



# Guidelines for Separating from Employment

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# Introduction

The *Guidelines for Separating from Employment* outline the separation processes that support Clemson University's Separation from Employment Policy. These guidelines apply to all paid employees of Clemson University except student workers.

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) manages all separations from employment with the university. Separations must be reported to OHR, where they are processed and documented. In accordance with state regulations, OHR maintains, archives and disposes of personnel records of employees who have separated from the university. OHR's Benefits unit encourages all separating employees to contact a benefits counselor to discuss the continuation, transfer or termination of benefits.

In order to better communicate the policies and procedures involved in ending an employment relationship—as well as improve processing and tracking—Clemson categorizes the types of separation as follows:

1. Voluntary Separations
  - a. Resignation
  - b. Retirement
  - c. Job Abandonment
2. Involuntary Separations
  - a. Termination
  - b. Termination due to failure to return to work (after authorized leave options have expired)
  - c. Termination for Cause
3. Other Separations
  - a. Expiration of Employment
  - b. Non-Reappointment
  - c. Death

Links to the university documents, forms, templates and websites referred to in these guidelines are available in the Related Resources section at the end of this document. For definitions, see the [OHR Glossary of Terms](#).

## **Resources:**

- For a detailed list of the requirements and recommendations for ending employment, the separating employee should consult the Employee Checklist for Separating from Employment.
- Supervisors and HR partners should follow the Separation Processing Checklist.
- Clemson's offboarding program provides information and assistance to separating employees in order to facilitate the transition for the employee and the university community.
- Employees are encouraged to meet with a benefits counselor to discuss how separation will impact their benefits.

# Categories of Separation

## Voluntary Separations

A voluntary separation occurs when an employee leaves a job on their own initiative, through resignation, retirement or job abandonment. In accordance with the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act, voluntary separations are not grievable. For more information on grievance rights, see Clemson's Grievance Policy or, when applicable, the *Faculty Manual*.

### Resignation

Any employee may resign by tendering written or oral notice to their supervisor in accordance with the timeframe specified for the position. Resignation is a voluntary separation from employment.

#### Resignation Process

1. Resignation is initiated when the resigning employee extends notice (written or oral) of intent to separate to the supervisor.
  - a. Notice should be given, when possible, within the timeframe established for the position:
    - **Staff members** are asked to give notice at least two weeks prior to the intended resignation date. Additional advance notice beyond this period may be expected. In situations where two weeks is not a realistic timeframe for a reasonable knowledge transfer, supervisors should communicate to the employee the need for additional time.
    - **Faculty members**, in accordance with the *Faculty Manual* and professional ethics, are asked to consider the needs of students and obligations to the academic community in scheduling such a departure. Faculty are asked to give the university the maximum feasible notification. Faculty should refer to the *Faculty Manual* for specifics regarding notice of intent to separate.
  - b. When an individual resigns, a chain of events is triggered that involves expense, planning and transition on the part of the university. Therefore, notice of intent to separate may not be rescinded, nor may the planned resignation date be changed, except with the approval of the chief human resources officer (CHRO) or designee.
  - c. A "Notice of Resignation or Retirement" form is available for use.
2. The supervisor receives notice from the resigning employee.
  - a. If notice is tendered verbally, the supervisor should document the resignation using the "Notice of Resignation or Retirement" form. Signatures of the resigning employee and any witnesses to the resignation should be included on the form if possible.
3. The supervisor forwards the resignation to the division's HR partner.
4. The HR partner confirms the resignation information and forwards a) the appropriate separation action form and b) the notice of intent to separate to OHR's Data Center.
5. The Data Center enters the resignation into PeopleSoft (CUBS-HR). Entry of the resignation triggers the offboarding process, including reports to all affected university entities.
6. OHR's Employee Engagement and Retention unit sends offboarding information to the separating employee, including a link to the Employee Checklist for Separating from Employment.
7. The supervisor initiates departmental offboarding, which should begin as soon as possible following notification and continue through the employee's last day of work. The supervisor should address the following activities as part of departmental offboarding:

