



# Winter Recess Leave, 2.6.55

## Interim College Policy

Applies to: Staff

**Responsible Office**

**Human Resources**

### POLICY STATEMENT

The college provides an annual Winter Recess from December 26 through December 31 each year. This college-wide period of reduced operations begins at 11:59 p.m. on the day following the observed Christmas Day holiday and concludes at 11:59 p.m. on the day preceding the observed New Year’s Day holiday. These dates are designated annually by the Office of Human Resources.

While the majority of operational units will close during this time, certain employees in critical service roles may be required to work during the recess to maintain essential operations. Critical service areas include safety and security, utilities supporting college facilities and properties, law enforcement and public safety, and snow removal. Members of the President’s Cabinet have the authority to identify additional employees required to work during the Winter Recess to support certain other necessary college or departmental operations or functions not listed as critical.

During the Winter Recess period, departments must implement procedures to monitor and respond to communications (e.g., voicemail, email, or other public inquiries) in a timely and appropriate manner.

### Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the college’s annual Winter Recess, observed from December 26 through December 31 each year. The Winter Recess provides an opportunity for most employees to be off work during a period of reduced campus operations and no classes, supporting employee well-being and work-life balance while ensuring essential college functions continue. This policy defines the period of reduced operations, outlines the process for determining which services must remain active, and ensures consistent and equitable application of Winter Recess leave across all departments.

### Definitions

Term	Definition

### Policy Details

- I. Winter Recess takes place December 26 through 31 each year. The days designated as Winter Recess Days are determined on a yearly basis by the Office of Human Resources.
- II. Staff members will receive paid time off hours based on their full-time equivalent (FTE) status and the number of business days during the Winter Recess. For example, staff members at 100% FTE will be granted 32 hours of paid time off in years where the recess is four days. A part-time employee with a 50% FTE would receive 16 hours of paid time off.
- III. College Holidays: Existing college holidays in December and January will remain per the [Holiday Policy, 2.6.20](#).
- IV. Winter Recess is not a weather or short-term closure. In the event of a weather or short-term closure event, consult the [Short-term Closing Policy](#).
- V. Eligibility: Regular, temporary, term and seasonal staff members who work at the time of the Winter Recess are eligible for paid time off during the recess. Seasonal employees must be in an active position at the time of the Winter Recess to be eligible.



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- A. Staff members who are on a continuous leave of absence and are *not* using paid time off, such as sick or vacation time, are not eligible for paid time off for Winter Recess.
- B. Staff members holding intermittent or contingent appointments and student employees are not eligible for Winter Recess paid time off.
- C. Faculty are not eligible. For faculty, breaks within a given semester, summer term or session, as well as any days between the end of the exam period and the beginning of the next semester or session, are considered off-duty days. Regular faculty will continue to be paid normally based on their appointment during Winter Recess because it is a scheduled break, and they will not receive a Winter Recess time off balance.
- VI. Winter recess days may only be used during the dates indicated by the college.
- VII. Participation in winter break is expected; however, the college's leadership team recognizes that there are operations that may need to be continued. The college will identify those critical and necessary operations annually.
- VIII. Eligible staff members required to work during the winter recess will be paid for that time and be offered a bank of time based on the days working during the winter recess and their full-time equivalency. Those hours may be taken at a time approved by the employee's department and Cabinet member and no later than December 23 of the following year. Hours not utilized by that date will be forfeited.
- IX. Use of winter recess days may not cause an employee to exceed forty hours in one week.
- X. If an employee is schedule to work on a winter recess day, but fails to report to work for any reason, he/she shall not receive the pay or hours for winter recess days outline in this policy and may be subject to discipline.
- XI. Winter recess days do not accumulate or carry-over, and are not eligible for any cash payout at time of separation, for any reason, from the college.

### PROCEDURE

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- I. The college observes an annual Winter Recess from December 26–31 each year to allow most employees to be off during a time when there are no classes and reduced campus operations, and specific dates are designated each year by the Office of Human Resources.
  - II. Winter Recess time off will be automatically entered into the payroll system for eligible staff members. FMLA time will not be deducted for staff members who are on approved Family and Medical Leave and not expected to work during the Academic Winter Recess.
  - III. Work during Winter Recess
    - A. Most college employees will be off during the recess, as this period coincides with unscheduled classes and reduced campus operations. However, some services must continue during the recess. Those in critical services listed below and certain operational services identified as necessary by President Cabinet members will ensure that critical college functions are maintained.
    - B. Employees who are required to work during the recess will receive an equivalent number of hours added to their time off balance in the Payroll system.
  - IV. Critical Services.
    - A. Critical Services that will require staffing during the recess include:
      - 1. Safety and security
      - 2. Maintenance, custodial and other services for buildings, including emergency maintenance and snow and ice removal
    - B. Critical services for the purposes of Winter Recess are not the same as disaster designations (essential, alternate or standby).
  - V. Scheduling during the Winter Recess should not be treated as a snow event or emergency closure. This is a planned recess. Employees assigned to work, particularly in critical services, should be aware of their responsibilities in advance and schedules communicated as soon as they become available.
    - A. Managers of critical services should adhere to established scheduling protocols and communicate plans to employees in a timely and transparent manner.
  - V. Other Necessary Operations



