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UF Handbook for Chairs & Directors

Overview

The “UF Handbook for Chairs and Directors” provides general resources and information regarding common issues that emerge in the administration of units at the department level. Throughout, references to “chairs” should be understood to include those directors who manage programs similar to and at the same level as departments. The “Handbook” should be used as an informational resource rather than as the final authority on an issue.

Readers should consult the following sources for more specific information:

- University of Florida Regulations and Policies: http://www.regulations.ufl.edu
- Relevant collective bargaining agreements (faculty, staff & GTAs): http://www.hr.ufl.edu/labor-relations/union.asp
- Legal questions: Office of the General Counsel (OGC) http://www.generalcounsel.ufl.edu/, 123 Tigert Hall, (352) 392-4387
  - Faculty “Handbook”: http://handbook.aa.ufl.edu/
- Office of Research: http://www.research.ufl.edu/
- Dean of Students Office: http://www.dso.ufl.edu
- University Ombuds (students): http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/
- Disability Resource Center: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/
- TEAMS and USPS policies: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/policies/general.asp
- Information Privacy: UF Privacy Office: http://privacy.ufl.edu
- Information Technology Security and Policies: http://infosec.ufl.edu/
1. **Departmental Responsibilities**

   a) **What are the responsibilities of a chair?**

   The department chair is responsible for providing leadership in the unit’s areas of teaching, research, and service. This key position represents the needs and aspirations of the unit to the rest of the university.

   The department chair also is accountable for the administrative affairs of the department and in that capacity is responsible to the dean and to the department faculty for competent management of administrative, fiscal, academic, and personnel affairs. This includes meeting any requirements created by the departmental and college missions; and oversight for grant and contract compliance, departmental budget, evaluation, intervention, and discipline for faculty and staff, course scheduling, oversight of students who enroll in departmental courses, and policies related to privacy and IT security.

   A department chair also is generally responsible for oversight of hiring, evaluation, and termination of all faculty and staff positions within the unit. This may include management, and working with unit and central Human Resources and the Office of the Provost on policy implementation.

   These areas must be managed according to departmental by-laws; University policies, Regulations, and governance documents; any relevant collective bargaining agreements; and applicable state and federal laws.

   Accordingly, department chairs should be familiar with the policies and Regulations of the University, as well as the governance structures of UF, the college, and their unit. They should also contact appropriate offices on campus if they have questions or need additional resources.

   **NOTE:** Regular discussions of specific responsibilities and expectations with the college dean (or designee) will enable a more comprehensive understanding of an individual chair’s role and the dean’s expectations.

   b) **Is a chair authorized to sign contracts or other agreements with outside companies, donors, or others on behalf of the department or college?**

   No. Contracts with outside vendors, donors, or other entities are governed by several offices on campus.

   1. **Research agreements** are negotiated and administered by the Division of Sponsored Research. All research agreements should be sent to DSR for review and processing: [http://www.research.ufl.edu/research](http://www.research.ufl.edu/research).

   2. **Gift or Donor Agreements** are negotiated and administered by the University Foundation: [http://www.uff.ufl.edu](http://www.uff.ufl.edu)

   Arrangements in which the donor receives a benefit from the University in return, which may be service or support agreements and not an outright gift, should be processed through Purchasing or, in the Health Sciences, the SVPHA’s Office of Contracts and Related Services (CRS): [http://contracts.vpha.ufl.edu](http://contracts.vpha.ufl.edu)
3. **The Health Sciences Center** has a separate office of contract compliance:  
   [http://www.contracts.health.ufl.edu](http://www.contracts.health.ufl.edu)

4. **Technology and Intellectual Property Licensing Agreements** are reviewed and signed by the Office of Technology Licensing (OTL) on behalf of the UF Research Foundation (UFRF):  
   [http://research.ufl.edu/ufrf.html](http://research.ufl.edu/ufrf.html)

5. **Material Transfer Agreements** (transfer of proprietary materials [e.g., biologics]) and some trademark agreements are also reviewed and signed by OTL. These types of agreements should be sent to the Director of OTL for review and processing:  
   [http://www.research.ufl.edu/otl](http://www.research.ufl.edu/otl)

6. **Any agreement that is international in nature** i.e., for services abroad, international collaborations, study abroad, international exchange programs, and/or international affiliations are subject to review by the UF International Center (UFIC) and the Office of the General Counsel. All international agreements should be sent to the UFIC:  
   [http://www.ufic.ufl.edu](http://www.ufic.ufl.edu)

7. **Construction Agreements** may originate in Facilities, Operation and Development and are then reviewed by Office of the General Counsel and signed by Business and Finance.

