

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

SECTION: Human Resources

NUMBER: 02.E.05

AREA: Miscellaneous Benefits

SUBJECT: Employee Assistance Program

1. PURPOSE

This document sets forth the guidelines to be observed in establishing and operating an Employee Assistance Program (E.A.P.).

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. Employee: An employee of the University of Houston System is an individual who performs services that are subject to the will and control of the component in terms of what must be done and how it must be done. An employee is paid through the payroll system, with accompanying tax withholding as provided by law.
- 2.2. Regular, benefits-eligible employee: An employee who is appointed for at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis for a period of at least 4.5 continuous months, excluding students employed in positions which require student status as a condition of employment.
- 2.4. Immediate family member: Those individuals who reside in the employee's household and are related by kinship, adoption, or marriage as well as foster children certified by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Minor children of the employee, whether or not living in the same household, will be considered immediate family for purposes of this policy.

3. POLICY

- 3.1. The System recognizes that personal problems can influence an employee's attendance, punctuality, judgment, behavior, and job performance. The use of illegal drugs, the abuse of alcohol, family problems, and other emotional, psychiatric, or physical problems can have an adverse impact on an employee's ability to function effectively on the job.
- 3.2. Each component university may establish or contract for an E.A.P. for employees. Such program may be extended to provide assistance to immediate family members of employees.

- 3.3. Participation in an E.A.P. will not be the basis for discrimination or retaliation against any individual or group on the basis of race, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.

4. POLICY PROVISIONS

- 4.1. An E.A.P. should provide confidential professional assistance to help individuals resolve problems that affect their personal lives or performance on the job. An E.A.P. may include such services as assistance with marital and family problems; referrals to community agencies, mutual help organizations, private hospitals, public treatment programs; and drug and alcohol abuse counseling and rehabilitation or referral to private drug treatment practitioners during or following problem assessment.
- 4.2. Generally, confidentiality is guaranteed to any employee who uses the services of an E.A.P. However, confidentiality may be suspended if in the judgment of the professional E.A.P. staff or supervisory staff, an employee represents a threat to self or to others, or if access to information is required in response to legal action. Absent these conditions, a violation of confidentiality by any employee involved in administration of the program may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment. Employees involved in administration of the E.A.P. will not discuss the employee's problem with supervisors, other employees, or treatment providers, unless the employee provides written authorization to release such information.
- 4.3. Each component having an established E.A.P. will provide materials describing the E.A.P., available services, and individuals eligible to use those services.
- 4.4. An E.A.P. supplements, but does not replace, the existing procedures for dealing with deteriorating or unsatisfactory job performance. Employees participating in an E.A.P. will be expected to meet existing job performance standards and established work rules. As long as the employee's job performance is acceptable and the employee abides by System and/or component university rules and regulations, no disciplinary action will be taken whether or not an employee chooses to accept the assistance offered through an E.A.P. Regardless, standard disciplinary procedures will be followed if an employee's job performance is unsatisfactory, or if the employee violates policies.
- 4.5. Absences from work resulting from participation in an E.A.P. will be handled in accordance with established leave policies.
- 4.6. All records maintained by the E.A.P. staff will be kept in locked files which are not part of the regular employee personnel files.
- 4.7. Fees and expenses incurred as a result of referrals to external agencies or professionals are the responsibility of the employee.

5. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources

Review: Every three years on or before August 31

6. APPROVAL

Approved: John Rudley
Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Jay Gogue
Chancellor

Date: May 25, 2005