

GUIDE TO PROCESSING TERMINATIONS

This guide has been designed to summarize procedures surrounding appointment terminations at Penn State, found in numerous University policies, guidelines and handbooks. However, it is not intended to be definitive for all details, nor does it grant substantive contractual rights to University employees. More precise definitions, special cases, and additional details must be obtained from the offices and publications where materials for this guide were gathered.

The official source documents for policies in effect at the University are in [GURU](#) (General University Reference Utility). Policies affecting employees represented by a union are found in the appropriate Agreements. A list of pertinent resources appears at the end of this document.

Nothing contained herein shall negate the right of the University to augment or change its policies applicable to employees.

LEAVING PENN STATE

A termination occurs when an individual leaves Penn State employment. Termination is automatic for individuals whose fixed-term appointments expire without renewal. However, a termination form must be processed if the departure occurs during the midst of a fixed-term appointment, if the individual is retiring, if the individual is leaving a standing appointment, if there has been an overpayment, or if the individual leaving Penn State is owed some additional compensation at the time of termination.

GENERAL TERMINATION INFORMATION

Method of Processing the Termination Action

Academic, Academic Administrator, Administrator, Executive, Staff and Technical Service positions in Standing, Fixed-Term Multi-Year, Fixed-Term I and Fixed-Term II appointments are all ended by processing a termination action in Workflow (<http://guides.ais.psu.edu/workflow/>).

Individuals on Wage appointments are ended with the TRMN form in the IBIS EASY system, which will become the WTER form.

Graduate Assistants and Fellows/Trainees and Postdoctoral Scholars and Fellows are ended with the TRMN form in IBIS EASY, which will become the GFST form.

All Departures

All individuals leaving a Penn State appointment for any reason – whether at the expiration of the appointment or in mid-appointment – must be provided with a copy of [HR-55](#), “Things to Know When Leaving University Employment”.

NOTE: While Policy HR55 addresses employees, it may be appropriate to provide similar notification to Graduate Assistants and Fellows, Postdoctoral Scholars and Fellows, who may have been issued keys, electronic business system clearances, or who may have other items belonging to the University at the time of their departure.

Appropriate work unit offices must be notified about the termination in order to track the retrieval of keys, parking stickers, SecurID tokens, and other items that may belong to the University.

If the individual was at Penn State on a visa, then the International Scholars and Visa Services Office of the Office of Human Resources (for employees and postdocs) or the International Programs Students Office (for students and graduate assistants) need to be promptly notified.

In addition, the work unit Area Security Representative must modify or remove access to University business systems such as EASY, IBIS, ISIS, Data Warehouse and others, upon the individual's departure.

The personnel files for employees who have left Penn State are to be kept and/or later destroyed in accordance with retention policies found at <https://guru.psu.edu/gfug/appendices/APP18.html>. See also [AD-35](#).

Faculty

Tenured or tenure-track faculty members who leave Penn State are to be provided with an Exit Questionnaire and with an opportunity to participate in an Exit Interview (visit <http://www.psu.edu/vpaa/exitinterview.htm> under "Exit Interview").

Staff/Technical Service

Staff/Technical Service employees leaving Penn State are to be provided an Exit Postcard, and they will subsequently be contacted by the University's Office of Human Resources with an opportunity to complete an Exit Questionnaire (visit <https://ohr.psu.edu/esurvey>).

DETERMINING THE APPOINTMENT END DATE

Before processing a termination action in Workflow or in EASY, the end date must be determined. This date is intended to be the last date on which the individual was (or will be) under appointment.

Employee Notice of Departure

University policy recommends the amount of notice that an individual should provide for resignation or retirement (see applicable policies and labor agreements). For academic appointments, the University requests a minimum of four months' notice, with the expectation that resignations will occur at the end of an academic year. For staff resignations, the University requests a one month notice, with a minimum notice of two weeks. Employees in technical service are asked to provide two weeks' notice.

University Notice to Employees

The amount of notice the University provides to individuals at the time of tenure denial is one academic year, as defined in [HR-23](#).

The amount of notice the University provides to individuals whose appointments will end for other reasons may vary in accord with the circumstances.

Determining the Last Day

For employees who do not meet the retirement requirements in [HR-54](#), the last day actually worked and the last day under appointment are the same, unless the individual is on a long-term medical absence. Those who retire in accordance with HR54 and accrue vacation, however, may opt to use their vacation prior to the actual last day of appointment.

For staff and technical service employees discharged in accord with policy and labor agreements, prior consultation with the Employee Relations Division of the Office of Human Resources is required before the employee is notified about the termination.

Similarly, if a staff or technical service employee is laid off, prior consultation with the Employee Relations Division of the Office of Human Resources is required before the employee is notified about the lay-off.

Finally, note that there are also regulations involving terminations that occur near the December/New Year holiday period (see [HRG-14](#)).

TERMINATION STATUS, TYPE and REASON

The submitter of a termination action in Workflow or in EASY is asked to designate a termination type: Voluntary, Involuntary, Retired, or Deceased.

