



Lehigh University Human Resources Policy

Policy Number:	304
Effective Date:	10/15/1984
Revisions:	10/1/2006
Applicability:	All Staff Members (Employment & Benefits)

EMPLOYEE INSPECTION OF PERSONNEL FILES POLICY

Purpose:

Policy on access to employee personnel files

Policy:

Introduction

Pursuant to the *Pennsylvania Personnel File Inspection Act* (the “Act”), an individual has the right, as a University employee, to inspect his or her personnel file as permitted by the Act. This Act protects employees from the placement of inappropriate information in their personnel files. A personnel file refers to a name-linked file of current and former employees assembled in the normal operations of the University.

Policy

The University complies with all federal and state legal requirements for the retention of personnel records. Records will be maintained in confidence except as access to such is necessary for the business needs of the University and as disclosure may be required by law.

The Human Resources Office maintains and stores the official University’s personnel file for each staff member. While it is recognized that some personnel records may be created and retained in the employee’s department, the retention of such records in these offices should be regarded as temporary in order to meet the daily administrative need for such records. Copies of records that need to be retained by the University should be transmitted (originals or copies) to the Human Resources Office for inclusion in the employee’s official personnel file.

The Human Resources Office maintains employee benefits records of faculty members. Faculty personnel files are maintained in the Office of the Provost. Benefits information is retained separately in the Office of Human Resources to ensure compliance with specific confidentiality policies pertaining to employee benefits information. These are not to be transmitted to the Office of the Provost. Faculty members who wish to see records of their benefit information should contact Human Resources.

Pursuant to the *Pennsylvania Personnel File Inspection Act* (the “Act”), an employee has the right, as a University employee, to inspect his or her personnel file as permitted by the Act. When a employee

requests an opportunity to inspect his or her personnel file, the Human Resources Office, with the assistance and cooperation of the employee's supervisor, will ensure that all personnel records have been included in the employee's official personnel file.

Procedures

All salaried staff members may request to inspect their personnel files and faculty members may request to review the benefit information maintained in the Human Resources personnel files. The following procedure is to be followed:

- Individuals must contact Human Resources regarding this request. Normally, 24 hours notice will be required for employees to view their personnel file.
- Human Resources will schedule an appointment during regular University business hours.
- The inspection will be made in the presence of a Human Resources staff member and the following guidelines will be followed:
 - Individuals may only inspect their own file.
 - Individuals may take notes on the contents of their file.
 - Individuals may request Human Resources to make copies of specific documents. The individual must pay the cost of the copies.
 - Individuals may not remove any of the contents of their file.
 - Individuals must sign an *Inspection Statement* upon completion of their inspection.
 - Individuals may submit a rebuttal to any information deemed inappropriate.
- Except for reasonable cause, inspections are limited to one per year.
- If the specific information sought by individuals is not maintained in the Human Resources files, arrangements will be made for inspection of the file containing the information requested.
- Human Resources will do the following:
 - Locate the office maintaining a file containing the record sought.
 - Inform the office that a request for inspection is on file in the Human Resources.
 - Request that the individual contact the office to schedule an appointment for an inspection.
 - Send a copy of the request and an *Inspection Statement* to the office.

The office maintaining the file will do the following in accordance with the guidelines stated earlier in this policy:

1. Have the individual complete an [Inspection Statement](#).
2. Place the *Inspection Statement* in the personnel file.
3. Notify Human Resources after completion of the inspection.

Human Resources will enter confirmation of the inspection in the file maintained in Human Resources.

Employee personnel files are retained for seven (7) years following the date of retirement, resignation, or termination of employment.

Keywords: Personnel, Files, Privacy