



University System of Georgia

## **STAFF HANDBOOK**

(REVISED 2013)

*This handbook is not a contract or guarantee of employment. Atlanta Metropolitan State College reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate policies, procedures, and/or benefits described in this handbook at any time, or require and/or increase contributions towards the College's benefits at its discretion and as it deems appropriate.*

<b>WELCOME FROM DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>WELCOME FROM AMSC PRESIDENT .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTIONS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.1 HISTORY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2 MISSION STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.4 ACCREDITATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5 ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE COLLEGE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.0 EMPLOYMENT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.2 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.3 ORIENTATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.4 WORK HOURS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.5 BREAKS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.6 STAFF CATEGORIES/EMPLOYMENT STATUS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.7 PROVISIONAL EMPLOYMENT PERIOD .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.8 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.9 PROMOTION, TRANSFER, AND POSITION RECLASSIFICATION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.10 RESIGNATION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.11 JOB ABANDONMENT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.12 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.13 TERMINATION, DISMISSAL, SUSPENSION, AND DEMOTION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.14 TERMINATION PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.15 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.16 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.17 POLICY ON HIV /AIDS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.18 POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS IN THE WORKPLACE ....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.19 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.20 CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.20.1 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.20.2 CREDIT CHECKS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.20.3 LOYALTY OATH.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.20.4 SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.20.5 RANDOM DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING OF HIGH RISK EMPLOYEES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.20.6 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY/RIGHT-TO-KNOW PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>21</b>

2.20.7 EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION FORM (I-9).....	21
2.20.8 IDENTIFICATION CARD .....	21
2.20.9 AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATION AND PARKING.....	21
<b>3.0 COMPENSATION PRACTICES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.1 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1.1 FEDERAL (W-4) AND STATE (G-4) INCOME TAX.....	21
3.1.2 SOCIAL SECURITY.....	21
3.1.3 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.....	21
3.1.4 GARNISHMENT OF WAGES.....	22
<b>3.2 OVERTIME/COMPENSATORY TIME .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3.3 TIME RECORDS.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3.4 PAY SCHEDULES.....</b>	<b>23</b>
3.4.1 MONTHLY PAID EMPLOYEES.....	23
3.4.2 BI-WEEKLY PAID EMPLOYEES .....	23
<b>3.5 DIRECT DEPOSIT / PAYROLL CARD .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.6 WAGES AND COMPENSATION .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>4.0 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.2 TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP).....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.3 SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4.4 LEAVE.....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.4.1 ANNUAL LEAVE .....	25
Faculty and Administrative Officers .....	26
4.4.2 SICK LEAVE.....	26
4.4.3 SICK LEAVE WITHOUT PAY .....	27
4.4.4 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE .....	27
4.4.5 MATERNITY LEAVE .....	27
4.4.6 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA).....	27
4.4.7 VOTING.....	28
4.4.8 COURT DUTY.....	28
4.4.9 MILITARY DUTY.....	28
<b>4.5 HOLIDAYS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>4.6 INSURANCE.....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.6.1 MEDICAL AND DENTAL INSURANCE PROGRAMS .....	29
4.6.2 CONSOLIDATED OMNIBUS BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT (COBRA) .....	30
4.6.3 BASIC, SUPPLEMENTAL, AND DEPENDENT LIFE INSURANCE .....	30
4.6.4 SHORT TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE .....	30
4.6.5 LONG-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE.....	30
4.6.6 FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS.....	30
4.6.7 AFLAC SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE.....	31
4.6.8 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.....	31
4.6.9 WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE.....	31
<b>4.7 RETIREMENT.....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.7.1 - 403(B) PROGRAMS.....	32
4.7.2 - 457 PROGRAMS.....	33

4.9 SECTION 125 PLAN .....	33
4.10 CREDIT UNION .....	33
<b>5.0 INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES, PROPERTY, AND EQUIPMENT....</b>	<b>33</b>
5.1 SAFETY.....	33
5.2 ISSUANCE OF KEYS .....	33
5.3 INVENTORY AND SECURITY OF COLLEGE EQUIPMENT .....	34
<b>6.0 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT .....</b>	<b>34</b>
6.1 PERSONAL CONDUCT .....	34
6.2 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY .....	35
6.3 AMOROUS RELATIONSHIPS .....	35
6.4 APPEARANCE / DRESS CODE.....	35
6.5 WORK ENVIRONMENT APPEARANCE .....	36
6.6 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES .....	36
6.7 DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY .....	37
6.8 TOBACCO/SMOKING POLICY .....	37
6.9 HARASSMENT POLICY.....	37
6.10 VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE .....	38
6.11 FIREARMS IN THE WORKPLACE .....	38
6.12 CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE .....	38
6.13 VISITORS.....	39
6.14 MAIL SERVICES .....	39
6.15 UTILIZATION OF COLLEGE EQUIPMENT .....	39
6.15.1 TELEPHONE UTILIZATION.....	39
6.15.2 COMPUTER AND NETWORK USAGE POLICY.....	39
6.16 PERSONAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES .....	39
<b>7.0 ADDITIONAL SERVICES, POLICIES AND RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>40</b>
7.1 GEORGIA OPEN RECORDS ACT.....	40
7.2 PERSONNEL FILES.....	40
7.3 INCLEMENT WEATHER .....	40
7.4 LOST AND FOUND.....	41
7.5 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR).....	41
7.6 ETHICS AND REPORTING HOTLINE .....	41
<b>8.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM.....</b>	<b>42</b>

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## WELCOME FROM DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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**ATLANTA METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE**  
1630 Metropolitan Parkway, SW Atlanta, Georgia 30310  
Office of Human Resources

Dear Employee:

Welcome to Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC). You are now part of an organization that is dedicated to excellence. Atlanta Metropolitan State College is a four-year, degree-granting institution of the University System of Georgia (USG). The college has a long tradition of teaching and service to the people in our community. Regardless of your position at the college, your unique skills and talents are vital to our on-going efforts to meet institutional goals and objectives.

This handbook is prepared to help you understand more fully employee benefits, responsibilities, and opportunities. This handbook also provides a description of the administrative policies and procedures of the college affecting your employment. Although this handbook will answer many of your questions, you may find it necessary to review a policy in complete detail. In this case, you should refer to The Policy Manual of the Board of Regents which is available in the Office of Human Resources, or online at the USG website at [www.usg.edu](http://www.usg.edu). All policies and procedures are subject to review and changes at the discretion of the Board of Regents and/or Atlanta Metropolitan State College. The information contained in this handbook does not constitute the terms of a contract of employment. The State of Georgia is an at-will-employment state and, therefore, either the college or the employee may, at any time, terminate the employment relationship with or without cause.

The Office of Human Resources functions to serve the best interest of both the employee and the college and is responsible for implementing college personnel policies. The Office of Human Resources also handles employee records, orientation, benefit information, recruiting, position classification, training, and wage and salary administration. If you need further details or guidance on any of the information to follow, unless otherwise stated, you may contact the Office of Human Resources.

Best wishes for an enlightening, pleasurable, and fulfilling experience at this exceptional institution where you can believe, begin, and become.

Sincerely,



Regina Ray Simmons  
Chief Human Resources Officer

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## WELCOME FROM AMSC PRESIDENT

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**ATLANTA METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE**  
1630 Metropolitan Parkway, SW Atlanta, Georgia 30310  
Office of the President

Dear Atlanta Metropolitan State College Employee:

I am delighted that the Office of Human Resources has updated and revised this comprehensive Staff Handbook and it is a pleasure to share it with members of the Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC) family. I encourage you to peruse this handbook carefully. It is designed to augment and facilitate your employment and to provide you with valuable resource information. Reading it is very important because the value and significance of the college is best transmitted via the work and enthusiasm exhibited by employees.

My vision for Atlanta Metropolitan State College is ***“To build an educational community focusing on excellence, where outstanding faculty members and committed staff teach and facilitate the successful academic matriculation and holistic development of all students.”*** You each help bring this vision to fruition through the excellent instruction and committed service that you provide. Please use the information in this handbook to continue to renew and improve the service and support that you provide.

Thanks for all that you do for Atlanta Metropolitan State College.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary A. McGaha". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Gary A. McGaha, Ph.D.  
President

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTIONS

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## 1.1 HISTORY

In June 1965, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia authorized a junior college for the west metropolitan area of Atlanta at an undesignated location. After a great deal of discussion, the Atlanta School Board and the Board of Regents made the decision to build the college on land adjacent to Atlanta Area Technical School, which was under the jurisdiction of the Atlanta Board of Education.

The Atlanta School Board authorized their Superintendent in February 1971 to develop a financial plan to build the new college. On October 9, 1972, the Board of Regents reconfirmed, in principle, the construction of the college. In February 1973, the Board of Regents authorized the plans and specifications for Phase I of the construction at a projected cost of \$2,000,000. Construction began on the first building in 1973 and was completed in August 1974.

