



Policy 2.40

Staff Severance Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When is the actual termination date for the employee taking severance?

The effective date of termination is the date following the end of the entire severance period.

2. When is the employee eligible to apply for unemployment?

The employee is eligible for unemployment at the end of the severance period.

3. When will vacation be paid out?

Vacation pay out will occur at the end of the severance period and upon termination from the university.

4. What will happen to the sick leave balance?

There is no pay out of unused sick time; however, if the employee should return to work for a state entity within ten years, the forfeited hours would be reinstated. To be reinstated for sick time, documentation of the balance is required.

5. Will vacation and sick leave continue to accrue during the severance period?

Yes.

6. What happens to health benefits during the severance period?

Employee health benefits continue through the end of the pay period in which the severance period ends. When coverage ends, an eligible employee may apply for continuation of benefits (COBRA).

An employee can reduce or terminate health benefits if the employee has a qualifying event or if open enrollment is occurring.

7. Can an employee stop his/her optional deductions during the severance period?

Yes. An employee may stop optional deductions such as Voluntary Group Term Life Insurance, Dependent Group Term Life Insurance and Supplemental Retirement Accounts.

8. If an employee finds other employment, does the severance pay and benefits coverage end?

Yes. All severance pay and benefits will stop at the time an employee begins other employment, whether the employment is within the university or external to the university.

9. If an employee retires does the severance pay and benefits coverage end?

Yes. All severance pay and benefits will stop on the last day of the month prior to when the employee's retirement benefit from STRS or OPERS is paid. For example, if an employee receives a check from OPERS on October 1, for the month of October, severance pay and benefits will terminate on September 30.

Units must check with OHR on employees who have already elected to retire from the university.

10. Will the employee be required to sign an agreement with the university before receiving severance benefits?

Yes. The employee will be required to sign an agreement by the specified date which requires notification to the college/unit or the OHR Employee Relations upon finding other employment. Employees who do not sign and return their severance agreement within the required period of time will be terminated without severance.

Classified Civil Service staff will receive the severance agreement and within 10 calendar days the employee must elect either displacement or severance. The date the severance agreement is signed will begin the severance period.

Unclassified staff will receive the severance agreement and must sign and return it within five calendar days to be eligible for severance. The date the severance agreement is signed will begin the severance period.

11. If the employee finds other employment and does not report it to the university, what happens?

The employee will be asked to sign an agreement acknowledging that she/he will inform the university of other internal or external employment. If the university discovers that the employee is working and has not notified the university, severance pay and benefits will stop. The university reserves the right to seek collection for severance pay paid to an employee during the time period in which he/she was working in another capacity.

12. Does the employee give up the right to be employed by the university for any period of time if the employee accepts severance?

No. The affected employee is encouraged to apply for and accept positions within the university. Units are encouraged to support RIFed employees in their job search by offering schedule flexibility.

13. How will departments decide the length of time the employee will need to work as part of the severance period?

The actual time worked and paid will be based on the business needs of the unit and is at the manager's discretion. At a minimum, the employee will receive a two-week minimum working notice period and cannot work more than two-thirds of the severance period unless agreed to by the staff member.

14. When does the severance period begin?

The date severance begins is determined by the unit. However, the employee must be notified in writing before the date that the working notice period begins. This follows the approval of the reduction request by the Office of Human Resources.

15. What does break in service mean?

A break in service means an employee has had a separation from service of thirty-one days or more. Provided the employee is reinstated or reemployed within the allowable time, an authorized leave of absence, or any separation from service that carries a right to reinstatement or reemployment as a result of layoff, does not constitute a break in service.

16. What happens to tuition benefits during the severance period?

Tuition benefits will continue for the employee and eligible dependents through the end of the academic term in which the employee's termination is effective. For example, an employee whose termination is effective the fourth week of a term will receive tuition benefits through the end of that academic term.

17. Who should an employee call if there are questions about the severance schedule?

An employee should contact his/her college/unit human resource professional or OHR at 614-292-2800 or ohrc@hr.osu.edu.

18. How will an employee receive severance pay?

Severance pay continues to be paid bi-weekly or monthly, based upon the appointment at the time of reduction, and will reflect all applicable deductions including taxes and benefits. Direct deposit will continue for those individuals currently using direct deposit. If the employee does not participate in direct deposit, checks will be mailed to the employee's mailing address.

19. If an employee is paid through grants and contracts, is he/she eligible for the severance program?

An employee fully funded on grants or contracts is not eligible for the severance program. For staff whose positions are on split funding, at least 50% of the position must be funded by eligible funding sources to qualify for the severance program. The portion of the position funded by the grant or contract is not considered in the calculation of severance. Letters of offer should indicate that these positions are grant funded and thus not eligible for severance.

20. Are emergency, season, temporary, term, and intermittent staff eligible for severance?

No. Emergency, seasonal, temporary, term and intermittent staff are not eligible for severance.

