Separation from Employment

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<th>Section: Employment</th>
<th>Policy Number: 125</th>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible Office: HR/HR Services</td>
<td>Effective Date: 04/01/01</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Revised: 10/01/02; 07/13/03</td>
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<td>Clarified: 01/01/10</td>
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Categories of Separation

Voluntary Termination: This is separation from the University initiated by the employee. This can be the result of resignation or retirement.

- **Resignation**: This occurs when the employee leaves his or her employment at the University on his or her own initiative. The University expects employees to give a minimum of two weeks notice of separation; however, a greater notice period is preferred for administrators. Failure to report to work or return after a leave of absence may be interpreted by the University as a resignation.

- **Retirement**: This is voluntary separation by an employee who meets all of the University’s retirement eligibility criteria. An employee is eligible to retire when he or she is at least 55 years of age, and he or she has at least 10 years of full-time service at St. John’s, and his or her combined age and years of full-time University service equal 75 years or more.

Involuntary Termination: This is separation of employment initiated by the University. Involuntary terminations may be the result of University-initiated reductions, discharge, or other reasons.

- **University-initiated Reductions**: Some reasons for a reduction include reorganization, position redesign, lack of work, lack of funds, and site relocation. The University’s policy on severance pay can be found in the Benefits section, policy #624.

- **Discharge**: This is termination of employment for cause. Reasons for discharging an employee may include, but are not limited to, misconduct, unsatisfactory work performance, absenteeism, insubordination, violations of University policy or rules, dishonesty, illegal acts, conflict of interest, or any act deemed inconsistent with the University’s mission. The decision to discharge an employee is a serious one and requires prior consultation with HR Services. For the University’s policy on Corrective Action, see policy #702 in the Employee Relations section.

Supervisor’s Responsibilities

When an employee separates from the University, whether as a voluntary or involuntary termination, the employee’s supervisor has certain standard responsibilities in the separation process. Supervisors are required to:

- Complete a Personnel Change Form (PCF) (including the employee’s accrued vacation balance) and forward it to HR Services as soon as a date of separation is established.

- For involuntary terminations, prepare a Notice of Discharge to be given to the employee upon termination. (Please contact HR Services for information to be included in the notification.)
Retrieve any applicable computer and telecommunication equipment (cell phone, pager, laptop, radio, etc.), and cancel email accounts and logins. Retrieve keys, ID cards, parking passes, and other University property that can allow the employee to gain access to areas that are restricted following termination.

Remind the employee that Tuition Remission terminates on the last day of employment, unless the employee is a qualifying retiree.

Remind the employee that all computer loans must be paid back prior to terminating from the University.

Inform the employee that health insurance coverage ceases at the end of the month in which the employee terminates. Make the employee aware that the Benefits office will be in contact with him or her regarding options for continuation of coverage under COBRA or a retiree plan, as applicable.

**Status of Benefits**

Upon separation from University employment, employees may be eligible for certain benefits, as described below. In the case of retirement, refer to policy #620, Benefits for Retired Employees.

**Vacation**: Upon separation from employment, employees will be paid for the cash value of any unused accrued vacation time. An employee will not be paid for vacation time that has not accrued as of the date of termination, and to which the employee is not otherwise entitled. Unused sick time, personal time and holidays have no cash value.

**Health Insurance**: Employees and their spouse/dependents enrolled in a University-sponsored medical and/or dental plan are notified of their rights to continue coverage under COBRA upon separation from employment.

**Life Insurance**: Employees have the option to convert their group life insurance policy to an individual policy upon termination.

**Tuition Remission**: Benefits cease for employees and their spouse/children upon termination of employment. The amount of tuition will be prorated for the semester.

**Retirement Plan**: Employees have several options upon separation from employment, including leaving their accumulated balance in the current account, rolling over the balance into another qualified plan or into an IRA, and making a cash withdrawal. Refer to policy #607, Retirement Plans, for more detailed information or contact the Benefits Office for the plan documents.

**Long Term Care Insurance**: Upon separation from employment, participants who were enrolled can continue coverage.