The submitter selects a termination reason. For the Retired or Deceased status, the termination reason will simply be shown as Retired or Deceased. For other terminations, however, a reason must be chosen from a drop-down list, which includes a wide variety of choices. The submitter may add a note in the Comments section of the Workflow termination action, or in the Notepad of the EASY TRMN form to clarify the choice.

The submitter then selects a termination date – meaning the last date on which the individual is a Penn State employee.

Deceased

If an employee dies while still in University service, the date of death is the same as the termination date.

The work unit Human Resources Representative notifies the Employee Benefits Division, and then will initiate a termination action in Workflow, selecting Deceased as the termination status. As noted above, the termination type and reason will also show as Deceased.

Policy [HR-53](#) defines a deceased employee's final salary payment.

If a Postdoctoral Scholar or Fellow dies in service, the date of death is the same as the termination date, and the work unit Human Resources Representative notifies the Employee Benefits Division prior to processing a termination action in EASY.

If the individual is a Graduate Assistant or Graduate Fellow/Trainee, the work unit notifies the Student Health Insurance Office before processing the termination action in EASY.

If the individual is a foreign national, the work unit must also notify the International Scholars and Visa Services Office of the Office of Human Resources (if the individual is an employee or a postdoctoral scholar or fellow), or the International Students Office (if the individual is a student of any kind).

Retired

An employee who leaves University service with eligibility to carry Penn State benefits into retirement (see [HR-54](#)) will be coded as a retiree in the University's database. The employee is asked to provide appropriate advance notice in writing (see [HR-52](#)), stipulating his/her last day as a University employee.

Note that, employees participating in the State Employees Retirement System, are advised to consult in advance with the State Retirement Counseling Office, and the specific retirement date may depend upon the time of year.

For employees who participate in vacation and/or sick leave accumulation, a determination must be made about whether the individual is eligible for pay-off at the time of retirement (see [HR-34](#) and [HR-50](#), or applicable labor agreement).

If a vacation and/or sick leave payoff is appropriate, the employee may opt for the payment to be incorporated into the final check, or for it to arrive at the end of the following pay period after the retirement. The work unit Human Resources Representative is expected to ask this question before the termination action is processed in Workflow.

For all academic retirements, a determination must be made about whether the individual is eligible for emeritus rank (see [HR-25](#)).

When the termination status of Retirement is selected, the termination type and reason will also automatically show as Retired.

Terminated

If the status of Terminated is selected, then the submitter needs to select a type of termination, either Voluntary or Involuntary.

Voluntary

An employee who chooses to leave Penn State service, but who is not eligible to continue benefits as a retiree, is considered to be terminated with the code in the Human Resources Database as “TER.” The submitter, having selected Voluntary as the termination type, will be asked to then select a Termination Reason from the drop-down box of choices, and is encouraged to provide a note in the Comments Section to clarify the choice, if appropriate.

The employee is asked to provide advance notice, per [HR-52](#), in writing to his/her supervisor about the intention to resign, stipulating his/her last day as a University employee. This documentation is to be kept with the employee’s work unit personnel file. In the absence of written documentation, it is strongly suggested that the Human Resources Representative provide a note to the file describing the circumstances of the departure.

For employees who participate in vacation accumulation, a determination must be made about whether the individual is eligible for a pay-off at the time of termination (see [HR-34](#) and [HR-50](#), or applicable labor agreement). Note that employees in both staff and technical service appointments must have completed one full year of service before they are eligible to be paid for unused vacation accumulation, and they must have provided appropriate notice of resignation.

Note that if a resignation occurs while the employee is on leave, additional provisions may apply (see [HR-16](#), [HR-17](#), and [HR-18](#)). For example, failure to return and to provide one full year’s contract service following a Sabbatical Leave will result in requiring the employee to pay back all salary received during the leave.

An employee who terminates in the midst of performance improvement efforts is considered as a Voluntary Termination. Note, however, that at the outset of performance improvement efforts, the supervisor should have conferred with the Human Resources Representative and the Human Resources Representative should have involved the Employee Relations Division of the Office of Human Resources, to ensure that all appropriate procedures are followed.

Graduate Assistants and Postdoctoral Scholars or Fellows who resign in the middle of an appointment are also considered to be Voluntary Terminations.

Involuntary

Upon selecting Involuntary as the termination status, the submitter will be asked to provide a termination reason from the drop-down box. The notes below provide additional resources and definitions for some of the reasons. The submitter is encouraged to add a note in the Comments section of the form to clarify their choice of reason, if appropriate.

Tenure Denial

Employees in academic appointments on the tenure track are reviewed to assess their progress toward tenure in their 2nd and 4th years of employment, and then are reviewed during their 6th year to determine whether permanent academic tenure will be granted. Employees on the tenure track are considered to be provisional during this entire period, and may be terminated at any point during the period or following the 6th year review. (See [HR-23](#) and P&T Administrative Guidelines, [Appendix K](#))

Prior to processing a termination action in Workflow, the work unit must have completed and fully documented the appropriate review procedures. Notification of a tenure denial must occur at least one year in advance of the termination date, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs must be notified. A tenure denial at the end of the 4th year review, for example, would result in termination on June 30th of the subsequent academic year.

