 *Grab a cup of coffee first because this one is a long one!*

October 2023

GuidanceResources®

For Employees: What is the Employee Assistance Program?



The Employee Assistance Program is provided by ComPsych® GuidanceResources® and offers counseling, legal and financial consultation, work-life assistance and crisis intervention services to all our employees and their household family members.

Why provide an EAP?

Because we care about our employees and their dependents. The EAP can be used free of charge as needed when you or your dependents are facing emotional, financial, legal or other concerns.

Are the services confidential?

Yes, the EAP is strictly confidential. No information about your participation in the program is provided to your employer.

Why might my family or I use the services?

There are many reasons to use these services. You may wish to contact the EAP if you:

- Are feeling overwhelmed by the demands of balancing work and family
- Are experiencing stress, anxiety or depression
- Are dealing with grief and loss
- Need assistance with child or elder care concerns
- Have legal or financial questions
- Have concerns about substance abuse for yourself or a dependent

What happens when I call?

When you call, you will speak with a GuidanceConsultant™, a master's- or PhD-level counselor who will collect some general information about you and will talk with you about your needs. The GuidanceConsultant™ will provide the name of a counselor who can assist you. You can then set up an appointment to speak with the counselor over the phone or schedule a face-to-face visit.

What counseling services does the EAP provide?

The EAP provides free short-term counseling with counselors in your area who can help you with your emotional concerns. If the counselor determines that your issues can be resolved with short-term counseling, you will receive counseling through the EAP. However, if it is determined that the problem cannot be resolved in short-term counseling in the EAP and you will need longer-term treatment, you will be referred to a specialist early on and your insurance coverage will be activated.

Can my children use the EAP?

Yes. The EAP is a confidential benefit for employees and their household family members.

COMPSYCH®
GuidanceResources® Worldwide



24/7 Live Assistance:
Call: 800-272-7255
TRS: Dial 711



Online: [guidanceresources.com](https://www.guidanceresources.com)
App: GuidanceNow™
Web ID: COM589



OPEN ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN

Open Enrollment is Oct 1st - 31st. It is the once-a-year opportunity for benefit-eligible employees to make changes to your pre-tax insurance plans. Also, you must sign up for Medical Reimbursement and Dependent Care Reimbursement each year as these programs do not automatically carry over to the new plan year. **All other benefits will remain the same unless you make a change during open enrollment.**

All changes will be effective January 1, 2024.

HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM INCREASE JANUARY 1, 2024

Select Coverage – Legacy participant Monthly premium

Premium Class	2023 rates (12 month)	2024 rates (12 month)	2023 rates (9 mo. Faculty)	2024 rates (9 mo. Faculty)
Employee only	\$20	\$20	\$26.67	\$26.67
Employee + child	\$211	\$221	\$281.33	\$294.67
Employee + children	\$403	\$422	\$537.33	\$562.67
Employee + spouse	\$564	\$591	\$752.00	\$788.00
Employee + spouse + children	\$814	\$854	\$1085.33	\$1138.67

Select Coverage – Horizon Participant Monthly premium

Premium Class	2023 rates (12 month)	2024 rates (12 month)	2023 rates (9 mo. Faculty)	2024 rates (9 mo. Faculty)
Employee only	\$46	\$48	\$61.33	\$64.00
Employee + child	\$237	\$249	\$316.00	\$332.00
Employee + children	\$429	\$450	\$572.00	\$600.00
Employee + spouse	\$590	\$619	\$786.67	\$825.33
Employee + spouse + children	\$840	\$882	\$1120.00	\$1176.00

Base Coverage – Legacy or Horizon Monthly Premium

Premium Class	2023 rates (12 month)	2024 rates (12 month)	2023 rates (9 mo. Faculty)	2024 rates (9 mo. Faculty)
Employee only	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Employee + child	\$124	\$130	\$165.33	\$173.33
Employee + children	\$317	\$333	\$422.67	\$444.00
Employee + spouse	\$478	\$502	\$637.33	\$669.33
Employee + spouse + children	\$728	\$764	\$970.67	\$1018.67

***LEGACY** – Hired before January 1, 2006, with any State of MS agency covered by the Plan (for example, Community/Junior College, public library, public school district, or other state agency or university).