8. **Requests for Construction Agreements** should be sent to the General Counsel’s Office, for review and processing. Website: [http://www.generalcounsel.ufl.edu](http://www.generalcounsel.ufl.edu)

9. **Leasing Space agreements** require the involvement of Purchasing and, in some cases, approval by the Provost. Website: [http://www.purchasing.ufl.edu](http://www.purchasing.ufl.edu)

10. **Other General Contracts or Agreements** should be put through Purchasing, as they are subject to a variety of University, state, and federal regulations and laws. Contact the Purchasing Department [http://www.purchasing.ufl.edu/](http://www.purchasing.ufl.edu/) when outside vendor contracts are necessary.

c) **What are the chair’s obligations and responsibilities when faculty grant funding runs out?**

A department or college is not obligated to support a faculty member or staff who have been funded by “soft money” (e.g., contracts and grants, sponsored research funds, grants and donations trust funds, and special funds such as those allocated to meet enrollment demands) unless some specific provisions have been agreed upon, or the faculty member is tenured. With appropriate notification of the funding termination, the chair may work with the faculty member to try to find another source of funding or to close out the project should further funding not be available. However, any requirements regarding employee termination must be followed, and could involve additional support during the notice period.

d) **How should a chair handle employee annual evaluations?**

It is important to provide honest, accurate and specific feedback for all faculty and staff in their annual evaluations. Annual evaluations provide an opportunity to assess the employee’s work and set performance expectations for the upcoming year. They will figure into any eventual tenure, permanent
status, and/or promotion decisions, and can be very important in cases where unproductive behaviors must be documented.

Should merit raises be allocated, the raises should be consistent with performance evaluations and annual reviews. The chair may seek the advice of a committee in gathering information for evaluations, but the final evaluation is the chair’s assessment, not the committee’s.

TEAMS and USPS performance appraisals information can be found on the HRS Web site: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/performance/default.asp

Faculty evaluations are governed by the collective bargaining agreement (if in-unit), departmental by-laws, college policies, and/or university regulations. In-unit faculty and staff evaluations have time lines. Chairs should ensure they are familiar with these time lines to avoid violations of any relevant collective bargaining agreements.

e) What is a chair’s responsibility for assigning faculty work and making sure that faculty effort is reported in line with federal and state requirements?

The department chair is responsible for making annual faculty assignments. The faculty member’s professional obligations and responsibilities are comprised of these assigned duties, and those other duties and responsibilities attendant on and pertinent to university employment. (Florida Statutes relating to this requirement are 1008.46 and 1012.945.) Accuracy in the match of assigned duties and actual effort is important to faculty evaluation for promotion, merit awards, tenure and/or permanent status.

The Effort Tracking (EFT) system collects critical information for UF in order to comply with federal and state requirements, including tracking contract and grant commitments. Faculty and staff should take every precaution to ensure that effort reported is as accurate as possible, and reflects the proportion of time spent each semester on the individual’s assigned responsibilities.

Instructions for completing the semester faculty assignment report (FAR) and meeting the requirements of the Effort Reporting system: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/training/myUFL/toolkits/EffortReporting.asp

f) What are a chair’s responsibilities regarding faculty or staff with disabilities?

Chairs should ensure that faculty and staff in their units adhere to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

An individual with a disability is defined as any individual who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, for example: walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, learning or caring for oneself.
2. Has a record of such impairment or is deemed as having such impairment.

The ADA requires that individuals with disabilities be provided equal access to public programs and services. The ADA upholds and expands the standards of compliance to employment practices, communications, and all policies, procedures and practices that impact the treatment of individuals with disabilities. For more specific information, see http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/programs/ada/
2. **Faculty & Staff Development**

   a) **What is a chair’s responsibility for faculty and staff awards?**

   Chairs should be on the lookout for awards, honors, grants, or other programs that would benefit departmental faculty and staff, and make sure that the faculty and staff have information about such programs. Whenever possible, the chair should take the initiative in nominating faculty and staff for appropriate awards and honors. [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/awards/default.asp](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/awards/default.asp)

   b) **How can chairs support staff development?**

   There are many training and development opportunities for UF staff, and chairs can refer staff to training possibilities offered through HRS: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/training/default.asp](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/training/default.asp)

   c) **How can leadership be fostered among mid-career faculty?**

   Chairs are encouraged to provide opportunities for their faculty to prepare for leadership positions within and outside the department.

