



# **PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

# Professional Staff Employee Handbook

Dear Professional Staff,

We welcome and encourage you to familiarize yourself with the contents of this Handbook, whether you are a new or current employee. This Handbook was established by Western's President and prepared by Human Resources in collaboration with the Professional Staff Organization (PSO) Executive Committee. It has been prepared to inform you of the practices relevant to you in your employment at Western, as well as provide the standards, terms, and conditions of employment in a clear and comprehensive manner. Furthermore, it is intended that it serves as an up-to-date guide for you during your employment at Western.

As a new or current employee, the skills, goals, perceptions, and values you bring to your position help to make the university the regional and national success that it is today. As such, you are part of a collaborative environment where faculty, staff, and students contribute to the mission of the university to:

*Serve the people of the state of Washington, the nation, and the world by bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds and perspectives in an inclusive, student-centered university that develops the potential of learners and the well-being of communities.*

In return, it is the goal of Western to provide a meaningful and rewarding work experience for all employees. Part of that goal includes creating an environment in which its employees are fully informed of their duties and responsibilities, provided with adequate administrative and supervisory direction, informed of their performance levels, compensated appropriately, provided training, considered for promotional opportunities, and treated with dignity and respect at all times.

We encourage your engagement in all matters that affect your work. We hope that you will use your talents in a way that stimulates students, parents, faculty, staff, and the broader community, and thereby contributes to the vision of the university to “*build a stronger Washington by being an international leader in active learning, critical thinking, and societal problem solving.*”

*Human Resources and the PSO Executive Committee*

## Introduction

The Professional Staff Organization (PSO) is one of the main constituency groups established in 1978 that comprise the governance system at Western Washington University (Western). It represents highly trained and educated individuals who formulate and direct the university's day-to-day operations. In their leadership role, they create and facilitate effective programs supporting Western's student learning experience, and share the responsibility of educating and supporting students by providing essential services and expertise.

PSO staff:

- Contribute to student success through advising, counseling, and teaching;
- Provide technological innovation and support that keeps Western more efficient in meeting the needs of the university, the state, and the nation;
- Conduct academic and institutional research, providing data that support the university and state decision-making;
- Provide mid-level management, confidential administrative and organizational support to Western; and,
- Foster and maintain strong relationships with outside constituents (alumni, parents, and friends).

The PSO membership consists of state employees in positions exempted from the provisions of the Civil Service Law ([RCW 41.06.070](#)) and are therefore not represented by a union. As such, they serve solely at the will of the appointing authority or designee. Notwithstanding the "at-will" nature of professional staff appointments, the provisions in this Handbook convey benefits and services available to professional staff, including options for addressing employment-related complaints. Their appointments can be modified or ended for any lawful reason, or reason that does not violate state or Western's policies or expectations. Professional staff employees therefore do not serve a probationary period.

The university and its professional staff maintain a collegial and committed relationship. As such, Western's President, with support from the PSO Executive Committee and Human Resources (HR), has established this PSO Handbook. Its purpose is to inform and instruct Western's professional staff employees about the university, state rules, policies, procedures, and performance expectations applicable to them, and provide the standards, terms, and conditions of employment in a clear and comprehensive manner. Periodically, this Handbook may be amended as policies, procedures, regulations, and laws are updated. In the event of a discrepancy between this Handbook and university policies or state regulations and laws, the latter will take precedence over the Handbook.

It is the duty and responsibility of the employee to be aware of and abide by these policies, procedures, and expectations.

This Handbook does not apply to:

- Temporary employees;
- Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement; however, if the employee holds more than one position, each position will be covered by the respective contract/handbook;
- Executive Officers (E5 employee class); or
- Employees specifically excluded by the President of Western.

If you have questions regarding this Handbook, please contact the PSO Executive Committee at [PSO@wwu.edu](mailto:PSO@wwu.edu), or Human Resources at [HRProstaff@wwu.edu](mailto:HRProstaff@wwu.edu).

