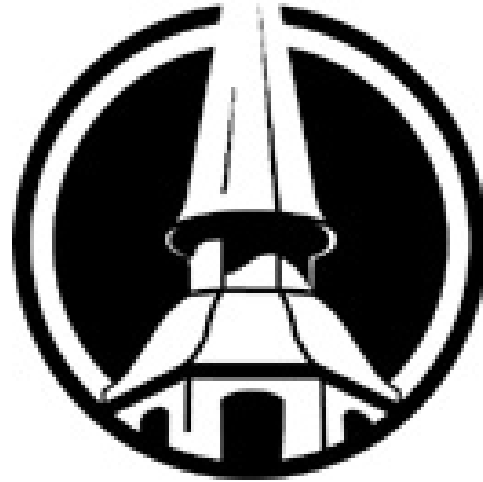


**OKLAHOMA
BAPTIST
UNIVERSITY**



SUPPORT STAFF HANDBOOK

November 2009

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PREFACE

This Handbook has been prepared and given to you so that you may be better informed about Oklahoma Baptist University's employment practices and benefits. We appreciate the service of those of you who have been in OBU's family for some time, and we welcome our new employees.

This Handbook is not a contract of employment. Neither this Handbook nor University practices, policies or procedures, nor other communications from the University to you should be understood by you to create a contract or an employment agreement for any period of time. Support Staff Employees are **at-will** employees, that is they do not have a contract of employment and either the employee or the University may terminate employment for any reason or for no reason. Only a formal agreement by the University made in writing and signed by you and the President could promise you employment for a term of time.

The University follows the traditional practice of employing its support staff on an **at-will** basis. That means either you or the University may terminate the employment relationship at any time and with or without any reason.

The benefits described in this Handbook may be more fully described elsewhere. For instance they may be described in benefit manuals and policies of insurance. Those more specific and detailed explanations will prevail over the summary statements made about benefits in this Handbook if there are differences or inconsistencies.

The policies and procedures described in this Handbook and elsewhere are management guides. The University intends to follow these policies and procedures but the policies and procedures are not contracts between the University and any employee.

Each Support Staff Employee is asked to sign a statement indicating that this Handbook has been or will be carefully read by the employee and that the employee has certain understandings about it and about his or her employment. That statement will customarily be given to the employee when the employee is given a copy of this Handbook. If you are not given a statement to sign, you are expected to ask the Human Resources Office for a statement. The signed statement should be returned to the Human Resources Office.

SECTION 1

Mission Statement

As a Christian liberal arts university, OBU transforms lives by equipping students to

- Pursue academic excellence
- Integrate faith with all areas of knowledge
- Engage a diverse world
- Live worthy of the high calling of God in Christ

To achieve its purpose the University has adopted several goals, among which are:

To be a Christian learning community where faith and knowledge contribute to the individual's awareness: of himself and his obligations within a diverse and interrelated society; of truth and its force; of the joy of discovery and the beauty of existence; and of the legacy of the past, the challenge of the present, and the promise of the future.

To cultivate Christian community in which the Baptist principles of individual freedom and dignity as well as mutual kindness, respect and concern for others are stressed.

To encourage a climate of learning where the student may develop the lifelong habit of critical thinking in the search for truth.

To identify and communicate the knowledge, experience, and values which constitute man's cultural heritage.

To provide opportunities for the student to engage in a serious study of the Bible and to learn the philosophy and tenets of the Judeo-Christian heritage; to instill an awareness of and an appreciation for the distinctive Baptist contribution to Christian theology and for the values inherent in the Christian faith; to encourage Christian commitment.

To foster an awareness of the needs of the human community and the responsibility of each individual in an active life of service.

To offer a broad-based liberal arts education and specialized professional training in mutually supportive roles.

To afford the opportunity to explore the relevance of all academic endeavors to the Christian life.

To make personnel, services and facilities of the institution available to meet appropriate educational, cultural, and religious needs of its several constituencies.

To serve the Baptist constituency through the development of informed, enlightened, sensitive leadership.

Administrators, faculty, and staff members will conduct their professional activities in a manner which is consistent with the Purpose Statement of the University.

SECTION 2

2.0 Employee Policies and Procedures

This section contains the approved policies of Oklahoma Baptist University with respect to the employment conditions of non-exempt Support Staff Employees of the University.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Support Staff

The term Support Staff applies to all non-exempt employees of the University.

2.1.2 Non-Exempt Employee

An employee subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act provisions concerning minimum wage, equal pay, maximum hours, and overtime pay.

2.1.3 Full-Time Employee

Any person working with an FTE (full-time equivalency) of at least .75, which equates to a minimum of 1,560 annual hours, and who is not hired as a seasonal employee, is considered to be a full-time employee of Oklahoma Baptist University.

2.1.4 Part-Time Employee

Any person working less than 30 hours per week on a regular basis is considered to be a part-time employee. Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week are eligible for certain University benefits on a prorated basis as outlined in this manual.

2.1.5 Seasonal Employee

Seasonal employees are hired to perform specified tasks with the realization that this at-will employment will end no later than the end of the season.

Seasonal employees are not expected to work at that job for more than 3 months without renewed authorization. No benefits other than Workers' Compensation, scheduled holidays during that season (after 30 days), F.I.C.A. and unemployment insurance will be authorized.

2.1.6 Temporary Employee

A temporary employee is a person hired to work on a specific task and whose at-will employment is expected not to continue beyond the duration of that task. Benefits will be determined on a case by case basis.

2.2 Types of Employment and Orientation Period

2.2.1 Non-Exempt Employees Categories

Non-exempt support staff personnel shall be those employed in jobs such as secretarial, clerical, technical, maintenance and security positions at the University. Employees in these positions are paid by the hour and are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Other positions may be classified as non-exempt support staff when deemed appropriate.

2.2.1.1 Orientation Period and Status

All employment in a given hourly position should have an orientation period of 90 days.

Nature and Purpose

The orientation period should provide the opportunity for special evaluation of an hourly employee's ability to perform the duties and carry out the responsibilities of the position to which he/she has been appointed. Terminations that occur during the orientation period will be reviewed by the Human Resources Office prior to the actual termination.

Orientation

Prior to beginning work, new employees will complete required governmental and University forms at the Human Resources Office (i.e. I-9, W-4). During the orientation period, it is expected that the Human Resources Office, Department Heads and supervisors will help each newly hired employee become thoroughly familiar with the duties, responsibilities, authority, and reporting relationship of the position as set forth in the appropriate job description and with the personnel policies and fringe benefits as set forth in this Handbook. Department heads and/or supervisors are equally expected to help new employees thoroughly understand what is expected of them in job performance, as delineated in the job description.

When the Human Resources Office completes the initial orientation, the new employee will then report to the appropriate supervisor who will begin orientation to the specific job assignment and to the department, in general. This orientation or training process is a continuing responsibility of the supervisor.

The University will make a serious attempt to successfully orient the new employee to the position, its work requirements, and the performance standards that apply to the work.

