ENTITIES TO WHICH THIS POLICY APPLIES:

East Georgia College
East Georgia College Statesboro

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Shared Sick Leave Program is to provide a means for East Georgia College employees to donate paid sick leave to a leave pool to be used by fellow employees who are eligible for and require leave while experiencing a life-threatening or emergency medical condition as defined, and which has caused, or is likely to cause, the employee to take leave without pay.

POLICY:

Employees will be given the opportunity to donate a specified number of hours of sick leave from their sick leave accounts to East Georgia College's leave pool during the annual open enrollment period for other benefits. The following provisions shall apply:

Only regular benefits eligible employees who have been employed in a benefits eligible position and has completed the East Georgia College provisional period upon enrollment shall be eligible to participate as either a contributor or recipient.

To contribute or receive leave under this program, an employee shall be required to enroll in the pool during the annual open enrollment period established by the Board of Regents.

Any unused shared sick leave not used by a recipient for the catastrophic illness or injury will be forfeited to the Shared Leave pool.

East Georgia College will designate a Shared Leave Administrator and appoint a committee to review and respond to requests for use of leave from the pool.
A recipient cannot receive shared sick leave with other benefits. (SSI, Disability, Workers Compensation, etc.)

Eligibility for participation shall end upon termination of employment.

Funding limitations may impact eligibility and participation.

Participation in shared leave is voluntary.

East Georgia College will consider flexibility in this policy in rare and exceptional circumstances involving pandemic emergencies.

This program shall be subject to an annual review and confirmation of continuation.

**Donation of Leave**

Employees will be given the opportunity to donate a specified number of hours of sick leave (in eight (8) hour increments) from their sick leave accounts to the Shared Leave pool during the annual open enrollment period for other benefits by completing a *Donor Transfer Certification form*. The Shared Leave will be transferred to the Shared Leave pool at the same time other benefit elections are effective (normally January 1). An employee who donates leave must retain a combined total of forty (40) hours of leave in his/her own annual and sick leave accounts (pro-rated for part-time employees).

Enrollment in the sick leave pool shall only be allowed during the open enrollment periods conducted during the months of October and November of each year. No employee shall be denied membership in the sick leave pool if the membership criteria are met. A participating employee shall not be allowed to donate to the pool any unused or unpaid sick leave from the employee’s personal account at the time of separation from the University System of Georgia, including retirement.

The employee will continue to accrue sick leave during their absence as long as they are paid at least one half of a monthly salary.

**Eligibility for Benefit:**

In order to be eligible to receive Shared Leave, the employee must:
be a member of the leave pool, and

have completed the initial provisional period of employment, and

provide certification from a licensed physician of a life-threatening or emergency medical condition, and

have exhausted all sick and annual leave (or provide credible medical evidence that he or she will have exhausted all sick and annual leave before the medical condition is resolved).

**Termination of Membership:**

An employee may withdraw from the pool at any time by sending a written request for withdrawal to the Human Resources Officer. Any leave contributed to the pool prior to withdrawal shall be forfeited. When a participating employee withdraws the maximum number of hours for which he/she is eligible, his/her membership in the pool will automatically terminate. The maximum withdrawal amount during a calendar year is 480 hours (12 weeks). To re-enroll, the employee will be subject to the initial enrollment requirements for membership. When a sick leave pool member is eligible for workers' compensation, unemployment, disability or retirement benefits, etc., he/she shall **not** be granted sick leave pool credits.

**Shared Sick Leave Committee:**

The committee will consist of one staff member from Human Resources, one faculty member, and one staff member from a work unit other than Human Resources.

**Application of Benefits:**

An eligible employee may request donated leave by completing the [Donated Leave Request Form](#), obtaining a completed [Physician’s Certification Form](#) and submitting these documents to the Donated Leave Certification Committee in care of Human Resources. If the employee is not capable of making application on his or her own behalf, a personal representative, having documented power of attorney for the employee, may make written application on behalf of the employee by completing the [Donated Leave Request Form](#), obtaining a completed [Physician’s Certification Form](#) and submitting these documents to the Donated Leave Certification Committee in care of Human Resources.
A potential leave recipient may request up to 160 hours of Shared Leave at one time, and may make up to two additional requests for Shared Leave within a calendar year, for a maximum total of 480 hours per year within a five (5) year period. The requests may be consecutive.

Confidentiality:

Any medical information provided to the Shared Leave Certification Committee, will remain confidential and will not be shared except with employees in Human Resources on a need-to-know basis. Potential leave recipients, their representatives and Shared leave committee members must refrain from using institutional e-mail to solicit leave by revealing a medical condition, as e-mailing of medical information may violate HIPAA privacy guidelines. (Added from UGA)

Approval Process:

Each request will be reviewed by the Shared Leave Certification Committee. The Chief Human Resources Officer, or his or her designee, will appoint these committee members for a renewable term of one (1) year. The committee member from Human Resources or his or her designee will carry out the administrative functions of the committee. If any member of the Shared Leave Certification Committee is from the potential leave recipient’s department, that committee member will be replaced by an alternate, designated by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

If any committee member(s) is unavailable to perform the functions of the committee due to illness, vacation, or other reason, or is unable provide a timely decision for any given applicant, the Chief Human Resources Officer, or his or her designee(s), will serve as substitute ad hoc member(s) of the committee. The committee’s decision to approve or disapprove a request for Shared Leave will be by simple majority vote and may be the result of communication by email, telephone, or other means in lieu of meeting together in one location.

If the request is approved, the Shared Leave Committee will notify the Shared Leave Coordinator (a designated employee within the Human Resources Department). The Shared Leave Coordinator will notify the applicant (or the personal representative who applied on behalf of the employee) within five (5) working days after the date the completed request for Shared Leave is received by the committee (or the date that the institution makes changes to these policies or procedures, if that date is later) that:

the request has been approved; and
the employee may begin drawing leave from the pool, and

if the employee has entered the status of leave without pay, the approved Shared Leave may be substituted retroactively to cover the period of leave without pay.

Or the request has been denied; and the reason for the denial

**Appeal**

Requests which have been denied may be appealed in writing to the Vice President of Fiscal Affairs.

East Georgia College follows the policy statement as passed by the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia (Shared Sick Leave Program located in the Human Resource Administrative Practice Manual).