

Employment of Short-term Casual Employees

Effective Date: September 1, 2010

Policy Statement

Short-term casual employees are employees on the University payroll who are performing **non-exempt work** for a **limited period of time** (this excludes full-time and half-time students at Columbia University, Barnard College and Teachers College). Short-term casual employees are limited to one job for a maximum of 560 hours or 4 months from the initial hire date, whichever comes first, in a 12 month period. When the employee has worked 560 hours or 4-months from the initial hire date, the short-term casual employee must be terminated, or the position converted into one of the other pre-defined administrative employment categories.

Reason(s) for the Policy

To ensure compliance with Columbia University policies, collective bargaining agreements and federal laws governing the administration of benefits and wage and hour laws.

Primary Guidance to Which This Policy Responds

Columbia University's collective bargaining agreements and applicable laws governing the administration of benefits and wage and hour laws

Responsible University Office and Officer

Columbia University Human Resources
212-851-7008
hrcs@columbia.edu

Revision History

Original policy issued January 1, 1993
Revised August 2006
Current policy revised May 22, 2018

Who is governed by this Policy

All short-term casual employees, excluding full-time and half-time students at Columbia University, Barnard College and Teachers College

Who should know this Policy

Anyone at the University engaged in hiring or managing short-term casual employees (excluding students, as outlined below), including hiring managers, Departmental Administrators, Academic Department Administrators, local Human Resources Administrators and central Human Resources.

Exclusions and Special Situations

Students: This policy does not apply to full-time and half-time students at Columbia University, Barnard College and Teachers College. Enrollment status (full-time, half-time, part-time) is defined by the Student Information System (SIS) based on the program of study for the individual student¹. Full-

¹ In limited circumstances, where an individual is taking a reduced course load and considered part-time due to documented disability reasons, such individuals may be considered a student exempt from the casual hour and time restrictions.

time and half-time students are categorized as student casuals and have a "student status" as defined by SIS. If a student's status changes they become subject to this policy.

Vacancy due to employees on an approved leave: If a short-term casual employee is hired to replace a specific employee on an authorized leave of absence, the employment may continue on the short-term casual payroll until the regular employee returns, but cannot exceed 999 hours in a 12 month period. Please refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for limitations and notice requirements for work that might otherwise be covered by a CBA.

Policy Text

Definition:

Short-term casual employees are employees on the University payroll who are performing **non-exempt work** for a **limited period of time** (this excludes full-time and half-time students at Columbia University, Barnard College and Teacher's College). Employment in this category is limited to specific types of work, as listed below. The position should fit into one of the six pre-defined non-exempt job descriptions below. Please see [short-term casual employee job descriptions](#) on the HR website for more detail.

Job Descriptions:

- Administrative
- Clerical
- Trades
- Cafeteria and Food worker
- Research support (non-academic)
- Research support non-technical (non-academic)

A short-term casual employee can hold only one position at a time at the University. In the event that a short-term casual employee is found to hold another paid position, that employee must elect which position to retain. However, if a casual employee does not work the full 4-months or 560-hours, he or she may be rehired in another department until the 4-month/560-hour limit is reached.

If the work required does not fit into one of the above descriptions, please contact your Human Resources Client Manager.

Hiring Process:

All short-term casual positions must be entered into Jobs at Columbia (JAC), but posting is only necessary if the department chooses to conduct a search. All short-term casual hires must complete an employment application in JAC. A summary of the process is below:

Posting: All short-term casual positions must be created and entered in Jobs at Columbia. If the department already has a candidate for the position then the online casual waiver process in JAC should be used.

Application: The candidate must submit an electronic application through JAC.

Hiring Paperwork: All applicable hiring paperwork must be submitted to the HRPC via the template-based hire process in a timely fashion. A full description of the required hiring documents can be found in the [HR Manager Toolkit on the HR Website](#). Certain departments may require a background check prior to hiring the short-term casual employee. This check may include a criminal conviction check, Social Security number verification, education and employment history verification, an employment reference check, consumer credit check and testing for current illegal drug use.

For a detailed description of the hiring process and steps, please see the [Administrative Staff Search and Onboarding section of the HR website](#). If you have additional questions, please consult with your HR Client Manager for guidance on the overall hiring process.

Termination:

Short-term casual employees are limited to a maximum of 560 hours or 4 months from hire date, whichever comes first, in a 12 month period. When the 560-hour or 4-month limit is reached, the short-term casual employee must be terminated unless he/she is filling in for a regular employee on an authorized leave of absence.

When a short-term casual employee reaches 4-months from hire date or 560 hours, whichever comes first, he or she will be automatically terminated in PAC. Short-term casuals should not work after the termination date. If it is determined that a short-term casual has worked past his or her termination date, the department must immediately discontinue the casual's employment.