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- A. Some operational roles not formally categorized as “critical services” may still need to continue during the Winter Recess. These are referred to as necessary operations. Necessary operations include work and services that cannot be paused without disrupting critical business cycles, academic processes or public-facing functions.
  - B. Examples of necessary operations may include:
    - 1. Urgent application processing
    - 2. Time-sensitive financial transactions
    - 3. Ongoing facility maintenance
    - 4. Event commitments
    - 5. IT help desk support
    - 6. HR and Payroll services
  - C. These operations require a staffing plan or on-call coverage to ensure continuity.
- VI. Operational Staffing Plan Details
- A. Each President’s Cabinet member must develop a high-level staffing plan that includes:
    - 1. Area and Department
    - 2. Operational service or area (e.g., Facilities, IT, HR, Admissions)
    - 3. Reason for staffing (why the work cannot pause during the recess)
    - 4. Coverage and staffing plan, which may include:
      - a. Reduced staffing: minimal staff working
      - b. Rotating schedule: shared shifts across team members
      - c. On-call coverage: staff available as needed for emergencies
    - 7. Staffing plans should be straightforward and include:
      - a. Assigned coverage
      - b. Emergency contact information
      - c. Access and communication continuity
- VII. Roles and Responsibilities for Staffing Plans
- A. President’s Cabinet Members
    - 1. President’s Cabinet members are responsible for reviewing and approving staffing plans for necessary operations continuing during the recess, as they deem appropriate.
    - 2. Submit final staffing plans for final review to the director of human resources.
    - 3. Ensure supervisors and managers are communicating staffing plan expectations by Nov. 1. After November 1, if a area/department requires additional staffing plans for necessary operations during the Winter Recess, supervisors/managers should notify employees as soon as possible to ensure adequate preparation and transparency.
  - B. Director of Human Resources
    - 1. Verify that operational services align with college guidelines and that no unnecessary work is scheduled during the recess.
    - 2. Support managers and supervisors in communicating staffing plans and expectations and responding to employee questions.
    - 3. Consult with the vice president and chief of staff on the policy and expectations for Winter Recess.
  - C. Supervisors/Managers
    - 1. Assess whether work is necessary for operational continuity or compliance with time-sensitive obligations during the Winter Recess.
    - 2. Share staffing plans with the appropriate President’s Cabinet member prior to team communication to ensure alignment and awareness.
      - a. Minimize coverage while ensuring equitable distribution of work.
      - b. Promote transparency in planning and fairness in assignments.
      - c. Balance operational needs with employee well-being.
    - 3. Coordinate with the director of human resources and the appropriate President’s Cabinet member on plans to communicate staffing expectations to affected employees no later than Nov. 1. Communication should



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follow college established protocols where applicable. After November 1, if a department requires additional staffing plans for necessary operations during the Winter Recess, supervisors/managers should notify employees as soon as possible to ensure adequate preparation and transparency.

#### VIII. HR and Payroll Processes during Winter Recess

- A. HR and Payroll are available in an emergency, as needed basis, by emailing [cotc-payroll@mail.cotc.edu](mailto:cotc-payroll@mail.cotc.edu) or is [HR@mail.cotc.edu](mailto:HR@mail.cotc.edu).
- B. For new hires to start work the first Monday after the New Year's Day holiday, they must be fully hired in Colleague (HR/Payroll system) by December 21. If they are not fully hired in the system by December 21, the start date will be the second Monday following the New Year's Day holiday.

#### IX. Using Winter Recess time off

- A. Winter Recess time off will be centrally loaded in the Payroll system for employees in an eligible position at the time the Winter Recess begins, regardless of whether they are scheduled to work during part or all of the recess period. For those not scheduled to work, the time will be applied as paid time off to reflect the days off.
- B. Vacation and other paid time off
  1. Employees who are required to work during the recess and call off must follow department call-off procedures. Winter Recess hours cannot be used for unplanned absences, and employees must use vacation or sick time.

#### C. Winter Recess Time Off Balance

1. Non-exempt employees that are required to work during the Winter Recess will need to indicate regular hours worked on their timecard and will be paid for their time worked. Exempt employees that are required to work need to notify payroll with hours worked, dates worked, and supervisor approval. By doing this, both non-exempt and exempt employees will get these hours added back to the employee's paid time off balance in the Payroll system based on the employee's full-time equivalency and the number of business days in the recess.
2. These hours will appear in the employee's time off balance in the Payroll system and will be valid for one year. Time off balances from Winter Recess for the current year must be used by December 23 of the following year.
3. Employees eligible for Winter Recess who are required to work all or part of the designated recess period may use the equivalent balance of hours at a later date. This time must be scheduled in advance of the following year's Winter Recess and approved by the employee's supervisor/manager.
4. Employees who have multiple positions with one or more eligible for the recess, the eligible positions will be combined to determine the number of hours awarded.
5. Winter Recess time will carry over in a transfer to a new job if there is no break in service and if the new position is also eligible for Winter Recess paid time off.
6. Employees who separate from the college or move to a position that is not eligible for Winter Recess paid time off will forfeit the unused time, and it will not be paid out upon departure or transfer.

