



NTC Business Services Center Employee Handbook



Updated January 2019

NTC Business Services Center:

Agency Brief Description: The **Nebraska Transportation Center (NTC)** is the umbrella organization for transportation related research at the University of Nebraska (NU) system, comprising UNL, UNO, UNK, and UNMC. The center's vision is to become a recognized center of transportation excellence focused on developing and delivering programs in research, education, and technology transfer.



NTC is funded predominantly by the research projects that faculty, staff, and students work on, however some seed funding has been provided by the Nebraska Department of Roads, University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Office of Research and Economic Development, and the College of Engineering.

The **Mid-America Transportation Center (MATC)** is housed within the Nebraska Transportation Center.

Since 2006, MATC has been designated as the Region VII United States Department of Transportation Center, and annually receives \$3.5 million in federal funding, which requires 1:1 matching funds. Region VII is comprised of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, and MATC is a consortium of nine universities within the region.

- University of Iowa
- Missouri University of Science and Technology
- Lincoln University
- University of Kansas
- University of Kansas Medical Center
- Nebraska Indian Community College
- University of Omaha
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln serves as the lead institution of the consortium, and MATC has its headquarters on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. There are numerous research, education, technical transfer, human resources, and diversity programs maintained by the center, in addition to administrative activities such as an annual report, newsletters, websites, social media, etc.

The **NTC Business Services Center**, located within the Nebraska Transportation Center administrative offices, is responsible for providing support to the faculty, students, and staff in accomplishing their research goals.

The NTC Business Services Center (BSC) activities result in direct charges to sponsored grants and contracts and overhead funds. The service center policies and practices reflect government regulatory costing principles such as those contained in the Office of Management Budget (OMB) Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Colleges and Universities," and those required by the Cost Accounting Standards Board. The service center is used to recover the expenses of the service center by charging per unit of output, and the rates are budgeted at a break even rate on an annual basis. Support services provided by the NTC BSC include:

- facilitating purchasing supplies and equipment (from \$5 to \$500,000)
- handling personnel related matters (personnel action forms, offer letters, hiring, separation, etc.),
- developing and maintaining websites
- technical support for computers and data back-ups
- teleconference support
- ITS Lab maintenance
- research equipment and software development and maintenance
- budget monitoring
- funding agency reporting requirements monitoring and support
- OMB Circular A-21 & A-110 compliance on transactions
- domestic and international meeting/event/conference support including but not limited to: program development, schedule organization, travel arrangements, online registration, transportation logistics, hotel arrangements, catering orders, name badges, participant binders/packets, customized gifts, etc.
- graphic design
- photography
- publication development such as conference programs, brochures, annual reports, etc.
- proposal budget and budget justification development
- proposal narrative writing assistance
- grants.gov & NSF Fastlane proposal submission assistance & internal routing in NUgrant
- IRB routing support
- proposal and final report editing, printing, and delivery
- locating funding opportunities
- other services as needed and requested

The NTC Business Services Center is responsible for supporting NTC faculty, students, and staff as well as overseeing the Mid-America Transportation Center and fulfilling the reporting requirements and coordinating the various programs. In addition, the NTC Business Services Center is responsible for all of MATC's financial administration, sub-award contract support, and oversight within UNL's respective administrative offices.

Description of Issue: The Nebraska Transportation Business Services Center developed out of the need for research faculty to be supported above and beyond the support given by academic departmental staff. The College of Engineering has a limited business center, however, due to various reasons this has not been utilized by faculty to meet their support needs.

The employee handbook provides a ready reference for new and experienced NTC Business Services employees when questions arise relating to the terms and conditions of employment, and establishes a standard set of expectations that apply regardless of your supervisor, to ensure all employees are held to the same expectations.

The majority of the policies and procedures at the Nebraska Transportation Center are under the umbrella of UNL, as that is the campus in which NTC is headquartered. However, NTC is allowed to establish departmental policies and procedures that fall within UNL guidelines.