Each new employee will receive a copy of this Handbook and may also have access to it through electronic media. If you are employed by the University and you have not been given a copy of this Handbook, you are expected to ask for a copy from the Human Resources Office.

Upon successful completion of the orientation period, hourly employees will be considered regular employees.

The decision as to whether regular employment status is granted will be made by the employing authority. Occasionally, due to the nature and complexity of a position, the orientation period may be extended an additional 60 days, if deemed necessary.

A separate orientation period and 90 day evaluation will apply to any change of position within the University.

Health/dental benefits, group life, disability insurance, and eligibility for paid holidays become effective 30 days following the date of employment.

Although vacation and sick leave may not be taken during the orientation period, vacation and sick leave benefits will accrue to be credited for the employee upon satisfactory completion of this period.

2.3 Employment

2.3.1 Vacancies

Responsibility for anticipating personnel needs resides with the department head in consultation with the appropriate budget head. The department head concerned, with others as needed, screens prospective candidates for employment. If a staff member is responsible to two different departments, the officers will confer together concerning the selection. The Human

Resources Office acts as a clearinghouse for information and as a depository of records. All job vacancy announcements and applications should be filed with the Human Resources Office.

2.3.2 Policy on Non-Discrimination

In compliance with federal law, including the provision of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Oklahoma Baptist University does not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service in its administration of educational policies, programs, or activities, its admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other university administered programs; or employment.

2.3.3 Job Posting

Vacancies for full-time and part-time hourly support staff positions will be posted for at least 3 working days on the OBU website and on bulletin boards in Thurmond Hall and the Physical Plant.

2.3.4 Nepotism Policy - All Employees

No family member may be supervised by another family member without the written permission of the President at the time of initial employment and at any change in employment or family status. Employees are expected to be forthcoming and advise the Human Resources Office when family relationships violate this policy. A family member should neither initiate nor participate in University decisions involving direct benefits (initial appointment, retention, promotion, salary, leave-of-absence) to members of his/her immediate family. Also, a family member should not participate in the evaluation of another family member. For the purpose of this policy, a family member is defined as one related to another in the first degree by blood or marriage.

2.3.5 Reemployment

All benefits will be reinstated as of the original date of employment for any rehired employee who is out of University employment for 90 days or less.

If an employee is out of University employment for more than 90 days, and had less than 1 year of previous service, all benefits will be dated as of the new date of employment with no credit for previous experience.

If an employee with at least 1 year of prior continuous service is out of University employment between 90 days and 1 year, insurance, sick leave and retirement benefits will be effective on the date of hire. Continuous service credit for the calculation of vacation, service awards, and educational benefits will be granted. No continuous service credit will be granted for the time out of University employment.

If an employee is out of University employment more than 1 year, all benefits will be as for a new employee with no credit for previous service.

2.3.6 Teaching by Non-Faculty Personnel

Support Staff who are qualified to teach may be appointed to adjunctive faculty positions upon recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Affairs with prior approval by the employee's administrative officer.

If an employee is asked to teach, additional compensation will be in order. The President will approve such joint arrangements. Such a teaching appointment will be on a term contract basis and subject to specific sections of the Faculty Handbook which apply to part-time faculty positions. Compensated teaching assignments by support staff will not be done while the employee is engaged in the task of the normal hourly position.

2.3.7 Employees Funded By Grants

Persons employed under special grants from private sources may have different conditions of employment than non-grant University employees.

2.3.8 Job Descriptions

Current job descriptions will be given to each employee and will be kept on file in the Human Resources Office.

2.3.9 Personnel Registry

The Human Resources Office shall maintain an official personnel registry of employees. All staff persons employed by the University shall notify the Human Resources Office of any change of address and telephone number; otherwise any notice sent by United States mail to the address of record shall be deemed to have been sufficiently given.

2.3.10 Service Awards

Staff members are honored for service to the University at an annual awards program. The University presents awards at five year intervals.

2.4 Personnel Records

2.4.1 Individual Personnel Files

Each employee shall have an individual personnel file, maintained by the Human Resources Office, which contains all personnel actions and materials.

An employee's personnel file shall be available to the employee upon request, with reasonable notice, except for letter(s) of reference obtained upon the representation that they would remain confidential.

2.4.2 Sick Leave And Vacation Leave Reports

It is the responsibility of the Business Office to maintain accurate sick leave and vacation leave records for each employee. Supervisors are responsible for accurate and timely reporting of sick leave and vacation leave to the Business Office.

2.5 Evaluation System

Each employee will normally receive an annual evaluation of job performance from his/her supervisor. The evaluations will require personal discussions between the supervisor and the employee.

The Performance Review program has four goals:

1. To encourage the employee's personal and professional growth.
2. To improve the employee's understanding of the job, the supervisor's objectives, and how well the employee meets these objectives.
3. To aid management in selecting qualified people for promotion, transfer, and training.
4. To provide safeguards for objectivity and fairness in the assignment of personnel.

2.5.1 Procedure

The Human Resources Office will provide the appropriate evaluation form. The supervisor will complete the evaluation and sign it. A conference between the supervisor and the employee will be held to discuss the evaluation. The employee may make written comments and sign the form. The evaluation form will then be forwarded to the reviewing official. The reviewing official will review, comment if desired, and sign the form. The completed form will be sent to the Human Resources Office to become part of the employee's personnel file.

Routinely, evaluations will be conducted at least annually with the normal review date falling before the end of the fiscal year.

All new hourly employees are required to undergo an evaluation of their performance 90 days after their initial starting date. The orientation period and the 90 day evaluation are designed to ascertain the desirability of continued employment of the individual.

2.6 Promotion and Transfer

Promotion is recognized by Oklahoma Baptist University as a cornerstone of good employment practice. The policy of Oklahoma Baptist University is to promote when possible. Job performance, competence, basic skills, and attendance record will be among those things considered when evaluating a promotion.

Length of service may be the deciding factor for the promotion only when all applicants for a job opening show equal qualifications. A recommendation for promotion will be discussed and approved by the department supervisor and appropriate administrative officers. Selection will be made as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs.

A transfer occurs when an employee is moved from one department to another. A transfer may take place without a promotion. An employee, who wishes to transfer to a vacant position with a lower authorized wage rate than the position he/she holds, may not continue at his/her current wage rate in the new position. Personnel who wish to transfer from one department to another should make this fact known to the Human Resources Office. All transfers shall be made for the convenience of the University.

Any accumulated sick leave and vacation will be unaffected by transfer or promotion.

An employee who transfers to a new position is expected to allow sufficient time to adjust to new duties and responsibilities. Except under extenuating circumstances, personnel transferring into a position should not request to be considered for another transfer for at least 90 days. There will be a 90 day orientation period for all transfers.

2.7 Professional Responsibilities

2.7.1 Code of Ethics

Proper operation of the University requires that employees provide responsible service and use the designated organizational channels when seeking decisions and policy determinations.

Employees of the University are bound to observe the highest ethical and moral standards and to faithfully discharge the duties of their position, regardless of personal considerations.

