

## **Rationale for Defining a 40-hour Work Schedule for Purposes of Leave Reporting**

At the UW System, unused sick leave has a high value after retirement. Not only are your unused hours of sick leave converted to dollar credits to pay for health insurance, but also, if you work for the State and/or UW System for at least 15 continuous years prior to retirement, those hours are matched (up to a limit) under the Supplemental Health Insurance Conversion Credit Program. At retirement, the cost of your health insurance premiums is deducted from your accumulated sick leave credits until the credits are used up. The ability to convert unused sick leave, and to receive supplemental sick leave credits, is a substantial, *non-taxable* addition to your retirement income.

Most UW System peer institutions do not have a monetary value associated with the accrual of unused sick leave. And for those that do, the value is substantially less than the monetary value of our accumulated sick leave conversion program. Sick leave, vacation, and personal holidays are significant elements of the UW System total compensation package and a significant recruitment and retention tool.

In response to a Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) report, in 1987 the state legislature imposed a cap on the amount of sick leave faculty, academic staff, and limited appointees could use to pay for health insurance upon retirement, layoff, or death. With the cap, accrued sick leave would be limited to 8.5 days per year for annual employees and 6.4 days per year for academic-year employees, instead of the 12 days per year unclassified employees may accrue without the cap.

In order to obtain a waiver to this cap, each UW institution independently agreed to identify a standard 40-hour work week for reporting purposes, distribute a monthly statement, and collect monthly reports, even if no leave has been used.

Normally, salaried professionals are exempt from overtime regulations and are not accountable for a 40-hour per week schedule. Many UW System faculty, academic staff and limited employees work far more than forty hours per week. However, in order to simply and fairly report sick leave usage and to be accountable to the State, it is necessary to identify a work schedule that uses a generally acceptable standard. This does not imply that unclassified staff only work 40 hours per week; it merely is a way to establish a workable means of recording the use of sick leave that is as equitable as possible.

Therefore, a 40- hour work week must be established for each individual against which he or she will report the use of sick leave. The specific schedule may change as needed to reflect changes in one's regular work schedule. With the approval of your department chair or supervisor, you may file a 40-hour work schedule that meets your needs, and you may change your official schedule whenever necessary. If you choose not to file a specific 40-hour work week schedule your sick leave reporting will be based on the standard state work schedule Monday – Friday 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Good documentation of your eligibility for sick leave credits and accurate leave reporting are part of our responsibility to the state and to the public. It is important to remember that you are a part of a larger community and your actions can affect not only you but also your colleagues and your institution. Accountability for proper leave use and reporting are essential to ensure the on-going availability of these valuable benefits.

### **Additional Information**

- Unclassified Personnel Guideline (UPG) on Sick Leave Policy [www.uwsa.edu/hr/upgs/upg10.pdf](http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/upgs/upg10.pdf).
- UWSA web site for sick leave: [www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/leave/sick.htm](http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/leave/sick.htm).
- UWSA presentation on leave reporting [www.uwsa.edu/hr/leave/unclassleavereporting.ppt](http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/leave/unclassleavereporting.ppt).
- UWSA sick leave presentation [www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/leave/unclasssickleave.ppt](http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/leave/unclasssickleave.ppt).
- UWSA unclassified employees benefits presentation [www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/newemp/orientunclass.ppt](http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/newemp/orientunclass.ppt)
- Leave reports are required by [www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0040.pdf](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0040.pdf)