

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

ADMINISTRATIVE TERMINATIONS (DUE TO POSITION ELIMINATION)

Why are administrative position eliminations happening now?

WIU is undergoing personnel reductions due to demonstrable enrollment reduction. The position elimination is considered a permanent reduction.

What rule guides the position elimination process for administrative employees?

The Western Illinois University Board of Trustees Regulations II.B.10.b and c govern employment procedures for administrative employees. There is no specific position elimination regulation for administrative employees. Therefore, the elimination of an administrative position is considered a termination without cause.

How much notice will be given?

Administrative employees will receive immediate notice of termination.

Can I appeal the termination without cause/position elimination?

No. Terminations without cause may not be appealed.

Do terminated administrative employees receive severance pay?

Yes. Per WIU Board of Trustees Regulation II.B.10.c, the severance pay amount will be based on the employee's length of service.

How is severance pay calculated?

Severance pay is calculated by multiplying the employee's monthly salary by the number of months of severance provided in the Regulations and allowed under Illinois law. Severance pay will have applicable taxes withheld but will not be counted towards earned income with the State Universities Retirement System (SURS).

What opportunities exist for reemployment?

Individuals may apply and be considered for any open positions for which they are qualified.

BENEFITS

How are insurance benefits affected by a termination?

Insurance coverage for administrative employees who are terminated on a permanent basis shall be terminated at midnight on the employee's last day of employment.

An employee will be eligible to continue health, dental, and vision coverage including dependent coverage under COBRA. Under COBRA and pursuant to Illinois Department of

Central Management Services (CMS) policies, employees have the option to continue coverage for eighteen (18) months by paying both the employer and employee premiums for that coverage plus 2% (102% of the cost of insurance). Learn more at:

<https://cms.illinois.gov/benefits/stateemployee/cobra.html>

Health insurance can also be purchased in the marketplace. Government Health Plans are those created and mandated by the Affordable Care Act. Learn more about Government Plans at: governmenthealthinsurance.com/. A termination without cause constitutes a qualifying event that will entitle an individual to enroll in a marketplace plan outside of the designated enrollment period.

State life insurance coverage ends at midnight on the date of termination of employment. MetLife will mail the employee a form upon termination of employment which may be returned to them to continue the life insurance policy privately. For questions regarding the life insurance policy, please contact MetLife at (800) 880-6394.

How are SURS retirement benefits affected by a termination?

Employees who are terminated on a permanent basis can elect to have their retirement contributions remain with SURS or elect to receive a lump-sum payout. Payout elections are administered directly by the [SURS office](#).

If an employee has had a retirement counseling session with SURS within the past year, will the employee be able to meet with SURS again because of these extenuating circumstances?

Yes. Employees may schedule another appointment. Employees must contact SURS directly at (800) 275-7877.

How long does non-payable sick leave balance count towards additional SURS service credit?

Non-payable sick leave can be counted for additional SURS service credit for up to 60 days after termination. SURS does not consider an employee to be terminated until 120 days have passed from the effective date of the termination.

If an employee chooses to take a separation refund from SURS for retirement contributions and later returns to work or becomes employed with another SURS employer, can the employee select a new retirement plan?

No. The plan election is a one-time, irrevocable election. Whatever plan an employee selected when originally employed will be the plan that remains should an employee be employed again within the SURS system.

What happens to accrued benefits?

Vacation Leave

Employees will receive pay for any accrued vacation leave balance as of the date of separation from service.

Employees who are reemployed by the university will not have vacation leave balances restored. However, the service year that establishes rate of accrued leave earning will be determined by adding all previous periods of State service which qualified for earning accrued leave.

Sick Leave

Unused Payable Sick Leave (earned from January 1, 1984–December 31, 1997)

Employees will receive pay for half of the payable sick leave balance as of the date of separation of service. The other half will be considered non-payable sick leave.

Non-Payable Sick Leave

According to the State Universities Civil Service System Merit Board Policy IV.C.4, a former employee who separates in good standing and returns to employment within two years, shall have former accrued Sick Leave restored.

WIU will keep a record for two years of non-payable sick leave for all employees who are terminated.

Unused, Unpaid Sick Leave (if retiring)

If an employee elects to retire, the non-payable sick leave will be reported to SURS at that time. Employees will receive additional service credit for any unused and unpaid sick leave earned in accordance with an employer's generally applicable sick leave policy *if the retirement annuity begins within 60 days* after termination of employment covered by SURS or one of the other systems subject to the Illinois Retirement System Reciprocal Act.

<u>Full Work Days</u>	<u>Additional Service Credit</u>
20-59 Days	¼ Year
60-119 Days	½ Year
120-179 Days	¾ Year
180 or more Days	1 Year

When are sick or vacation payouts received?

Eligible sick or vacation leave payouts will be processed in the next payroll cycle following separation.

Are terminated employees eligible for unemployment compensation?

Yes. Employees who receive notice of termination without cause may apply for unemployment benefits with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) at ides.illinois.gov. Please note that the University does not process applications or have the ability to inform an impacted employee of any actual benefit entitlement. Questions should be directed to IDES at (800) 244-5631.

Is employee assistance counseling available?

Yes. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential service free to all benefits-eligible University employees and their families. The EAP provides professional assistance to individuals experiencing a range of personal and work-related concerns. The EAP offers confidential counseling, legal support, financial information, and personalized resources as part of the coverage. To contact the EAP, call (800) 851-1714 or go to <https://www.guidanceresources.com/groWeb/login/login.xhtml> and use the member Web ID code: StateofIllinois.

What happens to the tuition waiver benefit for an employee or their child?

If the employee taking a class is in active status on the first day of the class, the waiver will continue until the end of the semester.

If the employee has a child enrolled at WIU, the tuition waiver will continue until the end of the semester. Eligibility for the 50% tuition waiver benefit is conditioned upon the parent being employed as of the first day of the academic term (in accordance with the academic calendar where the student is enrolled) for which the tuition waiver benefit would apply. In the event a child loses eligibility through a parent's separation from employment during any given academic term or semester, the benefit shall not be rescinded for the duration of that term or semester. However, no future benefits may be extended until such time as the employee regains eligibility status.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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