The following types of employee absences from duty are permissible. With the exception of educational leave, voluntary shared leave, and FMLA leave, the employee must use the standard College leave request form to notify his/her supervisor of upcoming leave and to report the hours taken.

A. Sick Leave

1. Benefit Accrual

Sick leave benefits accrue to permanent full-time College employees from the first day of employment at a rate of one (1) day per month of employment per contract year. Permanent part-time accrue sick leave on a prorated basis. No sick leave benefits accrue under contracts for extra service or temporary employees.

2. Maximum Accrual

Earned sick leave benefits accrue to eligible employees without limit.

3. Advancing Sick Leave Days

Sick leave is credited as earned. Such leave may be advanced with approval of the appropriate vice president up to the number of days the employee would accrue in that contract year from the period of the illness forward. This does not apply to employees who are on probation. In the event a departing employee has a deficit relative to accumulated sick leave, that amount is deducted from the final check.

4. Uses of Sick Leave Include:

a. Illness of the employee.

b. Medical or dental appointments.

c. Parental leave, to the extent of accrued benefits, to be applied at the beginning of the leave period.

d. Illness of member of immediate family (defined as spouse, child, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, sister, brother, grandparent, grandchild) or other dependents living in the household.

e. Death in the immediate family.
B. Parental Leave

Parental leave without pay may be granted to any full-time employee upon the birth or adoption of a child and will not exceed six (6) months without a physician's recommendation.

C. Military Leave

Full-time employees who are members of the US Armed Forces may be granted leave with pay for mandatory active-duty training during the contract period, including summer encampment, maneuvers, and/or training. Such leave may not exceed ninety-six (96) working hours per year. The employee must inform his/her supervisor immediately of the need for military leave.

D. Required Court Appearance

An employee is granted leave of absence with pay for court appearance when subpoenaed as a witness.

E. Jury Duty

An employee is granted leave of absence with pay when called for jury duty. An employee called for jury duty must immediately report such notice to his/her supervisor.

F. Faculty Incidental Leave

There may be limited occasions when emergencies, personal and business affairs, or related circumstances may require that faculty be granted leave while their classes are in session. For these occasions, full-time faculty may be granted up to a maximum of 18 hours of incidental leave per fiscal year. Incidental leave is not cumulative. Requests for such leave will be approved by the department chair or divisional dean as appropriate. Advanced approval is required for use of incidental leave except for emergencies. The College must incur no expense in arranging incidental leave for faculty.

G. Educational Leave

1. Educational leave with pay is defined as release time from duties and/or time normally required of full-time faculty and staff employees in carrying out their
responsibilities with continuation of full salary. Educational leave is for a specified period of more than three weeks.

2. The purposes of educational leave with pay are:

   a. To provide support for advanced work for the mutual benefit of the individual and the College.

   b. To assist the College in meeting Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and/or other regulatory/accrediting agency requirements.

   c. To enable employees to broaden their areas of competence to better meet the needs of the College.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible for educational leave with pay, the employee must be full time (9-, 10-, 11-, and 12-month basis) and not currently on probation; must have been employed by the College for at least three years; must not have received educational leave in the last three years; must be under contract to the College for the next academic year; and must complete the Educational leave application which is available in Human Resources. Educational leave will not exceed one university semester per calendar year.

4. Administrative Procedures

   a. An educational leave application form shall be submitted at least 90 days prior to the commencement date of the leave.

   b. The application shall be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor and shall proceed through higher level supervision to the appropriate dean/vice president. Disposition of the request will be made expeditiously, and the employee will be kept informed.

   c. Applications submitted by deans/vice presidents to the President’s Executive Council shall contain the following:

      (1) An application form stating the period of time for which leave is requested and a detailed description of the proposed activity.
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(2) Recommendation from the department chair for faculty applicants or the immediate supervisor of staff personnel.

(3) Recommendation from the division dean for faculty and/or other supervisors or vice presidents/President as appropriate for faculty and staff personnel.

d. The Executive Council shall consider the request for leave. If it determines that the leave would be beneficial and in the best interests of the College, the leave request will be taken to the Campus Affairs Committee, and upon recommendation, will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for its consideration.

e. A copy of all applications shall be given to the Director of Human Resources who will be responsible for compliance with policy and procedures.

f. If leave with pay is granted by the Board of Trustees, the Director of Human Resources shall notify the employee in writing within ten (10) working days subsequent to the Board meeting.

g. The educational leave agreement contract must be signed by the leave recipient and the College.

h. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final.

i. Selection Criteria

Highest priority will be given to those pursuing educational leave in order to (these activities are not ranked in priority order) meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools criteria and/or other regulatory/ accrediting agency requirements; or acquire training for new instructional assignments. If funds are limited, applicants who have never received leave with pay will be given preference over those who have been granted such leave previously.