Employees should not act in any way to breach the law, nor should they ask others to do so.

No employee shall engage in any business or transaction or shall have a financial interest, direct or indirect, which is not compatible with fully independent judgment in the performance of the employee's duties for the University.

An employee shall not disclose confidential information concerning the business or personnel of the University.

2.7.2 Rules of Conduct

All employees must observe the following basic principles of work:

- Perform a full day's work in an efficient and diligent manner in accordance with accepted methods and standards.
- Be at work on scheduled working days at a proper starting time and remain at assigned work places during normal periods, unless permission to leave has been granted by the supervisor.
- Observe breaks or rest and lunch periods without abuse.
- Notify the supervisor as quickly as possible if absence from work is necessary.
- Use carefully and considerately and keep in proper condition, all University property and equipment.
- Cooperate in keeping University premises and equipment clean.
- Carry out specific work related orders or instructions from the supervisor in charge.
- Truthfully, give all pertinent facts on records when they are properly requested.
- Follow established safety practices and report all accidents immediately to the supervisor and/or Human Resources Office.
- Maintain a positive attitude and address all human relations problems with patience, tact, and diplomacy.
- Promote harmony among fellow workers, students, faculty, and staff.
- Avoid gossiping and furthering rumors.

From time to time, employees of Oklahoma Baptist University will work with information which is of a confidential nature. Employees who are given such information are expected to keep the confidence placed in them and should not give this information to people unauthorized to receive it, whether they are within the University community or outside the University community. Violation of such confidences may lead to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment.

To protect University personnel from being subject to frequent solicitation; vending, selling, and soliciting are not permitted by employees or by other persons unless prior approval is given by the Administration.

Harassment, including but not limited to racial or sexual harassment, will not be tolerated.

2.7.3 Illegal Discrimination and Harassment Policies

2.7.3.1 Principle

Oklahoma Baptist University is committed to maintaining an atmosphere in which the age, gender, race, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, or veteran status of an individual is respected and not disparaged.

2.7.3.2 Sexual Harassment

2.7.3.2.1 Principle.

Oklahoma Baptist University strives to maintain high standards of professional ethics in an atmosphere in which individuals do not abuse their personal authority or power in inter-personal relationships. Accordingly, the University prohibits sexual harassment by any member of the University community, whether faculty, staff, or student.

2.7.3.2.2 Definition.

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advance or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) a reasonable individual would believe that his/her response to the conduct will affect the his/her employment or academic status; or (2) the conduct creates an intimidating or hostile environment for work or learning. Sexual harassment can be verbal, visual, physical, or communicated in writing or electronically. Although sexual harassment may violate state or federal law, the University may consider conduct to be sexual harassment whether or not it rises to the level of illegal sex discrimination.

The following are some examples which may be sexual harassment:

Requests for sexual favors; Hugging, touching, patting, or brushing another's body; Inappropriate whistling or staring; Veiled suggestions of sexual activities; Requests for private meetings outside of class or business hours for other than legitimate mentoring purposes; Use in the classroom of sexual jokes, stories, or images in no way germane to the subject of the class; Remarks about a person's body or sexual relationships, activities, or experience.

2.7.3.2.3 Informal Response to Harassment

Any person who wishes to make an informal response to unwelcome conduct, including conduct which may be sexual or other prohibited harassment, is welcome to communicate to the other party either in person or in writing that the conduct is offensive or unwelcome and request that the conduct cease. Frequently such a communication will cause the unwelcome behavior to stop, particularly where the person may not be aware that the conduct is unwelcome or offensive. Such an informal response may be made in addition to pursuing the complaint process described below.

2.7.3.3 Complaint

Oklahoma Baptist University encourages anyone who believes that he/she has been subjected to prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment or some other civil rights violation to make a complaint promptly. A faculty member or staff employee should make a complaint to the Vice-President in charge of his/her employment area or the Human Resources Office. A student should make a complaint to the Dean of Students or to the Associate Dean of Students. The University will investigate the complaint promptly.

2.7.3.4 Confidentiality; Retaliation

The University will undertake to protect, as much as possible, the confidentiality of persons reporting harassment or other civil rights violations, and of those accused. However, the University has a legal and moral obligation to investigate all complaints of civil rights violations and, if appropriate, to take corrective action. Therefore, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Oklahoma Baptist University strictly prohibits retaliation against any student or employee who makes a good faith complaint of sexual harassment or other civil rights violation, or who testifies, assists, or participates in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing involving such a complaint.

2.7.3.5 Investigation

Oklahoma Baptist University will promptly investigate any claim of sexual harassment or other civil rights violation. If the investigation leads to charges of sexual harassment or other civil rights violations, the person charged will be given written notice of the charges and given an opportunity to respond.

2.8 Workload - Hourly Employees

2.8.1 Work Week

For payroll purposes the University work week normally commences at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at 12:00 midnight Saturday. Every hourly employee must complete a time card for each two-week period. Hourly employees are paid bi-weekly, on the first Friday following the end of the payroll period.

For most University positions the normal work week includes eight hours per day, Monday through Friday, during the hours of 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. Some support functions require adjustments to the normal work day and hours. One hour is the normal lunch period.

2.8.2 Breaks

Two daily fifteen minute breaks are optional privileges for all employees. Department heads and supervisors are charged with the responsibility of staggering break schedules so that offices will be adequately staffed at all times. Time required to go from the place of work to the break area and to return is included in the 15 minute break period. Break time is not cumulative.

2.8.3 Time Sheets

All time cards or time sheets will be completed daily. Arrival and departure times must be recorded. Each day's work hours must be totaled and posted in quarter hour increments (7.75, 7.50 hours, for example). Sick leave, vacation, and other paid leave will be recorded.

All time cards must be signed by the employee and the supervisor or a designated representative.

2.8.4 Overtime

All overtime work must be specifically approved by the employee's supervisor prior to the actual work. Non-exempt employees who work in excess of 40 hours a week will be paid overtime at a rate of 1½ times their regular rate of pay.

2.8.5 Emergency Call-In Pay

Employees called back to work after they have left work following their scheduled work period, or during their scheduled day off, will be paid the equivalent of 2 hours pay at the regular rate or the applicable hours worked, whichever is greater. This does not apply if employees have been previously scheduled to report in early for their regular shift. If an employee is scheduled, prior to his/her leaving for the day, to return to work later that same day, all time worked will be considered an extension of that work day and the employee will not be eligible for emergency call-in pay.

2.8.6 Chapel/Assembly

Occasional attendance of chapel/assembly programs is permitted without loss of pay, subject to coordination with and approval of the department supervisor. Certain offices and functions must be continued during these periods.

2.8.7 Reporting Absences

The University recognizes that there are occasions when an absence from work cannot be avoided or when an employee may be late for work due to unforeseen circumstances. In these instances, the employee should contact his/her supervisor as early as possible concerning the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. If the supervisor is unavailable, the employee should contact the Human Resources Office. The employee should not leave a message with, or send a message by, another employee. An absence of 3 consecutive days without contacting the University will be considered a voluntary resignation.