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## Definitions

**Administrative reorganization** is the good faith reallocation, shifting, or elimination of job duties and/or responsibilities within a department or division, resulting in the elimination or reduction of one or more positions.

**Administrative unit** is any of the five groups of programs and functions reporting respectively to the President, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, Vice President for University Advancement and President/CEO of the WWU Foundation, or the Vice President for University Relations and Community Development.

**At-will employment** means that employment that can be modified or ended for any reason that is not unlawful, at the will of the employing official or designee. (At-will employment also means the employee may end employment at any time.)

**Complaint** is a written appeal to the PSO regarding an employment matter in accordance with the PSO complaint policy and procedures.

**Executive Administrative Officers** include, but are not limited to, the President, Provost, vice presidents, and other employees included in the E5 employee classification.

**Family** members mean the employee's spouse or domestic partner, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sister or brother and spouse/domestic partner thereof. Family member also includes individuals in the following relationships with the employee's spouse or domestic partner: child, parent, or grandparent. It also includes those persons in a "step" relationship.

**Flex time work schedule** is the scheduling of personnel with supervisor approval around a pre-determined core time to enable employees to meet the operating needs of the department, or to allow for employee flexibility. The pre-determined core times are specific hours which all employees in a given unit must be present at his/her job.

**Household** members are persons residing in the same home having reciprocal duties for one another. This term does not include persons sharing the same house when the living style is primarily that of a residence hall or commune. Wherever in these policies "family member" is referred to, that term shall be deemed to subsume "household member" as herein defined.

**Layoff** is the cessation of employment due to lack of work, lack of funds, or administrative reorganization.

**Market-based compensation** is compensation based on peer institutions' salary data including data from Washington's public sector, and higher education institutions, i.e., state, regional, and national institutions with similar enrollment, budgets, public Master's granting institutions, Western's Board of Trustees' approved peer listings, or Global Challenge States (GCS) peers.

**Market range** is the salary range for a specific payroll title/position and resides within a Salary Grade. As such, the market range is smaller than the salary grade range.

**Payroll title** is a group of positions that are aligned based on position descriptions.

**Position (working) title** is the daily title you use for your position (e.g. email, business cards).

**Professional staff** is an employee who provides leadership, management, and/or program direction in collaboration with executive administration, faculty, and classified staff in the following areas: professional instruction; research; university infrastructure; and the student learning experience.

**Project employees** are hired to perform duties for a limited term of six months or more. Certain projects are funded by grants, contracts, or agreements.

**Reduction in force** is the reduction in the appointment of or cessation of employment due to financial exigency or legislative mandate.

**Salary grade** is the entire span of salaries for a group of payroll titles. The salary grade is utilized to align similar payroll titles to ensure equity.

**Separation** is the cessation of employment due to administrative reorganization, reduction in force, layoff, or inability to perform the essential functions of the job due to a disability with or without reasonable accommodation.

**Temporary employee** is an employee whose term of appointment is less than six months, or less than 50% full-time equivalent.

**Total compensation** is salary compensation plus benefits, e.g., medical, dental, and vision health insurance, and match on retirement contributions.

**Working days** include weekdays when Western is open.

## **Abbreviations**

FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
HR	Human Resources
PSO	Professional Staff Organization
RCW	Revised Code of Washington (state law)
VEBA	Voluntarily Employees' Beneficiary Association

## **Professional Staff Compensation Program**

Western maintains a Professional Staff Compensation Program ([Program](#)), in support of achieving its mission and vision in a manner consistent with its values and fiduciary responsibility as a state-funded university.

## **Assignments, Promotions and Transfers**

Western is committed to filling positions with the most qualified candidates available. In addition, Western supports a diverse workforce and opportunities for upward mobility.

### **Vice Presidents May Consider Employees in Filling Professional Staff Positions**

Whether within or outside of their immediate area of responsibility, vice presidents may consider Western employees prior to an external recruitment while maintaining their commitment to Western's policies, including equal opportunity and affirmative action policies and procedures. A vice president may choose to open a search to all qualified candidates after considering internal candidates, or choose not to fill a position.