   The Office of Human Resource Services provides a number of leadership development programs [http://hr.ufl.edu/training/leadership/default.asp](http://hr.ufl.edu/training/leadership/default.asp), including Advanced Leadership for Academics and Professionals [http://hr.ufl.edu/training/leadership/alap.asp](http://hr.ufl.edu/training/leadership/alap.asp).

   Additionally, the Office of the Provost offers a variety of programs that provide opportunities for leadership and administrative enhancement for administrators and faculty [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/faculty](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/faculty) including the Academic Administrators Seminar Series: [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/academic-administrators-seminar-series](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/academic-administrators-seminar-series).

   d) **What are a chair’s responsibilities for faculty tenure and promotion?**

   The chair must notify faculty annually of any application deadlines, and point faculty to relevant information related to tenure and promotion, most prominently the annual “Guidelines” published by the Office of the Provost: [http://aa.ufl.edu/tenure](http://aa.ufl.edu/tenure).

   The chair is also responsible for managing any mid-career reviews during the tenure probationary period. The chair must accurately evaluate each faculty member annually and provide guidance to faculty about requirements for tenure and promotion.

   If a faculty member wants to self-nominate for tenure (prior to the end of the probationary period) or promotion, the chair may counsel against it if she or he believes it is inappropriate at that time. However, if the faculty member insists (and they are not in non-renewal status), the chair must put the candidate forward.

   When the faculty member chooses to become a candidate, the chair must manage the following:
   - The solicitation of external and/or internal letters of evaluation
• A letter of evaluation of the candidate (including explanatory material to help college and university evaluators understand the candidate’s contributions)

**NOTE:** The annual letters of evaluation as well as the tenure and/or promotion letter are the chair’s specific evaluation, not merely summaries of the file or the opinions of the departmental faculty. They should be accurate and informative assessments, not “cheer-leading” letters. Letters should clearly indicate the chair’s support or non-support.

3. **Student Affairs**

a) *What is the process when a student wants to appeal a grade?*

The university does not have a formal grade appeal process. However, as is the case with any class-related issues, the student should first request a meeting to discuss the grade with the course instructor. The student may then appeal a grade change to the chair. Students may also take advantage of the University Ombuds without first going to the instructor or chair.

The chair may discuss the grade change with the faculty member and make a recommendation. However, the instructor is responsible for making any grade changes.

If departmental discussion does not resolve the issue, the student should be referred to the appropriate college associate dean or the University Ombuds: [http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/](http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/).

Some colleges have separate policies, for example:

- Nursing: [http://www.nursing.ufl.edu/policies/S1%2003%20-%20Student%20Grade%20Appeals.pdf](http://www.nursing.ufl.edu/policies/S1%2003%20-%20Student%20Grade%20Appeals.pdf)

b) *What are a chair’s responsibilities regarding disabled students?*

Chairs should be familiar with UF policies regarding disabled students and course accommodation, and provide guidance to faculty and students on how to appropriately handle accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations are established by the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with disabilities are issued *accommodation letters* which specify their needs; students are responsible for providing the letters to faculty.

Upon receipt of an accommodation letter, a faculty member is responsible for reviewing the information in the letter and providing the requested accommodation(s). Faculty should not provide accommodations under ADA without guidance from a letter issued by the DRC.

For questions or concerns about the information contained in the letter, faculty should contact the DRC: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). See also, the ADA Faculty Guide: [http://www.ada.ufl.edu/publications/resourcerguides/faculty_guide.html](http://www.ada.ufl.edu/publications/resourcerguides/faculty_guide.html)
c) Does the University have a code of conduct or guidelines for disciplining students?

Yes. The Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code are available on the Dean of Students site: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scr/honorcodes/conductcode.php as well as on the UF Regulations site: http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/

- Violations are outlined in Section 4.041: http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/4041.pdf
- Options for Resolution and Procedures for Reviews and Hearings are outlined in Section 4.042: http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter4/4042.pdf

d) What must be done if a student is accused of cheating?

The Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution in the Dean of Students Office provides a checklist for faculty in handling Honor Code violations: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scr/faculty/process.php

For questions regarding the conduct process, contact Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at: 392-1261, ext.207.

e) What are the important issues related to students and privacy?

See Section 7 below, “Privacy and Security.”

4. Academic Affairs and Research

a) What are the guidelines for ownership of intellectual property?


The UF Office of Technology Licensing (OTL) http://www.research.ufl.edu/otl/ will:

- Work with researchers to assist in protecting their intellectual property;
- Work with inventors to facilitate the transfer of technologies created at UF to the commercial sector for public benefit; and
- Assist employees with new and useful research including its potential to be patented or copyrighted.

b) What if a faculty member is accused of research dishonesty?

All complaints involving academic dishonesty are governed by Regulation 6C1-1.0101: http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/10101.pdf and are processed through the office of the Vice President for Research. Chairs may receive reports or allegations of research misconduct, in which case the dean or director of the college or school should be informed in writing about the complaint, with a copy to the VP for Research.
c) What are the chair's responsibilities related to contract compliance?

As noted in Section (1) above, chairs have oversight for all contracts and grants managed by departmental faculty. While the faculty PI is ultimately responsible for meeting all federal, state, and/or other requirements of the granting or contracting agency, the chair should be aware of activities related to contracts and grants being managed by departmental faculty and/or staff. A chair who is aware of any irregularities in the management of a contract or grant is obligated to report that information to the dean.

d) What resources are available to faculty to help them manage research grants and contracts?

The Office of Research provides training and other information for faculty in managing contracts and grants. Any faculty who manage contracts and grants must successfully complete mandatory training provided by OR: [http://www.research.ufl.edu/research/compliance.html](http://www.research.ufl.edu/research/compliance.html)

e) How do we create new academic programs, put programs into suspension, close programs, or manage changes to program majors?

The Provost’s Office website has links to the various processes and policies involved in academic program management, including flowcharts for the various processes: [http://www_aa.ufl.edu/degree-programs](http://www_aa.ufl.edu/degree-programs)

5. Personnel Issues

a) What resources are available for dealing with difficult employee situations?

The UF Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides a wide range of services including employee evaluation and referral, consultation services for supervisors, workshops and training sessions, and support groups. Chairs should not attempt to address apparent emotional problems or behavioral issues without assistance from University staff trained to intervene in such situations. Chairs may contact EAP personnel for guidance in making any referrals.

Problems that may warrant referral include:

- work performance difficulties
- alcohol or other drug misuse
- family/relationship difficulties
- social interaction problems
- occupational or personal stress
- legal or financial problems
- eldercare issues
- parenting issues
- physical or mental health issues
- conflict resolution

More information may be found on the EAP website: [http://www.eap.ufl.edu/](http://www.eap.ufl.edu/)
b) How can an administrator help staff members work together as a team?

HRS staff in the various campus satellite offices can assist supervisors with:

- coaching and counseling for their employees
- serving as mediators at meetings
- recommending fair and appropriate disciplinary actions
- ensuring consistency throughout the university community
- providing information and guidance pertaining to various procedures, policies, and regulations.

Employee Relations staff also can assist staff with the resolution of workplace disputes; complaint and grievance processes; career counseling sessions; and alternative resources, as necessary.

More information may be found on the Employee Relations web site: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/disputes.asp](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/disputes.asp)

c) How can chairs address conflicts between faculty members or with faculty unable to work amicably?

Unacceptable behaviors can have many causes, from a serious illness to personality conflicts.

Chairs may face the sudden onset of new behaviors, or inherit a long-term conflict.

The chair’s responsibility is to address behaviors that are a threat to individuals, to the smooth functioning of the department, or to the maintenance of a supportive classroom and teaching environment. To address behaviors, the chair may need to contact an appropriate professional for intervention or to develop a strategy to implement change. Chairs should work with the college HRS office or HRS Employee Relations or the General Counsel’s Office, depending on the nature and severity of the issue, to devise a strategic approach.

There are many resources available to assist the chair in mitigating behavioral issues in the department, and it is adroit management practice to take advantage of them and use available expertise.

d) What are some basic rules for dealing with faculty or staff behavioral issues?

