



Vacation

(Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

POLICY STATEMENT

Cornell University provides paid vacation to eligible staff members for rest, relaxation, and renewal. Cornell expects employees and supervisors to coordinate approved vacation time with the business needs of the department, and to properly record vacation time taken.

REASON FOR POLICY

The university appreciates and values staff members as they carry out their job responsibilities in support of the university's missions of teaching, research, and public service. The university also recognizes that staff members need time away from work for rest and renewal. To that end, paid vacation benefits are available to eligible staff members. This policy assists staff members in understanding their eligibility for paid vacation time away from work and the principles and procedures surrounding its use.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- Ithaca-based locations
- Cornell Tech campus
- Weill Cornell Medicine campuses

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- Eligible, non-bargaining unit, nonacademic staff members
- College and unit Human Resources representatives
- Managers and supervisors of eligible staff
- College, unit, and department payroll and service center representatives with a role in administering time away from work

MOST CURRENT VERSION OF THIS POLICY

- <https://policy.cornell.edu/policy-library/vacation-excluding-academic-and-bargaining-unit-staff>

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

CONTENTS

Policy Statement	1
Reason for Policy	1
Entities Affected by This Policy	1
Who Should Read This Policy	1
Most Current Version of This Policy	1
Contents	2
Related Resources	3
Contacts	4
Definitions	5
Responsibilities	6
Principles	7
Purpose	7
Eligibility	7
Vacation Accrual Calculations for Nonexempt Staff Members	7
Vacation Accrual Calculations for Exempt Staff Members	8
Effective Date	8
Maximum Accumulation	9
Accumulation Over the Maximum	9
Accumulation Over the Maximum – Exception In the Form of a Rollover or Payout	10
Non-Accrual	10
Change in Standard Hours	10
Transfers	11
Scheduled Holidays and Unscheduled Days Off	11
Pay in Lieu of Vacation	11
Retirement	11
Terminations	12
Sponsored and Federally Appropriated Projects	12
Procedures	13
Requesting Vacation Time	13
Recordkeeping	13

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

RELATED RESOURCES

University Policies and Information

[University Policy 6.2.1, Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff](#)

[University Policy 6.9, Time Away From Work](#) (All relevant sections, including Health and Personal Leave, Catastrophic Leave Donation, Family Leaves for Nonacademic Staff, Medical Leaves for Staff, Military Leave Amendment, etc.)

[Guidelines for Temporary and Casual Appointments](#)

[Pay Practices and Guidelines: Time Collection, Overtime](#)

[Credited Service Information](#)

External Documentation

Fair Labor Standards Act

University Forms and Systems

[Workday](#)

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

CONTACTS

Direct any general questions about this policy to your college or unit administrative office or your local business service center. If you have questions about specific issues, contact the following offices.

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email/Web Address
Policy Clarification and Interpretation	College/Unit Human Resources Representative	Unit-specific	hr.cornell.edu/browse-self-service/find-your-hr-rep
	Division of Human Resources, Staff and Labor Relations	(607) 255-4652	hrpolicy@cornell.edu
Benefits, Endowed and Contract College	Division of Human Resources, HR Services and Transitions Center	(607)-255-3936	hrservices@cornell.edu
Time Collection	University Payroll	(607) 255-5194	payroll@cornell.edu finance.cornell.edu/payroll

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Benefits-Eligible Temporary Employee	Temporary employee whose anticipated or actual time on the job meets or exceeds the requirements to become eligible for coverage under certain benefits programs sponsored by the university. Various coverage and effective dates must be approved by Benefits Services and are determined by a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the length of the temporary appointment (that is, a minimum of six months for endowed; minimum of three months for contract college) and the total hours worked in a year. For information about which benefit programs apply to eligible temporary staff, contact Benefits Services.
Continuous Service	Uninterrupted time holding a regular appointment or a benefits-eligible temporary appointment.
Credited Service	See Credited Service information on the Human Resources website.
Regular Employee	Employee who is appointed to a non-temporary position of at least 20 hours per week with an expected duration of at least six months.
Temporary Employee	Employee who is appointed to a temporary position of at least 20 hours per week with an expected duration of less than six months.
Transfer	Movement from one position to another.
Unit Head	Individual with administrative responsibility for the unit.
Unit	College, department, program, research center, business service center, office, or other operating unit.