The college became the thirty-first institution of the University System of Georgia and began classes in September 1974 with an initial enrollment of 504 students. The college, Atlanta Junior College, was accredited in 1976 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). During the 1976-77 academic year, construction of the Central Energy Plant was completed. In 1978-79 two multi-level academic buildings were added to the resources of the college: an academic classroom building and the college library. The 1987-1988 academic year brought the decision to change the institution's name from Atlanta Junior College to Atlanta Metropolitan College (AMC), with the permanent transition becoming effective July 1, 1988. A new Health and Physical Education Complex was completed and occupied during the 1991-92 academic year. Additionally, the Student Center was completed during the fall 2000 semester. Fall 2009, Atlanta Metropolitan College opened its first instructional site at 34 Peachtree. On May 10, 2011, the Board of Regents approved a substantive and mission change for Atlanta Metropolitan College to move from Two-year college status to that of a State college. In its December 2011 annual meeting, SACS followed this action by approving an AMSC status change from a Level I to Level II institution, which authorized Atlanta Metropolitan State College to offer four-year programs and the bachelor's degree. In spring 2012, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved the name change of Atlanta Metropolitan College to that of Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC).

## 1.2 MISSION STATEMENT

Atlanta Metropolitan State College, a unit of the University System of Georgia, focuses on excellence, where outstanding faculty members and committed staff teach and facilitate the successful academic matriculation and holistic development of students. The College offers an affordable liberal arts education and prepares students from a diverse urban community to function in a global society.

### **1.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College, is firmly committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and to compliance with all Federal, State and local laws that prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, gender, national origin, religion, disability, protected veteran status and other protected classifications. This policy applies to all employment decisions including, but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, pay practices, benefits, disciplinary actions and terminations.

### **1.4 ACCREDITATION**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097: Telephone number 404-659-4501) to award Associate's and Bachelor's degrees.

### **1.5 ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE COLLEGE**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is a part of the University System of Georgia (USG), which is governed by a 16-member constitutional Board of Regents. The Board of Regents is responsible for "the government, control, and management" of all state-supported colleges and universities.

The president is the chief executive officer of the college and all its departments. The president is appointed by the chancellor, and charged with the responsibilities for providing overall leadership and administrative direction to ensure that the college meets its goals and objectives.

Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC) has four academic divisions: (1) Business and Computer Science, (2) Humanities and Fine Arts, (3) Science, Math, and Health Professions, and (4) Social Sciences. Each division is headed by a Dean, who, with the assistance of department heads, is responsible for the administration and management of the academic divisions. Deans report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who in turn reports to the President of the College. There are also five Vice Presidents (VPs) of the College, one for each of the following areas: (1) Academic Affairs, (2) Fiscal Affairs, (3) Institutional Advancement (4) Institutional Effectiveness, (4), and (5) Student Affairs.

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## **2.0 EMPLOYMENT**

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### **2.1 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY**

As a government contractor, Atlanta Metropolitan State College is committed to taking affirmative action to hire and advance minorities and women as well as qualified individuals with disabilities and covered veterans.



The College invites employees who are disabled or protected veterans and who wish to be included under our Affirmative Action Program to self-identify as such with the EEO Coordinator. This self-identification is strictly voluntary and confidential and will not result in retaliation of any sort.

Employees of and applicants to Atlanta Metropolitan State College will not be subject to harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination because they have engaged or may engage in filing a complaint, assisting in a review, investigation, or hearing or have otherwise sought to obtain their legal rights related to any Federal, State, or local law regarding EEO for qualified individuals with disabilities or qualified protected veterans.

In furtherance of Atlanta Metropolitan State College's policy regarding Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, Atlanta Metropolitan State College has developed a written Affirmative Action Program which sets forth the policies, practices and procedures which the college is committed to applying in order to ensure that its policy of non-discrimination and affirmative action for qualified individuals with disabilities and qualified protected veterans is accomplished. This Affirmative Action Program for qualified individuals with disabilities and qualified protected veterans is available for inspection by any employee or applicant for employment upon request. Contact the Office of Human Resources for additional information or questions.

## **2.2 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications. Employees may self identify any qualified disability as defined under ADA for which assistance is needed in carrying out their assigned duties. Individuals with disabilities are defined under ADA as persons who either have or are regarded as having a record of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. AMSC will make every effort possible to accommodate employees requiring assistance within the definitions of the law.

## **2.3 ORIENTATION**

The Office of Human Resources conducts orientation for all newly hired and rehired employees. This process provides up-to-date information on policies, procedures, benefits, and trainings on Ethics, Harassment and the "Right-to-Know" programs. Upon receiving and accepting an offer of employment from the Office of the President, new employees will be contacted by a representative of the Office of Human Resources concerning the date and time of his/her scheduled orientation. Supervisors are responsible for acquainting employees with departmental policies and procedures. Job descriptions are given to each employee and their job-related duties are explained.

## **2.4 WORK HOURS**

The normal workweek of the college is forty (40) hours. The workweek begins at 12:01

a.m. Sunday and ends at midnight Saturday. Normally, the workday consists of an eight-hour period plus forty-five minutes for lunch, or a total of eight (8) hours and forty-five minutes. Normal workday hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. It may be necessary, however, for a department to schedule employees to work a 40-hour week consisting of designated hours other than the normal college hours. An employee's supervisor will determine and advise the employee of his or her work schedule.

## 2.5 BREAKS

Employees are entitled to two fifteen minute breaks, one in mid-morning and one in mid-afternoon. Care should be taken to ensure that all work assignments are covered. Additionally, breaks are subject to the department's needs. Breaks are not to be taken at the beginning or end of the workday. An employee may not forego breaks to accumulate extra time off.

## 2.6 STAFF CATEGORIES

- Staff employees shall consist of two major employee groups 1) staff professional and administrative employees and 2) staff non-exempt and defined as follows:
- 1. Staff - Professional and Administrative Employees are exempt from the Federal Wage-Hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because of their professional or administrative responsibilities. (This group does not include faculty or graduate assistants); and
- 2. Staff- Non-Exempt Employees are not exempt from the federal wage-hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
  
- Student Employees: Student Employees are considered temporary and include graduate assistants and student workers.
  
- **Benefits Eligible:** There are three definitions pertaining to benefits eligible as described below:
  1. **Full Benefits Eligible:** This is defined as 30 or more hours per week or .75 FTE and greater, which applies to regular faculty and regular staff employees. Full benefits include all benefits in accordance with University System of Georgia of Board of Regents policy 8.2.9 Insurance.
  2. **Partial Benefits Eligible:** This is defined as 20 to 29 hours per week or .5 FTE to .74 FTE. Partial benefits eligible may apply to regular faculty and regular staff employees. Partial benefits include retirement and pro-rated leave accruals.
  3. **Non-Benefits Eligible:** This is defined as 19 or less hours per week (.49 FTE or less), which applies to regular faculty and staff employees. Non-benefits eligible also includes temporary faculty, staff, and student employees who may not work more than 1,300 hours in a 12 month period as defined later in this policy. Students may not be placed into a regular status.

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- **Regular Employment Status:** Regular employment is ***considered continuous*** and may also be defined by agreement, contract, term, or restricted funding source(s). Regular employment may be benefits eligible, partial benefits eligible, non-benefits eligible, full-time or part-time, exempt or nonexempt. Regular exempt employment must meet the “salary basis” requirement under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
  - **Salary Basis:** Being paid on a “salary basis” means an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period and the predetermined amount cannot be reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of the employee’s work subject to exceptions under FLSA.
- **Temporary Employment Status:** Temporary employment is short in duration to address business needs and must meet the requirements and characteristics described below:
  1. A temporary is non-benefits eligible.
  2. A temporary does not have an expectation of long-term employment.
  3. A temporary may be full-time or part-time.
    - A temporary employee may not exceed a total of 1,300 hours worked in a 12-consecutive month period. The 1,300 hours can be accumulated in any combination during the 12 month period. Once a temporary employee has worked 1,300 hours or has been employed for 12 consecutive months, whichever comes first, the temporary employee must have a break in service of 26 consecutive weeks. Employment applies across all USG institutions.
    - If a temporary employee is needed beyond the 1,300 hours, they must be moved to a regular employee status.
    - A temporary who is dually or jointly employed in more than one position must have all hours worked counted towards the 1,300 hour worked limit from the date of hire into the first position this includes Temporary Staff Arrangements.
  4. A temporary may be separated at any time for any reason without notice and either the employer or the employee can end the employment relationship. Such separation is not grievable or subject to appeal.
  5. A temporary is typically considered non-exempt under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act’s overtime provisions and paid for all hours worked on an hour-for-hour basis, and they must receive overtime pay or comp time for hours worked over 40 in a workweek at a rate not less than time and one-half their regular rate of pay. In some instances, temporary employees, such as graduate assistants, post docs or credentialed professionals, may be exempt.
  6. **Note:** If a temporary employee exceeds an average 30 or more hours per week during the ACA measurement period and meets the definition of healthcare eligibility under ACA, if they continue employment in a regular position, they will become eligible to enroll in healthcare benefits during the ACA administrative period.

- **Rehired Retiree** – When an employee has retired from the University System of Georgia and is receiving benefits from the Teachers Retirement System, or the Regent's Retirement Plan (Optional Retirement Plan), he/she may be re-employed by the University System under the following conditions:
  - The reemployment of a University System of Georgia retiree must be approved by the College President;
  - A rehired retiree must have a one month minimum break in service between the effective date of his/her retirement and the effective date of his/her reemployment;
  - The work commitment of a rehired retiree must be less than half-time; i.e., less than 50%;
  - The salary that is paid to a rehired retiree must be less than 50% of the annual benefit base compensation amount that he/she was earning at the time of his/her retirement; and
  - The salary that is paid to a rehired retiree must be consistent with his/her work commitment.