In instances where behavior threatens the individual her or himself, others, and/or impinges on the smooth operations of the unit, chairs may need to address the issue immediately. The UF Police Department (UPD) can respond within minutes, and are specially trained to deal with situations in a university environment: [http://police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/)

For Emergencies dial 911

e) What are the chair’s responsibilities related to faculty and staff performance issues?

Annual evaluations for faculty and staff, and the periodic Sustained Performance Evaluations (SPE) for faculty, are available methods to address a staff’s or faculty member’s ability to meet her or his
assignment. Evaluations should provide clear, consistent information on what the employee needs to do to meet her or his obligations.

If the chair can identify some form of help that would make a difference—assigning a teaching mentor or providing training, for example—the chair should make reasonable efforts to provide the help.

The SPE process can generate a “performance improvement plan” for faculty that provides clear steps to rectify the situation.

However, if these processes fail to result in improved job performance, there are various levels of discipline that can be imposed. If a chair believes discipline is warranted, she or he should contact the college’s Human Resources officer, associate dean for faculty, or, in severe cases, the General Counsel’s Office, to discuss what options are available.

f) **What should chairs do if confronted with behavior apparently caused by drugs or alcohol?**

The University is committed to providing a campus environment free of the abuse of alcohol and the illegal use of alcohol and other drugs. The University has adopted and implemented programs that seek to prevent the illicit use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol by University community members.

Violation of the policies and laws described in the UF Drug-Free Workplace Statement by an employee or student is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with applicable University and the Florida Board of Education regulations and/or collective bargaining agreements: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/policy/df_statement.asp](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/policy/df_statement.asp)

As with other forms of personnel intervention, a chair should seek help in how best to address the situation by contacting Employee Relations at 392-1072, or emprel@ufl.edu.

g) **What should chairs do about a student, faculty or staff member who appears to be having psychological or personal problems?**

The Office of Human Resource Services (HRS) has developed an informational guide to aid in assisting employees experiencing difficulties:


h) **How do chairs assist faculty or staff with a serious illness?**

Sick leave accruing Academic Personnel, USPS and TEAMS employees begin earning sick leave from the time they are employed; it is credited on the last day of each pay period.

There is no waiting period for using sick leave. *Except* in the case of approved parental leave, employees may only use what is available in the balance prior to future accrual. Sick Leave policy: [http://hr.ufl.edu/leave/sick.asp](http://hr.ufl.edu/leave/sick.asp)

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) [http://hr.ufl.edu/leave/fmla/asp](http://hr.ufl.edu/leave/fmla/asp) provides eligible employees with up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave a year, and requires group health benefits to be maintained during the leave as if employees continued to work instead of taking leave.
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Eligible employees can be granted up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave in a 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth;
- Placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, and to care for the employee's newly adopted child or a child newly placed in the foster care of the employee;
- To care for the employee's family member with a serious health condition; or
- The employee's personal serious health condition.

Employees may choose to use accrued paid leave instead of unpaid leave for any portion of the 12 workweeks. In addition, faculty, TEAMS and USPS in leave-accruing positions may use unearned sick leave to fund some portion of a parental leave: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/leave/fmla.asp

Extended leave encompasses forms of leave with or without pay that last longer than 15 consecutive workdays. Extended leave may be provided for medical (self and family), parental, military, and personal reasons: http://hr.ufl.edu/leave/extended.asp

The University has a sick leave pool which employees in sick-leave accruing positions can join: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/leave/sickleavepool/default.asp

i) How can chairs get a "difficult" employee to change their behavior?

It is an essential UF goal to maintain a safe and comfortable workplace and academic setting for all members of the University community. Certain standards of conduct have been established that cover every member of the UF community. Actions in violation of these standards include:

- Violent acts
- Threats (direct or implied)
- Unlawful harassment (verbal or physical)
- Abuse
- Stalking
- Intimidation

Disruptive behaviors will result in appropriate University response including disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution.

If confronted with violent behavior by a faculty or staff member, the chair should take immediate steps to protect the individual and others without endangering her or himself.

For non-emergency situations, UF’s three-tier approach focuses on:

- prevention
- threat management
- behavioral issues and crisis intervention
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Chairs should take time to review and become familiar with the steps to assess and manage these types of situations: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/emp_relations/policy/workplace-violence.asp

j) When should chairs recommend counseling?

The Employee Assistance Program offers free, voluntary, and confidential services to help employees address a range of personal and work-related concerns, such as stress associated with change and transitions, and job and career difficulties.