2.8.8 Outside Employment

Employees must recognize that full-time employment by the University requires that they dedicate such hours and energy as are necessary to efficiently perform their duties.

No employee of the University shall engage in any activity, employment, business, professional work, or enterprise which is inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with efficient performance of the employee's duties, functions, and responsibilities as an employee. Any questions concerning outside work should be resolved with the immediate supervisor and approved by the appropriate administrative officer.

2.9 Working Conditions

2.9.1 Safety

A safe work place is of prime importance to the University. The University wants every employee to be responsible for safety and prevention of accidents. Employees should work hard at protecting themselves and their co-workers from job hazards, for preventing fires and accidents, and promoting safety at all times. Unsafe conditions should be reported to the department supervisor immediately.

2.9.2 Occupational Accidents

If a work-related accident occurs to an employee while on duty, the employee immediately must report the accident to the immediate supervisor.

Depending on the severity and time of the accident, treatment should be sought at the following places in the order listed.

Campus Nurse, Geiger Center, Room 101E
Appropriate Industrial Clinic
Emergency Room, Shawnee Regional Hospital

2.9.3 Workers' Compensation

The University provides Workers' Compensation Insurance in compliance with Federal and State laws. The workers' compensation policy is on file in the Human Resources Office.

Lost-time accidents will be reviewed with the injured employee by a committee of appropriate risk management and personnel officers, along with three employees. The workers' compensation policy and procedure apply to OBU Student Workers who are injured during the hours they are working for the University.

2.9.4 Economy

Ensuring that the University receives a dollar's value for every dollar spent is the responsibility of every OBU employee. Maximum employee productivity and efficient material usage are expected by the University.

2.9.5 Work Orders

Any request for repairs or maintenance should be directed to the Physical Plant Office by e-mail or telephone.

2.9.6 Emergency Closing

Occasionally it is necessary to cancel or change the work schedule due to inclement weather or other emergency. Information may be obtained from radio, television or the immediate supervisor. If work has been canceled for some other reason, such as a funeral or other special activity, the President shall decide if employees are to work. If the University decides to close for emergency reasons, employees regularly scheduled to work will be paid for the hours missed due to the cancellation or change of schedule.

2.9.6.1 Emergency Public Relations Procedure

The Public Relations Department shall be in charge of disseminating information concerning the University, its employees, students and visitors to the campus in the event of an occurrence that concerns the news media.

2.9.7 Dress

Each employee is responsible to dress in a manner which is in good taste and in keeping with the rules of the work place. Employees will maintain good personal hygiene. Supervisory staff will determine and monitor appropriate dress for their particular work area.

2.9.8 Copyright Policy

The University is covered by current fair use and copyright laws. More explicit guidelines are available in the Faculty Handbook.

2.9.9 Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Free Campus

OBU is a tobacco free campus.

The use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages and/or illicit drugs on University property or as part of any University activity is prohibited. Violation of this standard of conduct shall result in the imposition of one or more of the disciplinary sanctions set forth below. In addition, violation of this standard of conduct may result in severe criminal penalties under local, state and federal law.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Any employee found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to one or more of the following disciplinary sanctions. The University reserves the right to exercise total discretion in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.

The use or possession or distribution of alcoholic beverages or illicit drugs on campus or at any university sponsored activity may result in required participation in a drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation program, and/or suspension without pay for an appropriate period of time, or termination of employment.

In addition, illegal activity involving drugs and alcohol may be referred to law enforcement officials for criminal prosecution.

Further information is available in the OBU Drug-Free Campus Policy, which is distributed annually to all employees and students.

2.9.9.1 Drug-Free Workplace Policy

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited on the campus of Oklahoma Baptist University. A violation of this prohibition by an employee will result in disciplinary action which may include termination of employment. Further, an employee who is convicted of a violation in his workplace of any criminal drug statute must notify his immediate supervisor no later than five days after such conviction. Failure to report shall be grounds for immediate termination. If reported and depending upon the facts as they appear to the appropriate University officials, the convicted employee will be subject to personnel action up to and including termination, or be required, at the University's discretion, to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

Further information is available in the OBU Drug-Free Campus Policy, which is distributed annually to all employees and students.

2.9.10 Privacy Rights of Students

Oklahoma Baptist University is subject to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This federal law affords students rights of access to education records and regulates the university's release or any disclosure of education records to third parties. All staff have an important role to play in insuring that the privacy of students' education records is respected.

The University has adopted policies and procedures to be followed by the University's personnel and by those interested in gaining access to education records. These policies and procedures allow students: the right to inspect substantially all of his or her education records; the right to prevent disclosures of education records to third parties; and the right to request amendment or correction of education records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. These policies are available for inspection and review in the office of the Registrar, the FERPA Coordinator.

To facilitate compliance with the law, no member of the staff shall disclose education records to a student or a third party without first obtaining approval of the disclosure from the FERPA Coordinator or without first following procedures developed by the FERPA Coordinator for the disclosure of the record in request.

2.10 Termination: Non-Exempt Employees

At times, Oklahoma Baptist University or individual employees may find it necessary to sever their employment relationship. **When this occurs, the employment termination date is determined as the last day the employee works.** To protect the interests of both parties, the various types of termination are here defined, and the policies and procedures related to each category are set forth.

The types of termination are:

- Resignation
- Retirement
- Layoff
- Discharge

2.10.1 Resignation

Resignation is a termination action by which an employee voluntarily severs relationship with the University. In the case of voluntary resignation, employees are expected to give at least a two-week written notice.

2.10.2 Retirement

Although there is no mandatory retirement because of age, normal retirement age at Oklahoma Baptist University is 65. An employee who is considering retirement should contact the Human Resources Office for information regarding annuity benefits, social security benefits, insurance coverage, etc. This should be done at least 90 days prior to retirement.

2.10.3 Layoff

Occasionally it may be necessary on two weeks notice to lay off employees. Such layoffs occur for reasons such as lack of work, loss of or lack of funds, market shifts, and program redirection in whole or in part. The Board of Trustees and/or the President shall be the deciding authority in such a situation. When the University initiates the layoff of an employee, the University will attempt to give at least two weeks notice. When the University initiates the termination of an employee in good standing the individual will be paid for actual time worked and for applicable accrued vacation hours.

The University's policy is to avoid layoffs whenever possible.

2.10.4 Discharge

Discharge is a termination action by which the University terminates employment of an employee. An employee who is discharged will be paid for time worked.

2.10.4.1 Disciplinary Policy

Oklahoma Baptist University has established the following employee disciplinary policy. However, the University has not promised or contracted with the employee to discipline only in keeping with this policy or the procedures described.

Certain employee actions will result in immediate discharge, while other actions will be dealt with in a less severe manner. The following section details these guidelines.