j. Verification

Within thirty (30) calendar days of completion of the requested activity, the employee must provide verification of satisfactory completion. Official transcripts must be sent to Human Resources verifying any academic work completed. Such transcripts will become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file. All recipients of leave with pay shall provide a one-page
written summary of the activity. This is required for educational activities as well as other projects.

k. Compliance with Agreement

An employee who fails to honor the agreement will be required to repay the amount expended for the educational leave with pay. If the employee fulfills a portion of the agreement, repayment will be on a prorated basis. The employee will be required to work for Gaston College at least one fiscal/academic year immediately succeeding completion of the agreement, except that the Board may waive this requirement at its sole discretion. The immediately preceding stipulation is designed for major activities encompassing several weeks of study/activity and does not apply to activities of brief duration. The Director of Human Resources will submit an annual report to the President’s Executive Council on the results of each participant’s activities, and will report annually to the Board of Trustees on the faculty/staff participation in leave-with-pay.

l. Availability of Funds

All commitments by Gaston College for leave-with-pay are subject to adequate funding. The College reserves the right to cancel any and all prior agreements if funds are not available.

m. Educational Leave-With Pay-Partial

(1) Employees of the College may take courses or other training during their normal work hours under certain conditions. These employees may be excused from their job responsibilities for brief periods to attend class with prior approval by the appropriate vice president or President as based upon the recommendation of the immediate supervisor and/or the respective dean or director. Two classes may be taken during working hours in one calendar year (January - December) with the supervisor's permission. The class should enhance one's ability to perform new or changing job requirements, a refresher course directly related to the job, or to upgrade skills. More than two classes may be taken per year if the supervisor approves and time is made up. If supervisor denies the request, the employee may appeal to the next level. Classes may be taken during the lunch hour (lunch hour being 11 a.m., 12 noon, or 1 p.m.) without the supervisor’s approval or making up the time.
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(2) This educational leave policy does not apply to job-related training such as workshops, seminars, and courses that are required or requested by administration or supervision. (examples: computer training, facilitator training workshops and courses or other job-specific activities which may be for three weeks or more.) These types of training activities would need only the supervisor’s approval and funding. Trustee approval would not be required.

n. Administrative Procedures

Staff employees shall be eligible for partial educational leave from their duties for educational purposes, under the following guidelines:

(1) Release time for partial educational leave must be authorized by the immediate supervisor taking into consideration the operation of the department, students, and other employees.

(2) Procedures for partial educational leave shall consist of a written request to the supervisor thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the class.

H. Vacation Leave

1. Vacation leave is earned by full-time non-instructional employees consistent with state policy according to the schedule below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Aggregate Service</th>
<th>Days Granted Each Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 years</td>
<td>11.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 but less than 5 years</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 but less than 10 years</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 but less than 15 years</td>
<td>19.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 but less than 20 years</td>
<td>22.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years or more</td>
<td>25.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Any absences beyond accumulated vacation leave are deducted from the salary for that pay period.
I. Child Involvement Leave

1. Child involvement leave promotes employee involvement in the education of youth and employee assistance to schools. Employees may take leave under this policy to:

   a) meet with a teacher or administrator of any elementary, middle, or high school or child care program authorized to operate under the laws of the state of North Carolina concerning the employee's child/children, step-child/children, or child/children over whom the employee has custody;

   b) attend, by any employee without regard to parental status, any function sponsored by the school or child care program as defined above, so long as the function is associated with a program which is a part or supplement to the school's or day care's program;

   c) perform; by any employee without regard to parental status, school approved volunteer work approved by a teacher, school administrator, or program administrator.

2. Amount of Leave

   a) Full-time permanent and probationary employees are granted eight (8) hours of paid child involvement leave on January 1 of each year regardless of the number of children or the parental status of the employee. Permanent part-time employees will receive a prorated amount of child involvement leave on January 1 of each year.

   b) New employees are credited with the appropriate prorated amount of leave immediately upon their employment. Employees who transfer to other state agencies which utilize this policy may transfer any balance of the unused hours of leave to the new agency. Leave not taken in a calendar year will be forfeited. Employees are not entitled to payment for this leave upon separation from the College.

3. Approval of Leave

   Leave request forms must be completed in advance through regular supervisory channels and should be marked to note the use of Child Involvement Leave. Employees must schedule and coordinate leave requests so that classes and
student needs will be covered. The College must incur no expense in arranging child involvement leave for its employees.

J. Holidays

Except as may be otherwise approved by the Board, full-time non-instructional employees are granted fifteen (15) paid holidays each fiscal year, the dates of which are determined by the President. To provide for essential college operations during holiday periods, some employees may be required to work on holidays.

K. Recognition of the Diversity of Religious Holidays

Gaston College acknowledges the diversity among religions and respects the rights of individuals to participate in the recognized holidays of the religion of their choice. Whenever possible, the College will enable staff and faculty to participate in recognized holidays of their religions when the dates of such holidays do not coincide with the college-adopted holiday schedule. This participation will be enabled to the extent to which there is no additional cost to the College is doing so, and with assurance that the employees' duties at the College are fully covered.