Chairs should be careful, however, in making recommendations to employees about seeking help. As with other personnel interventions, a chair’s best move would be to contact HRS for assistance about the most appropriate way to handle the situation.

More information is available on the EAP web site: http://www.eap.ufl.edu. Employees can arrange an appointment by calling 392-5787.

k) Can administrators terminate a staff member immediately?

It depends on the staff member’s classification, and the particular circumstances. There are two general staff classifications, both of them non-exempt, hourly employees:

- TEAMS (Technical, Executive, Administrative, and Managerial Support)
- USPS (University Support Personnel System; staff hired prior to January 2003 who chose not to become TEAMS).

TEAMS and USPS staff have somewhat different rights related to employment. Some specific situations are outlined below:

Non-Reappointment:

TEAMS employees may be issued a Notice of Non-Reappointment (i.e., may be non-renewed) at any time. The decision not to issue another appointment of employment is not a “termination” for misconduct and therefore does not require “just cause” to support the decision. The non-reappointment process is governed by University Regulations. To proceed with such an action, a chair should contact the HRS representative in the college.

An employment appointment does not create any right, interest, or expectancy of continued employment. At any time during any appointment, TEAMS employees may be non-renewed upon appropriate written notice:

- TEAMS employees hired before June 30, 2005, must be given 6 months’ notice that their appointment will not be renewed.
- TEAMS employees hired after June 30, 2005, must be given 3 months’ notice that their appointment will not be renewed.

*Note: USPS employees can only be terminated for just cause or layoff.*
Layoff:

A USPS or TEAMS layoff is defined as a termination of employment due to abolition of positions caused by:

- adverse financial circumstances
- reallocation of resources
- reorganization of degree or curriculum offerings or requirements
- reorganization of academic or administrative structures, programs, or functions
  - curtailment of one or more programs or functions
  - shortage of work or a material change of duties.

A USPS or TEAMS staff member may be laid off at any time as a result of these changes. A minimum 45 calendar-day notification of layoff should be provided.

An employee appointed to fill a full- or part-time contract, grant, or auxiliary position, which has been designated as a time-limited appointment, does not have layoff rights.

Human Resource Services is available to assist with non-renewal, layoff, or disciplinary matters involving TEAMS and USPS employees and should be consulted prior to taking any action to discipline or terminate an employee.

http://www.hr.ufl.edu/policies/handbook.pdf

I) Are relatives and spouses allowed to work in the same department (nepotism)?

Yes, with some restrictions. UF’s policy with respect to employment of relatives (or related persons) is found in UF Regulation 1.009 Employment of Relatives [link](http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/1009.pdf). Note that the definition of “relative” includes those with whom an individual shares a household.

The situation where related individuals work in the same department is treated as a conflict of interest, and must be addressed and mitigated by a written plan. This situation can arise, for example, when a partner accommodation hire takes place if the partners will work in the same unit. In such cases, the written plan must be created at the time of hire.

In general, a relative may not supervise another relative. Also, an individual may not be hired into a unit in which his/her relative has or would have any direct supervision or influence over the individual's supervisor without agreeing to a plan to mitigate the conflict of interest. Normally a plan would include providing for someone else to supervise the relative.

For guidelines and a nepotism agreement template, see: [link](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/forms/default.asp#n). A chair may also work with the college associate dean or HRS representative to arrive at an acceptable mitigation plan. The Provost’s Office must approve all mitigation plans involving faculty; HRS must approve all plans involving staff. Mitigation plans must be reviewed annually by the college and updated as necessary.

The Provost’s Office must approve, in writing, the hiring of a related person and/or supervisory employee in academic units.
m) **What should I do about grievances or complaints?**

Grievances and/or complaints filed by or against faculty or staff can come from both inside or outside the University. They are handled by a variety of offices depending on the nature of the grievance or complaint, and whether or not the faculty or staff member or process is covered by UF Regulations or a collective bargaining agreement. The chair’s intervention early to attempt to informally resolve complaints is recommended. However, an employee can elect to file a formal grievance or complaint. All formal faculty or staff grievances and complaints must be filed with either the President’s office or HRS. If a grievance or complaint is filed related to your unit, you will be contacted by someone from the college office, HRS, or the Provost’s Office for follow-up.

