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Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2012 11:07 AM
To: HRREPS@LISTSERV.UGA.EDU
Subject: Changes in benefits eligibility rules – Operating Instructions
Attachments: Benefits Eligible Operating Instructions 020212.pdf; How to attend a UGA Wimba Classroom session-1.pdf

To: HR partners
From: Human Resources

As you know, the Board of Regents (BOR) changed the benefits-eligibility rules effective January 1, 2012. In summary:

- Employees working at least 75% time in regular positions are eligible for health and welfare benefits (health, dental, life insurance and others) as well as retirement and leave benefits.
- Employees working at least 50% time and less than 75% time in regular positions are eligible for retirement and leave benefits.
- Employees working less than 50% time in regular positions as well as employees working in temporary positions (regardless of the % time) are not eligible for benefits.

Along with these changes, the BOR has made it possible to combine regular positions to achieve benefits eligibility, providing the positions are expected to exceed six (6) months in duration. Therefore, employees hired by different UGA departments can achieve some level of benefits eligibility if their combined (regular) positions equal a total of 50% work time or greater.

In order to assist hiring departments with these benefits eligibility changes, staff from Human Resources, Payroll, Budget, Departmental Financial Systems, and Faculty Affairs have collaboratively developed operating instructions that provide (1) an overview of the BOR adopted changes, (2) revised employee benefits status definitions, (3) new operating procedures for personnel actions, and (4) examples of various scenarios. Please review the attached document at your earliest convenience.

You are invited to attend a Q&A session Friday, February 17, 10:30am – 12 noon, Masters Hall at the Georgia Center. Representatives from Payroll, Human Resources, Budget, Faculty Affairs, and Departmental Financial Systems (WebDFS) will be available to answer your questions.

This session will be available via WIMBA for our non-Athens locations. If you would like to connect via WIMBA, please read the attached instructions.

University of Georgia

Employee Benefits-Eligibility Operating Instructions

Human Resources Division

1/26/2012

This document contains important information in determining employee benefits-eligibility at UGA.

A.

Introduction

Effective January 1, 2012, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents adopted a new definition for benefits eligibility. This new definition changes the benefits eligibility from a work commitment of half-time (twenty hours per week) to three-quarters time (thirty hours per week) or more for regular employees to be eligible for health and welfare benefits. This new definition is reflected in the below BOR documents:

- BOR Policy Manual Section 8.2.9:
http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/policy/C224/#p8.2.9_insurance
- BOR Human Resources Administrative Practices Manual:
http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/employee_categories/ <This section has not yet been updated on the BOR site>

Employee Benefits Status Definitions (effective January 1, 2012)

There are three types of benefits status for employees as detailed below. Please note that the definitions of “regular” and “temporary” employee categories are further defined in the BOR’s Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual at http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/employee_categories/.

Also note that in determining benefits status, a “regular” position/assignment is a line-item budgeted position filled for a continuous period expected to exceed six (6) calendar months in duration.

Full Benefits Status: Employees who have a work commitment of three-quarters time (30 hours per week) or more in one or more “regular” positions/assignments are eligible for all health, welfare, leave, and retirement benefits. Please see Exhibit A “Benefits Status Table”. [NOTE: Full Benefits Status is similar to what was referred to as “Regular” status prior to 1/1/2012.]

Partial Benefits Status: Employees who have a work commitment of half-time (20 hours per week), but less than three-quarters time (30 hours per week) in one or more “regular” positions/assignments are eligible only for retirement and leave benefits. Please see Exhibit A “Benefits Status Table”. [NOTE: Partial Benefits Status became a new benefits eligibility status as of 1/1/2012.]

Non-Benefits Status: Temporary employees are not eligible for any health, welfare, leave or retirement benefits. In addition, non-temporary employees who have a work commitment of less than half-time (20 hours per week) in one or more “regular” or non-line-item budgeted position(s) are not eligible for any health, welfare, leave or retirement benefits. [NOTE: Non-Benefits Status is similar to what was referred to as “Temporary” status prior to 1/1/2012.]

The BOR Policy states that an employee's work commitment may be comprised of multiple "regular" positions/assignments to reach the benefits-eligibility thresholds of either half-time (20 hours per week) or three-quarters time (30 hours per week). In determining benefits status, a **"regular" position/assignment is a line-item budgeted position filled for a continuous period expected to exceed six (6) calendar months in duration.**

The three types of benefits status defined above will be reflected on Personnel forms. When completing a Personnel form, the unit should mark the appropriate benefits status box based on its best knowledge of the employee's total UGA work commitment. Please note that this will be reviewed by University Human Resources and that other UGA work assignments could affect this status.