Welcome

Welcome to the Nebraska Transportation Center (NTC) and the University of Nebraska (NU). For the purposes of employment, we are officially employees of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), under the College of Engineering, at the Vice Chancellor of Research (VCR) approved Center– the Nebraska Transportation Center. However, since the majority of the faculty in NTC retains academic appointments, all formal Human Resource Actions, such as establishing a new position, must be approved by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

This handbook lays out the policies, procedures, and expectations that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln employees are subject to, as well as some of those specific intricate procedures at the Nebraska Transportation Center. This is a living, breathing document, and policies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are updated on a regular basis. While this handbook is updated each year, policies and procedures are subject to change and this document may not be entirely conclusive. If you have any specific questions or want to ensure you are referencing the most up to date information please check the UNL Human Resources Website <http://unl.edu/hr>, contact your supervisor, and/or the UNL Department of Human Resources.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
407 Canfield Administration Building
Lincoln, NE 68588-0438
Phone: (402) 472-3101

Defining the Employment Relationship

For purposes of staff employment there are two main classifications of employment:

Office/Service employees are paid hourly and are subject to overtime provisions of the Nebraska overtime law and to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Student workers also fall under the FLSA.

Managerial/Professional employees are normally paid monthly, have responsibilities primarily managerial or professional in nature, and are generally exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA.

Human Resources policies at UNL provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and applicants for employment. The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. This policy applies to all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

For more information regarding your employment relationship at UNL please visit:
<http://hr.unl.edu/policies/defining-employment-relationship/>

Other Policies

There are numerous policies and procedures surrounding employment at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Below are a few of the highlighted other policies. The Nebraska Transportation Center employees are subject to the following policies in their entirety. NTC does not deviate or have additional policies and practices that fall within these specific UNL policies.

The link to the full information on the policies below can be found at:
<https://hr.unl.edu/policies/>

Policy and Procedures on Unlawful Discrimination, Including Sexual and Other Prohibited Harassment

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has an institutional obligation to provide a place where persons can work and study free of illegal discrimination. More specific aspects of that obligation are defined by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1978, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, among other federal and state laws, agency regulations and judicial interpretations. University officials have a duty to promptly investigate and take appropriate action on all known incidents of illegal discrimination. (see website above for more information)

Testing for Alcohol and Controlled Substances for Employees Required to Hold a Commercial Driver's License

Effective January 1, 1995, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was required by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) to establish a policy and process which provides testing for alcohol and controlled substances of all employees required to hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) as a function of their UNL employment. (see website above for more information)

Rights and Benefits Associated with Military Leave

Statutory References

The University of Nebraska shall comply with the Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) and Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 55-160 **et seq.** concerning the treatment of University employees with military obligations. (see website above for more information)

Executive Memorandum No. 16: Policy for Responsible Use of University Computers and Information Systems

1. PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this Executive Memorandum to set forth the University's administrative policy and provide guidance relating to responsible use of the University's electronic information systems. (see website above for more information)

Export Control Policy

Faculty, staff, and students at the Nebraska Transportation Center must comply with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Export Control Policy, which is available at: <http://research.unl.edu/researchcompliance/policies-procedures-2/>). This policy complies with federal regulations to ensure that certain information, technology, biological and chemical agents, and other sensitive items are secure and not employed for purposes contrary to national security or U.S. economic interests. Faculty, staff, and students need to be especially careful when traveling internationally with research data. For example, do not travel with sensitive research data on a flash drive, saved on your laptop, or on any item that could be seized by Customs.

Work Schedule, Attendance Policy & Office Etiquette

Purpose

The purpose of the NTC Attendance Policy is to encourage good attendance habits and maintain fairness to all employees. This policy has not been established to serve as a punishment, but rather to create awareness of any deficiencies in attendance for the sake of both the employee and NTC. One of NTC's most valuable resources is its staff members. In order for this resource to be utilized, the staff member must be present to contribute his or her skills, experience, and work efforts toward the fulfillment of the organization's many obligations. It is important for each staff member to realize the specific and valuable contribution he or she makes and to accept the responsibility for good attendance in order to maximize that contribution. It is also imperative to realize that employee attendance problems negatively affect morale and the efficiency of the department as a whole.

Roles and Responsibility

Employees:

- To attempt best efforts to be physically and mentally fit for work;

- To attend work on time for every scheduled day of work;
- To provide reasons for absence, tardiness, or leaving early;
- To contact the supervisor and additional specified parties if unable to attend work;
- To seek medical care when necessary;
- To relay necessary information regarding duties scheduled during time work will be missed; and
- To not engage in excessive chatting about non-work related topics.