- a. Transition planning (in collaboration with the separating employee when appropriate).
  - b. Completion of the Separation Processing Checklist (for supervisors), which includes ensuring that the employee receives offboarding information and performs all required tasks.
8. Unless expressly stated by the supervisor, it is Clemson University’s expectation that separating employees report to work to fully facilitate the transition (knowledge transfer, closing or proper transfer of work projects and tasks, etc.). The resigning employee is responsible for the following tasks:
- a. Ensure the transfer of operational knowledge/responsibility and intellectual property of the university. The university expects resigning employees to report to work and be actively involved with transition planning and implementation, which includes honoring any existing commitments and effectively transferring the knowledge and responsibility associated with the position. The employee will be expected to work until their last day.
  - b. Return all university property to the supervisor, the division’s HR partner or a designated university official.
  - c. Settle outstanding accounts, such as those with the university libraries, Parking Services, and Procurement.
  - d. Other recommended tasks as outlined on the Employee Checklist for Separating from Employment.
9. OHR’s Benefits unit evaluates the continuation, transfer or termination of benefits; communicates to the employee any changes in benefits; and supplies the employee with any benefits-related year-end documentation when available.
10. OHR verifies employment records for the separating employee’s final paycheck, including final insurance premium deductions and applicable leave payouts.
11. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of the university’s personalized offboarding, a one-on-one OHR session during which the employee meets with a benefits counselor and participates in the in-person exit interview. For information on the exit interview process, please see the link in the Related Resources section at the end of this document.
12. Clemson University’s Payroll Office performs the following tasks:
- a. Calculates final paycheck
  - b. Determines method of delivery of final paycheck
  - c. Sends final Form W-2 when available
13. When requested, OHR provides information regarding the reason for separation to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce for unemployment claims.

**Resignation Roles & Responsibilities**

Responsible Party	List of Responsibilities
<b>Employee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend notice to your supervisor within the timeframe established for your position.</li> <li>• Return all university property.</li> <li>• Settle all outstanding accounts.</li> <li>• In coordination with the supervisor, engage in transition planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Inform OHR if you are taking a new job with a South Carolina state agency (including Clemson) in order to ensure appropriate offboarding.</li> <li>• After resignation, maintain confidentiality of all confidential information related to your position.</li> </ul>

<b>Supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle the resignation professionally and expeditiously.</li> <li>• Receive notice. (If notice is tendered verbally, document the notice.)</li> <li>• Provide response to resignation in writing.</li> <li>• Forward the notice of intent to the college/division’s HR partner for processing as soon as is practicable.</li> <li>• Initiate transition planning in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Review and approve/deny requests to take paid or unpaid leave during the notice period preceding the resignation; assess whether absence during this crucial transition period will negatively affect the operation of the university. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Special Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only when there has been a successful transition (knowledge transfer, closing or proper transfer of work projects and tasks, etc.) should time off be granted prior to the separation.</li> <li>▪ Manage special cases where exceptions to this requirement should be made.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Complete all items on the Separation Processing Checklist.</li> </ul>
<b>OHR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter separation information into PeopleSoft (CUBS-HR) and the employee’s personnel file.</li> <li>• Review and approve/deny any request from an employee to rescind notice of intent to separate or to change a declared resignation date.</li> <li>• Communicate resignation-related benefits changes to employee.</li> <li>• Inform S.C. state agency if the employee is transferring from Clemson University to their agency.</li> <li>• Verify final paycheck includes applicable benefits-related deductions and payouts.</li> <li>• When applicable, send final Form 1095-C when available.</li> </ul>
<b>Payroll</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calculate and deliver final paycheck.</li> <li>• Send final Form W-2 when available.</li> </ul>

## Retirement

For SCRS/PORS members, retirement occurs when the employee 1) ends the employment relationship with Clemson University (or another South Carolina state agency) and 2) is eligible for and elects to receive state retirement benefits. For an employee who is a member of an Optional Retirement Program (ORP), retirement occurs when the employee separates from Clemson University by means of declared retirement. Retirement is a voluntary separation from employment.

