

Student and University Assistant Sick Time

General FAQ's

Q. Are all students and University Assistants eligible to accrue sick time?

A. Yes, all students who are paid on student labor or federal work-study funds are entitled to accrue sick time once they meet the eligibility requirement.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements?

A. Student employees and University Assistants will be entitled to use accrue sick leave upon the 680th hour of employment with the University.

Q. In order to be eligible, does a student employee/University Assistant have to work 680 hours consecutively?

No, the requirement to work 680 hours is accumulative from date of hire or January 1st, 2012. Whichever is later.

Q. What is the sick accrual rate for student employees?

Student employees and UAs accrue 1 hour for every 40 hours of work.

Q. If a student/University Assistant leaves the University, will he/she be paid for any remaining sick leave balance?

A. No, under no circumstances will any unused sick time be paid upon separation of employment from the University.

Q. How many hours of sick time can a student employee/UA use in a calendar year?

A. An eligible student employee may use up to a maximum of 40 hours of accrued sick leave in a calendar year.

Q. If a student/University Assistant has a sick leave balance at the end of the calendar year, will they lose this time?

A. No, they may "carry over" up to a maximum of 40 hours of unused accrued sick time from one calendar year to the next.

Q. Does a student employee/University Assistant have to be scheduled to work in order to use sick time?

A. Yes, they may only use sick time for prescheduled hours of work.

Q. What can a student employee/University Assistant use accrued paid sick time for?

A. Student employees may only use accrued paid sick time for the following reasons:

- To treat the employee's own illness, injury or health condition; for the medical diagnosis, care or treatment of the employee's own mental illness or physical illness, injury or health condition; or for preventative medical care for the employee.

- For the treatment of the employee's child or spouse's illness, injury or health condition; the medical diagnosis, care or treatment of an employee's child's or spouse's mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; or preventative medical care for the employee's child or spouse.
- For the employee's treatment or services related to the employee's status as a victim in a family violence or sexual assault incident, for the medical care or psychological or other counseling for physical or psychological injury or disability; to obtain services from a victim services organization; to relocate due to such family violence or sexual assault; to participate in any civil or criminal proceedings related to or resulting from such family violence or sexual assault.

Q. Can federal work study funds be charged for sick time usage? (student employees only)

A. No, federal work study funds may not be used for the payment of sick time. Departments are required to process student pay sick forms for work study students eligible for paid sick leave. Payments for sick time usage will be charged to department fund sources.

Q. Are departments responsible for tracking the accrual and usage of student employee sick leave?

A. No, the accrual and usage of sick leave will be managed in the Payroll Department.

Q. How can students and departments obtain updated sick leave balance information?

A. Please contact the email box sickleavecheck@southernct.edu. They will be able to provide you with the most current information.

Frequently Asked Questions

(From the May 28 Supervisor Information Sessions)

Q. Are the accruals and use limits based on the fiscal year or calendar year?

A. All the benefits provided by this law are based on the calendar year.

Q. When did this benefit begin accruing?

A. The sick leave accrual for these employees began on January 1, 2012 or the employee's hire date, whichever is later.

Q. Is the 680-hour threshold per calendar year or is it a one-time trigger?

A. The 680 hours only has to be reached once during an unbroken period of service. A break in service would restart the count.

Q. What defines a break in service?

A. At this time, the absence of hours worked for an entire fall or spring semester will be deemed a break in service (i.e. winter, spring, and summer breaks are not a break in service).

Q. Can a Student Employee or University Assistant use accrual earned from one University job to take sick time at another University job?

A. Yes, this is an employer-level benefit; so as long as there has not been a break in service, the accrued time can be used for a qualifying job at any State of Connecticut agency.

Q. When multiple jobs are involved, what department bears the cost of the sick time?

A. The department for which the scheduled hours would have been worked.

Q. How should I change my department budget to account for this benefit?

A. For non-work-study students, there will not be a budgetary impact except for situations when hours or a shift must be handled by another Student Employee or University Assistant who would otherwise not have been working such that the department must pay twice for the same hours. Since this is a new benefit without any predictive data, it is difficult to make a recommendation about how a department budget should be adjusted, but supervisors have knowledge of the past sick calls and absences of this population and can use this experience as a guide.

For work-study students, the benefit cannot be charged to work-study funds; therefore, departments that use work-study students will need to adjust budgets to accommodate an estimate of the value of sick time that might be used.

The worst case scenario would be represented by multiplying the hourly rate by 40 hours per student.

Q. Why would a student make up hours instead of taking the sick time? Please explain more about this.

A. With agreement between the employee and supervisor, hours can be made up later in the same pay period or the next pay period. A student may wish to do this to preserve the sick time for future use. (In the case of work-study students, this would also save the department an extra expense.)

Q. Can a supervisor take action when a Student Employee or University Assistant appears to be abusing sick time?

A. As with other employees, a pattern of sick time use (such as every Friday or Monday) warrants an examination. Advance notice of up to 7 days can be required for non-emergency situations and documentation can be required for 3 or more consecutive sick days. Consult with the Human Resources Department if you believe an employee is abusing this benefit.

Q. How will this impact Graduate Assistants and Graduate Interns?

A. Those jobs do not meet the qualifications for this benefit, primarily because they are not paid hourly. However, if they work during the summer as Student Workers, they will earn this benefit.

Q. What if Student Employee or University Assistant states that he/she was ill or had another qualifying reason to use the sick time between January 1, 2012 and May 30, 2013?

A. Please consult with Human Resources and they will help work out what documentation should be requested based on the circumstances. Each case will be reviewed individually.