## **Performance Evaluations**

### **Employee Work Performance Shall be Evaluated Annually**

Performance evaluations shall be conducted annually. Supervisors will conduct formal performance evaluations following established protocols. The evaluation process is intended to provide an interactive opportunity to support the employee by reviewing, evaluating and clarifying job responsibilities, performance/accomplishments, expectations, potential barriers, training and equipment needs, and future goals and objectives.

In addition to the annual formal evaluation, supervisors are encouraged to facilitate discussion about performance on an ongoing basis and to provide periodic feedback. Employees are encouraged and expected to actively participate in the performance evaluation process, including seeking ongoing feedback.

Original evaluations will be forwarded to and maintained in the employee's official personnel file in HR.

## **Professional Development**

### **Professional Development**

Western and the PSO recognize the value and benefit of education and training designed to enhance an employee's professional knowledge and skills. Western and the PSO also recognize that an employee's institutional effectiveness will be enhanced by the employee's application of professional knowledge and skill within the context of the mission, vision and goals of the institution, division and unit. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to work together to identify reasonable and relevant professional development opportunities. Supervisors should provide guidance to an employee in these areas as part of professional development.

## **Tuition Waiver Program**

Employees are eligible to participate in Western's tuition waiver program as provided in RCW 28B.15.558, and in accordance with Western's policies and procedures.

## **Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics**

Professional staff at Western uphold the high standards of ethical behavior expected of Washington state employees as codified in [RCW 42.52](#), Ethics in Public Service Act, and [WAC 292-110-010](#), Use of State Resources. These standards include respecting and defending the rights of others, being responsible for their own actions, and maintaining an environment conducive to academic success, safety, and the well-being of others.

Professional staff have the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing university, local, state, and federal rules and policies. They are expected to provide leadership, model professional behavior, and ensure well-regulated operations that support safe and healthy work environments in ways that protect the institutional integrity of the university, and the interests and security of all Western employees, students, and visitors. Professional staff also have the responsibility to perform their duties to the best of their ability and to established standards, including those set forth in their job description, by the supervisor, or as otherwise established in compliance with this Handbook.

## **Discipline**

When an employee digresses from performance, conduct, and/or ethical standards, supervisors may, as appropriate, provide and/or arrange for the employee to receive coaching, counseling, and/or training. Western will determine the appropriate level of discipline up to and including termination.

## **Work Schedules**

### **Employees Work a Standard Work Schedule**

FLSA exempt employees are expected to work the hours necessary to fulfill job responsibilities and ensure coverage during the core business operating hours to the extent permissible by law.

### **Employees May Be Eligible For Overtime Compensation**

The FLSA provides that certain professional staff are eligible for overtime or compensatory time at time-and-one-half. Management reserves the right to determine whether an overtime-eligible professional staff employee receives overtime or compensatory time for work performed in excess of 40 hours in a work week.

### **Flex Time Work Schedules Require Approval**

Each request for an exception to the standard work schedule will be considered by a supervisor based on operational needs and the employee's request. Overtime eligible employees must use the [Alternate Workweek Time Reporting Form](#) to request a flextime work schedule.

An employee's proposed flextime schedule will not be approved if it will interfere with the work to be done or services to be performed. The final decision rests with the supervisor.

## **Employees Allowed Reasonable Time for University Service**

Western values professional staff employee participation as an appointed or elected member of university committees and councils. When an employee is elected or appointed to serve on a university committee or council, such service is normally considered part of the work assignment and is not charged to leave. Supervisors are encouraged to approve the use of reasonable amounts of work time for an employee's voluntary participation in other forms of university service.

## **Leave Accrual and Use**

### **All Leave Types Must Be Approved**

Supervisor approval is required for all partial- and full-day absences; approval is required in advance of taking leave except for sick and emergency leave.