n) **What do I do if a faculty or staff want to work from a remote location?**

Any remote location assignments are governed by an “Alternate Work Location Agreement” which must be executed and signed by the employee, supervisor/chair, dean or director, and the appropriate vice president (Provost, VP for IFAS or VP for Health Sciences). The full policy and form are located at [http://hr.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/forms/recruitment/alternate.pdf](http://hr.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/forms/recruitment/alternate.pdf)

6. **Legal Issues**

a) **What protection does the University provide to employees for taking action in a situation within their role and in the course of their jobs?**

The University provides general insurance coverage for actions taken within the scope of employment. When a chair acts for the University, assuming the actions are *lawful, reasonable, and within the purview of the chair’s role*, the University’s General Counsel’s Office will provide assistance.

Chairs who become aware that faculty and/or staff are engaging in illegal or prohibited conduct, financial mismanagement, or other violations of UF policies and procedures, may be held personally liable for failure to report that information to the appropriate office.

b) **What is the University’s stance on discrimination?**

The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act.

c) **What procedures are available for those who feel their “safe and comfortable workplace” has been violated?**
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It is the policy of the University that each employee and student be allowed to work and study in an environment free from any form of discrimination or harassment as defined in the University Regulations or in law.

The University has published guidelines for the prevention of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/publications/eeo_harassment_brochure.pdf](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/publications/eeo_harassment_brochure.pdf)

d) What are the procedures for filing a claim of discrimination?

Discrimination claims are governed by UF Regulation 1.0063: [http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/10063.pdf](http://regulations.ufl.edu/chapter1/10063.pdf) or appropriate collective bargaining agreements. In general, staff and faculty may file a complaint of discrimination with the Office of the Vice President for HRS.

e) What are the University's policies regarding sexual harassment?

University policies on sexual harassment aim to provide an educational and working environment for students, faculty, and staff that is free from this form of sex discrimination.

Individuals who engage in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

f) What must chairs do to protect all parties in a sexual harassment charge?

Guidelines for the prevention of sex discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/publications/eeo_harassment_brochure.pdf](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/publications/eeo_harassment_brochure.pdf)

In particular, faculty members who become aware of instances of sexual harassment must report the behavior to their chair; and chairs must report information to the college office. Faculty members, staff, or students also may report instances of sexual harassment directly to the college or to HRS.

Information on UF’s Sexual Harassment policy: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eeo/sexharassment.htm](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eeo/sexharassment.htm)

g) What are the chair’s or faculty’s responsibilities related to child endangerment?

All persons in Florida have an individual obligation to report known or suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Department for Children and Families (DCF) Hotline at (800)962-2873 or via [http://www.myflfamilies.com](http://www.myflfamilies.com). The abuser can be anyone, not just a parent or caretaker, including another child if the abuse is sexual in nature. (The state defines “child” as someone under age 18.) Knowing and willful failure to report constitutes a third-degree felony. In addition, high level administrators at UF must report known or suspected child abuse, neglect or abandonment committed on university property (whether or not in a UF activity) or at a university sponsored event or become liable for a $1,000,000 fine.

If you become aware of any behaviors at University facilities or at University-sponsored events that appear to endanger the welfare of a child, you should report that information to DCF and to the designated contact in the college office. Information on UF policies: [http://www.hr.ufl.edu/policies/policies.asp#abuse](http://www.hr.ufl.edu/policies/policies.asp#abuse). There are special procedures for ensuring safety for children involved in University events during the summer or at off-campus facilities. The Office of Youth
Conference Services provides training, information, and compliance registration for such activities. Information is available at [https://oycs.ufsu.edu/](https://oycs.ufsu.edu/)

7. **Privacy and Security:**

   a) *Do students have a right to see faculty e-mails regarding themselves?*

   Students may see any materials related to themselves, including e-mails. However, chairs and faculty should be careful not to include information on another student in any e-mail or other documents provided to the student requesting the information.

   b) *What restrictions does FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) impose on the release of student information and documents?*

   All University faculty are considered school officials and are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of student records.

   Any school official who maintains specific records is considered a record custodian. At UF, the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) is the official custodian for academic records.

   The release of any non-directory information about a student to any person - including the student's family members - outside the university community or to any university personnel without a legitimate educational interest violates federal and state law, as well as university regulations.

