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## The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Guidelines for Departments Regarding Separating Employees

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The following guidelines and [Employee Check-out form](#) have been developed to assist department personnel in identifying all applicable issues that must be addressed and acted on prior to an employee's separation from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston ("university"). Departmental administrative personnel should refer to the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* ("HOOP") for applicable policies affecting separating employees. For additional assistance, contact the appropriate university department.

The guidelines are to serve as a basis for each organizational unit/department to establish appropriate internal procedures for the check-out process. On receiving a notification of separation from an employee, the department chair or administrative equivalent or his or her designee must discuss departmental procedures with the separating employee and inform the employee of his or her responsibilities. The employee and the department may use the employee check-out form to facilitate the separation.

### I. Guidelines for Departmental Employee Check-out

The following items listed must be cleared prior to separation of an employee from the university. The chair or administrative head of a department, or his or her designee, must verify these items have been cleared. Additional items for clearance in the case of separation of clinical/laboratory personnel and physicians are also stated in the following.

#### A. Items to be cleared at least two weeks to one month in advance of separation date:

**Equipment and supplies.** Chairs and administrative heads of departments are designated property officers and as such are responsible for all university property in their care. The department must verify that equipment inventory and/or supplies are present; for more information, refer to HOOP Policy 16.01 Accountability and Responsibility for State Property. [http://legal.uth.tmc.edu/hoop/16/16\\_01.html](http://legal.uth.tmc.edu/hoop/16/16_01.html) For questions regarding equipment transfers, contact Capital Assets Management (CAM) <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/finance/cam/index.htm>

1. Once notified that an employee is leaving, ensure that the property for which the employee is responsible is accounted for. Refer to the [Capital Assets Handbook](#) for detailed information relating to property policies and procedures.
2. Schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss the status of the property for which he/she is responsible and review disposition options (if applicable).
3. If appropriate, request that CAM conduct a physical inventory of specific areas under the control of the employee and generate an updated inventory report for the department to use in its review.
4. In separations that involve the possible removal/transfer of university property, review the [Capital Assets Handbook](#), to ensure compliance with university policy, and;
5. Contact the [Office of Sponsored Projects](#) ([osp@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:osp@uth.tmc.edu)) to obtain information on sponsored project activities of the employee.
6. Contact [CAM](#) to review property transfer policies and to request inventory reports (i.e., list of property located in a particular room/lab, listing of property purchased with particular account numbers) to be used for internal planning and control.
7. Obtain appropriate approvals/sign-offs before property is removed from the university:

- *Accounting clearance.* Notify the [Accounting Department](http://www.uth.tmc.edu/finance/accounting/index.htm) <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/finance/accounting/index.htm> of the name and department of the separating employee. The Accounting Department will verify there are no unresolved issues (such as travel advances outstanding, insufficient checks) involving the employee.
- *Auxiliary Enterprise clearance.* Notify [Auxiliary Enterprises](http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/) <http://ae.uth.tmc.edu/> of the name, department, and date of separation of the employee. Auxiliary Enterprises will cancel copy codes, corporate cards, and parking key cards.
- *Separation personnel action ("PA") entered.* Ensure the Separation PA has been entered and approved. The separating employee may schedule an exit interview with a representative in Benefits.