## **2.7 PROVISIONAL EMPLOYMENT PERIOD**

With the exception of certain public safety employees, all staff employees are required to serve the first six (6) months of employment in the University System on a provisional basis to provide the employer an opportunity to evaluate the employee's performance. University System employees transferring to another University System institution or the University System Office are subject to a new six (6) month provisional period upon beginning at the new location.

If the work of the employee is satisfactory, employment will be continued. Should the work not be satisfactory, the employee will be notified in writing prior to the completion of the six (6) months provisional period. In the event of an approved leave of greater than thirty (30) days, an equivalent extension of the provisional period may be granted with the approval of the President or the Director of Human Resources. An extension should be granted only in exceptional circumstances, and in no instance shall the provisional period be extended such that the total provisional period would exceed nine (9) months.

An employee who has been discharged during the provisional period does not have any right to appeal.

Public safety employees are subject to the same provisional employment requirement as other employees, except that the six (6) month provisional period will not begin until any person employed as a public safety officer has completed his/her mandated training for certification as a police officer. This special provision only applies to those public safety employees for who specified training is mandated by state law and such training occurs after their employment.

## **2.8 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS**

Each regular status employee of AMSC will be evaluated at the end of the first six months of employment and annually thereafter. In addition to regular employees, individuals holding part-time or temporary appointments of six months or more will be deemed long term temporary employees and will also be subject to the same evaluation requirements as regular college employees. Evaluations will be completed by an employee's immediate supervisor and/or department head.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess job performance. Also, for regular employees, evaluations will be used in determining eligibility for transfer, promotion, demotion, retention, supervisory assistance, and wage adjustments.

The Office of Human Resources will provide the required forms in ample time for the review to be completed and returned for placement in the employee's personnel file by March 31. Employees having been evaluated during the preceding 30 days are not required to have the annual evaluation completed.

A special performance evaluation may be conducted for employees whose overall performance has been determined as unsatisfactory, or who have had specified deficiencies noted in their performance evaluation. Employees should be advised in writing what such evaluation should accomplish, the reason for such, the period of time involved, and the potential consequences should adequate job progress not be made.

The Office of Human Resources will provide further information about the performance evaluation process upon request.

## **2.9 PROMOTION, TRANSFER, AND POSITION RECLASSIFICATION**

A promotion is the shift of an employee from one position to another, which requires a higher degree of skill or responsibility and is assigned a higher pay range. Promotions, unlike transfers, involve an upgrade in position classification and an increase in salary, when funds are available. Promotions are made on the basis of merit and job requirements, not seniority. To be eligible for promotion, an employee must possess the skills and abilities required in the vacant position, and must have performed satisfactorily in his or her former capacity. Promotions are competitive; as it is the desire of the college to place the best qualified person in a vacant position.

The University System of Georgia supports an environment that values the pursuit of career mobility and encourages employees who express an interest, and have the abilities, to pursue appropriate vacancies to foster their career development. Toward that end, employees' efforts to transfer from one position to another will be supported. An employee may apply for a posted position in another department or at another USG institution or the University System office or be identified for transfer when appropriate. Institutions shall have the discretion to transfer an employee when deemed appropriate. For the purposes of this policy, there shall be two types of transfers as follows:

1. **Internal Transfer** - The shift of an employee from one position to another of the same classification or to one with comparable skills and in the same general pay range in the same institution.
  - A. The employee who is affected by an internal transfer shall continue all benefits uninterrupted.
  - B. The employee will restart the provisional period.
2. **External Transfer** – The movement of an employee from a position at one institution within the University System to a position at another institution or to or from the University System Office. Since institutional compensation practices may differ due to market conditions, the transfer may be to a position at a different pay range but the provisions of this transfer policy shall apply.
  - a. In the event of an external transfer, accumulated sick leave, retirement benefits and service continuity will be transferred if the break in service does not exceed thirty (30) calendar days. When the external transfer occurs with no break in service, an employee must transfer accrued vacation leave of between one (1) and twenty (20) days. For employees with accrued vacation leave of greater than twenty (20) days, the employee may elect one of the following options:
    - A. Transfer of the total accrued vacation balance, not to exceed forty-five (45) days.
    - B. Payment by the institution from which the employee is moving of accrued vacation leave greater than twenty (20) days. The total accrued vacation leave for which the employee may be paid shall not exceed twenty-five (25) days.

Employee's transferring to AMSC from the University System Office or another USG institution will restart the provisional period effective the first day of employment and will serve his/her first six (6) months in a provisional status, subject to all terms and conditions of the provisional period policy.

When an employee terminates from one institution and is then hired by another System institution, this shall not constitute an external transfer. If the termination and subsequent hiring occurs with less than thirty (30) days between the actions, the Chief Human Resources Officer of new employer may choose to treat such an action as an external transfer.

## **2.10 RESIGNATION**

Employees may resign by submitting their resignation in writing to their immediate supervisor. A copy of the written resignation must be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources for inclusion in the employee's personnel file, and to ensure the exit process is complete. An exit interview from the college will be conducted by the Office of Human

Resources. In order to resign in good standing with eligibility for re-employment, an employee should provide at least two weeks work notice unless a shorter period is acceptable to his/her supervisor.

## **2.11 JOB ABANDONMENT**

When an employee does not report to work for three consecutive, scheduled workdays and does not communicate with the department as to his/her whereabouts or intentions regarding the job, the department should terminate the employee for job abandonment. Prior to taking such action, department supervisors are advised to make reasonable efforts to contact the employee to determine the employee's intentions regarding the job. It is strongly recommended that the Office of Human Resources send a registered letter (return receipt requested) to the employee indicating that AMSC considers the employee to have voluntarily resigned from employment due to job abandonment as of the last day he/she worked.

## **2.12 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCESS**

It is recommended that supervisor document all steps of the corrective discipline process as they occur, as well as warnings of further corrective action if the unacceptable performance and/or behavior is not corrected. In each step, the supervisor is advised to state the next step to be taken if the performance does not improve. However, in cases of serious misconduct, the employee may be immediately terminated, or suspended from the work force. When an employee's performance or behavior is unsatisfactory, a progressive process is strongly advised. The steps involved in the process may include verbal discussion, written warning, suspension without pay, and termination. Any disciplinary step may be omitted depending upon the severity of the incident.

### **Verbal Disciplinary Action**

The initial disciplinary action should be verbal, whenever possible. The discussion should be firm but fair and should ensure that the employee clearly understands the established standards and expectations with respect to the unacceptable performance or behavior. A written record of the date and content of such discussions should be maintained in the appropriate files in the department.

### **Written Disciplinary Action**

Written disciplinary warnings follow verbal disciplinary action of an employee that does not result in the needed improvement or if the initial situation indicates a need for stronger action. The written warning outlines the undesired behavior, states expectations and lists consequences if issues continue.

The Office of Human Resources is available to assist department supervisors with the warning letter. Copies of the warning letter should be maintained in the appropriate departmental file and also transmitted the Office of Human Resources to be placed in the official employee file.

## **2.13 TERMINATION, DISMISSAL, SUSPENSION, AND DEMOTION**

Employees may be subject to demotion, suspension or dismissal in the sole discretion of institutional management. Institutions are expected to adhere to fair employment practices when considering such actions and should follow institutional policy regarding adverse employment actions.

An employee affected by demotion, suspension or dismissal shall be informed in writing of the reasons for the action taken. The effective date of a dismissal is immediate. **The effective date of a demotion or suspension shall be five days following the notification.** An employee affected by a demotion, suspension or dismissal may appeal to the next level of authority within five working days of the notification of the action.

The employee shall also be entitled to the procedural protections of a hearing before a Board of Review. The request must be made within ten (10) working days following the documented adverse action. The Board of Review hearing may take place either before or after the effective date of the personnel decision in question.

An employee who has been terminated or suspended without pay and is later reinstated shall be entitled to recover back pay unless the President or his designee determines otherwise.

Dismissal of employees may be effected by an employee's immediate supervisor who has been granted the authority to impose action up to and including dismissal when the supervisor determines the employee's performance of duty or personal conduct is unsatisfactory. Employees may be terminated for just cause. All supervisors are encouraged to follow a progressive discipline process; however, there are certain offenses that warrant immediate termination. Generally, these offenses should be communicated to employees by their supervisor after approval from their respective vice president.

A demotion is defined as a reassignment from one position to another position at a lower pay grade or salary range. A demotion can also be defined as a reassignment of duties to a lower level of pay or responsibility even if there is not a change in the employee's job title or position. Involuntary demotions may occur if work is eliminated, abolished or reorganized, as a disciplinary action or if a classified employee is unable to perform the work satisfactorily.

A suspension may occur as part of a Progressive Disciplinary Process or as part of an investigation.