Preferably, an oral warning will be given in a formal meeting where a problem is discussed. A memo will follow to document the meeting and will be signed by both the supervisor and employee. The signed memo will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

A written warning will be given in a formal meeting where the problem is discussed. The supervisor and employee will sign the document, which will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

Preferably, notice of a discharge will be given in a formal meeting where the employee will be advised of his/her termination and any severance arrangements which need to be made.

Guidelines for discharge

The following are management guidelines and not promises to employees that discharge may only occur in keeping with these guidelines. These guidelines are designed to emphasize reminders of expected performance rather than reprimands. The guidelines reflect the University's desire to correct the problem rather than punish the employee. The steps described reflect the fact that some deviations by employees from the expected are more serious than others. The University may choose to utilize some, all or none of the steps. These guidelines neither promise the employee nor restrict the University. The identification of some of the reasons for discharge is to help the employee understand expectations. The reasons are not an exclusive list. Other conduct may result in immediate termination as well.

Immediate Discharge

Some Reasons for Immediate Discharge:

- Possession or control of a handgun, concealed or otherwise, or other weapon, including the presence of a weapon in a vehicle, on property owned by or controlled by the University, except as specifically authorized by the President or the Board of Trustees.
- Possession of, or use of, drugs or alcoholic beverages on University property or while on University business.
- Attempts to sell drugs or promote drug use.
- Refusal to work (excluding safety reasons).
- Theft of University property.
- Willful destruction of University property.
- Serious insubordination.
- Sexual harassment.
- Serious misconduct of an employee.
- Felony conviction, which causes position or bonding complication.
- Falsification of time records.
- Falsification, fraud or omission of information when applying for a job.
- Failure to report to work for 3 days without notification.
- Failure to maintain a current license or certificate if required.
- Any act which endangers the safety, health, or well-being of another person which has caused serious disruption of work or gross discredit to the University.
- Serious or repeated breach of Code of Ethics (Section 2.7.1) and Rules of Conduct (Section 2.7.2).

Two Step Discharge

1. Written warning.
2. Immediate Discharge.

Some reasons for two step discharge:

- Gambling on campus.
- Careless, negligent use of University property.
- Unauthorized attempts to access offices, files, information to which an employee should not have access.
- Unauthorized or improper use of a leave.
- Failure to report to the University for 1 or 2 days without notification.
- Release of confidential information without proper authority.
- Sleeping on the job.
- The failure to comply with a supervisor's order or published rules and regulations of the University.
- Breach of Code of Ethics (Section 2.7.1) and/or Rules of Conduct (Section 2.7.2).

Three Step Discharge

1. Oral Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Immediate Discharge

Some reasons for three step discharge:

- Uncivil conduct.
- Tardiness.

- Unauthorized absence from job.
- Failure to maintain a harmonious working relationship with employer and students.
- Foul and abusive language.
- Inefficiency in performance of duties.
- Incompetence in performance of duties.
- Negligence in performance of duties.

The above examples are not all-inclusive.

Persons who believe they enjoy some right which has been violated or believe that disciplinary action has been taken on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information should file a grievance under Section 2.15 of this Handbook. Persons who believe that the disciplinary action is the result of illegal discrimination should make a complaint as provided in Section 2.7.3 of this Handbook.

2.10.4.2 Discharge Procedure

Immediate Release. If the employee's action is of extreme severity, the employee may be released immediately. Usual discharge procedures are described below.

Discharge Procedure:

Prior to discharge notice, the employee's supervisor should take the steps outlined above (Section 2.10.4.1), if appropriate.

The supervisor should provide the Executive Officer of the area and the President with a written record containing the events leading up to the recommendation for discharge.

The Executive Officer of the area should review the recommendation for discharge. He/she may endorse the discharge recommendation and forward it to the President, or he/she may reject the discharge recommendation and forward to the President a recommendation for a lesser disciplinary action as outlined above.

The President has the ultimate authority to order a discharge and may at his discretion overrule any recommended action.

2.10.5 Exit Interview

Exit interviews are conducted to obtain all necessary information pertaining to the termination process. An opportunity also exists for an employee to voice concerns that need to be reviewed by the University.

All regular employees whose employment with the University ends should have an exit interview before leaving.

The Human Resources Office, in coordination with the employee's supervisor, will schedule the exit interview.

2.11 Employee Training

Emphasis is placed on hiring fully qualified staff and encouraging them to broaden their capabilities. The University encourages employees to seek continued development through participation in professional activities, reading of literature in his/her field, and attendance at seminars, etc.

The University also provides opportunities for on-campus training. Periodic seminars are held to provide training in skill development, communication, new business concepts, human relations, safety, and other relevant topics.

2.12 Leave

2.12.1 Paid Leave

2.12.1.1 Sick Leave

A maximum of 12 days of sick leave is accrued per fiscal year (August 1 through July 31). Sick leave accrues at the rate of 1 day per month for full-time employees, prorated on the basis of FTE. Paid sick leave cannot be paid until the completion of 90 days of service.

All part-time employees who work at least 20 hours or more per week on a regular basis accrue sick leave prorated on the basis of FTE.

Sick leave can be used for personal illness and medical appointments for the employee and the employee's immediate family (dependent child, spouse and parent only). Sick leave used for the employee's immediate family is limited to six days per fiscal year.

A maximum of 70 days of sick leave can be accrued and carried forward from fiscal year to fiscal year. Sick leave must be approved by the department head prior to receipt of pay for such absence. Any sick leave may require a **doctor's statement** if the supervisor feels circumstances warrant such a statement; however, all extended sick leave without hospitalization will require verification of the nature and extent of the illness by means of a **doctor's statement**. If an employee is in termination status, a doctor's statement is required to use accrued sick leave.

Upon termination, an employee is not paid for accrued sick leave.

2.12.1.2 Maternity Leave

During pregnancy an employee may continue normal duties or use available leave while unable to perform regular duties. Employees who utilize leave for pregnancy shall suffer no penalty, retaliation or other discrimination. Before and after the birth of a child or adoption of a child, the University Family Medical Leave policy will be applied as needed.

2.12.1.3 Court Leave

When an employee is summoned to jury duty or subpoenaed to appear as a witness by a proper authority to serve as a witness in any state or Federal Court where the employee is not a party, the employee may be granted time off without loss of pay or benefits. The employee is responsible for notifying the supervisor or department head of impending jury or witness duty immediately upon receipt of the notice to serve. Compensation for jury duty, excluding expense reimbursement, must be paid to the University at the Human Resources Office if the employee wishes to retain the employee's regular University compensation.

2.12.1.4 Military Leave

Military leave for National Guard or military reserve duty may be taken without pay when scheduled and authorized by the supervisor. Vacation leave may be used, with approval, for meeting training obligations in the National Guard or military reserve.

Full-time employees who volunteer or are ordered to extended active duty may apply for extended leave without pay. Reemployment rights are extended for 90 days after completing military service to employees under the Veterans' Reemployment Rights Statute. Under this law, an employee must apply for reemployment within 90 days of discharge from military service or from hospitalization continuing after discharge for a period of not more than one year.

