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January 15:  
- PVDs available online

January 16:  
- Monthly EPAs due at noon

January 17:  
- Biweekly pay day  
- EPAs due at noon  
- Electronic monthly payroll available online

*Processing Schedules  
Payroll Reports*

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**HUMAN RESOURCES**

New year, new website... If you haven't already had an opportunity to review the HR Liaison Network resources available on the new Human Resources website, please take a look and let us know what you think. Simply click on [HR Liaisons](http://employees.tamu.edu/) from the list of categories on the bottom right-hand side of the Human Resources homepage. The HR Liaison Network information is arranged by the following topics: joining the network, training, common processes, communications, news archive and advisory resource group. We hope you like what you see and visit often! Questions and comments about the HR Liaison Network pages can be directed to [hrnetwork@tamu.edu](mailto:hrnetwork@tamu.edu) at any time.

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**2013 TRS Benefits Handbook Now Available**

*Please share this information with the employees in your department*

The newly updated December 2013 *TRS Benefits Handbook* has been posted on the TRS website and is available for viewing and downloading. This revised publication includes important information on TRS-related benefit changes approved by the Texas Legislature in 2013. To view the new handbook, please click on the link: [December 2013 TRS Benefits Handbook](#).

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**Does Your New Employee Have Previous State Service?**

The beginning of a new semester means a lot of new hire processing. Do any of your new hires have previous State employment? When previous State employment is documented and recorded properly in the University database, it may increase the months of service used to calculate any potential leave accruals and longevity pay. On a monthly basis, Payroll Services sends all new hires a notification requesting their previous state service. State Service forms can be found at [http://payroll.tamu.edu/](http://payroll.tamu.edu/) under the Employment Verification tab.

Additionally, if the employee is a transfer from another State agency, the [Leave Transfer From Other State Agency form](#) should be completed for any leave balance transfers. Individuals with previous State employment will need a little extra attention to ensure their leave is administered properly. Department leave administrators will want to access LeaveTraq to check the accrual rates and make any manual adjustments once previous State service has
been verified, update the flag for the six months of service complete, if applicable and process the transaction for any sick or vacation leave balance transfers. Employment with an Independent School District (ISD), Junior or Community College does not count as previous State employment for leave or State service credit. A list of state agencies can be found at: [http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxbud/expbyco10/counties/cntyagy.html](http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxbud/expbyco10/counties/cntyagy.html) online.

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**New Semester Means New Employees for iBenefits**  
At the beginning of each new semester there is an increase in newly hired benefit-eligible employees. Please remember ALL newly benefit-eligible employees should be entered into iBenefits for their benefit enrollment and they must complete the enrollment process within 60 days of their benefit-eligibility date. If you need a refresher on how to enter an employee in iBenefits or edit the employee information after the document is created, please review the Processor Quick Links available at [https://apps4.system.tamus.edu/help/ibenefits/](https://apps4.system.tamus.edu/help/ibenefits/) online. Contact your designated Benefits Representative if you have questions on benefit eligibility or need additional assistance.

**Suggested Tip:** When you provide the new employee with the iBenefits instruction sheet, also stress that they have **60 days to make their benefits selections**. This is different than the waiting period (1st of the month following the 90th day) associated with the employer contribution towards benefit premiums. Additionally, if the employee is a **Graduate Student Employee**, please reiterate that the default plan is **NOT** the Graduate Student Plan. They will incur a significant out-of-pocket premium should they get defaulted into the A&M Care Plan, including being charged a tobacco user premium of $30.00 per month.

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**Benefit Enrollment & iBenefits for Newly Hired International Students**  
International students are required as a condition of their visa requirements to maintain health insurance. International Student Services (ISS) is responsible for verifying that all international students satisfy this requirement. Because of the requirement for international students and the importance of compliance, the below is provided specifically to address benefits enrollment for international students **newly** hired into a benefits eligible position.

International students are automatically charged for the system student health insurance plan in the amount of $639 on their student fee statement. This fee may be adjusted for those who enroll in the Graduate Student Plan or submit a waiver request to Academic Health Plans due to alternative employer coverage. For new benefit-eligible employees, there are two recommended options for their benefit enrollment:

- **Preferred Recommended Option** – department will enter the employee into iBenefits as quickly as possible and instruct the employee to sign up for coverage selecting the option “the first of the month following enrollment” in iBenefits. The employee must submit their iBenefits document by the **February 1, 2014** deadline for coverage to begin on February 1 and to be included in the ISS premium waiver process. ISS will process the premium waiver automatically (student does not have to request a waiver if enrolling in the Graduate Student Employee plan) and will change the amount of the insurance fee to $106.42 for insurance coverage January 1st through January 31st. For employee only coverage:
  a) Employee will pay $106.42 through the student fee statement for January premiums.
  b) Employee will pay $106.42 through payroll deduction for February, March and April while waiting for the employer contribution.
  c) Employer contribution will begin to cover the monthly premium of $106.42 beginning in May and no further health insurance premium will be deducted from the employee’s paycheck.

- **Alternative Recommended Option** – If the department cannot enter the employee timely into iBenefits or the employee does not select benefit coverage in iBenefits by **February 1, 2014** for February coverage to be included in the premium waiver, then the employee should select the option to begin their employer coverage in iBenefits “on my employer contribution eligibility date” (in this case, it will be May 1, 2014). The employee will continue to have the $639.00 premium included on their student fee statement.
  a) Employee will pay $639.00 through the fee statement for coverage January through August 16th.
  b) Employer coverage will begin on May 1, 2014 and the employer contribution will cover the monthly premium of **$106.42 for employee only coverage**.
  c) Employee will receive a partial refund of premiums for any dual coverage processed by Academic Health Plans.

It is not recommended for the employee to enroll in the employer health plan through iBenefits for an effective date of March 1st or April 1st. The employee will have missed the deadline for the ISS premium waiver and will cause a delay in the refund for any duplicate coverage processed by Academic Health Plans.
Note: The department has the ability to enter an employee into iBenefits without the EPA being fully approved once the UIN has been recorded in the payroll database. See attached UIN Manager Release Notes for further details. The Graduate Student Health plan is the exact same coverage whether enrolled as a student or enrolled as an employee.

PAYROLL SERVICES

Helpdesk Software
Payroll Services began using Helpdesk software at the beginning of the year. This system allows us to track and monitor questions/requests that are received in our shared email accounts. The only difference you, the end user, should see is a ticket number email that is returned to you when you submit an email. The response to your email/request will be sent to you as an email. There is no need for you to sign into the Helpdesk system or do anything different than you currently have been. The ticket number email can be deleted once you have received a response. Please feel free to contact your payroll processor or Rosalie Nickles at Rosalie@tamu.edu or 979.458.1750 should you have questions.

EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PATHways/Performance Evaluation Process
A special edition of HR Liaison Network News will be coming out this week with important information regarding the 2013/2014 non-faculty performance evaluation. In the meantime, we encourage you to register for one of the upcoming sessions: “PATHways to Success: Performance Management Process Overview and PATH Demo,” on either January 17 @ 9:00 to 10:30 or February 3 @ 3:00 to 4:30 (http://training.tamu.edu/Courses/Detail/1726). Please contact EOD at HRPATHways@tamu.edu if you have questions.

TIP OF THE WEEK

Ensure Employees Know Their Rights in the Workplace
Do employees know their rights in the workplace? Do they know where to get information on employment rights? In accordance with various state and federal laws, all A&M departments must ensure employees have access to information about their rights in the workplace. Visit the HR website for more information and a list of workplace posters at http://employees.tamu.edu/liasons/required-posters/ online.