Reporting of leave time for payroll deduction purposes differs for overtime exempt and overtime eligible employees. See [Professional Staff Time and Leave Reporting Guidelines](#) for specific leave form and reporting requirements. Eligible leave taken will be reported by employees via the Employee Web Form Time Entry.

### **Leave Accruals Will Transfer**

Leave accruals will transfer when an employee transfers to a leave-accruing position. In the event the employee transfers to a non-leave accruing position, eligible leave balances will be cashed out.

See Vacation Leave and Sick Leave sections for more information regarding transfer of leave accruals, if formerly a state employee or transferring from a state agency.

## **Vacation Leave**

### **Employees Will Accrue Vacation Leave**

Beginning with the first day of employment, the employee will accrue vacation leave at the rate of two days (16 hours) per month. The commencement of employment on any date during the month will be deemed sufficient for two days (16 hours) leave accrual for that month. An employee working between 0.5 to 1.0 FTE will accrue vacation leave on the *pro rata* basis that the appointment bears to a full-time appointment. Employees who are in unpaid status for more than 10 working days in a month will not accrue vacation leave for that month.

Employees are encouraged to take at least two weeks of continuous vacation depending on the amount of accrued leave available.

### **Vacation Leave Requires Prior Approval**

All requests to use accrued vacation leave require supervisor approval prior to the scheduled vacation leave. Accrued vacation leave may be used for leave granted under [POL-U5410.03 Taking Family or Medical Leave](#) policy.

### **Vacation Leave Balances May Not Exceed 240 Hours**

Vacation balances will be reduced to 240 hours (30 working days) on the last day of the pay period of the employee's anniversary date, unless the appropriate vice president has given prior written approval for additional balances. All requests for approval to exceed the maximum must include a plan to reduce the balance below the maximum by the beginning of the next anniversary year.

### **Cash Out for Vacation Leave May Be Available**

A cash payment is provided for accumulated vacation leave under the following circumstances:

- the employee voluntarily resigns with a minimum of two weeks' notice on or after six months of continuous employment, or
- on the employee's separation/termination, retirement, or death.

### **Vacation Leave Accruals May Be Transferred**

An eligible employee with prior state service and no break in service may have their vacation leave balance transferred to Western. Employees should contact HR to determine eligibility.

## **Personal Holiday Leave**

### **Employees Accrue One Personal Holiday per Calendar Year**

Those employees with a full-time appointment will accrue a one-day personal holiday per calendar year if the employee is scheduled to be, or has been, continuously employed by the state of Washington for at least four months. Those employees with less than a full-time appointment will accrue leave based on their appointment percentage.

A personal holiday may be used any time after the commencement of employment with supervisory approval. An eligible employee may use the personal holiday for leave time granted under the [Taking Family or Medical Leave](#) policy, [POL-U5410.03](#).

Unused personal holidays do not carry over to the next calendar year and cannot be cashed out upon separation, resignation, retirement, termination, or death.

### **Employees Accrue One Winter Break Day per Calendar Year**

Those employees with a full-time appointment will accrue a one-day Winter Break Day per calendar year. Those employees with less than a full-time appointment will accrue leave based on their appointment percentage.

Subject to operational and staffing needs, the employee may use one paid Winter Break Day between the end of Fall Quarter and the beginning of Winter Quarter. Employees are expected to coordinate their use of the Winter Break Day with their supervisors. The day may not be carried forward and may not be converted to cash.

## **Community Service Leave**

### **Employees Accrue One Community Service Day per Fiscal Year**

Those employees with a full-time appointment will accrue a one-day Community Service Day per fiscal year. Those employees with less than a full-time appointment will accrue leave based on their appointment percentage.

A community service leave day may be used any time after the commencement of employment with supervisory approval. An eligible employee may use the Community Service Day to participate in community service, including volunteer work on behalf of schools, community or charitable organizations, and organized volunteer events.