***HORIZON** – Initially hired on or after January 1, 2006.

Medical Deductibles

Effective January 1, 2024, the **Base** family deductible will increase to \$3200. Please note that the deductibles for the Base individual coverage, Select individual and family coverage will remain the same in 2024.

Please watch for an email coming from University Human Resources **soon with instructions for the open enrollment process.

UNIVERSITY HR WEBSITE REVAMP

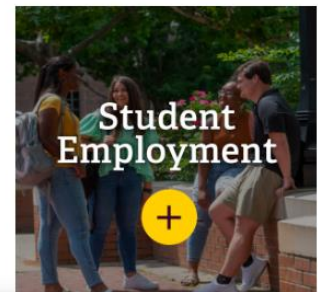
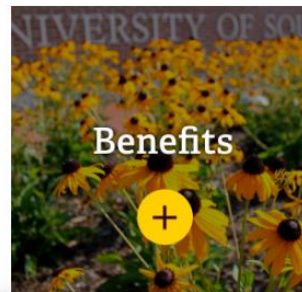
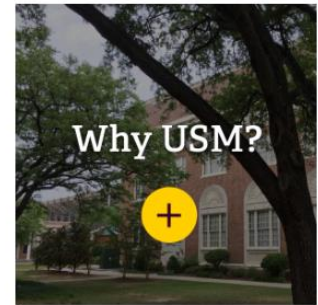
If you have not already noticed, the University HR website has a new look. Our goal was to make information easier to find (fewer clicks) and provide even more helpful information and resources (note some sections are still under construction). And make it look a whole lot prettier while we were at it! We encourage you to get on and click around to get familiar with where information is now with the changes. Who knows, you may find information you weren't even aware of before. If you are struggling to find something, please do not hesitate to reach out to your HR Partner for help.

NEW TABS! NEW LOOK!



USM Home / Employment and Human Resources / Applicants

Applicants



PRAISE SOMEONE IN TEAMS

Do you work with someone you want to send a special thank you or compliment? You can send them a “praise” in Microsoft Teams. In Chat: select the person you want to praise (if you have not already chatted with them you will have to send a chat first to utilize this feature) and select the praise icon under the comment box. A window will open with “badges” for you to pick and then you can create a personalized message. In Teams (which all participants of the Team will be able to view): Select the praise icon under the comment box. A window will open with “badges” for you to pick and then you will select the person you want to praise and create a personalized message.



Take a moment to make someone's day!

SOCIAL CONNECTION

What if there is something in our everyday lives that can transform our whole health and wellbeing?

The Surgeon General of the United States recently issued an [advisory](#) on what is being called a “loneliness epidemic.” Loneliness can have a significant and negative impact on a person’s physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Human beings are inherently social creatures, and, when we lack meaningful social connections and experiences, loneliness can take a toll on almost every aspect of our lives.

Today’s modern society has driven us from in-person interactions to a greater reliance on online connections, which are simply just not the same. COVID made this situation worse when we were all forced into isolation. Many of us still have not fully come back out. When you are alone or disconnected, there’s more inflammation and anxiety, which impacts your entire body and health.

The solution is to reclaim our social connections. Fostering in-person connections requires that we commit to our relationships and communities. Our actions today can create sustainable changes to our lives and our overall health and happiness.

Visit our new “Social Connections” [page](#) on the University HR website to learn more about the impact of social connections on our well-being and how you can start fostering those connections right here today.

EMPLOYMENT REMINDERS

New Hire Offers: Per our staff compensation guidelines, if a compensation rate above the midpoint of the recommended compensation range is being considered, the Department Head shall propose a compensation rate and provide justification to UHR by submitting an [Over Midpoint Justification Memo](#) to Kourtney.Stookey@usm.edu who will review the recommendation, along with internal alignment, and either approve it or recommend an alternate compensation rate. If unable to reach an agreed upon compensation rate, the matter will be escalated to the department’s SO, who will make the final decision. Justification for a compensation rate approved above the midpoint of the recommended range should be documented and submitted as part of the new hire paperwork to be maintained in the new employee’s personnel file.