   FERPA and student records privacy and specific issues for faculty are outlined on the Registrar's Office website: [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/staff/ferpafaculty.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/staff/ferpafaculty.html) and training for FERPA is available through the Privacy Office: [http://privacy.ufl.edu/about.html](http://privacy.ufl.edu/about.html)

   c) *What are “directory information” and “nondirectory information”?*

   Directory information is the information available about a student that is not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. While FERPA and state law protect the privacy of educational records, directory information is not treated as confidential and may be disclosed by the University without student consent unless the student requests a privacy hold. At UF, the following has been designated as directory information: Student name, local/permanent addresses and email address, telephone number(s), class and college, major, enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate level; full time or part time), dates of attendance at UF, degrees and awards received at UF, most recent previous educational institution attended, weight and height of university athletes, publication titles (dissertations), nature and place of employment at UF.

   Nondirectory information refers to information that generally cannot be released without the student's consent. This includes: birth date, religion, citizenship, disciplinary status, ethnicity, gender, grade point average, marital status, UFID or social security number, grades/exam scores, standardized test scores, and actual number of hours enrolled.
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Note: Nondirectory information may not appear in letters of recommendation provided for students, unless the student provides permission in writing for the information to be used. References to specific grades or GPA, for example, would be inappropriate without written permission.

d) Can a parent or relative who pays student tuition and fees see the student’s academic records?

Yes, but only under some circumstances. Under a very specific set of IRS regulations, there may be times when some academic information can be shared with parents or legal guardians. It is best to check with the Office of University Registrar and/or the UF Privacy Office BEFORE releasing any such information.

The more common options that may allow access are:

- The student may request that a transcript be mailed to the parent or relative.

- The parent may provide appropriate documentation to the Office of the University Registrar that indicates the student is their dependent.

Privacy information regarding the rights of parents of students may be found on the Registrar’s Office website: [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/parents/ferpaparents.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/parents/ferpaparents.html)

e) Can a faculty member post grades using UFIDs as identifiers?

No. If a faculty member posts grades, a unique and confidential identifier (e.g., 4-digit number) should be used.

This unique identifier cannot be part of the student's name, UFID, or social security number. The grade lists must be arranged in random, not alphabetical, order.

f) What are the chair’s responsibilities for data security?

The chair should be familiar with UF policies on information technology and data security. The UF Office of Information Security and Compliance (UF IT Security) issues guidelines and maintains policies related to email, virus protection for computers, copyright standards, laptop security, acceptable use of IT, and other areas of security vulnerability: [http://it.ufl.edu/policies](http://it.ufl.edu/policies). UF IT Security provides a variety of informational resources that summarize best practices and expectations in this area: [http://infosec.ufl.edu/restricted-data/](http://infosec.ufl.edu/restricted-data/). Chairs and directors should immediately notify UF IT Security at security@ufl.edu or ufirt@ufl.edu if you believe IT security has been breached. If you believe faculty, staff, student, or research data has been compromised, you should contact the UF Privacy Office at privacy@ufl.edu.

8. Other Resources:

- Information from Administrator Seminar Series
  [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/academic-administrators-seminar-series](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/academic-administrators-seminar-series)

- Information from New Faculty Orientation
  [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/nfo](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/nfo)
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- Information on: FEO, T&P, Regulations, Evaluations, program approvals
  FEO:  http://www.aad.fed.us/FEO
  T&P:  http://www.aad.fed.us/tene
  UF Regulations and Policies:  http://www.generalounsel.fed.edu/regulations/
  UF Course Evaluations:  https://evaluations.fed.edu/evals/
  Program Approvals:  http://www.aad.fed.us/degree-programs

- HRS Training and Resources  http://www.hr.fed.edu/
  Training:  http://www.hr.fed.edu/training/default.asp
  Academic Personnel:  http://www.hr.fed.edu/academic/default.asp
  Employee Relations:  http://www.hr.fed.edu/emp_relations/default.asp
  Policies:  http://www.hr.fed.edu/policies/default.asp

- FERPA Information (on Registrar’s Office site)
  http://www.registrar.fed.edu/ferpa.html
  FERPA for Students:
  http://www.registrar.fed.edu/currents/ferpastudents.html
  FERPA for Parents:
  http://www.registrar.fed.edu/parents/ferpaparents.html
  FERPA for Faculty and Staff:
  http://www.registrar.fed.edu/staff/ferpastaff.html