## **2.14 TERMINATION PROCEDURES**

All employees who are terminating or separating from their employment with the college are encouraged to participate in an exit interview conducted by the Office of Human Resources. During the exit interview, employees will receive all pertinent information regarding their separation, complete all necessary paperwork, and receive directions for



the return of any identification cards, keys, or other institutional properties to the college. This interview will also afford the employee an opportunity to provide feedback regarding their employment experience at AMSC. The employee will be compensated for any accrued annual leave days, not to exceed 45 days. **The payout of these days will be paid when the employee receives his/her final payroll check.** The final payroll check will be available on the next scheduled payroll cycle. In accordance with policies set forth by the University System of Georgia, a terminating employee shall not be entitled to receive pay for accumulated sick leave.

## **2.15 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

All employees of the college should avoid actual or apparent conflict of interests between their college obligations and their outside activities. The following should be adhered to before engaging in any outside employment:

- An employee of the University System shall not engage in any occupation, pursuit, or endeavor, which will interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties.
- All full-time faculty, administrators, and other professional staff members employed by a unit of the University System are expected to give full professional effort to their assignments of teaching, research, and service.
- Professional employees are encouraged to participate in professional activities that do not interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties provided the activity meets one of the following criteria: (1) is a means of professional development; (2) serves the community, state or nation; or (3) is consistent with the objectives of the institution.
- For all activities, except single-occasion activities, the employee shall report in writing through official channels the proposed arrangements and secure the approval of the president or his designee prior to engaging in activities. Such activities include: consulting, teaching, speaking, and participating in business or service enterprises.

Before engaging in any outside occupation, pursuit, or endeavor (that may interfere with the employee's regular and punctual performance of his or her responsibilities at the College), the employee should secure the "Outside Employment" form or "Consultant Services Agreement Between Institutions" form which can be obtained from the Office of Human Resources.

## **2.16 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Office of Human Resources maintains current listings of all job vacancies. The listings are posted in all campus buildings and emailed to all units of the college. Inquiries concerning job announcements for promotion or transfer opportunities should

be made to the Office of Human Resources at (404) 756-4047. The job postings can also be accessed from the web at [www.atlm.edu](http://www.atlm.edu) and [www.higheredjobs.com](http://www.higheredjobs.com).

## **2.17 POLICY ON HIV /AIDS**

For the purpose of this policy, the term “HIV infection” applies to all forms of human immunodeficiency virus infection, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV infection is a disabling condition under applicable federal, state, and local laws (ADA, Sections 4503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and college policies.

Employees with HIV in any form will not be excluded from or restricted in enrollment, employment (including benefits, promotions, and other terms and conditions of employment), or access to college services or facilities unless medically based judgments in individual cases establish that some exclusion or restriction is necessary to protect the individual or the college community.

With respect to HIV, Atlanta Metropolitan State College is committed to:

- Protecting the rights of all employees of the college community
- Educating employees about HIV
- Providing a humane response to those with any form of HIV
- Taking every reasonable precaution to provide a safe environment on campus

The college will provide employees with education regarding HIV to prevent its spread and to increase the understanding of and compassion for those with the disease. College officials will make every effort to ensure confidentiality of individuals with HIV and to make reasonable accommodations. Additional information can be obtained from the Office of Human Resources.

## **2.18 POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR NURSING MOTHERS IN THE WORKPLACE**

Nursing mothers shall receive rest breaks and private space to allow them to express milk for their nursing children and to comply with the manner in which the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010 amends the Fair Labor Standard’s Act.

Female employees who are nursing mothers shall be entitled to reasonable break periods during normal business hours to express breast milk for one (1) year after the child’s birth for each time such employee has the need to express milk.

Each nursing mother shall have access to a private location (other than a bathroom) for the provisions under this policy. The location shall be shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. If an employee does not have access to such a location, the Human Resource Director will assist the nursing mother with identifying a safe, secure location on campus.

The standard and customary time duration allotted for expressing milk is typically 10-15 minutes approximately 2-3 times during a typical 8-hour work period. However, when an employee makes an initial request for an accommodation under this policy, it shall be the employee's responsibility to engage in a dialogue with her supervisor about the duration and frequency of leave required. A request for an accommodation under this policy will be treated as a request for a flexible work schedule. Such accommodations will afford the employee the ability to modify their work schedule as needed based on their expressing time while still fulfilling their 40 hour work week obligation. When feasible, nursing mothers may also elect to use their standard break for expression. See handbook section 2.5 for break provision details.

## **2.19 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**

The preeminent criteria for the employment and promotion of employees at Atlanta Metropolitan State College shall be appropriate qualifications and performance as set forth in the policies of the Board of Regents. Relationship by a family or marriage shall constitute neither an advantage nor a disadvantage in such considerations. Additionally, no person shall be employed in a position which will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between the individual and any relative through any line of authority. More specifically, no individual shall be employed in a department or unit which will result in the existence of a direct or indirect subordinate-superior relationship between the individual and any relative of the individual. This standard does not apply to the temporary or part-time employment of children under age twenty-five (25), nor to any individual employed as of February 14, 1990, at any institution where a relative of such individual then holds a superior position at least one level of supervision removed from such individual in any line of authority.

For the purpose of this policy relatives are defined as spouse, parents, children, siblings, and any in-laws of any of the foregoing.

## **2.20 CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **2.20.1 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS**

It shall be a condition of employment with any institution of the University System of Georgia to submit to a background investigation. Offers of employment shall be conditional pending the result of the background investigation, which shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- A state and federal criminal history check covering a minimum of seven

- (7) years;
- A nationwide sex offender search;
- An Everify social security number check; and
- For all professional, faculty and academic positions, an academic credentials check.

Offers of employment for positions of trust may be conditional pending the result of a state and federal criminal history check covering more than the minimum of seven (7) years. Positions of trust are those that involve interaction with children, after-hours access to facilities, access to financial resources or that have been otherwise identified by the hiring official to require a more extensive background investigation.

A background investigation shall also be performed on any existing employee being transferred, reassigned, reclassified or promoted to a position of trust.

### **2.20.2 CREDIT CHECKS**

Offers of employment to individuals with access to financial resources will be contingent upon the results of a satisfactory credit history check. Additionally, any existing employee that is transferred, reassigned, reclassified or promoted into a position requiring a Purchase Card, when they have not been assigned a Purchase Card previously, must also submit to a credit check.

### **2.20.3 LOYALTY OATH**

The State of Georgia requires "all persons who are employed by and are on the payroll of and the recipient of wages, per diem, and/or salary of the State of Georgia, or its departments and agencies" to take a loyalty oath. If a person does not sign the oath, the act then instructs that "such persons shall not be permitted to receive any payment from the State."

### **2.20.4 SECURITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

As a condition of employment, every employee of the college must complete and sign a security questionnaire. The security questionnaire requires an employee to voluntarily disclose information, which establishes that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that he or she is a subversive person. A subversive person is defined as one who commits acts towards, advocates, or teaches the overthrow of the government of the United States or government of the State of Georgia by force or violence or who is knowingly a member of a subversive organization.

### **2.20.5 RANDOM DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING OF HIGH RISK EMPLOYEES**

Employees working in high-risk jobs on a regular basis are subject to random drug and alcohol testing for evidence of illegal drug and alcohol use. This includes campus law enforcement officers, plant operations employees, and employees who regularly perform high risk work where inattention to duty or errors in judgment while on duty will have a potential for significant risk of harm to employees or the general public.

### **2.20.6 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY/RIGHT-TO-KNOW PROGRAM**

The State of Georgia has enacted legislation to protect its employees from the dangers of hazardous chemicals that may be encountered in the workplace. The college has developed a plan to assure that all employees receive mandatory training and information about hazardous chemicals present in their work areas. A copy of the Right-to-Know program can be obtained from the Environmental Health and Safety and Right-to-Know Office or the AMSC Library.

### **2.20.7 EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION FORM (I-9)**

The Immigration Reform and Control Act requires all newly employed individuals to complete the form I-9 and provide documents, which establish identity and employment eligibility. The college will employ only U.S. citizens and aliens authorized to work in the United States. Failure to comply with the provisions of the act will result in immediate termination of employment.

### **2.20.8 IDENTIFICATION CARD**

Identification cards are available for all regular full-time and part-time employees. I.D. cards allow employee's access to the Library, Center for Academic Success, Student Center, and many campus activities. For further information concerning I.D. cards, contact the Campus Card Office.

### **2.20.9 AUTOMOBILE REGISTRATION AND PARKING**

All AMSC employees who park their vehicles in the college parking lots must register their vehicles and secure a parking decal each academic year from the Campus Card Office. These non-transferable parking decals must be displayed in the window of the vehicle.

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## **3.0 COMPENSATION PRACTICES**

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### **3.1 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

#### **3.1.1 FEDERAL (W-4) AND STATE (G-4) INCOME TAX**

The college is required to make withholdings of federal and state taxes from salary payments based on the number of allowances claimed on the Forms W-4 and G-4 by the employee. Any change in allowances should be reported to the Office of Human Resources immediately, to ensure proper withholdings.

#### **3.1.2 SOCIAL SECURITY**

All eligible employees of the college are required to participate in the Social Security program. Payroll deductions are made for the employee's share of the cost of the insurance, with the college paying a matching share. Work-study students are exempt from Social Security. Non-immigrant aliens may be exempt, in accordance with the provisions of their visas.

#### **3.1.3 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

All college employees are covered under the Georgia Employment Security Law, commonly known as Unemployment Compensation. This law was enacted to provide a source of economic security when a person becomes unemployed through no fault of his or her own. Eligibility for benefits is determined by the Georgia Department of Labor.