**Note:** Retirement is unique as a form of separation in that it requires compliance and planning from the onset of employment. In addition to the information contained in these guidelines, OHR maintains separate *Retirement Guidelines* to inform employees of the requirements and resources regarding benefits election, retirement planning, benefits adjustment, retirement, and post-retirement employment.

### Retirement Process

1. It is typical in the case of retirement that the retiring employee seeks information and counselling through OHR’s Benefits unit prior to making the decision to retire. Such planning is encouraged, but the process does not replace the employee’s obligation to tender notice to their supervisor as outlined below.

2. Retirement is initiated at the university level when the retiring employee extends notice of intent to separate to the supervisor.
  - a. Notice should be given, when possible, within the timeframe established for the position:
    - **Staff members** are asked to give notice at least two weeks prior to the intended retirement date. Additional advance notice beyond this period may be expected. In situations where two weeks is not a realistic timeframe for a reasonable knowledge transfer, supervisors should communicate to the employee the need for additional time.
    - **Faculty members**, in accordance with the *Faculty Manual* and professional ethics, are asked to consider the needs of students and obligations to the academic community in scheduling such a departure. Faculty are asked to give the university the maximum feasible notification. Faculty should refer to the *Faculty Manual* for specifics regarding notice of intent to separate.
  - b. When an individual retires, a chain of events is triggered that involves expense, planning and transition on the part of the university. Therefore, notice of intent to separate may not be rescinded, nor may the planned retirement date be changed, except with the approval of the chief human resources officer (CHRO) or designee.
  - c. A “Notice of Resignation or Retirement” form is available for use.
3. The supervisor receives notice from the retiring employee.
  - a. If notice is tendered verbally, the supervisor should document the retirement using the “Notice of Resignation or Retirement” form. Signatures of the retiring employee and any witnesses to the retirement should be included on the form if possible.
4. The supervisor forwards the retirement notice to the division’s HR partner.
5. The HR partner confirms the retirement information and forwards a) the appropriate separation action form and b) the notice of intent to separate to OHR’s Data Center.
6. OHR enters the retirement into PeopleSoft (CUBS-HR). Entry of the retirement triggers the offboarding process, including reports to all affected university entities.
7. OHR’s Employee Engagement and Retention unit sends offboarding information to the retiring employee, including a link to the Employee Checklist for Separating from Employment.
8. The supervisor initiates departmental offboarding, which should begin as soon as possible following notification and continue through the employee’s last day of work. The supervisor should address the following activities as part of departmental offboarding:
  - a. Transition planning (in collaboration with the retiring employee when appropriate).
  - b. Completion of the Separation Processing Checklist (for supervisors), which includes ensuring that the employee receives offboarding information and performs all required tasks.
9. Unless expressly stated by the supervisor, it is Clemson University’s expectation that retiring employees report to work to fully facilitate the transition (knowledge transfer, closing or proper transfer of work projects and tasks, etc.). The retiring employee is responsible for the following tasks:
  - a. Ensure the transfer of operational knowledge/responsibility and intellectual property of the university. The university expects retiring employees to report to work and be actively involved with transition planning and implementation, which includes honoring any existing commitments and effectively transferring the knowledge and responsibility associated with the position.
  - b. Returning all university property to the supervisor, the division’s HR partner or a designated university official.