**B. Items to be cleared by date of separation:**

1. *Identification badge.* Collect identification badge from the employee on the last work day and forward to Human Resources, UCT 150.
2. *Cash funds.* Ensure any petty cash or change funds are transferred from the separating employee to the "new custodian" prior to the employee's departure. The custodial slips are maintained by Treasury. The administrator must discuss custodial changes with the Treasury Department <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/finance/treasury/contact.htm> as far in advance of the actual custody change as possible, and Treasury will send the departmental administrator revised custody slip(s).
3. *Computer access.* The following actions must be taken regarding separating employees with computer access:
  - Notify the Client Support Services Help Desk by email at <mailto:helpdesk@uth.tmc.edu> or [Heat SelfService](#) to request that all access to computer resources be disabled. User IDs for any of the university applications will be revoked.
  - Notify the Local Area Network ("LAN") manager in your area to disable all access codes to the LAN.
4. *Credit cards.* Obtain credit cards, if applicable, at the time an employee leaves the university.
5. *Procurement/Buycards.* Contact Procurement <http://buy.uth.tmc.edu/> to cancel Buycard, if applicable.
6. *Key or key access cards.* Collect keys or key cards.
7. *Library, school/department.* If the school/department maintains a library, ensure the employee has returned all materials, books, etc., prior to separation.
8. *Telephone.* Notify Telecommunication Services ("TS") <http://is.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/telecom/> to request deletion of voice mail and/or change of name on telephone display.
9. *Mobile/Cellular phones.* Ensure phones owned by the university are returned to the department representative, who will contact TS and forward the phone to TS. Employees who own phones with service paid by the university will provide this information to the department representative, who will contact TS.
10. *Pagers.* Ensure pagers are returned to the department representative.
11. *Long distance authorization codes.* The department representative will forward a long distance authorization code form to TS for deletion of the code.

12. *Calling cards.* Return calling cards, if applicable, to the department representative, who will forward the calling card to TS.
13. *Parking.* If parking permit is issued, advise the employee that he or she must notify the appropriate authority of termination of parking permit.
14. *Timesheet form.* Ensure the employee has completed and submitted the final payroll timesheet documenting all time worked as well as all leave time to ensure the final paycheck is accurate and timely. This will expedite processing the lump sum vacation payment, if applicable. The department is responsible for providing final verification of vacation balance to payroll before lump sum vacation can be processed. As applicable, [Auditing and Advisory Services http://audit.uth.tmc.edu/](http://audit.uth.tmc.edu/) will audit records of separating employees.
15. *Safe combination.* If the departing employee had the combination to any institutional safe, contact the facilities services (locksmith services) so that the combination can be changed by the locksmith when the employee departs. (Note: The new safe combination must be reported to the Vice President, Finance and Business Services)
16. *Uniforms.* Collect all uniforms and return them to appropriate lease/loan company or recycle them, according to departmental policy. Provide to the separating employee a receipt detailing the number and description of uniforms returned.
17. *Closure checklist.* In case of complete closure of an organizational entity or lab, refer to the HOOP for [Guidelines for the Closure of an Organizational Entity](#).
18. *Other.* Departments should use the "Other" section of the form to list any other items specific to department and note clearance.

**C. Additional clearance responsibilities for separations from clinical or research departments/research laboratories:**

*Animal care/clearance to transfer animals.* Ensure that a principal investigator or other laboratory employee who is leaving the university makes appropriate arrangements for caring for or transferring all animals that have been under his/her supervision. Ensure that this individual contacts the Center for Laboratory Animal Medicine and Care <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/orsc/clamc/index.html> to arrange for appropriate handling of research animals at least one month prior to expected separation from the university. For decommissioning of laboratories, ensure the tissue samples and animal specimens are removed or transferred within SHERM guidelines.

*Hazardous agents (e.g., chemicals, biological agents, and radioactive materials).* Ensure that a principal investigator or primary laboratory person who is leaving the university has his/her laboratories "decommissioned" prior to departure. Biological, chemical, and radioactive materials, as well as any contaminated equipment, must be properly disposed of or decontaminated. Ensure the principal investigator contacts Safety, Health, Environment, and Risk Management (SHERM) at least one month prior to expected separation date to obtain detailed information on decommissioning laboratories. Ensure that clearance approvals are obtained from appropriate programs within Safety, Health, Environment, and Risk Management. <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/safety/index.html>

*Permit changes and security access.* Ensure any necessary permits are changed or terminated to reflect employee's departure and ensure termination of any security-related access codes.

*Personal monitoring badges.* Collect any monitoring badges from a separating employee on the last day of work in the laboratory. Forward the badge to SHERM with notification that the employee has terminated and will not need another badge.