#### **3.1.4 GARNISHMENT OF WAGES**

It is the legal responsibility of the college to make required deductions from an employee's earnings that are within the control of the college upon receipt of a Summons of Garnishment. The college is compelled to file an answer within a restricted time period. The University System considers the acceptance and settlement of just and honest debts to be a mark of personal responsibility. Repeated instances of default in payment by employees, after appropriate counseling, shall be considered sufficient grounds for termination for cause.

### **3.2 OVERTIME/COMPENSATORY TIME**

The standard workweek is forty (40) hours, for employees who are classified as non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The Fair Labor Standards Act establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, record keeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments. Overtime is paid or compensatory hours are accrued, when work is authorized, by appropriate college officials, to exceed 40 hours in any workweek. An employee may not work more than 40 hours a week, unless prior approval has been given by his/her supervisor. During peak workloads or emergencies, it may be necessary for an employee's supervisor to require that the employee work overtime. If an employee is required to work hours, in addition to the employee's regularly scheduled work day or on a day in which the employee was normally not scheduled to work, the employee may be granted time off within that same pay period, in an equal ratio to the extra hours worked. This system is used to hold the total hours worked within a given work week to 40 hours, even though the regular work schedule has changed. If time off is not given within the pay period in which the hours were earned, then compensatory hours are accrued at one and one-half hour for each hour earned during that same pay period. Employees covered by the FLSA will be paid at one and one-half times their standard pay rate, or they will earn one-and-one half hours compensatory time for each hour of authorized overtime work.

If a non-exempt employee is required to work on an officially designated college holiday that falls during the employee's scheduled work week, and, if the employee is not given another day off, the employee will be paid for the normal work time plus holiday time. Exempt employees are paid a fixed monthly rate and are not limited to a 40-hour workweek. Therefore, exempt employees do not receive overtime pay or earn compensatory time.

### **3.3 TIME RECORDS**

Employees subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act are required to

keep a time record of the hours worked. Plant Operations Department, Cafeteria employees and work-study students will use time clock cards. All other non-exempt employees will prepare computer generated bi-weekly time sheet reports by entering their time worked in the HRIS system.

The time sheet should be checked for completeness and accuracy and approved by the employee and supervisor in the HRIS system. Time sheets are due by noon on the Monday following the bi-weekly pay period, and should be approved in the HRIS system and submitted electronically to the Payroll Office.

If the time sheets are not approved in the system by the stated deadline, it is not possible to verify hours worked for that period. In this case, the payroll check may be delayed until the following pay period. Payroll records are subject to audit and will reflect actual time worked and leave taken. Any intentional falsification of time records may be grounds for termination of employment.

## **3.4 PAY SCHEDULES**

### **3.4.1 MONTHLY PAID EMPLOYEES**

Monthly paid employees are classified as exempt administrative, professional, or supervisory personnel and are compensated at a fixed monthly salary. Monthly paid employees receive payroll checks on the last workday of the month.

### **3.4.2 BI-WEEKLY PAID EMPLOYEES**

Bi-weekly paid employees are classified as non-exempt, non-administrative personnel. They are paid for hours worked and can be authorized to work and be compensated for overtime in accordance with established college policies. Bi-weekly employees receive payroll checks at the end of every other workweek.

## **3.5 DIRECT DEPOSIT / PAYROLL CARD**

All employees of the College must enroll in direct deposit services with the bank of their choice. Those employees who do not have a checking or savings account to which their payroll earnings can be deposited will be enrolled in the Payroll Card Program. Under this program, employees are issued a Visa-branded prepaid debit card through which AMSC will electronically deposit employees' net pay and other payroll-related funds to the card via ACH. The employees/cardholders can then use the card to access their net pay at ATMs and all merchant locations where Visa is accepted.

## **3.6 WAGES AND COMPENSATION**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College recognizes the importance of employees to the mission of the College. As such, the College will make every effort to ensure fair and equitable pay among employees. This provision applies to all compensation related matters including (though not limited to) as an employee's salary at the time of hire, annual merit increases, promotions, transfers, and other salary adjustments.

Additionally, all compensation matters are subject to the budgetary authorization and funding limitations of the College, the University System of Georgia and/or the State of Georgia.

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## **4.0 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

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### **4.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is committed to fostering the professional growth and development of its employees. Professional development refers to activities, which assist employees in meeting professional or personal needs that are consistent with the objectives and anticipated needs of the college. Employees are encouraged to enroll in courses and participate in professional development opportunities that will enhance their skills and improve their job performance.

### **4.2 TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)**

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is an employee supplemental educational assistance program which results in the waiver of tuition and fees when an employee attends any University System of Georgia (USG) institution. Tuition assistance requires TAP application approval for each semester and is based upon space availability within the course(s) and/or degree program of the institution attended. A maximum of nine (9) credit hours may be requested for approval under the Tuition Assistance Program each semester.

Participation in the Tuition Assistance Program shall be available to full-time benefits-eligible employees who have successfully completed at least six (6) months of employment in a benefits-eligible position as of the date of the Tuition Assistance Program application deadline for the desired academic semester. Full-time employees (who meet the applicable admissions standards and who have received appropriate prior authorization from their institution) may enroll in up to nine (9) academic semester credit hours for each of the three (3) designated semester periods: fall semester, spring semester, and summer semester.

Student status will be secondary to employee status in all considerations, including student fee waivers. Tuition assistance is the waiver of tuition and the waiver of certain fees. Tuition Assistance Program participation will be granted on a space-available basis. For limited-slot enrollment programs, approval must be granted by the teaching institution. An employee must receive a grade of C or better in each approved Tuition Assistance Program academic course. Employees may not enroll in the following professional schools: dental, medical, pharmacy, veterinary, law, or executive/premiere or comparable graduate programs.

Due to the current shortage of nursing faculty in the state of Georgia, the Tuition Assistance Program is available to Part-Time Nursing Faculty members seeking a graduate degree in Nursing. Any part-time nursing faculty member taking advantage of



this program shall be required to work full time within the University System at least two (2) years following receipt of the graduate degree in Nursing (or Education, if such would allow one to teach Nursing at the University level).

Participation in the Tuition Assistance Program for Nursing Faculty shall be available to part-time nursing faculty who have successfully completed at least six (6) months of employment, *as of the date of the Tuition Assistance Program application deadline for the desired academic semester*

### **4.3 SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College uses existing resources to organize, conduct, and sponsor various workshops and seminars, which afford employees the opportunity to enhance their professional skills, as well as remain knowledgeable of technological and procedural advancements.

### **4.4 LEAVE**

#### **4.4.1 ANNUAL LEAVE**

The college provides paid annual leave for all regular, full-time employees (except faculty). If your effective date of employment is on or before the 15th day of the month, you will earn leave for that month. Employees, who work full-time, other than temporary employees, shall be entitled to accrue annual leave, after completion of each period of years at the following rates:

1-4 years	1.25 days/month 10 hours	15 days/year
5-9 years	1.50 days/month 12 hours	18 days/year
10 or more years	1.75 days/month 14 hours	21 days/year

Employees who are classified as part-time employees (working ½ time or more but less than full-time) shall earn and accrue annual leave time in an equivalent ratio to their percentage of time employed

Earned annual leave may be accrued and carried over, up to a maximum of forty-five (45) workdays. On December 31st of each year, each employee's leave record shall be adjusted to reflect no more than 45 annual leave days accrued. Employees will be paid for unused accrued annual leave to a maximum of 45 days, upon separation from the college for any reason. If the employee's last day of work is prior to the 15th day of the month, the employee will not accrue annual leave for that month.

Temporary employees, including work study students, tutors, and all other temporary employees working less than ½ time, do not earn or accrue annual leave. Annual leave must be approved, in advance, by the employee's immediate

supervisor.

### **Faculty and Administrative Officers**

A full-time faculty member (Division Chairs) employed on a 12-month or fiscal year basis shall be entitled to vacation/annual leave earned at the rate of one and three-fourths working days (14 hours) per month. All working days during the fiscal year shall be counted. Absences during academic calendar breaks shall be recorded as vacation. All vacation days shall be recorded on institutional leave records.

A full-time administrative officer (President, Vice President) employed on a 12-month or fiscal year basis shall be entitled to vacation/annual leave earned at the rate of one and three-fourths working days (14 hours) per month. The use of approved vacation/annual leave shall be recorded on institutional leave records.

A faculty member who changes from a fiscal year contract to an academic year contract shall be paid his/her unused, accrued vacation/annual leave subject to the 45-day (360-hour) maximum payment restriction upon termination of the fiscal year contract.

#### **4.4.2 SICK LEAVE**

All regular full-time employees will accumulate paid sick leave at a rate of 1 day per calendar month or 8 hours per month of service.

There is not a maximum on the amount of sick leave, which can be accumulated. When sick leave is taken for a continuous period in excess of five (5) working days, a sick leave certificate or physician's statement will be required in order for the employee to continue to claim sick leave benefits. When an employee is out sick, he/she must exhaust all sick leave balances before using any other leave. Sick leave may be granted for any of the following reasons:

1. Illness or injury of the employee
2. Medical and dental treatment or consultation
3. Quarantine due to contagious illness in the employee's household
4. Illness, injury or death in the employee's immediate\* family requiring the employee's presence.