- c. Settle outstanding accounts, such as those with the university libraries, Parking Services, and Procurement.
  - d. Other recommended tasks as outlined on the Employee Checklist for Separating from Employment.
10. OHR's Benefits unit evaluates the continuation, transfer or termination of benefits; communicates to the employee any changes in benefits; and supplies the employee with any benefits-related year-end documentation when available.
  11. OHR verifies employment records for the retiring employee's final paycheck, including final insurance premium deductions and applicable leave payouts.
  12. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of the university's personalized offboarding, a one-on-one OHR session during which the employee meets with a benefits counselor and participates in the in-person exit interview. For information on the exit interview process, please see the link in the Related Resources section at the end of this document.
  13. Clemson University's Payroll Office performs the following tasks:
    - a. Calculates final paycheck
    - b. Determines method of delivery of final paycheck
    - c. Sends final Form W-2 when available

**Retirement Roles & Responsibilities**

Responsible Party	List of Responsibilities
<b>Employee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend notice to your supervisor within the timeframe established for your position.</li> <li>• SCRS and PORS participants file a retirement application no more than six months before intended retirement date.</li> <li>• File PEBA retiree insurance application within 31 days of retirement.</li> <li>• Return all university property.</li> <li>• Settle all outstanding accounts.</li> <li>• In coordination with the supervisor, engage in transition planning and implementation.</li> <li>• Inform OHR if you are taking a new job with a South Carolina state agency (including Clemson) in order to ensure appropriate offboarding.</li> <li>• After retirement, maintain confidentiality of all confidential information related to your position.</li> <li>• SCRS and PORS retirees who return to employment, monitor annual earnings and comply with post-retirement earnings limitations.</li> </ul>
<b>Supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle the retirement professionally and expeditiously.</li> <li>• Receive notice. (If notice is tendered verbally, document the notice.)</li> <li>• Forward the notice of intent to the college/division's HR partner for processing as soon as is practicable.</li> <li>• Initiate transition planning in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Review and approve/deny requests to take paid or unpaid leave during the notice period preceding retirement; assess whether absence during this crucial transition period will negatively affect the operation of the university.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Special Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only when there has been a successful transition (knowledge transfer, closing or proper transfer of work projects and tasks, etc.) should time off be granted prior to the retirement.</li> <li>▪ Manage special cases where exceptions to this requirement should be made.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Complete all items on the Separation Processing Checklist.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the employee with a retirement plaque.</li> </ul>
<b>OHR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon request, assist employees with completion of required SCRS/PORS documents, including a retirement application and retiree insurance forms.</li> <li>• Provide department with a retirement plaque for presentation to the employee.</li> <li>• Enter the retirement/TERI action into PeopleSoft (CUBS-HR) and the employee's personnel file.</li> <li>• Review and approve/deny any request from an employee to rescind notice of intent to separate or to change a declared resignation date.</li> <li>• Verify final paycheck includes applicable benefits-related deductions and payouts.</li> <li>• When applicable, send final Form 1095-C when available.</li> </ul>
<b>Payroll</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calculate and deliver final paycheck.</li> <li>• Send final Form W-2 when available.</li> </ul>

### Job Abandonment

Per Clemson University's Separation from Employment Policy, an employee who fails to report to work for three or more consecutive workdays without notifying the supervisor of the absence prior to or during the first three days of the absence is considered to have abandoned their job. Job abandonment is a voluntary separation from employment.

**Note:** An employee who has not received authorized leave of absence from their supervisor and is not going to report to work as scheduled is required to notify their immediate supervisor prior to the beginning of their shift on the date of the unauthorized absence (or as soon as is practicable). In the event that the immediate supervisor cannot be reached, the employee should notify a higher-level supervisor.

#### Job Abandonment Processing and Responsibilities:

1. Days one and two of an unreported and unauthorized absence constitute a disciplinary issue and should be addressed according to the Discipline Policy applicable to the position. Supervisors are to report a no call/no show to OHR immediately. OHR will work with the department to take necessary steps to monitor, document and address the situation. Proper procedure and documentation are critical should the absence continue to the point of job abandonment.
2. If the employee fails to contact their supervisor and/or fails to submit appropriate leave documentation for a third consecutive day, it is assumed that the employee has abandoned their job, and OHR initiates a voluntary separation for the individual.
3. On the workday following job abandonment, OHR sends a letter to the employee's address of record notifying the individual that they have been separated from employment as a result of job abandonment. Should the employee report for work on the fourth or subsequent days, such an appearance does not negate the employee's separation.
4. If the employee is unable to contact a supervisor during a period of unscheduled/unauthorized absence from work due to extreme circumstances (such as a serious personal illness or calamity), the employee should contact their immediate supervisor as soon as practicable to explain the absence. Upon receipt of the employee's explanation, the employee's immediate supervisor should provide written notification to

the Office of Human Resources outlining the explanation. The Office of Human Resources will determine whether the separation will be upheld.