2.12.1.5 Bereavement Leave

An employee will receive up to 3 days at regular straight-time pay for necessary time lost from work in the event of the death of a spouse (husband or wife), child (natural, foster, step), parent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother or sister only. In the event of the death of a grandparent or other relative that has played a major role in the rearing of an employee, 1 day is authorized. Any time off in excess of the above will be considered vacation time or leave without pay.

2.12.1.6 Holidays

The following days are authorized University holidays. The University reserves the right to schedule which calendar day a holiday will be observed.

- New Year's Day
- Spring Break Day - 1 day selected by the employee and approved in advance by the department head.
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving – Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
- Christmas Eve/Day

If any of the above holidays fall on Saturday, Friday will normally be the approved holiday. If it falls on Sunday, Monday will normally be the holiday.

To ensure the continuous operation of the University, it is necessary for certain employees to work on a University recognized holiday. In such instances, the employee will be paid two and one half (2 ½) times his/her regular rate of pay for the hours worked on the holiday.

All employees (excluding students), who work at least 20 hours or more per week on a regular basis, will be eligible for holiday pay. Employees working less than 40 hours per week will receive holiday pay prorated on an FTE basis.

2.12.1.7 Energy Conservation Days (ECD's)

The University will schedule annual energy conservation days in conjunction with the University's Christmas and New Year Holidays. Typically scheduled between Christmas and New Year's Day, the ECD's will allow the University to conserve energy.

Support Staff working during an ECD will be granted an equivalent number of hours as paid time off. This grant will have to be used prior to vacation pay. All ECD's must be used by the end of May.

Granted time in the ECD "bank" will need to be taken in 8-hour increments. If less time off is needed, it may be taken from the normal vacation account. ECD hours may be combined with normal vacation hours.

2.12.1.8 Vacation

All full-time and part-time employees are given vacation leave as follows:

Length of service or years of experience	Vacation days per year
0-2 years	10
2-5 years	12
5 to 15 years	15
15+ years	18

Vacation leave is prorated on an FTE basis for employees who work less than full-time. For example, an employee with 6 years of experience, regularly scheduled to work 32 hours each week (.75 fte) receives 11.25 days of vacation each year.

Support employees are also given their birthday as a vacation day. If the birthday falls on a regular day off, the supervisor may set an alternate day with the employee's input.

Candidates for employment with prior relevant experience may be approved to receive vacation leave based upon their years of experience. The President or his designee must approve such requests in advance of employment.

Vacation time is given at the beginning of the fiscal year or pro-rated based on the date of employment if the employee begins work after the beginning of the fiscal year. Vacation is not given to new employees until the 90-day orientation period is completed.

All part-time employees who work at least 20 hours or more per week on a regular basis are given vacation time on a pro-rated basis.

Whenever possible, the University will grant vacation at the convenience of an employee; however, departmental needs must be met and vacation should not be scheduled or taken without prior request and approval of the employee's supervisor.

Each budget unit head and supervisor is responsible for ensuring that each person under his/her supervision is scheduled for appropriate vacation time.

Vacation may not be carried forward from one fiscal year to the next. Cash payment in lieu of vacation is not permitted.

Employees will not be paid for any unused vacation time upon termination of employment. Upon resignation, employees may only be granted remaining vacation days on a pro-rated annual basis.

2.12.2 Leave without Pay

2.12.2.1 Family Medical Leave Act

Occasionally, an employee may be absent from work for an extended period due to personal or family related illness or injury. All support staff who hold positions with an FTE of .50 or greater can access their accrued paid leave (vacation, sick leave) for such a leave. In addition, after 1250 hours of work during the previous 12 months of employment for the University, the employee is eligible for up to a total of 12 work weeks of leave (combined paid and unpaid) during a 12 month period in accordance with the following provisions of the federally mandated Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

Qualifying events for family/medical leave:

- Birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for the son or daughter.
- Placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care.
- To care for a spouse, son or daughter or parent who has serious health condition.
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the job.

Terms of family/medical leave:

Accrued paid vacation and sick leave shall be used initially by the employee, then leave without pay may be used to extend the leave for the remainder of the 12 weeks, if needed.

While on leave of absence, employees do not receive vacation accrual, sick leave accrual, service credit, or holiday pay.

Medical leave may be taken intermittently (e.g., by working fewer days in a week or fewer hours in a day) if such a schedule is needed for medical reasons. Medical documentation from a physician will be required.

Procedures:

Requests for family or medical leave must be in writing 30 days in advance, (except for emergencies) and must include the reason for the request and the anticipated time period for the leave. For a serious health condition, the employee may be required to provide medical certification. Notification forms and forms for obtaining medical certification are available in the Human Resources Office.

Return to Work:

Eligible employees who take a family or medical leave of absence will be able to return to the same or equivalent position and employment benefits with certification from the health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

If an employee does not return to work as agreed upon after the 12 week period, unless other arrangements are made, he/she shall be considered to have resigned from the University effective the last day worked.

2.12.2.2 Extended Leaves of Absence without Pay

Purpose

Leaves of absence without pay for personal reasons may be recommended by the department manager for full-time employees when it appears to be in the best interest of the University and the employee.

Factors in Evaluating a Request

- The purpose for which the leave of absence is requested.
- The length of time the employee will be away.
- The effect the leave will have on the ability of the department to carry out its responsibilities.
- The employee's position and length of service.

Terms

A leave of absence of up to 6 weeks may be approved for personal reasons. One extension of six weeks may be requested in writing to the President for extraordinary situations. While on leave of absence, employees do not receive vacation accrual, sick leave accrual, service credit, or holiday pay. Health and life insurance coverage will remain effective, provided the employee prepays the appropriate premium (if applicable) on a monthly basis.

When employees are granted leaves of absence without pay, the University will make an effort to reinstate the employee to the same position he/she previously occupied or to a similar position at the conclusion of the leave.

2.13 Fringe Benefits

The fringe benefit program has been developed over a period of years through careful consideration and cooperative effort. Its purpose is to provide a foundation for support staff employees which will supplement salaries by offering a variety of benefits to fill the needs of support staff employees at all points of career development. Fringe benefits are determined by the University administration and may be excluded from current taxable income as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. Fringe benefits are subject to change by the University administration. As these changes occur, every effort will be made to provide advance notice of such changes. The benefits described below are afforded to all full-time support staff employees unless otherwise determined at the point of hire.

2.13.1 State and Federal Mandated Programs

2.13.1.1 Social Security and Medicare

Participation in the Federal Social Security and Medicare Program is automatic for each support staff employee with the University and the support staff employee contributing to the program as prescribed by law.

2.13.1.2 Withholding Tax

According to federal and state laws, income tax is withheld from each employee's paycheck if earnings exceed the allowance for exemptions as claimed on the Withholding Exemption Certificate (Form W-4). This certificate must be on file for each employee and may be changed or revised if the employee's exemption status changes. Such action may be completed in the Human Resources Office.

