

# Stanford

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## 2.1.3 PERSONNEL FILES AND DATA

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The University maintains personnel information for each employee in order to have a complete, accurate and current record of the employee's salary and job history at the University. This guide memo sets forth policies and procedures to facilitate the establishment, use and maintenance of personnel data, in whatever form maintained.

**Authority:**

Approved by the Vice President for Human Resources.

**Applicability:**

Applies to regular employees (as defined in [Guide Memo 2.2.1 \[1\]](#): Definitions), Academic Staff - Research, and Academic Staff - Libraries. For policies that apply to employees covered by collective bargaining agreements, refer to the agreements between Stanford University and SEIU Higher Education Workers Local 2007 and the Stanford University and the Stanford Deputy Sheriffs' Association. Agreements can be found at [Labor Relations & Collective Bargaining \[2\]](#).

While these policy statements are applicable to all University staff, the SLAC Human Resources Department maintains its own centralized personnel files and should be contacted for specific procedural information relating to personnel files for SLAC employees.

### 1. Definition

Employee Personnel Files are defined to include the application for employment, and records which are used or have been used to determine an employee's qualifications for promotion, compensation, termination, or disciplinary action. A detailed list of appropriate contents is provided in Section 3.

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### 2. Location

Because of the decentralized personnel function at Stanford, the documents which form an employee's personnel file can be found (1) on computerized record-keeping systems and/or digital imaging systems, (2) locally in the Dean's, Director's, Vice Provost's or Vice President's office, (3) in the department head's or supervisor's office, (4) in the Payroll office, and/or (5) at the Personnel Records area at SLAC. All such documents comprise the personnel file.

### 3. Contents

Employee personnel files should contain only that information which is directly related to the employee's job duties, salary, performance and general employment history. Medical files, where applicable, must be maintained separately from other files (see Guide to Supervisors on next page). Listed in the three following subsections are many types of documents which, if they exist, are appropriate for retention in employee personnel files. Documents that have not been shared with the employee and the supervisor do not belong in the file(s).

#### **a. Personnel Files and Data Maintained by the Department/Division:**

- Attendance and Absence Records (Note: At SLAC, these items are located in Payroll)
- For areas that do not use PeopleSoft HRMS, and for periods of time that predate the implementation of PeopleSoft HRMS:
  - Leave of absence correspondence (includes vacation and PTO)
  - Time sheets: TTR, RHT, Hours Worked Record (SU-28); at SLAC, located in Payroll
  - Vacation and sick leave records; at SLAC, located in Payroll
  - Yearly leave records; at SLAC, located in Payroll
- Offer and/or confirmation of employment letters
- Classification review letters addressed to employee
- Copies of compliance agreements and other University-required agreements, such as HIPAA and those related to use of patents or confidential personnel information/data
- Disciplinary memos issued to employee
- I-9 documents and supporting documentation (SLAC)
- Job application and any attachments (resume, etc.)
- Job descriptions
- Job requisitions
- Layoff notice issued to employee
- Performance evaluations issued to employee; employee responses thereto
- Personnel action forms (PAF)
- Photo ID where required (SLAC)
- Resignation letter
- STAP forms and related documents
- Termination notice issued to employee
- Transfer or promotion requests
- Years of applicable experience calculation

#### **b. Payroll and Other Forms Maintained by Payroll:**

- Automatic bank deposit form
- Disability insurance adjustment forms (DIA)
- Long term disability vouchers
- I-9 documents and supporting documentation
- One-time payment and reduction forms
- Time sheets (RHTs)
- Special salary processing form
- Wage attachments or garnishment notices (completed)

- W-4 form

**Guide to Supervisors**—Supervisors are cautioned that “notes to the file” and other documentation not addressed to the employee do not belong in the employee personnel file. The following list provides some examples of the types of documents that should be retained, but separate from the personnel file.

Contact your local Human Resources office if you are ever in doubt of what to retain and/or where to retain it.

- Auxiliary medical files:
  - Disability Claim Forms; SU-17: Accident/Injury Report
  - Physician evaluations
- Communications from or to University attorneys
- Employee settlement agreements
- Employee lawsuits
- Employee charges to outside agencies (EEOC, DFEH, OFCCP)
- Employee Relations advice
- Grievances, grievance responses, and grievance-related documents
- Memos between management and the Compensation office
- Personal financial information (loan applications)
- Records relating to workplace investigations, including reports related to such investigations, with the exception of any corrective action issued to an employee as a result of an investigation
- Letters of reference

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## 4. Access and Use

Personnel files are confidential and access is limited to protect employee privacy. See:

[Guide Memo 1.1.1 \[3\]](#): University Code of Conduct, section 3

[Guide Memo 1.5.2 \[4\]](#): Staff Policy on Conflict of Commitment and Interest, section 2.b and 2.e