Operating Procedures

As part of the BOR policy changes, benefits status will be determined based on total UGA effort/time. As stated previously, UGA total effort/time is determined by adding together all "regular" positions/assignments:

- Combined positions/assignments may be in one or more departments.
- Temporary and lump sum positions will *not* be included in calculating the employee's benefits-eligibility effort/time.
- Only line-item budgeted positions/assignments of 25% time or greater will be added together to determine total effort/time.

Thus, any "regular" position/assignment that is 25% time or greater *will now* need to be placed in a line-item budgeted position:

- All employees (except student workers and graduate students) who are employed or will be employed for 25% time or greater **and** 6 months or longer must be budgeted and paid from line-item budgeted positions.
- Therefore, if a department extends the time of employment beyond 6 months for an employee who is working 25% time or greater and that person has been paid in a lump-sum position, the employee will need to be moved to a line-item budgeted position.
- Lump sum positions may continue to be used for positions/assignments that are temporary **or** that are less than 25% time.

Benefits costs are based on the percentage of time associated to each "regular" position/assignment and, if applicable, are charged to each corresponding non-state account that also funds the salary of the employee. Therefore, if a position becomes combined with other line-item positions to create Partial or Full Benefits Status, the corresponding non-state account(s) will be charged the appropriate share of the benefits costs.

Personnel actions impacting total UGA effort/time occur both during budget development as well as in the amended budget through submission of documents via WebDFS:

1. During the budget development process, departments are encouraged to communicate with each other prior to establishing/modifying these types of employees. This will help ensure that all “regular” (line-item budgeted) positions/assignments are aggregated to determine the employee’s total UGA effort/time. In addition, this will also ensure that departments understand how the combination of the various positions/assignments results in a benefit-eligibility status for the employee and what budgetary impact this may or may not have on the department. University Human Resources will monitor positions in budget development to ensure that benefits eligibility status is based on total UGA effort/time.
2. To assist the department and central offices in accurately identifying joint/combined positions which are modified throughout the year, the WebDFS system will display other positions/assignments held by the employee that are active at the time the document is being prepared and routed. Additionally, the system will add up all “regular” (line-item budgeted) positions/assignments to determine the employee’s total calculated UGA percent time. A warning message will display if the benefits status marked on the document is not consistent with the system calculated UGA percent time, and corrective action may be required. As noted above, combined positions/assignments may be in one or more departments and may be processed on more than one personnel report. Departments will need to communicate with each other prior to establishing these types of employees and all departments should understand how the combination of the various positions/assignments results in a benefit-eligibility status for the employee and what budgetary impact this may or may not have on the department. Upon initiating a “Personnel” form in WebDFS, the system will display all active appointments in the system.
 - a) The appointment information will include position, appointment begin and end dates, position percent time, job class, and title.
 - b) The WebDFS system will display only positions active at the time the document is prepared or viewed by each approver.

The purpose of displaying the additional position(s) to all approvers is to remove the need for the initiating department to add the additional position(s) to the document. The only position(s) that should be added to the actual personnel document are the position(s) that the initiating department oversees.

Because there are limitations to any system, Human Resources will review/monitor employee benefits status on a weekly basis for all employees.

Position Examples

Single Position/Assignment:

If an employee has a single “regular” (line-item budgeted) position with a work commitment/percent time of less than three-quarters time (less than 30 hours per week), the department may increase the percent time to at least three-quarters time (30 hours per week), with appropriate school or division approval. Increasing the employee’s work commitment/percent time must be based on an increase in the work effort the department requires. Thus, any increase in percent time must be accompanied by a corresponding increase to the employee’s budgeted salary. In other words, departments may not increase an employee’s percent time without increasing the employee’s total compensation to reflect the additional work requirement that necessitates the percent time increase.

Multiple Positions/Assignments:

An employee’s work commitment/percent time may be comprised of multiple “regular” line-item budgeted positions. The key criterion is that all positions/assignments are established as “regular” positions on the personnel report(s). Positions/assignments established as hourly/lump sum may not be combined or added to “regular” line-item budgeted positions/assignments to determine an employee’s total percent time for benefits eligibility. Examples of how a single position and how multiple positions impact benefits-eligibility are provided in Exhibit B.

Changing Payroll Type

Several things should be considered before changing payroll types (fiscal to academic) to achieve a higher work effort/time percentage.