2.13.1.3 Unemployment Insurance

All support staff employees of the University are covered by the Oklahoma Employment Security Act. The University pays all cost of unemployment insurance. Oklahoma law provides that under certain conditions weekly benefits may be paid to unemployed individuals from an unemployment insurance fund contributed to by employers. Detailed information may be obtained from the Human Resources Office.

2.13.1.4 Workers' Compensation

All support staff employees are covered under the regulations of the State of Oklahoma covering Workers' Compensation. The University carries and pays the cost of Workers' Compensation Insurance. Detailed information may be obtained from the Human Resources Office.

2.13.2 Flexible Benefit Plan

2.13.2.1 Premium Payment Plan

Under the premium payment plan eligible employees pay eligible premiums with pre-tax dollars by payroll reduction. Detailed information may be obtained from the Human Resources Office.

2.13.2.2 Medical/Dental Reimbursement Account

The Medical/Dental Reimbursement Account allows eligible employees to reduce their salary by an amount equal to the cost of planned health care expenses not covered by medical programs. The salary reduction contributions are deposited into the

reimbursement account on a pre-tax basis. After the employee incurs eligible expenses, he/she requests a reimbursement from his/her account. The payment received is tax free. Detailed information may be obtained from the Human Resources Office.

2.13.2.3 Dependent Care Reimbursement Account

The Dependent Care Reimbursement Account allows eligible employees to reduce their salary by an amount equal to the anticipated cost of their work-related dependent day care expenses. The salary reduction contributions are deposited into the reimbursement account on a pre-tax basis. After the employee incurs eligible expenses he/she requests a reimbursement from his/her account. The payment received is tax free. Detailed information may be obtained from the Human Resources Office.

2.13.3 Insurance

2.13.3.1 Medical Insurance

The University provides major medical insurance for full-time support staff employees at no cost to the employee. A spouse and eligible dependent children may be covered if the employee chooses to pay the required premium. The premium may be paid with pre-tax dollars through the Premium Payment Plan. Each support staff employee receives insurance identification cards and materials which describe the benefits when coverage becomes effective. The medical insurance program is administered by the Human Resources Office which provides applications, forms and information concerning coverage.

2.13.3.2 Dental Insurance

Dental insurance is provided for full-time support staff employees at no cost to the employee. A spouse and eligible dependent children may be covered if the employee chooses to pay the required premium. The premium may be paid with pre-tax dollars through the Premium Payment Plan. The insurance program is administered by the Human Resources Office, which provides applications, forms, and information concerning coverage.

2.13.3.3 Group Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

The University provides, at no cost to the full-time support staff employee, group life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. A detailed description and certificate of insurance for each plan is given to the covered employee. The master policies are held by the University and are on file in the Human Resources Office which administers the plans.

2.13.3.4 Long-Term Disability Insurance

Full-time support staff employees of the University are provided long-term disability insurance. No benefits are paid during the first three months of disability. The certificate of insurance, which is issued to the support staff employee through the Human Resources Office at the time coverage becomes effective, contains the provisions of the policy.

2.13.4 Retirement Plans

The University participates in retirement plans offered by GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (GuideStone) and by the Teachers Insurance Annuity Association/College Retirement Equity Fund (TIAA/CREF). Upon employment, a full-time or part-time support staff employee who works at least 1,000 hours annually is eligible to participate in the retirement program on a voluntary basis subject to limitations established under Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Upon employment, the University will begin contributing an amount equal to 6% of gross salary to GuideStone or TIAA/CREF retirement fund(s) chosen by the eligible employee. Employees failing to make a selection within the given time frame are automatically enrolled with GuideStone.

The amounts contributed by the University are invested by the chosen retirement plan and are fully vested to the support staff employee after he or she completes one year of service with the university. Periodic statements are issued by the companies. In addition, telephone inquiries and transfers of deposits between the various funds managed by the companies may be transacted by the support staff employee.

The Human Resources Office provides information, forms, instructions and calculations of the maximum amount that employees may contribute on a tax sheltered basis above the University's contribution.

2.13.5 Education Benefit

Full-time support staff employees may take 2 courses per academic year tuition free (limit one per semester, maximum of 3 hours per course). Employees will be limited to five hours of course work per week during normal work hours (typically 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Additional hours are discounted 15% up to specified maximums. An employee's spouse and eligible dependents receive a 15% tuition discount up to specified maximums. This benefit becomes effective at the start of a new semester following the employee's hire date.

After completing 5 years of University employment, full-time support staff employees, their spouse and eligible dependent children receive full tuition free up to specified maximums.

Employees who wish to arrange for tuition benefit must obtain the tuition benefit form from the Human Resources Office prior to enrollment.

The policy regarding educational benefits for OBU employees is available in the Human Resources Office.

2.13.6 Fringe Benefits for Retired Support Staff Employees

The following fringe benefits continue for support staff employees after retirement. All other University benefits cease upon retirement. The University requires employees to reach the age of 55 to be considered for retirement benefits.

2.13.6.1 Health Insurance

Full-time support staff employees with **fifteen or more years** of service who retire **prior to age 65**, may remain on the group insurance plan until eligible for Medicare **by paying** the group rate through the University. Upon reaching age 65 the retired support staff employee must transfer to a self-paid supplemental Medicare plan. Full-time support staff employees who retire **after age 65** should transfer to a self-paid Medicare supplement policy immediately upon retirement.

Full-time support staff employees with **less than fifteen years** of service who retire **prior to age 65** may remain on the group health insurance plan for the duration of the time allowed under federal COBRA law **by paying** the group rate through the University.

Full-time support staff employees who have **less than fifteen years** of service and who retire **after age 65** should transfer to a self-paid Medicare supplement policy immediately upon retirement.

The Human Resources Office can provide retiring support staff employees with information on available supplement plans.

2.13.6.2 Life Insurance

Subject to the provisions of the group life insurance plan, a portion of the employee's group life insurance may be retained after retirement at no cost to the retiring employee if a minimum of 15 years of service has been completed. Further details are outlined in the life insurance certificate issued to each covered employee.

2.13.6.3 OBU Tuition for Retired Employees

Senior Citizens Tuition Assistance provides free tuition for students aged 65 or older. The program is limited to six hours per semester per student and the student pays \$25.00 per credit hour service charge. General fees and any special fees must also be paid by the student.

2.13.6.4 Other Privileges

The University provides a variety of privileges for retired employees. These include membership in the Noble Complex, admission to University concerts, general admission tickets to sporting events, use of the library, use of the Glorieta Cabin, parking privileges, the service of a notary, discounts at the book store, discounts at the cafeteria, and discounts on tickets to University dramatic productions.

Identification cards, available through the Office of the Dean of Students, are required to utilize many of these privileges.

2.13.6.5 Disclaimer

The University reserves the right to change, increase, decrease, or eliminate these benefits.

2.14 Salary and Compensation Provisions

2.14.1 Starting Salaries and Wages

Starting salaries and wages for new personnel will be appropriate to the position requirements and in perspective with similar positions. Salaries and wages will be reviewed by the personnel officer and department head and then authorized by the appropriate dean or vice president, administrative officer, the chief financial officer, and President.