[Guide Memo 6.1.1 \[5\]](#): Administrative Computing Systems, section 3.c

[Guide Memo 6.2.1 \[6\]](#): Computer and Network Usage Policy

[Guide Memo 6.4.1 \[7\]](#): Identification and Authentication Systems, section 5

### a. Access by the Employee or Representative

Each employee or their authorized representative may review the employee’s own local personnel files by requesting an appointment with the local Human Resources office during regular business hours and non-working time. An employee or their authorized representative may review the employee’s own payroll and related forms by making an appointment with and presenting appropriate identification to the Payroll office. An authorized representative must present a written authorization signed by the employee permitting the representative to make such inspection. Such appointments generally will occur, unless agreed in writing, within 30 days after the written request for inspection is submitted.

A Human Resources or Payroll staff member will remain present during the time the file is reviewed, allowing sufficient inspection time commensurate with the volume of the file. The employee or authorized representative is permitted to take notes during the inspection.

An employee or their authorized representative may also request a copy of the personnel file. The authorized representative must present written proof, signed by the employee, that the representative is authorized to receive a copy of the personnel file. Such a copy will be provided at the employee’s expense within 30 days after a written request is received from the employee or their authorized representative. Requests for a copy

of payroll records, however, must be provided within 21 days of receipt of the employee's request. Current employees can also access their payroll records, including W-2s and time and leave records, at any time at <https://axess.sahr.stanford.edu/>.

#### **b. Access by a Former Employee**

A former employee of the University or their authorized representative may request a copy of their personnel file for up to three years after termination. The request must be in writing, and the representative must provide written proof signed by the employee authorizing the representative to request and receive a copy of the personnel file. Generally such requests will be granted once each year and the copy provided within 30 days after receipt of the written request, unless the University and the employee (or authorized representative) agree otherwise. The copy of the file may be provided at the former employee's expense. Requests by a former employee for a copy of their payroll records must be provided within 21-days of receipt of the former employee's request.

#### **c. Access by University Officials**

University officers, managers, deans, department heads, Human Resources professionals, representatives of the General Counsel's office, and other University officials with a business need to do so may review individual files. This access is also extended to hiring officers within the University when the employee is a finalist for promotion or transfer.

#### **d. Access by Summons/Subpoenas**

Process servers with summons or subpoenas for documents contained in an individual employee's personnel file should be directed to Payroll, or to the Manager of Employee & Labor Relations at SLAC. Departments are not authorized to accept service of summons or subpoenas.

#### **e. Outside Employment Verification Requests (Former and Current Employees)**

Stanford does not respond directly to any employment verification requests. Stanford contracts with a third party service supplier to provide employment, salary, and immigration verification services. Employees should follow the instructions at Stanford's [Gateway to Financial Activities](#) [8] for employment verification. Requests for information on SLAC employees should be referred to the SLAC Human Resources Department.

#### **f. Access by Agents of the University**

Agents of the University are required by contract to certify that University personnel data will be treated confidentially and only used for the purposes specified in the contract.

#### **g. Requests for Employment References (Former & Current Employees)**

Requests from outside the University for employment references should be directed to the local Human Resources office. Requests for information about SLAC employees should be referred to the SLAC Human Resources Department. Information other than the dates of employment and job classification requires the employee's written consent before the release of information.

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## **5. Maintenance and Retention**

### **a. Current Employees**

An employee's work history at Stanford may include service with many different departments. To streamline recordkeeping, the local personnel files should follow the employee from one department to the next, thereby creating a consolidated personnel file containing the employee's complete job history. Local personnel files must be kept in a secure location to prevent unauthorized access.

No one should be responsible for maintenance of their own personnel file or data. For example, the personnel file of a department or school's file administrator should be maintained by that individual's supervisor or manager, as appropriate.

### **b. Terminated Employees**

The final department where a former employee worked is responsible for ensuring that appropriate records are retained for the requisite length of time. Records of former Stanford employees should be retained for eight years following the date of termination.

### **c. Destruction of Outdated Information**

Personnel files contain confidential information and must be destroyed by shredding, incinerating or, in the case of digital records, purged by the system administrator. When the requisite period of data retention has passed, the records should be destroyed. Contact University Human Resources/Employee & Labor Relations or the SLAC Human Resources Department before the destruction or purging of any personnel information.

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#### **Links**

- [1] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/2-2-1>
- [2] <https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/hr-processes-policies/labor-relations-collective-bargaining>
- [3] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/1-1-1>
- [4] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/1-5-2>
- [5] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/6-1-1>
- [6] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/6-2-1>
- [7] <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/6-4-1>
- [8] [http://fingate.stanford.edu/staff/payemployee/emp\\_verification.html](http://fingate.stanford.edu/staff/payemployee/emp_verification.html)