever possible, avoid asking for leave during the first or last week of a semester. It is recognized that there may be circumstances that require exception to this guideline and these will be addressed on an individual basis.
- Whenever possible, requests should be placed at least five days in advance of the leave date.
- Submit a suggested plan for covering missed classes.

## Holidays

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In accordance with State of Montana policy, the college recognizes the following holidays:

- **New Year's Day** - January 1
- **Martin Luther King Day** - Third Monday in January
- **Presidents' Day** - Third Monday in February
- **Memorial Day** - Last Monday in May
- **Independence Day** - July 4
- **Labor Day** - First Monday in September
- **Veteran's Day** - November 11
- **Thanksgiving Day** - Fourth Thursday in November
- **Friday after Thanksgiving** (In lieu of Columbus Day)
- **Christmas Day** - December 25
- **Floating Holiday** - See below

If one of the above holidays falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed. If the holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday is observed. If a holiday occurs during an employee's vacation leave, that day is not deducted from vacation leave.

The Montana Board of Regents may designate additional days as holidays in accordance with policy [801.5 Holiday Exchanges](#).

Administrative and support staff in a paid status either the last regularly scheduled working day before or first regularly scheduled working day after a holiday is observed are eligible to receive holiday benefits. Eligible employees who are not required to work on an observed holiday receive a maximum of eight (8) hours regular pay for the holiday. When an employee is required to work on an observed holiday, the employee receives two and one-half (2-1/2) times the regular rate of pay.

### **Special provisions for floating holidays:**

#### **Eligibility:**

- Each employee receives one floating holiday per calendar year.
- Employees are eligible for and may use floating holiday upon hire.
- Student workers and temporary employees are not eligible for floating holiday.

### Hours:

- Floating holiday will not exceed eight (8) hours per calendar year.
- Full time employees will receive eight (8) hours of floating holiday.
- Part-time employees will receive prorated holiday hours based on the employee's regular schedule.

### Availability:

- Floating holiday provides an employee with one annual scheduled day off per calendar year. An employee may only use their floating holiday on one calendar day. An employee may not divide floating holiday hours across multiple days. The floating holiday cannot be used for commencement.

### Faculty:

- Faculty must use their floating holiday on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving. This is a non-instructional day and no classes will be held.

### Leave Use Requirements:

- An employee will not perform work, record time worked, or bank hours on a scheduled floating holiday.
- If an employee works on a day originally scheduled as a floating holiday, the day reverts to a regularly scheduled workday.
- An employee may use accrued annual, compensatory or personal leave (as applicable) on a floating holiday if leave use is needed to maintain the employee's regular schedule (i.e. 10 hour workday: 8 hours floating holiday, 2 hours annual leave).

### Request Process:

- Employees requesting floating holiday should use the following procedure to ensure that leave time is coordinated with appropriate staff and that there is adequate coverage of duties.
- Request should be submitted to an employee's immediate supervisor at least five (5) days in advance of the requested date, and as early as possible to facilitate planning.
- An employee's floating holiday request may be denied to meet workload deadlines, maintain required staffing levels, or avoid overtime or compensatory time.

### Special Situations:

- If an employee terminates employment after using a floating holiday and is subsequently rehired in the same calendar year, the employee will not receive an additional floating holiday in that calendar year.
- If a part-time employee uses a floating holiday and subsequently becomes a full-time employee in the same calendar year, the employee does not receive additional floating holiday hours in that calendar year.

### Payout and Rollover Prohibitions:

- Unused floating holidays expire at the end of each calendar year. Floating holidays do not rollover or accrue. Floating holidays cannot be cashed or paid out to an employee at any time.

## Maternity and Parental Leave

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A pregnant employee may request a leave of absence for purposes of the pregnancy, any childbirth health related condition, and care of the newborn. The employee may use accrued paid leave and unpaid leave. Parental leave is available for non-birthing partners or for employees who are adopting a child immediately following a child's birth or placement.

In order to maintain consistency across the Montana State University affiliation, Great Falls College follows a 4-campus policy for Medical and Parental Leave. The policy can be found on Montana State University's policy page, [here](#).

## Lactation Accommodation

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Great Falls College recognizes the importance and benefits of breastfeeding for both mothers and their infants, and seeks to promote a family-friendly environment in which to work and study. In accordance with [MCA 39-2-215 to 217](#), the college supports and encourages the practice of breastfeeding, accommodates breastfeeding needs of employees, and provides adequate facilities for breastfeeding or the expression of milk for the employee's child.