Unused Community Service days do not carry over to the next fiscal year and cannot be cashed out upon separation, resignation, retirement, termination, or death.

## **Sick Leave**

### **Employees Accrue Sick Leave**

Employees appointed after July 1, 1997 accrue eight hours (1 day) of sick leave on the first day of employment and at the beginning of each month thereafter. Those with less than a full-time appointment will accrue sick leave based on appointment percentage.

### **Former State Employment Sick Leave Accruals May Be Restored**

Sick leave balances may be restored for former Washington state employees who are reemployed in a professional staff position at Western within three years of their separation date from state employment, however the employee must participate in Western's sick leave accrual plan for this section to apply. Contact HR to check for eligibility.

### **Reserve Sick Leave May be Available for New Employees**

On the first day of employment, an emergency reserve of up to 12 days (non-accruable) of sick leave may be available during the first year of employment. All available accrued leave, including shared leave, must be used prior to using approved reserve leave. Determination for reserve sick leave will be based on:

- available funding,
- medical necessity that meets [Shared Leave Program](#) criteria, and
- approval by the unit head and HR.

### **Medical Certification May be Required**

The employee may be required by a supervisor or HR to submit a written physician's certification supporting the need for absence because of illness or disability by a licensed physician or health care practitioner.

### **Uses of Accrued Sick Leave**

Employees enrolled in the sick leave accrual system may use sick leave under the following conditions:

- during illness, disability or injury which has incapacitated the employee from performing required duties;
- personal medical, dental, or optical related appointments;
- exposure to a contagious disease by the employee such that attendance at work would jeopardize the health of fellow employees or the public;
- applicable leaves covered under the [Taking Family or Medical Leave](#) policy [POL-U5410.03](#);
- short-term medical care (up to 10 working days) of a family or household member that requires the employee's presence for treatment, supervision, or to make arrangements for extended care;
- care of family member as required by the Family Care Act ([RCW 49.12.265](#));
- condolence or bereavement (beyond the three-day bereavement allowance);
- leave for Domestic Violence Leave ([RCW 49.76](#)); or
- leave for Military Family Leave ([RCW 49.77](#)).

### **Accrued Sick Leave May be Cashed Out**

Cash outs of accrued sick leave will be made in accordance with [RCW 41.04.340](#) as amended or transferred to the Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association – Medical Expense Plan (VEBA) on retirement when applicable.

### **180 Day Medical Leave Plan**

The 180 Day Medical Leave Plan option for professional staff will no longer be available as of November 7, 2016. Employees covered by this plan through November 6, 2016 will remain in the 180 Day Medical Leave Plan until there is (a) separation of employment or (b) election to convert to the Accrued Sick Leave Plan, whichever is earlier. Additional details on the 180 Day Medical Leave Plan can be accessed on the HR website.

## **Emergency Leave**

### **Leave May be Taken for Short-Term Family Emergencies**

An employee may take leave in the event of an unexpected short-term emergency requiring an immediate response. The employee must inform their supervisor as soon as practicable. These emergencies include:

- (1) Minor/dependent child care emergencies such as unexpected absence of regular care provider, unexpected closure of child's school, or unexpected need to pick up child at school earlier than normal.
- (2) Elder care emergencies such as the unexpected absence of a regular care provider or unexpected closure of an assisted living facility.

Vacation leave, personal holiday, or leave without pay may be used, however for the purpose of this section, advance approval or written advance notice shall not be required. Use of emergency leave shall not exceed three days per incident without the supervisor's approval.

The employee, upon returning from each such leave, shall submit the appropriate leave form designating to which leave category the absence will be charged.

## **Bereavement Leave**

### **Paid Leave Granted for Bereavement**

Leave may be approved for up to three days. Paid leave will be granted for family or household members.

Additional sick leave time may be used for condolence or bereavement with the supervisor's and dean/director's approval.

## **Shared Leave**

### **Shared Leave May be Available**

Employees may be eligible to receive shared leave if specific criteria are met. Please refer to [Shared Leave](#).