Supervisors:

- To ensure the placement of a work schedule that agrees with the needs of the department and the employee;
- To communicate work schedules to subordinates;
- To counsel employees regarding attendance;
- To request doctors' notes in accordance with this policy;
- To stay in touch with employees who are away from work, and record reasons given for absences, lateness, and leaving early; and
- To document all time off and report absenteeism concerns.

Policy

The NTC Attendance Policy is to be administered in an atmosphere of mutual respect between the supervisor and staff member (employee).

- 1) For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:
 - a. Unscheduled absence – more than two hours of work are missed in a normal workday.
 - b. Scheduled Absence – more than two hours of work are missed in a normal workday with the prior approval of a supervisor.
 - c. Tardiness – Late by 15 minutes or more without prior notification.

- 2) Working schedules and starting times are established by the supervisor based on business and employee needs.
 - a. Employees working over 30 hours a week are given the option to utilize flextime:
 - i. Core hours are from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm.
 - ii. Employees can start work as early as 7:00 am or leave as late as 6:00 pm.
 - iii. For every four hours an employee works, they must take a ½ hour break.
 - iv. Note: Full time employees are expected to establish a standard schedule within the flexible schedule, so for example, Bob works 7:00 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday. Employees can deviate schedules, but for the purposes of business operations and planning, some level of consistency in employee scheduling is requested.

- 3) In the event of any absence or tardiness from an assigned work schedule, the employee is required to report the absence to NTC. When reporting an absence, the employee must email or call his or her supervisor, or other specified individual. The employee must call or email before the scheduled start time.
 - a. Example – Jane is feeling sick when she wakes up and doesn't believe that she can perform her work duties. She has to be to work at 8 a.m. She must call in to work before 8 a.m., otherwise, she will not be fulfilling her responsibility as an employee to provide proper notification, and a counseling session with her supervisor will be held.

- 4) All vacation time must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.
 - a. Example – Jim decides he wants to take off work on Thursday. Since he is due to arrive at work on Thursday at 8 a.m., he must request this time off by 8 a.m. Wednesday. It will be at his supervisor’s discretion to allow or not allow him the time off if he does not request it 24 hours in advance.
- 5) After an absence has been approved by a supervisor, the employee must notify those in the office by sending an email to the office list serve (NTC-STAFF@LISTSERV.UNL.EDU) that informs other employees when they will leave and return and who to contact in their absence.
- 6) Employees are expected to be at work at the starting time. There will be a fifteen minute window; however, any amount of time that a person is tardy to work must be made up at the end of the shift. Work activity must commence at the starting time and continue throughout the shift with the exception of scheduled break time, lunch, or the end of work. In the event a nonexempt employee reports to work 15 minutes past the start of the shift and proper notification was not given, the employee will be considered tardy and she/he will engage in a counseling session with their supervisor.
 - a. Example 1 – Jane is to be to work at 8 a.m. She emails her supervisor at 8 a.m. to let her know that she will be 30 minutes late. Since she notified her supervisor a counseling session is not required. However, she is required to work 30 minutes after her normally scheduled ending time, or other arrangements must be made to account for the time lost. (Note: Excessively calling in under such circumstances can move the supervisor to record this as a tardy after counseling has been done.)
 - b. Example 2 – Jim is to be to work at 8 a.m. He has other things that he would like to do on Tuesday morning. Tuesday morning he emails his supervisor and the Office Manager and lets them know that he will be in at 11 a.m. This is considered an Unscheduled Absence. This would require a verbal counseling session, and if it happens again corrective action procedures would be engaged.
- 7) NTC reserves the right to require an employee to submit a physician’s note in the event of five or more unscheduled absences for medical reasons.
- 8) If an employee is absent for more than three days without prior notice or approval, such absence is viewed as job abandonment. The employee is then separated from employment as a voluntary resignation.
- 9) Verifiable emergencies making it impossible to report to work are the exception to the rule.
- 10) A no call/no show to work will immediately result in a counseling session between the employee and supervisor.
- 11) An employee arriving to work or departing early has an option to make up time missed (if under four hours), at the discretion of the supervisor, if proper advance notification was given.
 - a. Example 1 – On Wednesday John requests to leave three hours early. He asks his supervisor on Wednesday if he could make up the time after work on both Wednesday and Thursday of the following week. This would be acceptable under this policy as long as the supervisor deems that this will not interfere with the business needs of NTC.
 - b. