

PUBLIC ACCESS TO PERSONNEL FILES

Approved by University Council on May 8, 1997

Reviewed and approved by University Council on December 10, 2009

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 In accordance with House Bill 1718, each employee or official of a governmental body may choose whether to allow public access to certain personal information in the custody of the governmental body.

1.2 This policy states the type of employee information available for protection and the process/provisions observed by UHCL with regard to release or protection of such personal employee information.

2.0 POLICY

2.1 Official employee personnel records held by the university are public, unless they fall within a specific exemption to the Texas Public Information Act. However, the University of Houston System allows employees to authorize or not authorize release or disclosure of certain personal information specified by state law.

2.2 Each employee may determine whether the following information should be available for public access or should be protected from public access: home address, home telephone number, social security number and family member information.

2.3 The home address and home telephone number of any person employed by the university as a peace officer are automatically protected and will remain so unless such an employee completes an authorization to release this information. The definition of "peace officer" is set forth in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures (article 2.12) and the Texas Education Code (section 51.212).

3.0 PROCESS

3.1 Each new employee will be offered the opportunity to authorize disclosure or protection of this information at the time of initial employment. Such authorization must be made in writing using the "Public Access Authorization Form". To be valid, the form must be signed by the employee and delivered to the Office of Human Resources.

3.2 An employee may change an authorization to release or protect personal information at any time, by completing and delivering a new authorization form to the Office of Human Resources.

3.3 Nothing in this policy shall be used as the basis for illegal discrimination against any employee or group of employees.

3.4 The authorization information will be entered into the HRMS immediately, usually within 5 working days, of receipt.

3.5 The completed authorization form will be considered effective on the date it is entered into the HRMS by the UHCL Office of Human Resources.

3.6 After an authorization to deny public access to personal information is entered into the HRMS, the protected information will not be published in directories, nor included on lists of employees secured from component and System files requested by private firms or individuals under the Texas Public Information Act. The information will not be given to anyone else who requests it, as long as the authorization to deny public access has not been reversed. However, such information may be used by the University of Houston System or its components for any official business purpose, including mailing correspondence, payroll and reimbursement checks, and informational materials to the employee's home address.

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Title: President
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