### **Donating Shared Leave**

Under certain conditions, an employee may donate accrued vacation leave, sick leave, or personal holiday to another employee who is eligible to receive donations.

## **Leave Without Pay**

### **Leave Without Pay May be Taken Under Certain Circumstances**

Circumstances may be for, but are not limited to:

- compensatory work-related injury or illness;
- applicable leaves covered under [POL-U5410.03, Taking Family or Medical Leave](#) policy;
- faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under auspices of a religious denomination, church or religious organization (per subsection 3 of [RCW 1.16.050](#)) for up to two work days per calendar year;
- educational/professional development;
- government service in the public interest;
- military service;
- voluntary firefighting leave; or
- other reasons as approved by the supervisor(s).

Vacation and sick leave will not accrue during a calendar month if leave without pay exceeds 10 working days in a calendar month.

## **Government Service Leave**

### **Employees May Be Approved for Leave of Absence for Elective or Appointed Office**

Employees may file for, campaign, or serve in elective or appointed office without change in their employment status as long as such activities:

- are not in conflict with state ethics laws, see [RCW 42.52](#), as determined by the university's Ethics Officer; and
- do not interfere with their employment duties and responsibilities, as determined by their supervisor.

### **Paid Leave Shall be Granted for Jury Duty**

An employee will be allowed to retain any compensation paid for jury duty service. Employees required to serve as a witness at a trial, or fulfilling other civil duties pursuant to subpoena shall remain in paid status.

The above does not apply to situations when an employee is called upon to testify as an expert witness. In these situations, the employee shall request leave without pay, vacation leave, or personal holiday. See policy [POL-U5400.17, Professional Staff Policy on Consulting and Other Outside Compensated Professional Activities](#).

## **Professional Leave**

### **Employees May Apply for Professional Leave after Six Years of Full Time Service**

After six years of full-time service to Western, a full-time employee may apply to the appropriate vice president, or designee, for professional leave to acquire knowledge and/or experience, which will enhance the employee's future contributions to Western. Professional leave may be granted for up to a calendar year.

### **Requests for Professional Leave Must Be Submitted Six Months Prior to Leave**

To apply for professional leave, the employee will submit a written Professional Leave Plan to the appropriate vice president six months prior to the requested leave period.

The plan is to include the following information:

- Duration of leave desired and the dates thereof;
- Detailed statement of plans for utilizing the time;
- Explanation of how realization of the plan is expected to enhance the value of the individual's service to the university; and
- Names of institutions and/or individuals with which the employee will be associated, as well as itineraries and specific dates which are pertinent.

Vice presidents may establish additional criteria and procedures within their respective divisions.

### **President Makes Final Approval for Professional Leaves**

The granting of professional leave shall be contingent upon a signed, contractual agreement between the President, appropriate vice president and the employee, providing that the employee shall return to Western following completion of the leave and serve for a period equal to that of the amount of leave granted.

### **Employees Awarded Professional Leave May be Compensated**

Compensation will be determined as part of the professional leave contractual agreement.

### **Employee Will Fully Comply with the Approved Agreement**

Failure to comply with the provisions of the signed agreement will constitute an obligation to the recipient to repay Western, on a *pro rata* basis, any remuneration received from the institution during the leave.

### **Employee Will Submit a Summary of the Results of the Leave**

Following the completion of the leave, the employee will submit a written summary of the results of the leave to the appropriate vice president.

## **Resignation**

### **Employee Will Provide Timely Notice of Resignation**

An employee may resign in good standing with Western by providing written notice to their supervisor. A minimum of two weeks written notice is expected.

## **Retirement**

### **Employee Will Provide Timely Notice of Retirement**

An employee planning to retire should consult retirement guidelines on HR's "[Ready to Retire](#)" webpage.

## **Project Employees**

### **Project Employees May be Terminated**

Project employees are employed on an at-will basis for a specific time period and may have their employment ended at any time. There is no obligation to rehire a project employee after a specific project ends.