For sick leave purposes, immediate family is defined as the employee's: spouse, child (foster or guardian), parents (foster or guardian), siblings (brothers, sisters), grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, and any relative who lives in the employee's household.)

Employees must request sick leave for planned medical procedures prior to taking off from work. Except for emergencies or sudden illnesses, employees must request sick leave in advance through their supervisor using the appropriate request procedures.

The Georgia General Assembly passed Act 859 which allows the Teachers Retirement System to grant service credit for accrued sick leave for which a member has not used or been paid. To qualify, each member should have a minimum of sixty (60) days of sick leave. For each forty days of sick leave accumulated and unused, a retiring employee will receive credit for one month of service under TRS. Sick leave credit may be used to qualify for retirement, but cannot be used to become vested under TRS. Contact the Office of Human Resources for more information.

**The Donated Shared Sick leave Program** is to provide a means for Atlanta Metropolitan State College employees to donate paid leave to be used by fellow College employees. This leave may be used to alleviate hardships caused to an employee or the employee's family if a catastrophic illness or injury forces the employee to exhaust all earned leave time and to lose compensation.

#### **4.4.3 SICK LEAVE WITHOUT PAY**

If an employee is unable to work because of illness or injury, and has exhausted all of his/her sick leave days, the employee may request sick leave without pay for a period not to exceed one year upon the recommendation of the employee's supervisor and with the approval of the president. Upon approval of sick leave without pay, the employee will have the option of continuing medical, dental, life insurance, credit union deduction, and tax-sheltered annuity deductions. The employee will continue to pay the employee's portion of enrolled benefits. In addition, the employee will not be allowed to contribute to the Teachers Retirement System, Optional Retirement Plan, or Long Term Disability account. (See AMSC's Family Medical Leave Policy).

#### **4.4.4 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

In the event of a death in the employee's immediate\* family, an employee may be allowed five (5) days leave with pay. Bereavement leave is charged to sick leave.

For bereavement leave purposes, immediate family is defined as the employee's: spouse, child (foster or guardian), parents (foster or guardian), siblings (brothers, sisters), grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, and any relative who lives in the employee's household.)

#### **4.4.5 MATERNITY LEAVE**

Disability due to pregnancy is considered the same as any other disability and appropriate sick leave provisions of the policies shall apply.

#### **4.4.6 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)**

Any regular employee, who has been employed on one half-time basis or greater for at least twelve consecutive months and worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, is eligible for up to twelve weeks of unpaid family leave under conditions authorized by the FMLA.

While family leave is unpaid leave, an eligible employee may use accumulated sick

leave under conditions authorized by current sick leave policies, along with annual leave with appropriate approval, as provided by current college policies before or after requesting or utilizing unpaid family leave. Spouses who are both employed by the college are jointly entitled to a combined total of 12 workweeks of family leave for sick leave under FMLA and may be requested for the following reasons:

1. The birth of the employee's child and in order to care for the child;
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. To care for a spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition; or,
4. A serious health condition that renders the employee incapable of performing the functions of his or her job.

The entitlement to leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care will expire twelve (12) months from the date of the birth or placement.

Employees seeking to use FMLA are required to provide a 30-day advance request of the effective date FMLA leave will begin when the need is foreseeable and such notice is practical. In addition, the employee must provide medical certification to support the request for leave. For the duration of FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's group health insurance coverage. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to the employee's original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

#### **4.4.7 VOTING**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College employees are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right to vote in all federal, state and local elections. If an employee's normal work schedule prevents him or her from voting, sufficient time off for the purpose of voting may be allowed. In compliance with the Georgia State Laws, and to allow coordination and planning which will minimize the disruption of normal office operations, employees are required to obtain approval from their immediate supervisor prior to the voting period. The actual time granted will be at the discretion of the employee's supervisor.

#### **4.4.8 COURT DUTY**

Regular full-time employees called for jury duty or witness duty will be paid by the college at the normal rate of pay of any regular scheduled time lost from the job. Such leave will be granted upon presentation of official orders from the appropriate court.

#### **4.4.9 MILITARY DUTY**

Regular full-time employees who report to duty by federal or state orders shall be entitled to leave with pay while engaged in the performance of military duty or while traveling to and from such duty. The maximum length of military leave with pay is 18 working days in any one calendar year. However, paid leave may be granted for up to 30 working days per calendar year for declared emergencies by the Governor. Periods of absence for U.S. military or National Guard duty not

exceeding twelve consecutive months are treated as military leave without pay. Military leave is granted in accordance with the Federal Fiscal year which begins October 1 and ends September 30 of each year.

## **4.5 HOLIDAYS**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College observes 12 official paid holidays each year, including the following. The dates may vary from year to year, but a schedule of the official holidays is listed below:

- New Year's Holiday • Independence Day Holiday • Martin L. King, Jr. Holiday
- Labor Day Holiday • Memorial Day Holiday • Thanksgiving Holidays
- Christmas Holidays

A terminating employee shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring after the last working day of his/her employment.

## **4.6 INSURANCE**

The following information is a summary of employee insurance benefits. AMSC offers regular classified employees who work ½ time or more the opportunity to purchase health insurance, dental insurance, supplemental life insurance, dependent life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, and disability income insurance. The Office of Human Resources provides each eligible employee with complete descriptions of the available plans and comparisons of the benefits in each plan along with rates. New employees must enroll in benefits during the first 31 days of employment. Eligible employees who do not elect benefits during the first 31 days of employment must wait until the annual open enrollment period to enroll which is set by the Board of Regents each year. Open enrollment periods typically occur during the months of October or November. All coverage changes made during open enrollment will become effective January 1 of the following year.

Employees may also request coverage changes when they experience a qualifying event. Qualifying events include such life changes as a birth, death, marriage, divorce, adoption or some other change in family status. Employees experiencing qualifying events will have 31 days from the date of the event to request appropriate changes. Qualifying events must be substantiated by appropriate supporting documentation.

### **4.6.1 MEDICAL AND DENTAL INSURANCE PROGRAMS**

All full-time, regular employees are eligible to participate in the college's major medical and dental plans. Descriptions of the plans and enrollment and claim forms are available in the Office of Human Resources. The employee and AMSC contribute toward the cost of the medical insurance plan. One-hundred percent of the dental insurance cost is paid by the employee. The college does not participate in any portion of this benefit.

#### **4.6.2 CONSOLIDATED OMNIBUS BUDGET RECONCILIATION ACT (COBRA)**

Any regular employee who terminates employment or is terminated for any reason is eligible to continue with his or her health care coverage for a limited time under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986. The employee would assume 100 percent of the cost of coverage plus a two percent administrative fee. For more information on this act, contact the Office of Human Resources.

#### **4.6.3 BASIC, SUPPLEMENTAL, AND DEPENDENT LIFE INSURANCE**

The college provides all benefits eligible employee's \$25,000 Basic Life Insurance coverage. This coverage is paid for by the college and includes accidental death and dismemberment.

In addition to Basic Life Insurance coverage, an employee may choose to enroll in Supplemental Life Insurance in amounts equal to one, two, or three times the employee's annual pay, rounded to the next \$1,000.00. "Pay" is defined as base wages or salary only, not overtime pay or bonuses. The cost of this supplemental coverage is based on age and the amount of coverage elected.

An employee may choose to enroll in Dependent Life Insurance for the employee's eligible spouse and unmarried children. The employee pays for this coverage. Dependents are only eligible to enroll in this plan if the employee is eligible and enrolled. The cost for dependent life insurance is a flat rate, regardless of the number of dependents covered.

#### **4.6.4 SHORT TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE**

The college has a voluntary short-term disability insurance program in which all benefits eligible employees may elect to participate. The employee pays the full premium for this coverage. Further information on the plan may be obtained from the Office of Human Resources.

#### **4.6.5 LONG-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE**

The college has a long-term disability insurance program in which all benefits eligible employees may elect to participate. This is a voluntary plan, with elimination periods of either 90 or 150 days with all premiums paid by the employee. The monthly benefit for long-term disability is 60% of monthly salary up to a maximum of \$7,500. The employee pays the full premium for this coverage. Further information on the plan may be obtained from the Office of Human Resources.

#### **4.6.6 FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College administers flexible spending accounts for both dependent care and medical expenses. Under the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account, employees who have regular dependent care expenses, such as baby sitting and day care, contribute pretax dollars to a special account from which they are reimbursed for such expenses. Depending upon the particular situation, employees may contribute up to \$5,000 per year.

Under the Medical Flexible Spending Account, employees who have certain types of medical expenses contribute pretax dollars to a special account from which they are reimbursed for such expenses. Under this plan, employees may contribute up to \$1,200 per year. Contributions to the spending accounts are made before taxes are withheld from the employee's pay, which results in reduced federal, state and Social Security taxes. These spending account plans are available to benefits-eligible employees and participants have until March of the following year to request reimbursement for eligible expenses.

#### **4.6.7 AFLAC SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE**

Supplemental insurance coverage is available for out-of-pocket expenses related to injuries or illness not covered under the major medical plans. The three options provided under AFLAC are (1) short-term disability and (2) cancer protection insurance, and (3) accident insurance.