2.14.2 Salary and Wage Increases

Salary and wage increases, based on individual merit and availability of funds, are usually made at the beginning of the fiscal year, August 1.

2.14.3 Pay Period Non-Exempt Personnel

Hourly support staff employees are paid bi-weekly, on the first Friday following the end of the payroll period. For payroll purposes, the University work week commences at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and ends at midnight Friday.

2.14.4 Payroll Advance

Advances on pay will not be authorized.

2.14.5 Dues and Membership Payments

The University will pay only those dues and membership fees which are for the institution or which will provide needed publications, books or other instruction-related data associated with membership in an organization. No personal dues or fees will be paid unless these requirements are met.

All requests for approval of University payment of dues and membership fees will be approved by the appropriate department head.

2.15 Grievances

The University recognizes that problems involving employer-employee relations will arise from time to time. It is in the best interest of both the University and the employee to resolve these matters as quickly as possible and at the lowest possible level. In order that employees may be assured fair consideration, the University has established a grievance process for the impartial review of complaints, including appeals to higher levels of authority. The person making a complaint is called the "complainant" and the party named in the complaint is the "respondent."

2.15.1 Subjects for Grievances

The grievance procedure applies only matters arising under Section 2 of this handbook. Appropriate subjects for a grievance are:

- An alleged violation of a right perceived to be held by the employee;
- A complaint of illegal discrimination which has been made as provided in this handbook but which has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction;
- An allegation that a decision concerning the employee has been made based upon incorrect or incomplete factual information.

2.15.2 Grievance Coordinator

The Grievance Coordinator for staff grievances shall be the Director of Business Services. The Grievance Coordinator shall:

- Provide information about the grievance procedure.
- Assist in seeking resolution of an alleged complaint through normal institutional channels prior to commencement of the grievance process.
- Assist any complainant in preparing a grievance. The Grievance Coordinator shall not act as an advocate, but shall be available to advise a complainant about proper procedure to ensure a comprehensive and orderly presentation of a complaint.
- Coordinate scheduling for the Grievance Committee and maintain appropriate records throughout the grievance procedure.

2.15.3 Filing a Complaint

Under most circumstances a staff member should seek to resolve a problem by informally discussing the complaint with his/her immediate supervisor. If the matter is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may submit the complaint in writing to his/her immediate supervisor. The complaint should identify the complainant and the respondent and describe the specific complaint and the desired remedy.

If the problem is not resolved at this level, the employee may take the written complaint to the second level of review, the immediate supervisor's manager.

If the complaint is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, he/she may submit the complaint to the Grievance Coordinator for resolution. The written complaint must be filed with the Grievance Coordinator no later than 30 calendar days following the date of the event or discovery of the action that caused the complaint. If the 30th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the next working day shall be the deadline for filing with the Grievance Coordinator.

2.15.4 Response

The Grievance Coordinator shall promptly send copies of the written complaint to the respondent and the appropriate department manager. Within 7 calendar days after receiving the complaint, the respondent shall submit a written answer to the Grievance Coordinator, who will send copies to the complainant and appropriate department manager.

2.15.5 Mediation

Upon receiving the response to the complaint, the complainant should initiate a meeting with the Grievance Coordinator to discuss possible means of informal resolution. The Grievance Coordinator should offer his/her services to assist in any reasonable way as a mediator to try to foster communication and understanding among the various parties involved.

2.15.6 Grievance Committee

A hearing before a Grievance Committee should be considered a final resort after all other negotiation and mediation has failed to produce an acceptable resolution of a specific complaint. However, if the complaint is not resolved within 30 days from the time the respondent files a response to the complaint, the Grievance Coordinator shall cause a Grievance Committee consisting of three members to be named. The Grievance Committee shall be selected by the President from OBU full-time employees if the need arises.

Whenever a conflict of interest exists among members of the Grievance Committee and a complainant, or between the Grievance Coordinator and the complainant, a substitute shall be agreed upon between the complainant and the President of the University.

The Grievance Committee shall designate one of its members to chair the committee.

2.15.7 Hearing

Within 45 calendar days of receiving the respondent's answer, the committee shall conduct a hearing as scheduled by the Grievance Coordinator. Any specified hearing deadline may be extended by mutual written agreement of the parties. The Grievance Coordinator or the chair of the Grievance Committee if a chair has been selected, shall notify all parties in writing of any extension.

In advance of the hearing, the Grievance Coordinator shall provide the Grievance Committee copies of the complaint and answer. The hearing shall be conducted by the chair under informal procedures. The Grievance Committee shall hear the complainant first and then the respondent. The Grievance Committee shall have broad discretionary power to question the complainant and respondent, to hear any witnesses present at the request of a party or the Grievance Committee, and to request additional witnesses or other evidence. The Grievance Committee may interview the parties or witnesses following the hearing.

The complainant or respondent may consult legal or other advisers in preparing for any hearing. However, in order to preserve the informal, non-judicial nature of the grievance process, advisers and representatives may not attend any hearing. The University may have its legal counsel at any hearing to assist the Grievance Committee or to protect the University's interests.

The Grievance Committee and the parties shall not discuss information of a private or confidential nature obtained in the course of these procedures. Any such disclosure, except where required by law, shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

The Grievance Committee shall prepare a written report of its findings and recommendations within 30 days of the hearing unless more time is reasonably required. The report shall be sent to:

- The Grievance Coordinator,
- The complainant,
- The respondent, and
- The appropriate department manager.

2.15.8 Ruling by Grievance Coordinator

Within 14 days of receipt of the committee's report of findings and recommendations, the Grievance Coordinator shall make a decision accepting, rejecting or modifying the Grievance Committee's findings or recommendations. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the individuals who received the committee's report and the Grievance Committee.

2.15.9 Appeal to the President

Within 10 calendar days of receiving the Grievance Coordinator's ruling, the complainant or the respondent may appeal the ruling to the President of the University in writing. The President shall:

- Review the case in whatever manner he/she feels appropriate;
- Make a decision within 30 days of receiving the appeal; and
- Communicate his/her actions to the parties directly or through the Grievance Coordinator.

The Grievance Coordinator shall make a record of whatever disposition is made by the President and distribute it to the complainant, the respondent, and the department manager. The President's decision is final unless an appeal to the Board of Trustees is appropriate.

2.15.10 Appeal to the Board of Trustees

Where an action of the President has given rise to the original complaint, the final appeal shall be to the Board of Trustees instead of to the President. The appeal shall be made to the Chairman of the Board in writing within 10 calendar days of receiving the Grievance Coordinator's ruling. The Board of Trustees or its designated committee shall review the written record and act upon the appeal no later than 7 calendar days following its second meeting after receipt of the appeal. The Board of Trustees may conduct its review in whatever manner it deems appropriate, and there shall be no right to a hearing before the Board.

2.15.11 Grievance File

The file on each grievance will be maintained in the Human Resources Office for at least 2 years. Such a file will be open to the complainant and will be used only for the specific grievance it involves. The grievance will not become part of an employee's personnel file.