



Policy Number: I.16
Policy Level: Operating Policy
Originally Issued: June 30, 2014
Reviewed: November 10, 2017
Revised: November 19, 2021
Policy Owner: VP for Financial Affairs
Policy Implementation: VP for Financial Affairs

Closing of the University's Physical Campus

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

In accordance with Athens State University's mission, this policy establishes the standards for the University's response in the event of emergency closings of the physical campus, changes to teaching modalities, and cancellation of classes. There are situations (e.g., inclement weather conditions, other acts of God, power failures, etc.) that will prevent Athens State University employees/students from performing their normal duties at the University and may require adjustment to the physical campus access and activities and business operations. These situations may necessitate the closing of the physical campus, the changing of the modality of classes, the cancelling/delaying of classes, and/or the delaying/cancelling of scheduled activities and business operations.

Conditions may exist which limit employees'/students' abilities to report physically to campus and the University does not wish personnel to take undue personal or property risks, therefore, employees and students are expected to use their discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to work or classes.

However, certain jobs are considered essential during an emergency and require designated personnel to be physically present for work, when it is safe for them to do so.

II. Physical Campus Closing

For the purpose of this policy, physical campus is considered to be all property owned by the University.

The University does not wish personnel to take undue personal or property risks, therefore, employees are expected to use reasonable judgment, in keeping with their location and circumstances, as to whether or not they can or should report to work. However, if the University remains open, those employees who do not report to work must report their hours of absences as personal leave, sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay. If an employee feels it is in his/her best interest to leave work early due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions, he/she must report his/her absence as personal leave, sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay. The following apply in situations requiring the opening/closing of the University during inclement weather and/or other emergency situations:



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A. Advance Notice

If the President notifies employees in advance of the start of the work day that the physical campus will be closed or will have a delayed opening, employees (to include those on annual, personal and sick leave) are not charged leave for the time off. Part-time and temporary employees are paid for any hours scheduled to work during the period of the closure. An employee not scheduled to work is not given credit for the additional time off.

Emergency/essential personnel should report as assigned. Classes may be moved to an online modality.

B. During Work Day

If the President or designee announces during the day that the physical campus will be closing early, an employee on annual, personal or sick leave is charged leave as scheduled. Non-exempt employees (including part-time and temporary employees) who worked all scheduled hours (if any) should report their full shift, as if worked, on the monthly timesheet. All classes offered during the time that the physical campus will be closed may be moved to an online modality.

C. Emergency Closing of the Physical Campus – Evacuation

If this is announced by the President or designee, everyone is to leave the physical campus except for emergency/essential personnel.

D. Emergency Closing – Immediate Situation

In cases where there is an emergency weather situation (such as a tornado or other severe weather), all students, faculty, and staff on the physical campus should proceed directly to the safe space as directed by facilities personnel. Classes on the physical campus are cancelled during duration of the event and any non-essential personnel who is not on the physical campus should remain away until the emergency situation is resolved.

III. Cancellation of Classes

Cancelling of classes is an academic matter. Cancellation of classes does not necessarily mean that the University is closed for business operations. Class cancellations will apply to all University locations unless otherwise specified.

Students are instructed to check their LMS and their University email for readings or assignments that can be completed through electronic means.



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IV. Essential Personnel

Some University personnel are designated as essential personnel and are required to work during periods when the University is closed. Each department head that has areas of responsibility that are deemed essential during inclement weather/emergency conditions will create a list of essential personnel. Essential personnel must be available for emergency work as required. Essential personnel who fail to report for work as scheduled are subject to disciplinary action if they do not have a valid excuse.

Employees that are designated are informed well in advance of anticipated inclement weather and informed of the requirements of this policy and other pertinent information as deemed necessary by the department head and supervisor.

V. Compensation During Emergency Closings

Non-Exempt Personnel

The University will compensate non-exempt essential personnel at the following rate during a period that the University is closed if they are working on the physical campus during the time the University is closed:

- Straight time equivalent to the employee's regularly scheduled hours (such as 8 hours, or a pro-rated number if the employee is part-time); *plus*
- Extra straight time OR compensatory time (hour for hour) for all actual hours worked on a day that the University is closed for an emergency.
- For all hours worked in excess of 40 for the work week, overtime rates per the [Overtime and Compensatory Time](#) policy will be applied.

Exempt Personnel

Under normal circumstances, exempt personnel do not receive additional compensation for work completed during emergency closings.



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VI. Responsibility for this Operating Policy

Policy Owner

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the Vice President for Financial Affairs is the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Vice President for Financial Affairs.