



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

September 2021

NEW HIRE PAPERWORK

Ideally, all new hires should fully complete all new hire paperwork with HR **prior** to starting work. When that is not possible, we need your assistance in getting them to HR on their **first day of work** to ensure critical legal documents are completed timely. For your reference, all new hire processes are posted on the HR [website](#).

Human Resources has different ways of notifying departments that their new hire is ready to start working:

- 1) Student workers receive a clearance card from HR that they can give their supervisor letting them know they are clear to begin working.
- 2) Graduate Assistants have a checklist on their SOAR account that will remain active until the GA is cleared. GAs should not be allowed to start work until the checklist is completed and removed from their account. You can request information about your GA's checklist from your College budget manager (academic units) or the Graduate School (non-academic units).
- 3) Staff and Faculty (benefited & non-benefited): Human Resources will email the ID card form to the contact person on the PAF/PDS. Until you receive this, your new hire should not be working.

I-9 and E-Verify are federal and state laws (Immigration Reform and Control Act and Mississippi Employment Protection Act) that require the University to verify the identity and employment authorization of each person we hire within 3 business days of start date. We must retain records of our compliance (or lack thereof) which is subject to audit and penalties by these agencies. Fines can range anywhere between \$200-\$2,000 per each offense (per each hire). Patterns of non-compliance are treated with harsher penalties. In extreme cases, willful violations of the law can include civil and criminal penalties for individuals. Please note that this law extends to all employees of the University, including student workers.

JOB EVALUATION REQUEST FORM

University HR has created a Job Evaluation Request form that will be submitted when requesting the evaluation of a new position or the reevaluation of an existing position. It is the responsibility of the department head to complete and submit this form back to their [HR Partner](#) to start the evaluation process of a new or revised position at the University. Please work closely with your HR Partner to accurately complete this form and for guidance if you have any questions or concerns.

Reminder: ALL job descriptions must be completed on the updated job description template. Please use the Job Description Writing Guide for assistance and contact your [HR Partner](#) if you have any questions. All forms and guides are listed on the [HR website under Forms](#).

NEW HIRE OFFERS

New compensation guidelines went into effect July 1, 2021, requiring all offers (both external and internal) above midpoint of the position grade to go through an approval process before they can be extended to the candidate. If a compensation rate above the midpoint of the recommended compensation range is being considered, the Department Head should propose a compensation rate and provide justification to University HR **PRIOR** to issuing an offer letter to the selected candidate in Cornerstone. University HR will then review the recommendation, along with internal alignment, and either approve it or recommend an alternate compensation rate. You can find all of our compensation guidelines, including FAQs and a video presentation, on the HR website under [Compensation/Payroll](#).

GA HEALTH INSURANCE WAIVER DEADLINE

The last day to waive the GA health insurance will be on September 8th. All GAs will be automatically enrolled in the policy and must actively waive the coverage in order to opt out, which cannot be done after September 8th. Please visit <https://studentcenter.uhcsr.com/usm> to waive the policy and for additional policy information. No refunds will be processed for those who do not complete the waiver process by the deadline.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT HOURS

GAs are first and foremost students pursuing an education. Assistantships provide much needed experience for graduate students as well as financial support while pursuing their education. During fall and spring semesters, all GAs must be enrolled full-time for 9 or more credit hours to be defined as a GA and receive a stipend and tuition waiver. GAs can work no more than 20 hours per week year round, which includes breaks and summer semester.

Q. Do GAs have to make up time missed from work during holidays due to University closures?

A. No. GAs paid monthly are not required to make up time when the University is closed for holidays or any emergency closure declared by the President. GAs should observe holidays the same as Faculty and Staff.

STUDENT WORKER HOURS

Students cannot work more than 20 hours per week year-round, which includes breaks and summer. If the student is working more than one job, collectively their hours cannot exceed 20. During the fall and spring semester, all student employees must be enrolled full-time for 12 or more credit hours in order to be employed on campus.

PART-TIME FACULTY PAY SCHEDULE

Full Fall Session:

August 23, 2021 – December 13, 2021 will be paid out September through December

Fall Session I:

August 23, 2021 – October 11, 2021 will be paid out September and October

Fall Session II:

October 12, 2021 – December 2, 2021 will be paid out November and December

BENEFITS OPEN ENROLLMENT COMING SOON!

