



Wednesday, December 3, 2003

AP/IC merger questions and answers

Q: When will the new AP manual be available?

A: The new AP manual will be available on the UHR Web site in mid to late December 2003.

Q: Why is there interest in having Administrative/Professional and Individual Contract employees merged into a single employee group?

A: Both groups have expressed a desire to combine into a single group, with the same terms of employment, working conditions, benefits, etc. From a practical standpoint, it also makes good business sense that employees with similar duties and responsibilities have the same employment relationship with the university.

Q: What terms of employment do administrative professional employees at other universities have with their employers?

A: University Human Resources conducted a survey of Michigan public universities to find out how administrative professional employees are treated at other institutions. Responses were received from 8 of 12 institutions surveyed. This is what was found: All the respondents have open-term relationships with their non-represented administrative and professional employees - that is, there was not a specific term for the appointment. At some institutions, these employees have "just cause" appointments, while at others they have "at will" appointments. Still others combine the two approaches, having those at a certain level and above "at will," and others "just cause."

Q: What does "just cause" mean?

A: It means the employee may not be discharged without a reason, or reasons, that fall within certain definitions. According to the Personnel Policy Manual for Administrative-Professional Employees and Administrative Professional Employees with Individual Contracts, a "just cause" employee may be disciplined and discharged for reasons including, but not limited to, performance, conduct or behavior, whether by act or omission, and whether it occurs on or off duty or on or off university premises, which interferes with or adversely affects, in other than a de minimis manner, the orderly and efficient operation of the university.

Q: What does "at will" mean?

A: It means the employee serves at the pleasure of the university and may be terminated at any time with or without cause and with or without prior notice.

Q: Which positions will be "at will" and which will be "just cause" under the new structure?

A: The following positions will be "at will":

- Positions in salary band S and above, and
- Administrative and professional positions in University Human Resources, the Office of the General Counsel, University Diversity & Compliance and the Golf Course; and development officers.

All other positions will become "just cause." Note that all APs with continuing contracts, regardless of salary band, will retain their "just cause" status, and any AP who has completed his/her probationary period and who successfully completes his/her next term contract review will become a "just cause" employee, irrespective of salary band or position.

Q: How many positions are currently "at will" and how many positions are "just cause," and how will that change?

A: There are 57 percent "just cause" and 43 percent "at will" employees today. If the university's proposal is implemented, 77 percent of these positions will be "just cause" and only 23 percent will be "at will." In fact, the number of employees who are "just cause" will be even higher when the proposal is first implemented. Since all APs who have successfully completed their probationary period or current contract review will become "just cause" employees regardless of the position they hold, 88 percent of the APs and ICs will be "just cause" when the proposal is implemented.

Q: Will there still be a probationary period for employees accepting a "just cause" position?

A: Yes, every newly hired administrative professional employee will be required to complete a one-year probationary period, during which the employee will be "at will." Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the employee will become "just cause" or "at will," depending upon salary band and the office in which s/he works, as explained immediately above.

Q: I am currently an AP employee and have completed my probationary period. What will this structure mean to me?

A: If you do not yet have a continuing contract, you must successfully complete the term of your current contract and subsequent review. After that, you will continue to be a "just cause" employee. The only circumstance in which that would change is if you accept a new position at salary band S or above, or if you take a position in one of the offices with "at will" positions, as described above. If you have a continuing contract, nothing will change unless you take a new position at salary band S or above or you take a position in one of the offices with "at will" positions, as described above.

Q: I am currently an IC employee, what will this structure mean to me?

A: If you are in salary band S or above, or work in University Human Resources, the Office of the General Counsel, University Diversity & Compliance, the Golf Course or are a development officer, you will become an "at will" employee. Otherwise, you will become a "just cause" employee upon expiration of your contract and a satisfactory review. Regardless of which type of employee you are, your employment will be **either just-cause or at-will** and you will not have to go through the annual contract process any more.

Q: I am an employee in a development officer position, UHR, the Golf Course, UDC or the General Counsel's Office, what will this structure mean to me?

A: If you are an AP and have completed your probationary period, you will become a "just cause" employee after you successfully complete the term of your current contract and subsequent review. If you are an IC or an AP currently in your probationary period, you will become an "at will" employee upon successful completion of your current contract and associated contract review or probationary period. In either case, your employment will be open-ended and you will no longer have to go through the annual or biannual contract process. Of course, if you later accept a position at salary band R or below that is not in one of the departments identified in the question, you will become a "just cause" employee.

Q: How will AP and IC benefits be affected by this "merger?"

The following summarizes the benefits that are effective January 1, 2004:

<p>Sick Time After 1st year, 13 days After 2nd year, 26 days After 3rd year, 39 days After 4th year, 52 days After 5th year, 65 days After 6th year, 130 days</p>
<p>Vacation Accrual 1-6 months, 8 hours per month. After 6 months, 14.67 hours per month.</p>
<p>Leaves of Absence Available after 12-month probationary period</p>
<p>Tuition for Dependents Tuition only</p>

Medical, dental, optical, long-term disability, group life, optional life, collective life, travel accident, and accidental death or dismemberment insurance benefits will remain the same. Longevity-Bumping-AP employees hired prior to August 1, 1999, will continue to be eligible for longevity pay (Section VI) and have reassignment through bumping (Section IV) as described in the current personnel manual.

Q: Would I lose my "just cause" status if my supervisor revised my position?

A: No. Losing "just cause" status is based on whether the employee makes the choice to move laterally, be promoted or apply for a higher banded position. If you apply for a "posted" position in the S band or above and accept the position, then you would lose "just cause" status (**after January 1, 2009**). However, if it is your supervisor's request and not your choice regarding the rebanding of your position or reorganizing of your department, then you would not lose your "just cause" status.

Q: I am a temporary employee, how will I be affected?

A: Temporary employees are not APs or ICs and will not be included in this employee group.

Q: I am a part-time AP or IC, how will I be affected?

A: Whether you are a full- or part-time AP or IC does not affect whether you become "just cause" or "at will." The sole determining factors are your salary band and the office in which you work, as described above.

Q: I work at the Lowry Center, I am a member of the intercollegiate athletics management staff , or hold a grant-funded position, how will I be affected?

A: The positions identified in the question will continue with their current employment arrangements and will not be affected by the merger.

More Questions? Contact us at rwatson@oakland.edu. We will make every attempt to answer your questions. Common questions, and their answers, will be periodically added to this Web page.

SUMMARY

Frequently asked questions from OU employees about the proposed AP/IC merger are answered.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, December 3, 2003

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