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

RESPONSIBILITIES

The major responsibilities each party has in connection with this policy are as follows:

College/Unit Human Resource Representative	Consult with the supervisor on exceptions to the maximum accumulations (that is, rollovers and payouts).
Staff Member	<p>Obtain approval from the supervisor for the use of accrued vacation time in accordance with this policy and unit practice, and with as much advance notice as possible.</p> <p>Properly record the use of vacation accruals in the appropriate time collection system.</p> <p>Be aware of vacation balance, including maximum allowable vacation accumulation, and review and verify the accuracy of these balances with the supervisor periodically and as necessary.</p>
Supervisor	<p>Communicate expectations to staff members regarding how vacation should be requested in accordance with this policy and unit practice.</p> <p>Review and respond to requests from staff members for the use of vacation in a timely manner.</p> <p>Communicate expectations to staff members regarding properly recording vacation in the time collection system, including expectations for following unit-specific procedures, if any.</p> <p>Be aware of staff members' vacation balances, including maximum allowable vacation accumulations, and periodically review and verify the accuracy of vacation balances.</p> <p>After consulting with the college/unit human resource representative, approve or deny exceptions to the maximum accumulation of vacation on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Advise staff members who are separating from the university of how vacation balance will be administered.</p>

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PRINCIPLES

Purpose

Cornell University provides paid vacation, with supervisory approval, to eligible staff members for rest, relaxation, and renewal. In order for business needs to be accomplished, and to protect the interests of both the institution and its staff members, vacation time must be approved and recorded in an appropriate and compliant manner.

Eligibility

All regular full-time, regular part-time, and benefits-eligible temporary staff members are eligible to accrue vacation time.

Vacation Accrual Calculations for Nonexempt Staff Members

For nonexempt staff members, vacation time accruals are based upon the total number of hours paid (to a maximum of 80 hours during a biweekly pay period, but no more than 40 hours per week) multiplied by the appropriate vacation factor (see Table 1-a and Table 1-b).

Table 1-a. – 39-Hour Workweek

Accrual Rates for Nonexempt Staff Members (Biweekly Pay Periods, 10 Workdays)

Credited Service	Vacation Factor	Hours Accumulated Per Pay Period Based on 78 Hours
Less than ten years	.05769	4.4998 (.05769 x 78)
10 but less than 11 years	.06153	4.7993
11 but less than 12 years	.06538	5.0996
12 but less than 13 years	.06923	5.3999
13 but less than 14 years	.07307	5.6994
14 years or more	.07692	5.9997

Example: If a nonexempt staff member has a credited service date that indicates 11-1/2 years of service, and was paid for 70 hours this past pay period, the staff member would accrue 4.5766 hours of vacation for this pay period ($70 \times .06538 = 4.5766$).

Table 1-b. – 40-Hour Workweek

Accrual Rates for Nonexempt Staff Members (Biweekly Pay Periods, 10 Workdays)

Credited Service	Vacation Factor	Hours Accumulated Per Pay Period Based on 80 Hours
Less than ten years	.05769	4.6152 (.05769 x 80)
10 but less than 11 years	.06153	4.9224
11 but less than 12 years	.06538	5.2304
12 but less than 13 years	.06923	5.5384
13 but less than 14 years	.07307	5.8456
14 years or more	.07692	6.1536

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PRINCIPLES, continued

Vacation Accrual Calculations for Exempt Staff Members

For exempt staff members, vacation accrual rates vary according to credited service and are reflected in Table 2. The value of one vacation day is determined by the staff member's standard weekly hours of appointment.

Table 2

Accrual Rates for Exempt Staff (Semimonthly Pay Periods)

Credited Service	# of Days Accrued Annually	# of Days Accrued Monthly	# of Days Accrued Semimonthly
Less than ten years	15	1.25	0.6250
10 but less than 11 years	16	1.33	0.6667
11 but less than 12 years	17	1.4167	0.7083
12 but less than 13 years	18	1.5	0.7500
13 but less than 14 years	19	1.5833	0.7917
14 years or more	20	1.6667	0.8333

Effective Date

Vacation accruals begin on the staff member's first day at work. Vacation leave may not be taken before it is accrued.

When a staff member changes from temporary to regular employment status with no break in continuous service, vacation accruals are retroactive to the staff member's original hire date in accordance with the accrual charts above. Changes in the rate of accrual are made effective the first day of the pay period in which the anniversary date occurs.