Converting a short-term casual position into a regular or temporary university position:

If a department wishes to convert a short-term casual position into a regular or temporary university position, all normal Columbia University policies and procedures and applicable collective bargaining agreements apply for hiring new employees. These include job posting (for all bargaining-unit positions and for all officer positions lasting longer than 12 months), interviewing of applicants, and submission of any applicable monitoring paperwork. Please see the [Administrative Staff Search and Onboarding section of the HR website](#) for more information. The Human Resources Client Managers can provide further assistance to appropriately categorize new positions.

When appropriate, based on the job and grade and in collaboration with an HR Client Manager, a department may move an existing short-term casual employee into one of the other administrative employment categories. However, in order to avoid a break in service, the department must initiate the hiring process at least one month before the 4-month/560-hour limit is reached by the incumbent. For rules on benefits eligibility, please consult the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Rehiring Former Casual Employees:

Any short-term casual employee who has worked the maximum number of hours/months within 12-months of his or her hire date may not be employed as a short-term casual employee *anywhere* within the University for 12 months from his or her termination date.

Compensation

All short-term casual employees must be paid based on the number of hours worked and his or her hourly pay rate. Original completed and signed timesheets must be kept on file in the department. [A](#)

[standard timesheet for short-term casual employees can be found on the Human Resources website.](#)

Lump sum payments are not allowed.

Where the job performed by the short-term casual employee is comparable to an existing position, the short-term casual employee's salary should be no less than the minimum pay grade for that position. However, if work is not substantial enough to be classified according to current pay grades (e.g., stuffing envelopes), rates outside of the range can be considered, but must meet all state and federal minimum wage laws. Please consult with your HR Client Manager if you have any questions.

Casual employees are eligible for overtime (at time and one-half their regular hourly rate) for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week.

Restrictions and limits on use of short-term casual employees:

The short-term casual employee payroll policy does not change the collective bargaining agreement limitations defining when an employee becomes a regular employee. Thus, as long as the employee works at least the minimum number of hours (20 per week except 10 per week for 1199), the employee is subject to the collective bargaining agreement after four (4) months—three (3) months for 1199 members—if the job is a union-represented position.

The short-term casual employment category is restricted to **non-exempt** work. The following types of individuals cannot be hired as a short-term casual employee:

Academic Officers: Any person who will be teaching, working with students as an adviser, doing collaborative research, or performing the duties of a professional librarian cannot be hired as a short-term casual employee. They must be given a faculty appointment or appointed as an officer of research, an officer of the libraries or a student officer, and hired using the academic nomination process. Please contact the office of your dean/executive vice president or the Assistant Provost for Academic Appointments (for Morningside appointments) or the Director of the Office of Faculty Affairs (for CUMC appointments) if you are unsure whether a person should have an academic appointment

Former University employees: If a department wishes to rehire a former employee who has separated from the University, he or she must be hired using one of the regular or temporary administrative employment categories: regular full-time, regular part-time, temporary full-time, temporary part-time, or part-time variable hours.

University Retirees: If a department wishes to rehire a University retiree, that individual must be hired using one of the regular or temporary part-time administrative employment categories: regular part-time, temporary part-time, or part-time variable hours. Please also refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreement for pension implications and limitations when rehiring any union retiree.

If a department wishes to hire someone on a short-term basis who will be performing officer-level work, the individual must be hired using one of the regular or temporary administrative employment categories: regular full-time, regular part-time, temporary full-time, temporary part-time, or part-time variable hours. Alternatively, the department can hire a temporary through the Columbia Employment Information Center.

For more information on determining when work is exempt (officer) versus non-exempt (support staff) consult with your HR Client Manager.

Special Situations for Short-term Casual Employees:

Columbia University Graduates: Students who have recently graduated can be hired or retained in a short-term casual employee position. The hours they worked as a student do not count toward the 4-month/560-hour limit on short-term casual employees. However, the 4-month/560-hour limit begins after graduation.

Columbia University Students: This policy does not apply to full-time and half-time students at Columbia University, Barnard College and Teachers College. Enrollment status (full-time, half-time, part-time) is defined by the Student Information System (SIS) based on the program of study for the individual student.

Full-time and half-time students are categorized as student casuals and have a "student status" as defined by SIS. *If a student's status changes and they drop below half-time registration status (part-time), they become subject to this policy.*

Laid-Off employees participating in the enhanced layoff benefits program: for union employees who have been laid off and are participating in the enhanced layoff benefits program through SSA, 1199 and 2110, special circumstances may apply. Please consult the applicable collective bargaining agreement or contact The Officer of Labor and Employee Relations for more information. Following the end of the enhanced layoff benefits period, the 4-month/560-hour limit begins.

Positions covered by the 1199 cafeteria workers union: if a short-term casual employee is hired to work in a position that would otherwise be covered by the 1199 cafeteria CBA, s/he is limited to 520 hours or 3-months from hire date, whichever comes first.