The type of payroll chosen should reflect the duties of the job and the timing of those duties. For instance, faculty members who perform their jobs year round should be paid on the monthly payroll and it would not be appropriate to move them to academic payroll because the expectation is that the work is performed over a 12-month timeframe. If on the other hand, the faculty member teaches only fall and spring academic semesters, monthly payroll is not the most appropriate pay schedule and changing this person to the academic payroll is the more appropriate action.

All faculty expectations of job duties and timing of those duties should be clearly documented in offer letters. Any change to those duties should subsequently be documented in a letter to the employees explaining the changes, why those changes are being made, how it will affect their payroll, and when they are expected to report to work. If duties and timing are unclear, a letter of clarification is also appropriate.

Faculty and Staff on Approved Leave

Faculty and Staff on approved leave will continue to be fully benefits-eligible even if their UGA position percent effort/time drops below three-quarters time (30 hours per week) during their leave. Proper documentation is required from the department and/or Faculty Affairs.

Retirement-Eligible (Vested) Employees Half-Time (20 hours per week) but Less Than Three-Quarters Time (30 hours per week) and Retiring

Employees with either full or partial benefits status who are retirement-eligible (meet vesting requirements) are eligible for retiree health/dental/life insurance, if their regular line-item budgeted position(s)/assignment(s) are at least three-quarters time (30 hours per week) at least one month prior to the date of their retirement.

Employees must enroll in the USG health/dental and/or UGA life insurance plans on or before the first of the month prior to their scheduled retirement date and have at least one premium payroll deduction in the month prior to their retirement date to be eligible to retain retiree health, dental, or life insurance.

Questions/Resources

Please contact Human Resources Division with questions and for additional information.

- Duane Ritter: #706-542-2621 (Establishing positions and combining multiple positions assignments)
- Lydia Lanier: #706-542-6498 (Benefit eligibility)

Exhibit A: Benefits Status Table

Employment type	When your position/appointment is...	Benefits	Coverage starts...	Coverage continues if you...
Faculty and Staff paid on Fiscal Year Payroll with Full Benefits	...75% or greater salaried per month (30 hours per week) and you are expected to be employed for a continuous period that is expected to exceed six (6) calendar months in an eligible job classification.	Health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, optional life insurance, flexible spending account, health savings account (if enrolled in an HSA-qualified health plan), long term disability insurance, short term disability insurance, accidental death & dismemberment insurance, cancer insurance, personal accident insurance, critical illness insurance, retirement, annual leave, and sick leave	...for health & benefits if the hire date is the first day of the month and enrollment is completed on or before the hire date, the start date for benefits will be the first day of the month; otherwise, health and welfare benefits are effective the first of the following month. ...for leave and retirement benefits: immediately if your start date is on or before the 15 th of the month, and the employee has 60 days to select ORP, if eligible.	...maintain a 75% (30 hour per week) or greater salaried position in an eligible job classification.
Faculty and Staff paid on Fiscal Year Payroll with Partial Benefits	...50% effort/time, but less than 75% effort/time per month (20 hours, but less than 30 hours per week) and you are expected to be employed for a continuous period that is expected to exceed six (6) calendar months in an eligible job classification.	Retirement, annual leave, and sick leave	...for leave and retirement benefits: immediately if your start date is on or before the 15 th of the month, and the employee has 60 days to select ORP, if eligible.	...maintain a 50% (20 hours per week) but less than a 75% (less than 30 hour per week) salaried position in an eligible job classification.
Faculty and Staff paid on Academic Year Payroll with Full Benefits	...paid at least 75% effort/time or greater for the academic semester and you are expected to be employed for a continuous period that is expected to exceed six (6) calendar months in an eligible job classification..	Health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, optional life insurance, flexible spending account, long term disability insurance, accidental death & dismemberment insurance, cancer insurance, personal accident insurance, critical illness insurance, retirement, and sick leave	...for health & welfare benefits: on the faculty member's contract start date if enrollment is completed on or before the contract start date, otherwise health and welfare benefits are effective first of the following month. ...for leave and retirement benefits: immediately if your start date is on or before the 15 th of the month, and the employee has 60 days to select ORP.	...maintain a 75% or greater paid appointment.
Faculty and Staff paid on Academic Year Payroll with Partial Benefits	...paid 50% but less than 75% for the academic semester and you are expected to be employed for a continuous period that is expected to exceed six (6) calendar months in an eligible job classification.	Retirement and sick leave	...for leave and retirement benefits: immediately if your start date is on or before the 15 th of the month, and the employee has 60 days to select ORP, if eligible.	...maintain a 50% but less than 75% paid appointment.

Note: Eligibility criteria may be met by combining or “stacking” budgeted positions/appointments; however, temporary positions are not eligible for combining.

