

Date: October 17, 2023

To: Senate Faculty

From: June Betancourt, Director
Academic Personnel

Re: Faculty Guidance and GSR usage of Personal Time Off

The Office of Academic Personnel has received several inquiries from departments regarding the options available should faculty members receive requests for personal time off from Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs). Pursuant to the [GSR \(BR\) collective](#) bargaining agreement, GSRs may request paid personal time off (PTO) or leave without pay, depending on the circumstances. In addition, because GSRs are part-time exempt employees, flexible scheduling provides additional opportunities for time away from work. GSRs may also be approved to work remotely from within the U.S. for limited time periods, even if their work is regularly performed on campus, so long as remote work is appropriate under their individual circumstances, as discussed further below. All of these options are at the discretion of the GSR's supervisor.

Paid Personal Time Off (PTO)

[Article 23](#) of the [GSR \(BR\) contract](#) establishes Graduate Student Researchers as employees and grants paid personal time off (PTO) when the GSR's appointment is at 25% or more for a minimum of one full month. The paid PTO allotment is one day per month for every full month of appointed service at 25% or more. The amount of paid PTO is communicated to the GSR directly on the written notice of appointment letter.¹

Please note that the fiscal year pay basis and exempt status did not change with the new contract. GSRs have always been appointed under these terms (unlike ASEs). A GSR appointment start date can fall on any work day and does not have to align with the start of an academic year quarter (e.g. 7/1, 10/1, 1/1 and 4/1).

GSRs are eligible to use their allotment of paid PTO in full day increments during the service period of the appointment, and may do so on a "front-loaded" basis. In other words, if the GSR has a 25% appointment for twelve months, they may, with approval from their supervisor, elect to use all twelve days at once, at the beginning of their service period. Alternatively, they may elect to use paid PTO in a more evenly distributed manner or delay usage of paid PTO towards the end of the twelve-month service period, again providing that the supervisor has approved the request after factoring in operational needs. Please note that pursuant to the GSR contract PTO that goes unused within an appointment period will not carry forward to subsequent appointments.

Supervisors may require that GSRs submit their requests for paid or unpaid time off in writing.² Requests must include information needed by the supervisor to assess the operational impact of the absence. If the supervisor requires that a time off request be made in writing, or if the GSR submits the request in writing, the supervisor's response must also be made in writing. As a best practice and to avoid confusion, AP recommends that supervisors manage such arrangements in writing.

¹ Eligibility for pay status during time off is determined by the funding agency. See *Article 23 Personal Time Off*

² Instructions for Kronos usage may be found under Timekeeping Resources at <https://ap.ucsb.edu/resources.for.faculty.supervisors/>. Departments are encouraged to use the GSR Paid Time Off Calculator tool available at the Timekeeping Resources section on the [Resources for Faculty Supervisors](#) page

Leave Without Pay for Personal Reasons

If a GSR prefers to defer usage of paid PTO or has used all of their paid PTO allotment, they may request to use unpaid leave. A GSR may also request to combine available paid PTO days with unpaid time off, such an arrangement may be desirable over the holiday intercession period. If a GSR's lab or unit is closed during a campus closure, the GSR can elect to use their available PTO to supplement pay during the closure. If GSRs are required to work during a closure, they will be paid for each day worked and will not be required to use personal time off.

Flexible Scheduling

GSRs are part-time, exempt employees. Pursuant to Article 28 (Time and Effort) of the GSR contract, a GSR's workload "may fluctuate in a given time period (e.g. workweek, month, academic term) due to the general functions and activities within a research lab or program." Please note, this does not mean a GSR has discretion to set their own schedule. Instead, the GSR's supervisor should determine the most appropriate regular schedule for the GSR, based on the operational needs of the department and the GSR's other commitments. However, when a GSR requests time off of work, a Department may approve the GSR to "flex" their regular schedule to allow time off to be taken without impacting the GSR's time reporting. For example, a GSR with a 50% appointment who regularly works 4 hours per day Monday - Friday could instead work 8 hours on Monday, 8 hours on Tuesday, and 4 hours on Wednesday, and be off work Thursday and Friday.

Remote Work

Supervisors may also wish to consider requests from employees to work remotely from within the United States during the holiday intercession period, if appropriate for the job duties.

Note that time reporting in Kronos by individuals, as well as supervisor verifications, will not take place until the end of October. Student employees and supervisors do not need to do anything before then, although they may wish to engage in planning for paid and unpaid time off during the upcoming holiday intercession period.

Questions about this message may be directed to my attention at june.betancourt@ucsb.edu

Questions about Kronos may be directed via Service Now. See **Support** at <https://www.timekeeping.ucsb.edu/>.

Other guidance may be found at AP News and Announcements – [Memos to Campus](#):

[Faculty Supervision of Graduate Students](#) (September 14, 2023)

[Timekeeping and Leave Reporting for ASEs and GSRs - Technical Guidance and Resources](#) (September 27, 2023)

[Faculty Guidance and Resources on ASE and GSR Leave Reporting](#) (September 27, 2023)

Policy and Training references:

[Student Titles AP Certificate PPT \(Jan 2022\)](#) - see slides 32-33

[APM 110](#) – Definition of a Fiscal-Year Appointment - pg 4

[APM 660-80.a.\(2\)](#) – Salary Administration for Fiscal-Year Appointments - Pg 7

[APM 720](#) – Leaves of Absences/Holidays

Thank you.

Cc: Department Chairs, Deans, Directors, and Assistant Deans