#### **4.6.8 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is committed to ensuring the overall health and well-being of its employees. As part of this commitment, the College provides all benefits eligible employees with no-cost access to confidential services such as counseling, social services, chemical dependency, and marriage and family therapy through the FEI/Families First Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The Employee Assistance Program is a valuable resource to individual employees, their families, College managers, supervisors, human resource professionals and other College Administrators.

#### **4.6.9 WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

The Federal Workers Compensation Act provides protection for all employees in the event of injuries or death while performing services for the college. A listing of our approved Panel of Physicians is posted on at least one bulletin board in each building on the campus.

As required by the law, O.C.G.A. 34-9-81.1. The State Board of Workers' Compensation Bill of Rights for the insured worker, any on-the-job injury must be reported to the Office of Human Resources. All employees of the college are covered under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. The act provides protection for the employee in the event of injuries or death while performing services for the college. Whether medical treatment is required or not, notification of all injuries must be submitted within 30 days to ensure that the college complies with the reporting and claim filing requirements established by the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS). Failure to do so may result in the loss of the benefits.

## **4.7 RETIREMENT**

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia is commitment to provide retirement plans for its eligible employees. Eligible employees are required to participate in one of the following retirement plans as a condition of employment. Retirement

elections (other than the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan) are irrevocable and can not be changed unless Employees and employers will be required to make the appropriate contributions to the respective retirement system as indicated below:

- **Teachers Retirement System of Georgia:** The Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA) was established in 1943 by an act of the State Legislature to provide retirement security to individuals employed by the state's public educational entities. Specifically, all employees who are employed one-half time or more in covered positions of the state's public schools systems, regional libraries, country libraries, and regional educational service agencies are required to be members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA) as a condition of employment. Employees in covered positions of the University System of Georgia are required to be members of TRSGA unless eligible for participation in an optional retirement plan administered by the University System's Board of Regents. The TRSGA is a defined benefit plan.
- **Optional Retirement Plan:** The Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) is a defined contribution plan established in 1990 as an alternative retirement plan for designated employees of the University System of Georgia. Effective July 1, 2008 any exempt level employee may elect to participate in the Optional retirement plan.
- **Employees Retirement System (ERS):** Any vested member of ERS who becomes an employee of the University System of Georgia may elect to remain a member of ERS, provided that such election must be made to the Board of Trustees of TRSGA within sixty (60) days of such employment and is irrevocable once the election is made. This retirement option is not open to other employees of the University System of Georgia.
- **Georgia Defined Contribution Program:** A retirement system for temporary, seasonal, and part-time employees of the State of Georgia who were not eligible for membership in the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) or the Teachers Retirement System (TRS).

#### **4.7.1 - 403(B) PROGRAMS**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College offers its employees the opportunity to invest a portion of the employee's salary into either 403 tax-deferred annuity program or a Roth 403 after tax investment option. Under these investment programs, authorized by Section 403B of the Internal Revenue Code, all contributions and earnings under the 403 tax deferred annuity are exempt from federal and state taxes until they are withdrawn from the program, typically at the time of retirement. Conversely, contributions under the Roth 403 are made on an after-tax basis and distributions are tax free when withdrawn in accordance with IRS regulations. Employees may elect to participate in both plans, however annual combined contribution amounts must not exceed allowable contribution limits as set forth by



the IRS.

#### **4.7.2 - 457 PROGRAMS**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College offers its employees the opportunity to invest a portion of the employee's salary into a 457 elective deferred compensation program. Under this investment program, the Internal Revenue Code, all contributions provides employees, under certain conditions, with the opportunity to contribute additional monies to this plan.

### **4.9 SECTION 125 PLAN**

The college offers a Section 125 Plan which permits employees to reduce their taxable income by the amount of their health and life insurance premiums. Enrollment in the Section 125 Plan to shelter premiums for health benefit plans, is automatic for employees who participate in the health benefit plans offered by the University System of Georgia.

### **4.10 CREDIT UNION**

The State Employees Credit Union, located at 400 White Hall Street, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, offers a variety of savings and loan services for AMSC employees. For more information, employees may call the main office at (404) 656-3748.

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## **5.0 INSTITUTIONAL PREMISES, PROPERTY, AND EQUIPMENT**

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### **5.1 SAFETY**

Employees are expected to perform their duties as safely as possible to ensure the protection of themselves, their fellow workers, and the general public, and to reduce the amount of time lost from work through injuries or accidents.

The prevention of accidents is primarily an individual responsibility. If any unsafe working conditions are detected, report them to the supervisor and the Office of Human Resources immediately.

All employees of the college are covered under the provisions of the Worker's Compensation Act. The Worker's Compensation Act provides protection for all employees in the event of injury or death while performing services for the college.

### **5.2 ISSUANCE OF KEYS**

If it is determined that keys are needed in the performance of a job, they will be issued

by the Office of Campus Safety. Lost keys should be reported immediately to the Office of Campus Safety. Terminating employees must turn in all keys to Campus Safety prior to the employee's exit interview, and failure to do so may result in a delay of final payment of wages.

### **5.3 INVENTORY AND SECURITY OF COLLEGE EQUIPMENT**

The 1971 Session of the Legislature of the State of Georgia passed into law House Bill Number 9, requiring that a central inventory system be established to maintain a complete and accurate inventory of all state-owned property.

Equipment purchased with grant funds is subject to the same rules and regulations as stated above. Atlanta Metropolitan State College must list equipment with the State of Georgia and must maintain an accurate and current inventory to comply with the law.

In order to administer these regulations, the college must keep a local inventory that will show where all equipment is located at all times. Whenever there is a need to move furniture or equipment, the individual initiating the move must complete and submit an Equipment Transfer Report Form according to the routing shown on the form.

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## **6.0 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

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### **6.1 PERSONAL CONDUCT**

The following examples include, but are not limited to, actions which are unacceptable to the college and which may result in disciplinary action or discharge:

- Failure or being unfit to perform assigned duties
- Conviction of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude
- Bringing discredit to the college
- Insubordination
- Negligence
- Falsifying records, reports, or information
- Theft
- Misuse of telephone or computer services
- Intoxication or drinking on the job
- Failure to report an absence or reason for an absence
- Taking unauthorized leave
- Habitual absence or tardiness
- Discourteous or disruptive behavior
- Unauthorized absence from assigned work area
- Interfering with the work performance of another employee
- Wasting material
- Willfully damaging equipment or property

- Willfully violating safety regulations
- Gambling while at work
- Sleeping while at work
- Using or selling illegal drugs on college premises
- Job abandonment
- Willfully violating laws or policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status
- Any other misconduct interfering with performance of duties
- Any form of harassment

## **6.2 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Regular and punctual attendance is expected of all employees. More specifically, employees are expected to arrive at work and return from lunch on time. When an employee cannot report to work at the scheduled time, the supervisor must be informed as soon as possible. Failure to notify the supervisor of absence and reason for absence could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. A record of tardiness, unscheduled absences and abuse of sick leave may result in loss of pay and/or disciplinary action and may interfere with promotional opportunities.

## **6.3 AMOROUS RELATIONSHIPS**

When one party has a professional relationship towards the other, or stands in a position of authority over the other, even an apparently consensual amorous relationship may lead to sexual harassment or other breaches of professional obligations. Atlanta Metropolitan State College prohibits all faculty and staff from pursuing amorous relationships with students whom they are currently supervising or teaching.

The College also strongly discourages amorous relationships between faculty or administrators and employees or students whose work they supervise. Anyone involved in an amorous relationship with someone over whom he or she has supervisory power must recuse himself or herself from decisions that affect the compensation, evaluation, employment conditions, instruction, and/or the academic status of the subordinate involved.

## **6.4 APPEARANCE / DRESS CODE**

AMSC employees are representatives of the College and are therefore expected to maintain appropriate appearance for the workplace. Employees should dress appropriately, in accordance with departmental guidelines, and should insure that they are neat, clean, and well-groomed.

The following articles of clothing are deemed to be inappropriate and should not be worn to work at anytime:

- T-Shirts, tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, mesh, net or otherwise revealing fabrics.
- Clothing with revealing necklines, backs or midriffs
- “Low rider” pants or trousers which reveal undergarments
- Shorts (except as part of an official uniform)
- Spandex or Lycra
- Athletic wear including sweat suits, jogging suits, etc.
- Novelty shirts with obscene or inappropriate wording or slogans
- Flip flops or bedroom slippers regardless of decorations or ornamentation

## **6.5 WORK ENVIRONMENT APPEARANCE**

Employees are required to keep their work environments clean and orderly. It is expected that before departing work, employees lock all files and cabinets and clear work materials from desk surfaces, especially materials of a sensitive or confidential nature.

## **6.6 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

As responsible and interested citizens in a democratic society, employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic obligations and otherwise engage in the normal political processes of society. Nevertheless, it is inappropriate for employees to manage or enter political campaigns while on duty, to perform services at the

College or to hold elective political office at the state or federal level while employed by the College. Therefore, the following policies governing political activities are hereby adopted:

- Employees may not manage or take an active part in a political campaign which interferes with the performance of duties or services for which receives compensation from AMSC.
- Employees may not hold elective political office at the state or federal level.
- A candidate for or holder of an elective political office at the state or federal level may not be employed or hold a faculty, staff, or other position at AMSC, with or without compensation.
- Employees seeking elective political office at the state or federal level must first request a leave of absence without pay prior to qualification as a candidate in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. If elected to state or federal office such person must resign prior to assuming office.
- Employees may seek and hold elective office at other than the state or federal level, or appointive office, when such candidacy for or holding of the office does

not conflict or interfere with the employee's duties and responsibilities to the AMSC or the USGA.