*Sponsored projects (contracts and grants).* Contact the [Office of Sponsored Projects](http://www.uth.tmc.edu/osp/index.htm) <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/osp/index.htm> for a report of those sponsored projects requiring action. The

report will include pending, active, and terminated sponsored project activities. [The Guidelines for the Closure of an Organizational Entity](#) provides options available and/or action(s) necessary for each activity.

#### **D. Additional clearance responsibilities for separations/closure involving health care providers:**

Departments should ensure that health care providers have completed the following prior to separation:

1. *Patient charts.* Completed all patient charts.
2. *Patient notifications.* Notify all patients by mail of the separation, to ensure continuity of care. The notification should advise patients of the following options and information:
  - other health care providers with the university who can provide continued care,
  - names and phone numbers of two other physicians who are specialists to continue care for the patient, and
  - that copies of their medical records can be forwarded to the physician of their choice.
3. *Contact information.* Health care providers should inform clinic management how he/she may be reached in the event of an emergency regarding an established patient.
4. *MSRDP notifications.* The department, upon receipt of formal letter of resignation by a physician, is responsible for the following:
  - Notifying the MSRDP [UTP Provider Enrollment](#) of the physician's name, UTHSC-H physician number, specialty, effective stop date, National Provider Identifier ("NPI"). Provider Enrollment is responsible for notifying Medicare of the termination of the Provider Transaction Access Number (PTAN).
  - Notifying MSRDP [UTP Provider Enrollment](#) of the effective date of termination of malpractice insurance.

## **II. Information to be discussed with the employee prior to separation.**

Employees leaving the university are advised to schedule a meeting with a representative in the Benefits Department to review information related to benefits. A personal meeting with a benefits representative is recommended, however, information can be mailed if preferred. Please contact 713/500-3935, for information. Items listed below are discussed in the benefits exit interview.

**Teacher Retirement System (TRS):** When exiting, employees may request a refund of Teacher Retirement contributions, transfer TRS funds into another qualified retirement account or leave funds in TRS. A 20% income tax withholding and a 10% retirement penalty for early withdrawal of a retirement account will be imposed by the IRS. If TRS transfers your money directly to another retirement account, no taxes or penalties will be imposed. Deposits are refunded approximately 60-90 days following receipt of both the member's final deposit and completed application. A Request for Refund form will be provided and needs to be returned to Benefits for certification before forwarding to TRS. There is no deadline for returning the form to Benefits. Refunds are not required and funds may be left with TRS. Employees are vested after 5 years of state service and may receive a retirement annuity with TRS. More information is available at the TRS web site. <http://www.trs.state.tx.us/>

**Optional Retirement Program:** A vesting letter will be provided employees participating in the ORP program for use with transactions related to the designated insurance carrier.

**Tax Sheltered Annuity:** Employees with tax sheltered annuities need to contact their designated carrier regarding continuance of their account.

**Insurance:** Employee insurance coverage expires the last day of the month of termination. Federal law (COBRA) extends the right to continue health, dental and vision coverage at the individual's expense for up to 18 months. There is a 60-day deadline for making a determination to continue coverage. COBRA rights, rates and enrollment forms will be provided at the interview.

**Vacation Pay:** Payroll will be notified by the employing department of any remaining accrued vacation hours. It is advisable to confirm ending balances with your department before leaving. An address for mailing payment should be stated at this time to ensure payment is not delayed. Employees transferring directly to another state agency will take their accrued vacation and sick leave balances with them to the new agency.

**Sick Leave:** Unused sick leave will be reinstated should employees return to state service within one year, provided there is a 30 day break in service. Unused sick leave hours may be donated to the Sick Leave Pool for use by other employees who experience a catastrophic illness or injury. It is advisable to confirm ending balances with your department before leaving.

**Forwarding Address:** It is advisable that you notify your department of a forwarding address so our computer database can be updated. The annual W-2 Annual Statement of Earnings will be mailed to the latest address in our system.