The work unit must record the results of the review in the Human Resources Database, using the function UTNA. Then, on or before the stipulated termination date, the work unit must process a termination action in Workflow. The termination reason will be listed as Tenure Denial.

Other Involuntary Terminations

Before making a decision to dismiss an employee in a staff or technical service appointment, the supervisor/manager must consult with his/her Human Resources Representative, who will then, as appropriate, confer with the Employee Relations Division of the Office of Human Resources. It is the Human Resources Representative's responsibility for ensuring that appropriate procedures have been followed, and for obtaining appropriate administrative concurrences, prior to an employee being informed that his or her employment is being terminated.

For an involuntary termination of an employee in an academic appointment, the Human Resources Representative or Dean, depending upon the circumstances, may also confer with the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

If the matter involves a Graduate Assistant or Fellow/Trainee, or a Postdoctoral Scholar/Fellow, the work area may wish to confer with the Graduate School prior to taking action.

For staff appointments not included in a bargaining unit, see [HR-34](#) and [HR-78](#). For all appointments included in a bargaining unit, reference the applicable labor agreement. For employees in academic appointments, see [HR-23](#).

Layoff

Employees who have been informed by management that their appointment will end due to restructuring or financial exigency, and who have not been recalled during their personal recall eligibility period, will be terminated with Layoff as the Termination Type and Termination Reason.

Prior to such a termination, the Human Resources Representative must ensure that all appropriate procedures and notifications have been done in accord with applicable policies and labor agreements.

Note that non-renewal of fixed-term appointments, of a Graduate Assistantship or Postdoctoral appointment are not layoffs and the individual in such situations are not eligible for layoff benefits.

RESOURCES

General information can be accessed at the following home page addresses:

- [Office of Human Resources](#) - (human resources matters)
- [Penn State](#) - (services and facilities)
- [Faculty and Staff Services Quick Reference](#) - (quick reference link) [Travis, that link is www.psu.edu/ur/facstaff.html]

[HR-5](#), Regular and Non-regular University Employees (provisions concerning transfer from a full-time position to a wage position, and for payoff of unused earned-time hours)

[HR-16](#), Leave of Absence Without Salary (provisions for failure to return to active service)

[HR-17](#), Sabbatical Leave of Absence (provisions for failure to return to active service)

[HR-18](#), Graduate Study Leave of Absence (provisions for failure to return to active service)

[HR-23](#), Promotion and Tenure (notice of non-reappointment and termination)

[HR-25](#), Emeritus Rank

[HR-34](#), Employment Conditions for Staff Employees (probationary period provisions; disposition of unused Vacation and/or Sick Leave; layoff)

[HR-44](#), Effective Date of Termination

[HR-50](#), Use of Accumulated Vacation at Time of Resignation or Retirement, or Upon Completion of a Fixed-Term I Appointment

[HR-52](#), Resignation from University Employment

[HR-53](#), Deceased Employee's Final Salary Payment

[HR-54](#), Continuation of Group Insurance After Age 60, Age 65, or After Retirement or Death

[HR-55](#), Things to Know When Leaving University Employment

[HR-57](#), How to Determine Effective Dates of Employment or Termination for Employees Paid Monthly (except Academic)

[HR-70](#), Dismissal of Tenured or Tenure-Eligible Faculty Members

[HR-78](#), Staff Employee Failure to Meet Acceptable Standards of Performance

[HRG-14](#), Termination of Employment Near December-New Year Holidays

[PR-2](#), Personnel Paid Monthly (termination provisions)

[PR-4](#), Bi-weekly Payroll (termination provisions)

[PR-6](#), Graduate Assistants (termination provisions)

[PR-9](#), Payment for Fractional Payroll Periods Worked and Transfers between Types of Payrolls for Non-academic Employees

[PR-10](#), Compensation of Individuals Classified as Academic or Academic Administrators (termination provisions)

Agreement between the Pennsylvania State University and Teamsters Local Union No. 8

Policies Affecting Guards and Other Security Personnel at Locations Other Than University Park

Policies Affecting OPEIU

Promotion and Tenure Administrative Guidelines, Appendix K at <http://www.psu.edu/dept/vprov/promotion.htm>

Workflow Guide for the Termination Process: <http://guides.ais.psu.edu/workflow/>

GURU: <http://guru.psu.edu>

Office of Human Resources: <http://www.ohr.psu.edu>
814-863-3186

Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs: <http://www.psu.edu/dept/vprov>
814-863-7494

Student Health Insurance: <http://www.sa.psu.edu/uhs/basics/insurance.cfm>
84-865-7467

Graduate School: <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu>
814-865-2516