21. Are student employees and graduate associates eligible for severance?

No. Student employees and graduate associates are not eligible for severance.

22. Where can I find guidance as to whether an employee is paid through grants and/or contracts?

The Office of Business and Finance has guidelines to help units and employees determine if the position is grant or contracted funded. They can be found at:

- a. [Office of Business and Finance Fund Transfer – General Ledger](#)
- b. [Funds Typically Used by an Academic Departments](#)

23. If employees are funded through county funds, are they eligible for severance?

Yes. Employees funded in this way are eligible for the severance program.

24. If a department changes a grant-funded position to general funds, does the employee occupying that position become eligible for the severance program?

A college/unit has the flexibility to change a grant-funded position to general funds on a temporary basis. This flexibility is allowed in an effort to bridge an employee until external funding is renewed. If a position is changed to general funds and the position is subsequently abolished, the employee is not eligible for severance if the funding change was effective for a period of less than six months. An employee who has been changed to general funds for a period equal to or greater than six months is eligible for severance.

25. How will an employee's retirement and state service credit be impacted during the staff severance program?

Employee and university contributions will continue during the working notice and severance pay periods. Therefore, an employee continues to earn service credit until her/his termination date subject to retirement plan regulations.

26. Can a Classified Civil Service employee who participates in the severance program still "bump" into another position?

No. A CCS staff member who participates in the severance program at the time of the abolishment also forgoes her/his rights to displacement and reinstatement.

27. Does a Classified Civil Service employee who participates in the severance program still have "reinstatement rights?"

No. When employees participate in the severance program reinstatement rights cease.



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28. What are the employee's responsibilities with this policy?

The employee must sign an agreement for the severance program. If Classified Civil Service, the staff member must also notify the supervisor and/or the Office of Human Resources to elect the program within ten days of receiving notification.

29. What happens if the employee and manager disagree with the length of working notice and severance pay periods?

The policy states that the working notice period must be a minimum of two weeks and will not exceed two-thirds of the total weeks of the severance period. While there is flexibility within these parameters, the unit has the discretion to divide the total weeks in a way that best meets its business needs. If an employee has questions or concerns about the length of the working notice period, the employee should contact his/her college/unit human resource professional or OHR Employee Relations at 614-292-2800 or OHRC@hr.osu.edu.

30. During the working notice period, is the employee able to attend interviews and conduct a job search?

Yes. The employee is encouraged to begin the job search process as soon as possible. Managers should be as flexible as possible in allowing staff to interview, work on resumes, access job postings, and network during the working notice period.

31. Is the time the employee works during the working notice period counted toward the employee's continuous service for purposes of calculating her/his total severance period?

No. Only the continuous service the employee has prior to the beginning of the severance period will be used to calculate the severance period. For example, if an employee has 14 years and 10 months of service and her/his working notice period is two months, her/his severance period will be based on 14 years of service, not 15 years.

32. If a position is *involuntarily* reduced from full-time to part-time, is the employee eligible for severance?

No. Severance is only available when an appointment is completely eliminated.

33. Who pays the severance for a CCS employee when a displacement occurs?

In the event a displacement occurs, the unit who initiated the original abolishment will be responsible for the cost of the severance program.

34. Should a manager/supervisor initiate retirement conversation with the employee?

No. The employee may request information on retirement benefits by contacting a benefits consultant.

35. If I am one year or less away from full benefit retirement and my position is *involuntarily* reduced can I be bridged to my retirement date?

If an employee is one year or less away from full benefit retirement and their position is *involuntarily terminated* may be bridged to retirement based on approval by the Office of Human Resources. Departments and/or employees should contact HR [Employee and Labor Relations, ohrc@hr.osu.edu](mailto:ohrc@hr.osu.edu), 614- 292-2800 for more information.

36. Can the unit pursue corrective action with an employee during severance?

Yes. The unit needs to manage the employee's performance during the working notice period.

37. If a CCS employee elects displacement, and is unable to displace based on lack of position availability or retention point totals, can that employee receive severance at the time of layoff?

Yes. If a CCS employee elects displacement, but must be laid off because she or he is unable to displace another employee and no suitable vacancies exist, the employee is eligible to receive his/her severance. When the employee accepts severance, his/her reinstatement rights are forfeited and the severance payment is prorated appropriately. These factors could include but are not limited to reviewing the effective date of notification, those weeks the individual was in the search process for purposes of displacement, the reason the employee could not displace, and the ability of the unit to manage its operations.

38. Where can I get additional information?

- Staff Severance Program, Policy 2.40, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy240.pdf
- Reduction in Work Force – Classified Civil Service Staff, Policy 9.20, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy920.pdf
- Reduction in Work Force – Unclassified Staff, Policy 9.15, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy915.pdf
- [HR Employee and Labor Relations, ohrc@hr.osu.edu](mailto:ohrc@hr.osu.edu), 614-292-2800