## Involuntary Separations

An involuntary separation occurs when the university removes an employee from a position against the employee’s will. In the case of involuntary separation, an employee with grievance rights retains those rights. For specifics on the grievance process, see Clemson’s Grievance Policy or, when applicable, the *Faculty Manual*.

All involuntary separations require the review and approval of the vice president/division head in consultation with the chief human resources officer. Throughout the involuntary separation process, supervisors are required to work through the Office of Human Resources to protect the interests of the employee and the university and to achieve compliance with governing regulations.

## Termination

### **Institutional Contingencies and Financial Exigencies**

Clemson University reserves the right to terminate employees due to nondiscriminatory business needs, such as budgetary limitations, shortage of work, organizational changes or outsourcing/privatization. In such circumstances, terminations must be coordinated with OHR, follow a consistent process and be applied in a fair manner.

### **Termination Notice and Approval Requirements (for business/financial reasons)**

<b>Position Type</b>	<b>Minimum Notice Period</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Covered Employees	As established in the Reduction in Force	VP; CHRO; state OHR	Reduction in Force Policy
Faculty/Special Faculty (excluding post-doctoral research fellows)	As outlined in the <i>Faculty Manual</i>	As outlined in the <i>Faculty Manual</i>	<i>The Clemson University Faculty Manual</i>
Temporary Staff (TLP & TGP)	recommended 30 days*	VP; CHRO	OHR’s Staff Relations
Post-doctoral Research Fellows (TLP & TGP)	recommended 90 days*	VP; CHRO	OHR’s Faculty Relations

\*Exceptions to this timeframe require justification and OHR approval.

### **Termination of Temporary Employees**

The termination of a temporary employee for business/financial reasons prior to a specified employment end date (or at any time if the employment end date is not specified in the offer letter) requires advanced notice and approval as outlined in the table above. For employment ending on the date specified in the offer letter, see the Other Types of Separation—Expiration of Employment section below.

### **University Center/Institute Closing**

Terminations and other employment actions stemming from the closing of a university center or institute are managed through OHR’s University Center/Institute Closing procedure. The position-based notification and approval requirements listed above still apply.

**Failure to Return to Work**

Clemson University reserves the right to terminate any employee who fails to return to work after authorized leave options have expired. Such terminations are effective immediately upon notification of the employment action.

**Termination for cause**

All terminations for cause are effective immediately upon notification of the employment action.

**Misconduct**

Clemson University reserves the right to terminate employees in response to misconduct.

**Resources:** For more information on terminations due to misconduct, see the following sources:

- Misconduct by a covered employee—see Clemson’s Discipline Policy.
- Misconduct by a faculty/special faculty member—see Clemson’s Discipline for “Non-Covered” Employees Policy and the *Faculty Manual*.
- Misconduct by a non-covered staff member—see Clemson’s Discipline for “Non-Covered Employees Policy.

**Substandard Performance**

Clemson University reserves the right to terminate employees due to substandard performance.

**Resources:** For more information on terminations due to substandard performance, see the following sources:

- Substandard performance by a covered employee—see Clemson’s Employee Performance Policy.
- Substandard performance by an employee in a probationary period—see the Employee Performance Policy and the Probationary Period and Trial Status Policy.
- Substandard performance by a faculty/special faculty member—see the *Faculty Manual*.