## **Layoff Due to Lack of Work, Lack of Funds, or Administrative Reorganization**

### **Appointing Authority May Authorize Layoffs due to Administrative Needs**

The Appointing Authority may authorize layoffs due to administrative needs. University Administration will make every effort to minimize the adverse effects of layoffs on employees due to an administrative reorganization. Employees shall have no right to file a complaint to the PSO regarding separation due to layoff.

### **Written Notice Will Be Given to Employee Designated to be Separated**

Should administrative reorganization necessitate an employee's separation, the appropriate appointing authority will give written notice to the affected individual in accordance with university procedures.

Notice will be given according to the following schedule based on calendar days. The notice of separation will indicate the effective date based on length of full-time service as an employee at Western according to the following criteria, as well as include an explanation for the separation.

After one year, but less than two years	30 days
Two years, but less than three years	60 days
Three years, but less than four years	90 days
Four years, but less than five years	120 days
Five years, but less than six years	150 days
Six years or more	180 days

## **Severance Pay May Be Provided**

Western may provide severance pay in lieu of notice for any separation equal to the amount of salary for the time period as outlined in this section.

## **Preference Will Be Given to Separated Employees**

An employee who is separated in connection with a layoff due to administrative reorganization will receive priority consideration when Western fills administrative positions for which the employee is qualified. Priority consideration will be provided for two years following the effective date of separation.

## **Layoff Due to Reduction in Force**

### **Western's President Can Declare a Layoff Due to Reduction in Force**

The President can declare that a layoff due to reduction in force is required in connection with a university-wide budgetary impact or legislative mandate.

The President will make every effort to minimize the adverse effects of layoffs on employees due to a reduction in force. Employees shall have no right to file a complaint to the PSO regarding separation due to layoff.

Reductions in force will be handled in accordance with the [Layoff Due To Reduction In Force Procedures](#). These procedures do not diminish or otherwise affect the President's authority and responsibility to implement administrative reductions or reorganizations to improve the effectiveness or efficiency of an administrative area or Western as a whole.

## **Filing a Complaint**

### **An Employee May File a Complaint**

An employee is encouraged to resolve employment issues informally at the lower administrative levels, but retains the right to file a written complaint to the PSO in an effort to appeal an employment decision to a higher administration level. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the PSO policy [POL-PS5440.15, Filing and Processing Professional Staff Employment Complaints](#), and procedure [PRO-PS5440.15A](#).

## **Modification of the Handbook**

### **Modification of the Handbook**

Any professional staff employee covered by the provisions of the PSO Handbook may propose modifications to the Handbook at any time by submitting their proposal to the PSO Executive Committee.

Proposals are submitted by the PSO Executive Committee to HR. Proposals may also be submitted by University Administration to HR. Proposals are reviewed and, if necessary, modified by HR in collaboration with PSO Executive Committee. HR will approve the final

proposals and present the proposals to Western's vice presidents for review and approval. Western's vice president(s) submit the proposals to the President for review and approval. HR and Western's President and vice presidents reserve the right to approve changes to the PSO Handbook that are supported by HR, but may not be fully supported by the PSO Executive Committee.

Upon vice presidential and presidential approval, the PSO Executive Committee submits the proposal to the PSO membership for review and approval. Approved modifications to the Handbook shall be in effect 10 working days after the date of approval, or as agreed upon by Western's President.

Denied or returned proposals may be appealed by the PSO Executive Committee; however, the President's decision on the appeal is final.

### **Modifications Will Be Published**

Adopted modifications will be announced to the PSO membership and the campus community, posted on the PSO and HR websites, and incorporated into the PSO Handbook.

### **Modifications Will Be Memorialized**

A history of adopted modifications will be documented and retained by HR.

*Approved by President Shepard: July 2, 2012  
Effective Date: July 16, 2012*

*Modifications Approved by President Randhawa: November 7, 2016  
Effective Date: November 7, 2016*