

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Inter-Office Communication

*Department of Sociology*  
Iowa State University  
103 East Hall

**DATE:** August 24, 2009

**TO:** Graduate Assistant Employees  
Department of Sociology

**FROM:** Paul Lasley  
Professor and Chair

**SUBJECT: Vacation and Sick Leave Policies for Graduate Assistants**

It is important that students distinguish between their academic program role (student) and their assistantship role (employee). Graduate research assistants are not automatically free to leave their job during breaks when classes are not in session. If they wish to be gone, they must make prior arrangements with their assistantship supervisor and submit an Absence Request Card. Research assistants must complete an Absence Request Card after they return from sick leave. This also applies to teaching assistants if the illness occurs during the time on appointment.

See the back of this memo for policies and procedures. For more clarification or information on leave balances, please check with Ramona who keeps the vacation and sick leave records for the department.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
VACATION AND SICK LEAVE POLICIES  
FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

### **VACATION**

1. **Teaching Assistants.** Teaching Assistants do not accrue vacation, but they are entitled to official university holidays and semester break periods the same as B-base (9-month) faculty. They are not required to be on duty:
  - a. Between Fall Semester graduation and Spring Semester (should be on duty two workdays before classes begin)
  - b. During Spring and Thanksgiving Breaks
  - c. During University holidays
  
2. **Research Assistants.** Research Assistants accrue vacation as follows:
 

½ time RA: 8 hrs/mo\*

¼ time RA: 4 hrs/mo

RAs are required to be on duty except for official university holidays unless they take vacation time. RAs wishing to be absent when classes are not in session (for example, during Monday through Wednesday of Thanksgiving Break week, the break between Fall and Spring Semester, and Spring Break) should plan ahead and request to use vacation time.

**RAs must use their accrued vacation by June 30 of each year or by the end of appointment, whichever comes first. There is no vacation accrual payout at the end of an appointment.**
  
3. **Authorization for Vacation.** RAs desiring to request vacation time must submit an Absence Request Card to their assistantship supervisor for signature. Cards are available from your assistantship supervisor's secretary or any secretary. Next the card goes to Ramona in the main office.

### **COMPENSATORY TIME**

There is the possibility that RAs could be allowed or needed by their supervisor to do compensatory time (e.g., a half-time RA might work 30 hours per week for two weeks in order to be off one week). This would need to be negotiated with the assistantship supervisor. It would still be appropriate to fill out an Absence Request Card inserting "comp time" under "other" so that there is official approval of absence.

### **SICK LEAVE**

Sick Leave accruals may be used for: illness, medical/optical/dental appointments which may not be scheduled at other than work hours, funeral/pallbearer leave, maternity leave, and emergency leave. "Emergency leave" is narrowly defined as *an absence to care for ill or injured family members*. "Family members" is defined as employee's spouse, children, grandchildren, foster children, step children, legal wards, parents, grandparents, foster parents, step parents, brothers, foster brothers, step brothers, sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters, foster sisters, step sisters, daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins, corresponding relatives of the employee's spouse and others persons who are members of the employee's household. Sick leave accruals do carry over to the next appointment *unless* there is a break between appointments.

1. TAs and RAs accrue sick leave as follows: 1/2 time TA or RA - 6 hours/month  
1/4 time TA or RA - 3 hours/month
  
2. An Absence Request Card for sick leave must be submitted upon return to work. It should be signed and routed in the same way as a card requesting vacation time.

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\*A 1/2 time RA's vacation for one day means 4 hours are subtracted from hours accrued (based on 20-hour work week).

A 1/4 time RA's vacation for one day means 2 hours are subtracted from hours accrued (based on 10-hour work week).

Please note: For grad assistants who do not have the same work hours every day, the correct number of hours missed should be calculated and shown on the absence request card; otherwise, it will be assumed that a half-time RA's absence for one day is 4 hours.