**Termination Roles & Responsibilities (all types of terminations)**

Responsible Party	List of Responsibilities
<b>Employee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return all University property.</li> <li>• Settle all outstanding accounts.</li> <li>• When appropriate, engage in transition planning and implementation in coordination with the supervisor.</li> <li>• Maintain confidentiality of all confidential information related to your position.</li> </ul>
<b>Supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate termination with OHR’s Staff and Faculty Relations unit leading up to and during the separation.</li> <li>• When appropriate, initiate transition planning in a timely manner.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete all items on the Separation Processing Checklist.</li> </ul>
<b>Vice President /Division Head</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and approve/deny the termination of any employee under their jurisdiction.</li> </ul>
<b>OHR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate termination with supervisor.</li> <li>Complete required documentation.</li> <li>Draft (or review and approve draft) and coordinate delivery of employee termination letter.</li> <li>Coordinate and assist with time-sensitive offboarding.</li> <li>Act as a resource for employees throughout the termination process.</li> <li>Act as a resource for the VP/division head for decisions on terminations.</li> <li>Verify final paycheck includes applicable benefits-related deductions and payouts.</li> <li>When applicable, send final Form 1095-C when available.</li> </ul>
<b>Payroll</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate and deliver final paycheck.</li> <li>Send final Form W-2 when available.</li> </ul>

## Other Types of Separation

### Expiration of Employment (staff positions)

Separation due to expiration of employment occurs in the following temporary employment situations when the employment ends for business reasons on the date specified in the offer letter (or contract):

- End of contract
- Failure to procure continuing funding (temporary grant and time-limited positions)
- End of job (temporary and time-limited positions; intermittent positions when the job ends or when the employee has not worked for 12 months or more)

Expiration of employment has no requirement of prior notice or justification beyond that established by the offer letter. For terminations before the specified end date or if no end date is specified in the offer letter, see the Involuntary Separations section above.

### Non-Reappointment (faculty/special faculty positions)

Separation due to non-reappointment occurs when a non-tenured faculty member or a special faculty member is not reappointed to a position. Non-reappointment is governed by the rules and regulations set forth in the *Faculty Manual*.

### Death

Clemson University strives to respond to the death of an employee with sympathy and in a way that is supportive and considerate of colleagues, family and friends while ensuring that all official actions required for separation from employment are taken.

# Voluntary Incentive Programs

## Voluntary Incentive Programs

In accordance with South Carolina state regulations, Clemson University reserves the option to offer state-approved programs designed to provide an incentive to employees to retire or resign in order to realign resources and/or permanently downsize. The decision to implement a voluntary incentive program is made by the VP/division head and is based on the strategic business needs and priorities of the college/division. Approval is based on the VP/division head's ability to demonstrate recurring cost savings. One or both of the available programs—the Retirement Incentive Plan (RIP) and the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP)—may be offered, and participation is at the discretion of the eligible employee. Participation in a voluntary incentive program constitutes a voluntary separation from employment and is not grievable. Information on voluntary incentive programs can be obtained through Clemson's Office of Human Resources (OHR). OHR is available to develop and implement an incentive program tailored to the objectives of the college/division.

Note that the process for separating from employment, through resignation or retirement, varies from the procedures established above. For additional information on Clemson's Voluntary Incentive Programs, see the Incentive Programs General Information Summary, the Retirement Incentive Plan (RIP) FAQs, and the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP) FAQs.

## Related Resources

[Employee Checklist for Separating from Employment](#)

[Exit Interview Process](#)

[Faculty Manual](#)

[Incentive Programs General Information Summary](#)

[Retirement Incentive Plan \(RIP\) FAQs](#)

[Voluntary Separation Program \(VSP\) FAQs](#)

[Notice of Resignation or Retirement](#)

[Offboarding Guidance for Separating from Employment](#)

[OHR Glossary of Terms](#)

[Clemson University Retirement Guidelines](#)

[Separation from Employment Policy](#)

[Separation Processing Checklist](#) (for supervisors)

[University Center/Institute Closing Guidance](#)