Cornerstone Postings over \$50k (E&G funded only): Job Postings that can potentially pay a Candidate a salary over \$50k and are E&G funded require **President Approval** before the posting is approved by HR. Please work directly through your chain of command to receive President Approval before submitting your Cornerstone Posting. Please email Kourtney.Stookey@usm.edu for any questions regarding Cornerstone Postings.

PAF@USM.EDU vs. HR@USM.EDU

Please reserve PAF@usm.edu for the submission of PAFs and PDS. This email is for submitting paperwork for processing only, and it is not monitored for questions. Please email HR@usm.edu or call 6-4050 for questions regarding paperwork.

ELECTRONIC PAFS – PHASE 1

It's here! Electronic PAFs – Phase 1 will go live on Monday, November 13th (Phase 1 includes Terminations and Leave of Absence actions). At that time, paper PAF submissions for Terminations and Leave of Absence will no longer be accepted. The first week in November, all supervisors and their designated proxies will be assigned training through Canvas. Additionally, several training opportunities will be offered. Keep your eyes out for the next HR newsletter for more information!

SUPERVISORS AND PROXIES

This month all supervisors will need to ensure they have at least one proxy designated for SOARHR. Proxies will have the ability to approve bi-weekly payroll hours, monthly leave, and enter Electronic PAFs on behalf of the supervisor.

All supervisors are required to designate at least one proxy. A supervisor may designate multiple individuals to serve in this capacity, however, **the supervisor ultimately remains responsible for all these business processes.**

This can be done using the following navigation.

Log into SOARHR and follow the navigation below.

Go to Nav Bar - "Self Service - USM HR/Payroll Self Service - Time Entry Approval Proxy"

Simply enter the ID of the person you wish to designate as a proxy, check the box next to "I agree" and then click "save." (note: the screenshot below states "bi-weekly" but will be the proxy for bi-weekly payroll, monthly leave, and electronic PAFS)

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Time Entry Approval Proxy". Below the title is a tab labeled "Approval Proxies". The main content area is titled "Bi-Weekly Time Approval Proxies" and includes a search bar labeled "*Proxy Emplid" with a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar are navigation controls: "Find", "First", "1 of 1", and "Last". Below the search bar is a text box containing a request for proxy authorization: "I request that the employee listed above be given the security to act as my proxy when approving hourly non-exempt time as submitted by employees in the area(s) for which I am currently responsible. I request that he/she be granted this security until I notify you otherwise. I certify that even though the proxy designated above is allowed to act on my behalf when approving employee time, I am still responsible for the accuracy of the time entered by the employees assigned to me." At the bottom right of this text box is a checkbox labeled "I Agree". At the bottom left of the form are two buttons: "Save" and "Notify".

NEW HIRE APPOINTMENTS

New employees can schedule their Hiring Paperwork appointments [HERE](#) for both our Hattiesburg and Gulf Park HR offices. Please encourage your new employees (including student workers) to bring original versions of identification documents to complete the Form I-9 as well as direct deposit information. This information is also provided on our website where appointments are made. Student employees need to bring their signed PAF with them to their appointment. As a general reminder, student hire and rehire effective dates are on Monday each week. When a student hire presents a PAF with a date before their appointment, the HR office will update the new date on the PAF and the clear to begin work card.

Thank you for assisting us with this communication!

SPRING 2024 FACULTY & ADJUNCT PAPERWORK

Personnel Action Forms (PAF)/Personnel Data Sheets (PDS) Dates
January 17, 2024 – May 14, 2024

The following deadlines have been set to ensure that all new faculty and new or continuing Adjunct appointments are completed in time for the spring semester. All dates are the latest date the forms should be received by the specified office. Please be aware that until the fully completed paperwork is received by Human Resources and processed through ORA and OFPA, the employee will not appear in SOAR, and if new, will not have a USM email address.

Monday, November 13, 2023

PAF and PDS Due in Provost Office. (Must include faculty qualifications form and accompanying documentation as needed for Provost signature.)

Monday, November 20, 2023,

Final form with all signatures and documentation for spring semester due in Human Resources.

