

**Graduate School Opportunities for Off-campus Employees
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture**

Guidelines for Combined Annual Leave and Off-site Work

Strong research and extension programs depend upon having highly motivated, qualified Program Technicians (PT) and Program Associates (PA). Attracting and maintaining such PT/PA's at off-campus sites becomes a great challenge in some disciplines. The ability to work toward an advanced degree is an important incentive when recruiting PT/PA's. With advanced training, PT/PA's are better able to understand work objectives and procedures and tend to accomplish their tasks at a higher level of proficiency. Attainment of a graduate degree does not guarantee an employee a salary increment increase nor does it entitle a Program Technician to be promoted to Program Associate.

Any off-campus based PT/PA's who wishes to pursue a graduate degree may request permission to combine annual leave and off-site work so that they might attend classes on campus. This request may not extend more than one semester, and may only be requested to attend an accredited graduate program at a university located in Arkansas. To initiate the request, the employee must:

1. Be accepted into a post-graduate degree program, which would benefit the Division's goals, and must have made some progress toward the degree.
2. Develop a plan for the proposed semester which includes:
 - a. A degree plan, with courses designated which will be taken during the on-campus semester.
 - b. A work plan indicating how assigned work will be covered during absence from primary duty station.
 - c. A proposed class and course schedule indicating distribution of work and annual leave that will be used each week.
 - d. An on-campus work plan indicating work (other than course work) to be completed while on campus. This may include work on data summaries, presentations at professional meetings, literature reviews, protocol development, proposal writing, or related work assigned by their major professor.
3. Have accrued sufficient annual leave to meet the proposed plan.
4. Gain approval from primary supervisor, on-campus temporary supervisor, Unit Head, and the Associate Vice President at least three months prior to beginning the proposed semester. Anyone in the approval chain may reject the plan if they determine that the plan is not likely to benefit the Division of Agriculture and/or would be disruptive to the employee's work task or unit.