Open Enrollment is quickly approaching. Remember this is the once a year opportunity for benefit eligible employees to make changes to your pre-tax insurance plans. No action is needed if you do not wish to change anything except for Medical and Dependent Reimbursement which do not carry over and you must sign up for each year. All changes will be effective January 1, 2022. Due to Covid-19, all changes will be made online this year. Any required paper forms will be available on the HR website. More detailed information will come in October. Please visit the Benefits Summary for all benefits information. https://www.usm.edu/employment-human-resources/files/benefit_summary_2021.pdf

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL FILES

University HR would like to remind departments that they should not keep personnel files on employees in the department that may include personal information such as social security numbers, birthdates, banking information, copies of identification, and tax information. This information should only be found in the employee's original HR file. If you have this information on file in your department, please have the information shredded. Contact Kameron Dale, HR Director, at ext 6-4056 if you have questions.

SUPERVISOR CHANGES

Updates to an employee's supervisor ID, may be submitted by email. You may email the name and Empl ID of the employee, the name and Empl ID of the old supervisor, and the name and Empl ID of the new supervisor to HR@usm.edu. Please be aware of the pay period when updating biweekly paid employees. For biweekly paid employees, the update is effective at the beginning of a pay period.

INTERNAL JOB CHANGES

According to policy 3.3.2 Transfers in the Employee Handbook, all employees must be in their position at least 6 months before they are eligible to transfer to a new position. Exceptions can be made but require current department head approval. No department should offer a transfer to an employee who has not been in their role at least 6 months without approval from their current department.

Also, hiring departments should conduct internal reference checks for current or past USM employees prior to making an offer. More information can be found in the [Staff Hiring Toolkit](#), section 2G (Reference Checks). Contact your [HR Partner](#) for more information if you have questions about internal transfers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

All faculty and staff are now enrolled with a membership to Academic Impressions giving us access to trainings, webcasts, resources, and conference discounts! You will login using your **w#@usm.edu** credentials. Each month we will highlight great learning opportunities for staff and leaders- there are many, many more! Go explore- to access this resource, click [here](#).

Rethinking Search & Hiring Practices

Join a conversation about how others are reshaping their search and hiring practices around the new realities of the workforce. Through facilitated discussion and idea-sharing, you'll learn how other institutions are shifting their approaches to search and hiring both internally and externally

LIVE VIRTUAL: September 14, 2021, | 12:00 am to 11:00 pm Eastern

Improving Promotion & Tenure Reviews by Using a Deliberative Decision-Making Model

Break the cycle of inconsistent promotion and tenure reviews by implementing an objective decision-making process.

LIVE VIRTUAL: September 23 2021, | 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm Eastern

Developing Your Skills as a Manager: A Bootcamp for Mid-Level Leaders

This bootcamp, designed for leaders with some experience in a leadership/supervisory role, will help you refine and further your skills, focusing on how you interact one-on-one with those you supervise as well as with your teams.

ONLINE BOOTCAMP: September 27 – November 8, 2021

Developing a Comprehensive System of Support for First-Generation Students

This virtual conference is designed to give you a variety of tools to best support your first-gen population and to give them the best chance at success. This year, speakers will highlight how they have been responsive to the needs of first-gen students throughout the pandemic and its continuing aftermath, discuss the strengths that first-gen students bring to our campuses, and address ways that institutions can proactively meet first-generation students where they are.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE: September 29 – October 1, 2021

University HR News & Recognition



*Office of Admissions recently recognized **Moriah Rouse**, HR Coordinator, with the Heart of Gold Staff Service Award for her support to their department. Moriah has a very big job in HR both in quantity and complexity. Every new hire to the institution passes across her desk to ensure the process has been fully captured, background checks have been cleared, and visa status is confirmed. We know what a rock start Moriah is and we are so proud to see that others recognize her specialness as well. We are also proud because this is HR's 2nd year in a row to be awarded this honor. Go Moriah and go Team HR!*

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.

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