L. Transfer of Leave

1. Accumulated sick leave is transferred by all College employees who leave the College and are subsequently employed by another state agency or organization of North Carolina. Accumulated vacation leave for non-instructional employees may be transferred as well, dependent upon the policy of the (North Carolina) state agency with which the departing employee will be employed.

2. Persons beginning employment with Gaston College will transfer in accumulated sick leave from other state agencies or organizations (North Carolina). Up to 30 days of accumulated vacation leave may be transferred from the former place of state employment (North Carolina).

M. Voluntary Shared Leave

1. Purpose

Prolonged medical conditions may cause employees to exhaust all available leave and therefore be placed on leave-without-pay. Voluntary shared leave provides an opportunity for employees to assist another affected by a medical
condition that requires absence from duty for a prolonged period of time resulting in possible loss of income due to lack of accumulated leave.

2. Policy

In cases of a prolonged medical condition, an employee may apply for or be nominated to become a recipient of leave transferred from the vacation and/or sick leave account of another employee within the College. For purposes of this policy, medical condition is defined as the medical condition of an employee or his/her spouse, parents, children, or other dependents (including step and in-law relationships) which is likely to require an employee's absence from duty for a prolonged period, generally considered to be at least 20 consecutive workdays. If an employee has had previous random absences for the same condition that has caused excessive absences, or if the employee has had a previous, but different, prolonged medical condition within the last twelve months, the college may make an exception to the 20-day period. The intent of this policy is to allow one employee to assist another in case of a prolonged medical condition that result in exhaustion of all earned leave.

3. Guidelines:

   a. A prospective recipient may make application for voluntary shared leave at such time as medical evidence is available to support the need for leave beyond the employee's available accumulated leave.

   b. Participation in this program is limited to 1,040 hours (prorated for part-time employees), either continuously or, if for the same condition, on a recurring basis.

   c. Subject to the maximum of 1,040 hours, the number of hours of leave an employee can receive is equal to the projected recovery or treatment period, less the employee's combined vacation and sick leave balance at the beginning of the recovery and treatment period. The employee must exhaust all available leave before using donated leave.

   d. At the expiration of the medical condition, as determined by the College, any unused leave in the recipient's donated leave account will be treated as follows:
(1) The recipient's vacation and sick leave account balance will not exceed a combined total of 40 hours (prorated for part-time employees).

(2) Any additional unused donated leave will be returned to the donor(s) on a prorata basis and credited to the leave account from which it was donated. Fractions of one hour will not be returned to an individual donor.

e. If a recipient separates due to resignation, death, or retirement from the College, participation in the program ends. Donated leave will be returned to donor(s) on a pro-rata basis.

f. A donor may contribute vacation and/or sick leave to another employee.

g. In addition to the above guidelines, the State Board of Community Colleges adopted Article 2 of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes (ratified House Bill 432 and 25 NCC 01E.1300, April 10, 2003) to allow community college employees to share leave voluntarily with an immediate family member defined as an employee of a community college, public school, or State agency; and, community colleges, public schools, and State agencies shall permit eligible employees to receive leave. For the purposes of this guideline, the term "immediate family member" means a spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild. The term also includes the step-, half-, and in-law relationships. (Revised: 11/24/03)

N. Disability Leave

The College complies with the guidelines of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina with regard to short-term and long-term disability benefits. These guidelines are detailed in the retirement system booklet which is provided each employee and is available in Human Resources.

O. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

1. Full-time college employees who have been employed by the College for at least 12 months and who worked at least 1,040 hours (half-time) during the previous 12-month period are entitled to a total of 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:
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a. For the birth of a child and to care for the child after birth, provided the leave is taken within a 12-month period following birth;

b. For the employee to care for a child placed with the employee for adoption, provided the leave is taken within a 12-month period following adoption;

c. For the employee to care for the employee's child, spouse, or parent, where that child, spouse, or parent has a serious health condition; or

d. For an employee with a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position.

2. All sick leave and vacation leave must be exhausted by the employee prior to his/her taking FMLA leave. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform his/her supervisor in advance of the intent to take FMLA leave. At the end of the FMLA leave, the employee will be reinstated in the same position held when the leave began or in a position of like pay, grade, and benefits.

P. Bereavement Leave

Purpose

1. To provide eligible faculty and staff of Gaston College with salary continuance during periods of absence from work for bereavement due to the death of an immediate family member. This leave shall be used before the use of any other leave and shall not be considered as annual leave or sick leave. It is not cumulative.

2. For the purpose of this policy, immediate family is defined as: father, mother, son or daughter, wife, husband, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, comparable in-laws and step-parents/children, legal guardian; or any person who was a member of the employee’s established household.
3. Two days of leave will be granted to attend or make arrangements for a funeral. If travel for an out-of-town funeral is 200 miles or more and additional time is needed, sick leave may be used with approval from the employee’s immediate supervisor. Employee must be in “pay status” in order to receive paid bereavement leave.