

OTHER LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide for administration of other types of leave authorized under the Texas Government Code, except for leave described in other policies in HOP 4-600.

B. Persons Affected

Employees who are appointed at least twenty (20) hours per week for a period of at least four and one half (4½) months and who are not employed in a position for which the employee is required to be a student as a condition of employment may be eligible for the following types of leave from employment.

C. Definitions

Not applicable.

D. Policy

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) provides eligible employees paid leave under specific circumstances as authorized by state law and described in this policy. To the extent the leave descriptions below conflict with the Texas Government Code, the Texas Government Code should be followed.

1. Volunteer Firefighters Leave

Employees who are volunteer firefighters or emergency medical services volunteers as defined in Section 773.003 of the Texas Health and Safety Code may be granted up to five (5) days of paid leave each fiscal year (September 1 – August 31) to attend fire service or emergency medical services training conducted by a state agency or institution of higher education. These volunteers may also be granted leave without a deduction in salary for the purpose of allowing the volunteer to respond to emergency fire or medical situations. This leave is not charged against the employee's vacation or sick leave.

2. Foster Parent Leave

An employee who is a foster parent to a child under the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS) may be granted paid leave to attend meetings held by DPRS regarding the child or to attend an admission, review, or dismissal meeting held by the school district regarding the child.

3. Educational Activity Leave (formerly Parent-Teacher Conference Leave)

An employee may use up to a total of eight (8) hours of sick leave total each fiscal year to attend educational activities for the employee's children who are attending a grade from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. For purposes of this leave, an "educational activity" means a school-sponsored activity, including a parent-teacher conference, tutoring, a volunteer program, a field trip, a classroom program, a school committee, an academic competition, and an athletic, music, or theater program. The eight (8) hours are in

aggregate and does not apply to each individual child in the employee's family. The employee must give reasonable advance notice of the employee's intention to use the sick leave to attend an educational activity. (See HOP 4-603, Sick Leave.)

4. Red Cross Disaster Service Volunteer Leave

Employees who are certified disaster service volunteers of the American Red Cross or who are in training to become volunteers may be granted leave up to ten (10) days each fiscal year to participate in specialized disaster relief services for the American Red Cross. The employee must have authorization from his or her supervisor in addition to a formal request to volunteer from the American Red Cross and the approval of the governor. If the above conditions are met, the employee will not lose pay, vacation time, sick leave or earned overtime or compensatory time during the leave.

5. Blood Donation Leave

Employees may take time off to donate blood not to exceed four (4) times in a fiscal year. The amount of time allowed is the time that is sufficient and reasonable to donate blood.

Employees must obtain prior approval from their supervisor before taking the time off. Upon returning to work, the employee must provide to the supervisor, documented proof that the employee donated blood during the time off. If the employee fails to provide documented proof that blood was donated during the time off, the department may deduct the time off from the employee's salary or accrued leave, whichever the employee chooses.

6. Leave for Bone Marrow or Organ Donors Leave

An employee is entitled to a leave of absence without a deduction in salary for the time needed to serve as a bone marrow or organ donor. Leave without deduction in salary under this section may not exceed five (5) working days in a fiscal year to serve as a bone marrow donor or 30 working days in a fiscal year to serve as an organ donor.

7. Assistance Dog Training Leave for Employees with a Disability

An employee with a disability is entitled to up to ten (10) days of paid leave per fiscal year for the purpose of attending a training program to acquaint the employee with an assistance dog to be used by the employee for the employee's disabling medical condition. The training program must be recognized for providing specific focus on training the employee to work with an assistance dog for the disabling medical condition. A "employee with a disability" means an employee who has a mental or physical disability; an intellectual or developmental disability; a hearing impairment; deafness; a speech impediment; a visual impairment; post-traumatic stress disorder; or any health impairment that requires special ambulatory devices or services.

8. Leave for Amateur Radio Operator for Disaster Relief

An employee who holds an amateur radio license issued by the Federal Communications Commission may be granted leave of up to ten (10) days each fiscal year to participate in specialized disaster relief services without a deduction in salary or accruals. To qualify for this leave, the employee must have the authorization of the supervisor and the approval of the governor.

9. Court Appointed Special Advocates Volunteer Leave.

An employee may be granted a leave of absence without a deduction in salary or accrued leave to participate in mandatory training or perform volunteer services for Court Appointed Special Advocates. Leave without a deduction in salary or accrued leave under this section may not exceed five (5) hour each month.

10. Training Leave for Reserve Enforcement Officers.

A state employee who is a reserve law enforcement officer (i.e., a reserve deputy sheriff, reserve deputy constable, reserve police force, or volunteer reserve police force) is entitled to a leave of absence without a deduction in salary to attend training required under Section 1701.351 of the Texas Occupations Code. Leave under this section may not exceed five (5) working days every biennium.

11. Voting Leave

Whenever possible, employees are expected to vote before or after their normal working hours. If it is not possible for an employee to vote during off hours, UTRGV will allow an employee sufficient time off, without deduction in salary or accrued leave, to vote in each national, state, or local election. Paid leave for voting is provided to regular employees. Leave is only available on an official election day, with a maximum of four (4) hours allowed. Employees must coordinate with their supervisor to schedule time off to vote.

12. Administrative Leave with Pay for Outstanding Performance.

The President may approve and grant administrative leave with pay to an employee as a reward for outstanding performance as documented by the employee's performance appraisals. The total amount granted to an employee may not exceed 32 hours during a fiscal year.

13. Official Activities

Upon the direction of the President, employees may be excused from regular duties to attend UTRGV meetings and activities. Supervisors may grant a reasonable amount of time off during the workday for attending such events.

E. Procedures

1. In order to qualify for the leave entitlements under this policy, employees must provide their supervisor with adequate documentation to support the leave request in advance of the leave requested.
2. Employees provided with leave under this policy must designate the leave on their time sheets or leave request forms.
3. Employees taking educational activity leave as provided above must code the time absent as "sick leave" and indicate that the purpose of the leave was to attend an appropriate educational activity.
4. For all other leave designated in this policy, employees must code the time absent as "other" and provide an explanation.

5. The employing department is responsible for maintaining a record of time and attendance, absences of each employee, and the reason for absences.

F. **Relevant Federal and/or State Statute(s), Board of Regents' Rule(s), UTS Policy(ies), and/or Coordinating Board Rule(s)**

Texas Government Code Chapter 661