#### D. Timekeeping

1. Eligible employees who work a shift during the recess should record their time using the current timekeeping process in the Payroll system. It is essential that timekeeping records accurately reflect the actual hours worked.
2. Key timekeeping practices:
  - a. Winter Recess time off may be used in increments of one-tenth of an hour (i.e., 6 minutes).
  - b. Employees should only use Winter Recess time off on days they are normally scheduled to work, up to their Full-Time Equivalency (FTE).
  - c. If an employee's usual day off coincides with a recognized Recess Day, they do not need to use Winter Recess Time Off and may save it for future use. Employees will need to take action to update their timekeeping. (See Winter Recess Time Off Balance section above.)
  - d. Before submitting timekeeping entries, employees should remove any paid time off hours that they worked.



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- e. Similarly, managers and supervisors must carefully review and approve timekeeping submissions to ensure paid time off is only applied to times the employee did not work. This helps maintain accurate records and ensures compliance with college policy.

### Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
President's Cabinet members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm staffing plan for non-critical services that are operationally necessary and provide awareness to the President, if applicable.</li> <li>2. Coordinate with managers/supervisors and the director of human resources on staffing plans necessary for the area/department and communicate to area/department by Nov. 1.</li> </ol>
Manager/Supervisor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess Operational Needs               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify services and roles required to perform operationally necessary work during the recess period, especially if those roles are not included in the above definition of "critical services."</li> <li>b) Determine minimum staffing levels to maintain continuity.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Communicate Expectations Early               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Coordinate with President's Cabinet member and the director of human resources to inform team members about recess schedules and coverage needs in advance.</li> <li>b) Supervisors and managers of critical services should adhere to established scheduling protocols and communicate plans to employees in a timely and transparent manner.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Review and Approve Winter Recess Time Off Requests               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Managers/supervisors are accountable for managing timekeeping for their teams.</li> <li>b) For employees who work over the recess, evaluate paid time off requests that use recess time off balances.</li> <li>c) Prior to approving timekeeping, ensure employees who were required to work make the proper adjustments to their Winter Recess time off usage.</li> <li>d) Prior to taking your own time off for Winter Recess, ensure that the first week of timekeeping is approved and ready for payroll processing.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Promote Equity and Fairness               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that employees working during recess have equitable access to time off later.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Coordinate Cross-Team Support               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Collaborate with other managers/supervisors to share resources or redistribute workloads if needed.</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Document Staffing Plans               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Submit finalized staffing plans in accordance with the procedure to the appropriate President's Cabinet member and the director of human resources for review and compliance tracking.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Director of Human Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Provide Policy Guidance               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Advise leaders on the Academic Winter Recess paid time off program and how it applies during recess.</li> <li>b) Provide support and interpretation of the Academic Winter Recess paid time off program.</li> <li>c) Clarify distinctions between winter recess paid time off and other policies (e.g., Weather and Short-Term Closure).</li> <li>d) Review staffing plans for non-critical services to ensure compliance with college guidelines.</li> <li>e) Collect post-recess feedback to identify areas for improvement in future policy creation and program implementation.</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Support Planning and Compliance               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide support and interpretation of the Winter Recess paid time off program.</li> <li>b) Clarify distinctions between winter recess paid time off and other policies (e.g., Weather and Short-Term Closure).</li> <li>c) Collect post-recess feedback to identify areas for improvement in future policy creation and program implementation.</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. Facilitate Communication               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Help draft and distribute official messaging about recess expectations for the unit/college using communications toolkits and website details.</li> </ol> </li> <li>10. Advise on Conflict Resolution               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Support leaders in resolving scheduling conflicts or employee concerns related to recess coverage.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>



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Position or Office	Responsibilities
	11. Evaluate and improve A. Collect feedback post recess to identify areas for improvement in future staffing plans.
Eligible Employee	1. Remove any previously requested time off during the Winter Recess. 2. Review centrally loaded Winter Recess paid time off to ensure the hours accurately reflect your schedule and any hours worked. 3. Consult with Human Resources for questions.

### Resources

Holiday Policy 2.6.20 - <https://www.cotc.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2.6.20.pdf?1624381470>

Short-term Closing and State of Emergency Policy 2.6.21 <https://www.cotc.edu/sites/main/files/file-attachments/2.6.21.pdf?1623958845>

### Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Policy guidance	Human Resources	740-755-7345	<a href="mailto:Wadley.16@mail.cotc.edu">Wadley.16@mail.cotc.edu</a> <a href="http://www.cotc.edu/hr">www.cotc.edu/hr</a>
Payroll questions	Business and Finance	740-366-9140	<a href="mailto:Cotc-payroll@mail.cotc.edu">Cotc-payroll@mail.cotc.edu</a>

### History

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