◆ **Note:** The term "continuous services" is distinguished from the term "credited service" which is used elsewhere in this policy.

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PRINCIPLES, continued

Maximum Accumulation

Maximum vacation time accumulation is based upon standard hours of appointment. The tables below reflect the maximum accumulation allowed for nonexempt and exempt staff members with standard hours of 39 and 40, according to their credited service. The maximum accumulation for staff with standard hours other than 39 or 40 is calculated on a prorated basis.

Table 3

Maximum Accumulation for Exempt and Nonexempt Staff with Standard Hours of Appointment of 39

Credited Service	Nonexempt Maximum Accumulation (Hours)	Exempt Maximum Accumulation (Approximate Days)
Less than ten years	234.0	30
10 but less than 11 years	249.6	32
11 but less than 12 years	265.2	34
12 but less than 13 years	280.8	36
13 but less than 14 years	296.4	38
14 years or more	312.0	40

Table 4

Maximum Accumulation for Exempt and Nonexempt Staff with Standard Hours of Appointment of 40

Credited Service	Nonexempt Maximum Accumulation (Hours)	Exempt Maximum Accumulation (Approximate Days)
Less than ten years	240	30
10 but less than 11 years	256	32
11 but less than 12 years	272	34
12 but less than 13 years	288	36
13 but less than 14 years	304	38
14 years or more	320	40

Accumulation Over the Maximum

Although vacation payouts at retirement or termination will not exceed the maximum (or the cap for contract college employees), vacation-eligible staff members may accrue in excess of their maximum accumulation based on credited years of service. This excess is not carried over beyond December 31 of any given year. Each year, as of December 31, leave balances that exceed the maximum are automatically adjusted to the appropriate maximum in accordance with the Maximum Accumulation tables for those staff members with appointments of 39 or 40 standard hours. For other eligible staff members, their maximum balances are prorated based upon their standard hours of appointment.

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PRINCIPLES, continued

Accumulation Over the Maximum – Exception In the Form of a Rollover or Payout

Requests for exceptions to the above, in the form of a rollover or a payout of the excess vacation (or a combination of the two), may be considered only if staff members had been specifically requested to forego taking vacation due to pressing and unusual business needs, thereby causing the vacation balance to exceed the maximum. Routine day-to-day work at a high volume is not considered unusual and will not trigger an exception to the maximum accumulation. Rollovers, payouts, or a combination thereof should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the unit head, with the stipulation that accruals must be brought within the maximum by December 31 of the next year. Exceptions cannot be granted in two consecutive years. Supervisors and staff members should work together to proactively plan and balance business and personal needs to allow adequate time away and avoid the loss of accruals.

◆ **Note:** Departments are responsible for funding any payouts that are approved.

Sponsored and Federally Appropriated Projects

Positions that are supported by any amount of sponsored or federally appropriated funding are ineligible for the vacation payout provisions of this section of the policy.

Non-Accrual

For staff members on paid leave (other than vacation), vacation time ceases to accrue on the first day of the leave after any required waiting periods. Accruals will begin again on the first day of return from the leave. Vacation does not accrue during unpaid leaves.

Change in Standard Hours

If changes occur to a staff member's standard hours, either voluntarily (for example, phased retirement) or involuntarily, the maximum accumulation balance is reset based on their new standard hours of appointment, effective on the first pay period following the change in standard hours. At that time, accruals in excess of the maximum accumulation are paid out by the department.

Exceptions may be considered in the form of a rollover of the excess vacation, or a combination of a rollover and a payout. Exceptions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the sole discretion of the unit head, with the stipulation that accruals must be brought within the maximum by December 31 of the next year, or they will be paid out at that time. Exceptions cannot be granted in two consecutive years. Supervisors and staff members should work together to proactively plan and balance business and personal needs to allow adequate time away and avoid the loss of accruals.

◆ **Note:** If the change in standard hours is occurring as a result of a transfer to a different department and the maximum accumulation is exceeded, the excess vacation will be paid out to the staff member by the former department at the time of transfer (see the Transfers section).

Sponsored and Federally Appropriated Projects

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PRINCIPLES, continued

Positions that are supported by any amount of sponsored or federally appropriated funding are ineligible for the vacation payout provisions of this section of the policy.