Exhibit B: Position Examples

Scenario #1: Single “regular” line-item budgeted position/assignment at three-quarters time; 30 hours per week:

In the scenario below, employee is considered three-quarters time (30 hours per week) with full benefits status. One position is included on the Personnel Report.

Position 1	75%/ 30 hrs p/wk	Line Item	Department 1 (Designated Home Unit)
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Scenario #2: Two “regular” line-item budgeted positions/assignments—One is half-time (20 hours per week) and the second is 30% time (12 hours per week) in the same unit:

In the scenario below, employee is considered 80% time (32 hours per week) with full benefits status. Both positions are included on the same Personnel Report. Benefits costs are based on the percentage of time associated to each “regular” position/assignment and, if applicable, will be charged to each corresponding non-state account that also funds the salary of the employee.

Position 1	50% (20 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1
Position 2	30% (12 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1

Scenario #3: Two “regular” line-item budgeted positions/assignments--One is half-time (20 hours per week) and the second is 30% time (12 hours per week) in two different units:

In the scenario below, employee is considered 80% (32 hour per week) with full benefits status. Each department submits personnel for its position. Benefits costs are based on the percentage of time associated to each “regular” position/assignment and, if applicable, will be charged to each unit’s corresponding non-state account(s) that also funds the salary of the employee. Both departments must agree on creating this benefit-eligible employee.

Position 1	50% (20 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1 (Designated Home Unit)
Position 2	30% (12 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 2

Scenario #4: Two “regular” line-item budgeted positions/assignments each at half-time; 20 hours per week in two different units:

In the scenario below, employee is considered 100% with full benefits status. Each department submits a personnel report for its position. Benefits costs are based on the percentage of time associated to each position/assignment and, if applicable, will be charged to each unit’s corresponding non-state account(s) that also funds the salary of the employee.

Position 1	50% (20 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1 (Designated Home Unit)
Position 2	50% (20 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 2

Scenario #5: Two positions/assignments--One “regular” line-item budgeted position at half-time (20 hours per week) and the second is a one-time lump sum (non-regular) payment at 40% (16 hours per week) in two different units:

In the scenario below, the employee would have partial benefits status; eligible only for retirement and leave. The employee is not eligible for health and welfare benefits because the second position is non-benefits lump sum status. Each department submits a personnel report for its position.

Position 1	50% (20 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1 (Designated Home Unit)
Position 2	40% (16 hrs p/wk)	Lump Sum	Department 2

Scenario #6: Two “regular” line-item budgeted positions/assignments both at 40% Time (16 hours per week) in two different units:

In the scenario below, the employee would have full benefits status at 80% time (32 hours per week). He/she is eligible for health and welfare benefits because the two “regular” position/assignments exceed three-quarters time (30 hours per week). Each department submits a personnel report for its position. Benefits costs are based on the percentage of time associated to each position/assignment and, if applicable, will be charged to each unit’s corresponding non-state account(s) that also funds the salary of the employee.

Position 1	40% (16 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1 (Designated Home Unit)
Position 2	40% (16 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 2

Scenario #7: Three “regular” line-item budgeted positions each at quarter-time (25% effort/time; each 10 hours per week) in three different units:

In the scenario below, employee would be full benefits status at three-quarter time. He/she is eligible for health and welfare because the three positions/assignments equal three-quarters time. Each department submits a personnel report for its position. Benefits costs are based on the percentage of time associated to each position/assignment and, if applicable, will be charged to each unit’s corresponding non-state account(s) that also funds the salary of the employee.

Position 1	25% (10 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 1 (Designated Home Unit)
Position 2	25% (10 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 2
Position 3	25% (10 hrs p/wk)	Line Item	Department 3

How to attend a UGA Wimba Classroom session

Live online and archived classes are accessible through Wimba. While access to Wimba is provided free, you will need either speakers or a headset to listen to the presentations. Please visit the Wimba Web site [http:// uga.wimba.com](http://uga.wimba.com) in advance of any online class to ensure your computer is properly configured and run the set up wizard.

On the day of the session, go to <http://uga.wimba.com>

Click on "Participant Login" and type your full first and last name (as appears in UGA system) OR your location if you are viewing as a group in the "Name" field.

Once you click "Submit" you may be asked to run the setup wizard. If you encounter any problems the wizard cannot resolve, please call the EITS Help Desk at (706) 542-3106 or your departmental IT staff for further assistance.

Once logged in, scroll down and click on **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SESSION.**

If you have any questions about the class,

please contact:

Training & Development

training@uga.edu or 706-542-7062