## **6.7 DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

The use of alcohol and illegal drugs by employees of the college is strictly prohibited on college premises. AMSC abides by the terms and provisions of the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988. A copy of the complete policy is available in the Office of Human Resources and is provided during the employee's orientation session.

## **6.8 TOBACCO/ SMOKING POLICY**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is a tobacco and smoke free institution. The use of any tobacco products or smoking is strictly prohibited on the campus and in all campus buildings. AMSC's policy on being a tobacco and smoke free institution is within the workplace is in accordance with the college's obligations as an employer for the health of its employees and to protect the college against compensation damages under the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act (1986).

Any violations of the above policy should be immediately reported to the Environmental Health and Safety office at extension 4044.

## **6.9 HARASSMENT POLICY**

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability, or that of their relatives, friends, or associates, and that:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual conduct of any nature, which is not freely and mutually agreeable to both parties. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Making, as a condition of employment, acceptance of unwelcome sexual advances or requests, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for employment decisions · Creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment by such conduct

Employees who believe they have suffered any form of harassment or retaliation may

immediately report the alleged conduct to their supervisor or to the supervisor of the person who is behaving objectionably, so that a confidential investigation of the complaint can be undertaken. Alternatively, the employee may report the alleged conduct to the Office of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer. Further, any employee who observes conduct by another employee which he or she believes to be harassing, retaliatory, or discriminatory must report such conduct as outlined above. All complaints of harassment will be treated confidentially and will be investigated promptly and thoroughly by the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)/Judicial Affairs Director in conjunction with the Office of Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer.

## **6.10 VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College will not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Workplace violence, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting.

Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Violations of the workplace violence policy will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

To make deliberate false accusations of workplace violence violates this policy. In such instances, the complainant will be subject to disciplinary action. However, failure to prove a claim of workplace violence does not constitute proof of a false and/or malicious accusation.

Employees who, in good faith, report what they believe to be workplace violence or who cooperate in any investigation will not be subjected to retaliation.

## **6.11 FIREARMS IN THE WORKPLACE**

In accordance with O.C.G.A. 16-11-127, Atlanta Metropolitan State College strictly prohibits the possession or transportation of firearms in, on, or within 1000 feet of the college. This applies to all employees with the exception of AMSC security and law enforcement officers. Employees failing to comply with this policy may be subject to employment termination as well as criminal prosecution.

## **6.12 CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE**

Under its Risk Management Policy, AMSC does not assume responsibility and/or liability for unattended minor children of faculty, staff, students and visitors in and around college buildings, grounds and facilities. It is expected that employees will not bring their children to work during the employee's scheduled work hours. In addition, children may not be cared for in the workplace. Other arrangements must be made. Employees bringing children to work may be asked to leave and be required to use accrued leave.

## **6.13 VISITORS**

It is expected that employees will not receive personal visitors during working hours or in staff working areas. Additionally, visiting and socializing with colleagues for excessive periods of time (regarding personal or non-work related matters) during non-break work hours is also deemed inappropriate.

## **6.14 MAIL SERVICES**

The college mailroom is to be used for incoming and outgoing correspondence of the college and is not to be used for personal mail delivery.

## **6.15 UTILIZATION OF COLLEGE EQUIPMENT**

It is against the state law to use college equipment, such as telephones, photocopiers, and facsimile machines, for personal use or gain.

### **6.15.1 TELEPHONE UTILIZATION**

The use of all State of Georgia telephone services should be limited to official College business only. Telephone calls should be handled in a prompt and courteous manner, and College telephone lines must be kept clear for business calls. Using office phones for personal long distance calls is a violation of College policy, which is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees may not make personal long distance calls.

The College recognizes that there may occasionally be times when personal calls must be made or received during business hours. Such calls (whether on the office phone or a personal cell phone) must be held to a minimum and should not interfere with the employee's work. Employees are encouraged to make such calls during their breaks or at lunchtime.

Additionally, personal cell phones should be kept in the off or vibrate mode during normal business hours.

### **6.15.2 COMPUTER AND NETWORK USAGE POLICY**

Atlanta Metropolitan State College recognizes its responsibility to provide the widest possible access to electronic resources for its faculty, students, and community. Specific information concerning this policy is contained in the Computer and Network Usage Handbook and Faculty Handbook.

## **6.16 PERSONAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**

Employees who supplement their earnings by the promotion or sale of products and services do so entirely on their own initiative and without implied approval or endorsement by the College. All such activity, including sampling, soliciting orders, and deliveries, must be conducted entirely outside of working hours and entirely outside of College property.

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## **7.0 ADDITIONAL SERVICES, POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

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### **7.1 GEORGIA OPEN RECORDS ACT**

Certain information maintained by the college about an employee and the employee's employment record is considered to be a matter of public record and is subject to the Open Records Act of the State of Georgia. This means that any citizen of Georgia may request access to certain information contained in an employee's personnel file without the employee's knowledge or consent. Open records requests are filed with the Office of Human Resources and, by law; the office must provide access to requested information within a stipulated timeframe. Although some information is excluded by law and cannot be accessed under the provisions of the Open Records Act, employment and salary history as well as performance evaluations are among the information that may be made available for review.

### **7.2 PERSONNEL FILES**

The college maintains the official personnel files on each staff and faculty member. These files contain documentation, such as an employee's length of service within the system, performance evaluations, benefits information, beneficiary designation forms, letters of commendation, etc. If an employee wants to review his or her file, he/she may contact the Office of Human Resources to schedule an appointment.

To ensure that an employee's personnel file is up-to-date at all times, employees should update their information in the HRIS system and the Office of Human Resources should be notified, in writing, of any changes in name, telephone number, home address, marital status, number of dependents, beneficiary designations, scholastic achievements, emergency contact person(s), etc. Employees are encouraged to inspect their personnel files on an annual basis. Personnel files are the exclusive property of the college.

### **7.3 INCLEMENT WEATHER**

When inclement weather creates a condition under which there might be a question as to whether the college will operate on a normal basis, procedures shall be as follows:

- All employees will receive either an email, text message or telephone message from the ConnectEd System using the corresponding information as supplied by the employee in the ADP System.
- A statement will be released through normal campus distribution channels should the conditions occur during normal operating hours.
- Employees are requested to listen to local radio and television stations, check our AMSC website at [www.atlm.edu](http://www.atlm.edu), in addition to calling (404) 756-4000 for



announcements regarding the college's operating hours should the conditions occur outside of normal operating hours.

- Employees whose job responsibilities require that they work during hazardous or emergency weather conditions in order to maintain critical campus functions, e.g. public safety or facility employees, information technology or employees with critical health and safety responsibilities are considered 'essential personnel' and will be expected to maintain a normal work schedule unless specifically excused.

## **7.4 LOST AND FOUND**

A lost and found service is maintained by the Office of Public Safety. If an employee finds or loses an article on campus, he or she should notify the Office of Public Safety.

## **7.5 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)**

As part of its commitment to the prompt and fair resolution of the concerns of its students, faculty and classified employees, AMSC has established and implemented the Alternative Dispute Resolution. The procedures ensure that any individual within the college community who has a grievance will have access to an internal process which provides elemental fairness to the parties involved and which has as its objective the resolution of the grievance. The procedures may be used as one of many options for grievances. Alternative Dispute Resolution includes those mechanisms usually involving a third party or neutral intervener to facilitate agreement between two parties outside the judicial forum.

## **7.6 ETHICS AND REPORTING HOTLINE**

The College strives to maintain the highest standards of personal and business ethics and professional conduct. As an employee, you are required to do the same. Your daily activities on behalf of the College should always be carried out in an ethical and legal manner and conflicts of interest should be avoided.

Additionally, Atlanta Metropolitan State College recognizes that an ethical, efficient, and effective work environment is essential to our continuing to successfully accomplish our mission. As a result, we have always placed a high priority on ensuring that each member of our college community has the opportunity and means to convey any matter that could compromise that environment. Reporting through your supervisory chain frequently produces the most thorough and timely resolution of a matter and is encouraged. However, other reporting avenues, such as the Campus Police and Human Resources, have been and continue to be readily available. In keeping with our efforts to expand alternatives for reporting matters of significance, the college also offers an Ethics and Reporting Hotline which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and allows employees to voice concerns while remaining anonymous if preferred.

Any employee who witnesses or has knowledge of unethical or illegal behavior the employee may report the concerns anonymously by dialing 1-877-516-3418

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## 8.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

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I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Staff Handbook and understand my responsibility to be aware of and understand all policies and procedures covered therein. I further understand that this employee handbook does not constitute a contractual obligation on the part of Atlanta Metropolitan State College as policies set forth are determined by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and by the State of Georgia and/or the United States government through various executive orders and federal employment guidelines and are subject to change.

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**Name (Please Print)**

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**Title**

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**Signature**

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**Date**