Dates for Spring Personnel Action Forms and Personnel Data Sheets:

Intercession – January 2, 2024 – January 16, 2024, paid out in January as an Additional Pay

Full Spring Session – January 17, 2024 – May 14, 2024, paid out February through May

Spring Session I – January 17, 2024 – March 7, 2024, paid out February and March

Spring Session II – March 18, 2024 – May 14, 2024, paid out April and May

SPRING 2024 GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAPERWORK

Personnel Action Forms (PAF) Dates

January 1, 2024 – May 16, 2024, FOR GA'S WHO ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED IN THE FALL
Will be paid full months January – April and 12 days in May.

January 10, 2024 – May 16, 2024, FOR NEW GA HIRES Will be paid 16 days in January; full month
February, March, and April; and 12 days in May.

Please be sure to enter the monthly rate of pay on the PAF. You may also include the intended full stipend sum for the term in the comments section.

I-9 REMINDER

As previously communicated, all new employees are legally required to complete a Form I-9 to demonstrate they are legally permitted to work in the United States. University Human Resources completes this process with new hires during their new hire appointment.

Two important things for departments to know to ensure you stay in compliance:

1. No new hire- including student workers, GAs, and adjuncts- should be allowed to start working until a clearance is received from HR that they have completed the new hire process.
2. New hire processes can be found on the [HR Website](#) which outlines all of the steps of the new hire process for each status and what a clearance from HR looks like.

REMINDER: NO HIRING IN DECEMBER

University Human Resources would like to remind all faculty and staff that there is no hiring during December. This includes all student, part-time, and benefit-eligible positions. All offer letters must be accepted, and the background check request submitted to HR by Friday, November 10th. This is to ensure the background check has cleared. The Effective Date of Action (start date) can be no later than Thursday, November 30th. All other paperwork (PAF, I-9 Form, Tax Forms, etc.) must be in HR by Monday, November 27th. Any paperwork received after November 27th will require a start date of January 3, 2023, or later with approved background check clearance and completed paperwork.

**Note: No hiring means that start dates cannot be in December. You may, however, continue posting jobs, interviewing, making offers, and starting new hire paperwork.*

UPCOMING HR TRAINING SESSIONS

Cornerstone Q&A

Wednesday, October 11th @ 10:30am (1 hr)

Audience: Anyone who accesses Cornerstone as part of the hiring process.

Summary: Overview of the Cornerstone applicant tracking system. Please review the resources and training on the [HR Website](#) prior to the session.

Creating a Harassment Free Environment

Thursday, October 26th @ 1:30pm (1 hr)

Audience: All employees

Summary: Understanding each employee's rights and responsibilities for creating a work environment free of harassment.

Please RSVP to Miranda.newman@usm.edu to receive the link to the Teams training.

In addition to the above, HR has posted our [full training library](#) on our website with a complete list of all of the available that can be requested through your HR Partner on-demand.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SOME STATE-SPECIFIC UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

States can require that specific requirements be satisfied before students can complete supervised field experiences (internships, clinicals, etc.) in their state. Both Colorado and New Hampshire have requirements that apply to unpaid internships. Before placing a student in either state, please review the requirements listed on the State Internship Laws webpage (https://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics/state_internship_laws.php). If you have any questions or concerns, email stateauthorizations@usm.edu

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

A reminder that all benefit-eligible employees have access to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). To register online, go to [GuidanceResources.com](https://www.guidanceresources.com) or the app GuidanceNow, and use the Organization Web ID COM589. When it asks for your company name, enter UNIVE (a box should pop up with USM for you to select). In addition to web resources, membership also comes with telephonic access to talk to a counselor, financial advisor, or legal advisor: 800-272-7255.

Click [here](#) to view a short video about the EAP.

This month's features include:

[Destigmatizing Mental Health](#)

[Resource Guide: Traumatic Events](#)

[Crisis Support](#)

[Staying Safe After a Natural Disaster](#)

[Financial Tips to Recover From a Natural Disaster](#)

***If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, please contact our main line at 6-4050 or your HR Partner for more information.
SMTTT!***