Transfers

Staff members will retain their accumulated vacation time if they are transferring from one benefits-eligible position to another. Accumulated vacation is transferred up to the allowable maximum accumulation based on the standard hours of appointment of the new position. When an employee transfers from a paid, benefits-eligible, academic position that does not accrue vacation to a staff position, they are credited with one day of vacation leave for every year of prior continuous service, up to the allowable maximum. The new unit is responsible for providing funds to cover the transferred vacation time up to the allowable maximum accumulation based on the standard hours of the new position.

If a transferring staff member's vacation balance exceeds the maximum accumulation at the time of transfer, then the former department pays out the excess to the staff member at the time of transfer.

Sponsored and Federally Appropriated Projects

Positions that are supported by any amount of sponsored or federally appropriated funding are ineligible for the vacation payout provisions of this section of the policy.

Scheduled Holidays and Unscheduled Days Off

Should a scheduled university holiday fall within a staff member's vacation period, time for that day should be classified as holiday pay, not vacation pay.

If a staff member is on vacation when the university declares an unscheduled day off (for example, due to inclement weather) the staff member's time for that day continues to be classified as vacation time and the staff member is not given an additional day off.

Pay in Lieu of Vacation

An active staff member may not receive pay in lieu of vacation except under the provisions in this policy describing when a rollover or payout of accruals exceeding the maximum accumulation would apply.

Retirement

Endowed

When a staff member retires from the university, accrued vacation up to a maximum accumulation based on standard hours of appointment and credited years of service is paid in a lump sum in the last scheduled check. Supervisors should inform the staff member of this procedure when notice of retirement is given.

Contract Colleges

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PRINCIPLES, continued

When a staff member retires from the university, accrued vacation up to a maximum of 30 days is paid in a lump sum in the last scheduled check. Supervisors should inform the staff member of this procedure when notice of retirement is given.

Terminations

Endowed

When a staff member terminates employment, accrued vacation up to a maximum accumulation based on standard hours of appointment and credited years of service is paid in a lump sum in the last scheduled check, provided that the staff member has completed one year of continuous service. The supervisor should inform the staff member of this procedure when notice of termination is given.

Contract Colleges

When a staff member terminates employment, accrued vacation up to a maximum of 30 days is paid in a lump sum payment in the last scheduled check, provided that the staff member has completed one year of continuous service. The supervisor should inform the staff member of this procedure when notice of termination is given.

Sponsored and Federally Appropriated Projects

Staff members on term appointments that are supported by any amount of sponsored or federally appropriated funding may, at the discretion of the college or funder, be ineligible for the vacation payout provisions of the Retirement and Terminations sections of this policy. If ineligible, the employee will be notified, in writing at the time of initial appointment or appointment extension, that accrued vacation must be taken during the employee's period of active employment; any vacation balance remaining at the end of employment will be forfeited. Supervisors and staff members should work together to proactively plan and balance business and personal needs, allowing adequate vacation time away from work during terms of employment to avoid the loss of accruals.

POLICY 6.9

Vacation (Excluding Academic and Bargaining-Unit Staff)

PROCEDURES

Requesting Vacation Time

Employees are encouraged to take their earned vacation time for periods of rest, relaxation, and renewal. Staff members must obtain supervisory approval for the use of vacation time in accordance with unit practice, ideally with as much advance notice as possible to allow supervisors to plan for adequate staffing coverage. Supervisors should make efforts to schedule vacation to accommodate the preferences of their employees whenever possible. The university, however, reserves the right to deny vacation requests for business reasons.

Nonexempt staff members may use vacation by the hour. If the staff member takes a day of vacation, the number of hours used will be equal to the number of hours that the staff member was scheduled to work on that day. Exempt staff members should normally use vacation in increments of half days.

Recordkeeping

The payroll system is the official accrual record for exempt and nonexempt staff.

Unit management (for example, supervisors, payroll representatives, Human Resources representatives) should inform exempt and nonexempt staff members as to how to record the use of accruals and how to access their leave balance information. Management and staff members are both responsible to be aware of the vacation balance and for periodically reviewing it, as needed, to verify that balances are accurate and to discuss whether the balances are at or nearing the maximum accrual.

To officially correct a staff member's vacation balance, the correction must be made in accordance with the university payroll system/time-collection requirements.

◆ **Note:** In contract colleges, exempt staff members are required to report vacation usage in the payroll system when such accruals are used. Failure to report vacation usage will result in the forfeiture of eligibility for payment of accrued vacation upon termination or retirement. Unit policies may be more restrictive.