In accordance with Montana law ([MCA 50-19-501](#)), a woman may breastfeed her child in any place open to



infants, and seeks to promote a family-friendly environment in which to work and study. In accordance with the public on campus or any place the mother is otherwise authorized to be. This cannot be considered a nuisance, indecent exposure, sexual conduct, or obscenity.

It is an unlawful discriminatory practice to refuse to hire or employ or to discharge an employee who expresses milk in the workplace or to discriminate against an employee who expresses milk in the work place.

The college provides a space suitable for such use, including providing privacy, lighting, and electricity needs. The college provides for a convenient facility for milk storage on campus.

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## Leave of Absence

An employee may request a leave of absence without pay; such leave may be granted at the discretion of the supervisor and CEO/Dean. If leave without pay is granted, it will be administered in accordance with established college policies and collective bargaining agreements.

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## Military Leave

The college follows [A Manager's Guide to the Paid Military Leave Requirement](#) as developed by the Montana department of administration.

**Eligibility:** In accordance with the rules of the State of Montana, full-time employees who have completed a six (6) calendar month period of continuous of employment must be given leave of absence with pay accruing at a rate of 120 hours in a calendar year, or academic year if applicable, for performing military service. Part-time employees are eligible to receive prorated military leave under the same conditions and circumstances.

### Use of Leave:

- Paid military leave is meant to compensate qualified employees for loss of income because of time spent performance military service. Departments should grant paid military leave only for the hours the employee was scheduled to work and receive pay.
- Eligible employees may request, and employers may grant, paid military leave in as few as one-hour increments.
- Employees may also use paid military leave intermittently with leave without pay while performing military service.
- Employees may use paid military leave retroactively.
- Departments may deny paid military leave if it results in overtime.
- Employers may not automatically deduct paid military, sick, or vacation leave from an employee who is absent from work to perform military service. The employee must designate the leave they wish to take and may choose to perform military service without using paid leave.
- Employees may request and use paid military leave simultaneously with state active duty military pay from the Montana Department of Military Affairs. In this case, the employee does not violate the State of Montana's ethic laws because the employee is using accrued leave.

**Military Leave Accrual:** Eligible full-time employees earn up to 120 hours of paid military leave each calendar year. Part-time employees earn paid military leave on a prorated basis. Employees can carry unused paid military leave into the next calendar year but cannot accrue more than 240 hours. Once employees reach the maximum, no leave will accrue until the balance drops below 240 hours.

**Unused Military Leave:** Unused military leave cannot be cashed out on termination of employment. If a state employee transfers to another state agency without a break in service, the employee's accrued paid military leave should be transferred along with the employee's accrued sick and annual leave.

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## Public Service Leave

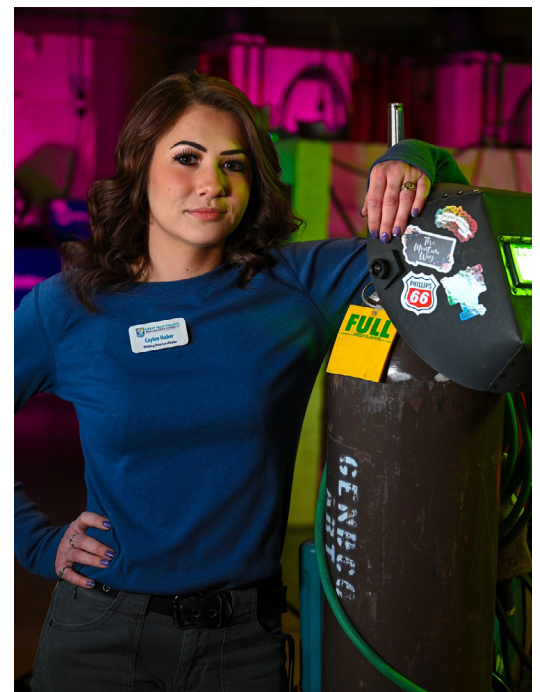
An employee who is elected or appointed to public office is entitled to a leave of absence without pay, not to exceed 180 days per year, in accordance with [Montana Code 39-2-104](#).

## Jury Duty and Service as a Witness

Eligible employees are granted paid time from work to serve as a witness or juror when properly subpoenaed or summoned in accordance with [Montana Code 2-18-619](#).

An employee who is under a proper summons as a juror or subpoenaed to serve as a witness shall, in accordance with 2-18-619, Montana Code Annotated, collect all fees payable as a result of the service and forward the fees to the college's business office. Juror fees will be applied against the amount due the employee. If an employee elects to charge juror time against earned annual leave, it is not necessary to remit juror fees. Employees are not required to remit any expense or mileage allowance paid by the court.

The employee's supervisor may request that the court excuse an employee from jury duty if they are needed for the proper operation of the college.





## COMPENSATION

Compensation is an important part of your total rewards package, and we are committed to offering fair and competitive pay that reflects the value of your work and supports your career growth.

As a public institution, Great Falls College is subject to the biennial process of the Montana legislature, the Board of Regents, and the collective bargaining agreements (as applicable) that govern the compensation of our employees. Within this framework, we strive to offer flexibility and consistency in pay administration, comply with applicable regulations, and recognize and reward our staff and faculty for their contributions to our mission of forging futures through inclusivity, opportunities, and excellence.

Included in this handbook is an explanation of the compensation structure, pay increases, and benefits for each employee group, as well as the processes and criteria for requesting and approving salary adjustments. Please note that this handbook is not a contract and does not guarantee any specific terms or conditions of employment.

If you have any questions or concerns about your compensation, please contact your supervisor or the human resources department. We appreciate your hard work and dedication to Great Falls College and our students.

### Total Compensation

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Compensation is more than the salary or wages paid for the important work completed to support high quality educational experiences for our students. It includes the comprehensive and affordable benefit plans and programs. Total compensation for Great Falls College employees include:

- Salary and wages paid for work performed
- Comprehensive affordable benefit plans and programs
- Access to educational opportunities for you and your family at discounted rates

### Collective Bargaining

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As part of its commitment to quality education and fair labor practices, Great Falls College has entered into collective bargaining agreements with three unions that represent its employees: the Two-Year College Faculty Association for all faculty, the Montana Federation of Public Employees for classified administrative staff, and the International Union of Operating Engineers for classified facilities staff. These agreements outline the rights and responsibilities of both parties, as well as the terms and conditions of employment, such as salary, benefits, workload, grievance procedures, and professional development. Links to each bargaining agreement can be found below:

- Faculty: [Two-Year College Faculty Association, MFT, AFT, AFL-CIO](#)
- Classified Staff: [Federation of Classified University Staff Local #8521 – Montana Federation of Public Employees](#)

- Facilities Staff: [International Union of Operating Engineers – Two-Year Colleges](#)

## Compensation Plans

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As outlined earlier in this handbook, Great Falls College has three primary types of employees: classified, faculty and professional. Each type of employee has different rules and processes in place in regards to compensation changes.

**Classified Employees:** Policies and practices for classified employees are set forth by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and can be found in the [Montana University System Staff Compensation Plan](#).

**New Employees:** Job titles are established by OCHE in collaboration with system human resources offices and national data from the US Department of Labor.

The initial salary for classified employees is established by OCHE. These hiring ranges are reviewed biennially with input from campuses. A link to the hiring ranges for all university system employees can be found on the HR website.

**Pay Increases:** Salary changes for classified employees are also governed by the compensation plan, by the Montana Board of Regents policy and by applicable collective bargaining agreements.

For classified employees, there are multiple ways to increase annual compensation:

**Across the Board Pay Increase:** Amount and timing of across the board increases are determined by the Montana Board of Regents and the collective bargaining agreements.

**Strategic Pay:** Strategic pay may be awarded at the discretion of the college, pursuant to approval criteria, in the following circumstances:

- To retain an employee with unique knowledge, skills, or abilities that are critical or vital to the achievement of the college's or department's mission or strategic goals when the employee's resignation would have a significant adverse impact on the accomplishment of critical and time-sensitive projects or when such employee has received a more lucrative job offer or otherwise presents compelling evidence of his/her marketability; or
- To mitigate problems with documented recruitment and retention issues; or
- To some or all current employees performing the same work under the same working conditions requiring the same level of knowledge, skill, or ability in order to resolve inequities created when it was necessary to pay a newly hired employee a higher wage than current employees with equal or greater qualifications and performance; or
- To compensate an employee who is required to perform a job under unique working conditions that have resulted in documented recruitment and retention problems.

The amount of Strategic Pay is determined by the college pursuant to approval criteria. Factors to consider when determining Strategic Pay amounts include but are not limited to:

- the employee's job-related qualifications (experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance)
- OES wage survey or other survey data as applicable
- recruitment and turnover statistics
- existing wage relationships within the campus and work unit
- the effect that the award of Strategic Pay will have on the morale, productivity and overall operation of the campus and the work unit
- budget availability and constraints.

Further details on the process of determining strategic pay can be found in the [MUS Staff Compensation Plan](#).

**Progression Pay:** Progression pay is awarded when an employee has advanced to the next step of an approved Career Ladder resulting in a change in title within the Staff Compensation Plan. A position

an vacancy notice is not required in order for an employee to progress within a Career Ladder. Career Ladders are not available for all positions, or for all employees.

Progression Plan may be appropriate when:

- there is an increase in an employee's knowledge, skills, duties and responsibilities within his or her job title; and
- the appropriate level of management has identified a need within the department for higher level responsibilities.

Eligibility Requirements:

- The employee has completed their probationary period
- The employee has received a 'meets expectations' or higher on the most recent performance review
- The employee is free of active disciplinary actions
- The department has funding for proposed increase upon completion of progression.
- The department has a legitimate need for the new level of duties required of this position.
- The department structure allows for this position.
- The department been free of layoffs in similar classifications for the past 12 months.
- At least 6 months has elapsed since employee's last progression plan

More information on progression pay can be found in the [MUS Staff Compensation Plan](#).

**In-Range Progression Pay:** In-Range Progression pay may be awarded when there is an increase in an employee's knowledge, skills, duties and responsibilities within his or her job title and management has identified a need within the department for higher level responsibilities.

Eligibility Requirements:

- The employee has completed their probationary period
- The employee has received a 'meets expectations' or higher on the most recent performance review
- The employee is free of active disciplinary actions

More information on in-range progression pay can be found in the [MUS Staff Compensation Plan](#).

**Lump Sum Bonuses:** A Lump Sum Bonus (not added to employee's base wage) may be awarded to an employee when that employee has exhibited exemplary service or contribution to the college. The award of a Lump Sum Bonus is at the college's discretion. There is no entitlement to a Lump Sum Bonus and it is up to the college to advance such a request. Lump Sum Bonuses may be given in an amount not to exceed a maximum of \$2,000.

Eligibility Requirements:

- The employee has completed their probationary period
- The employee has received a 'meets expectations' or higher on the most recent performance review
- The employee is free of active disciplinary actions

More information on lump-sum pay can be found in the [MUS Staff Compensation Plan](#).

**Faculty Compensation:** Full time faculty compensation is determined through the collective bargaining process every 2 years. Specific issues addressed in the [bargaining agreement](#) include:

- Annual increases
- Salary minimums
- New faculty salaries
- Increases for additional degrees awarded
- Recruitment/retention salary adjustments
- Merit awards
- Promotions
- Summer session compensation
- Overload compensation
- Extra duty assignments
- Compensation for department chairs

**Professional / Contract taff Compensation:** Professional staff are not covered under any collective bargaining agreement at Great Falls College. However, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, OCHE, has issued [guidance](#) that outlines parameters for professional employee compensation and pay increases. Below is a summary of this guidance. For more specific information, please review the [Board of Regents Salary Guidelines for Non-Faculty Contract Employees](#).

- **Across the Board Salary Adjustment:** Amount and timing of across the board increases are determined by the Montana Board of Regents and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE).
- **Retention Salary Increase:** Retention salary increases allow the college to retain an employee with valuable knowledge, skills or abilities that are vital to the achievement of the college’s mission or strategic goals; and whose resignation would have a significant adverse impact on the accomplishment of critical and/or urgent projects.

Retention salary increases require substantial documentation and must be approved by OCHE. Managers need to work with human resources to determine eligibility and complete the approval process.

- **Internal Equity Adjustment:** An equity salary adjustment seeks to resolve inequities between employees performing similar work, under similar working conditions, requiring a comparable level of knowledge, skill, or ability but receiving different pay.

Internal equity salary increases require substantial documentation and must be approved by OCHE. Managers need to work with human resources to determine eligibility and complete the approval process.

- **Non-Base Performance Bonus:** Non-base performance bonuses may be awarded for exemplary service or contribution beyond the scope of the employee’s regular job responsibilities and expectations.

Bonuses require substantial documentation and must be approved by OCHE. Managers need to work with human resources to determine eligibility and complete the approval process.

## Conclusion

We hope that this employee handbook has provided you with useful information about the policies, procedures, and benefits of working at Great Falls College. We are committed to creating a positive and productive work environment for all our employees, and we value your contributions to our mission and vision.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the topics covered in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the human resources department or your manager. They will be happy to assist you and address any issues you may have. Thank you for being part of the Great Falls College team!



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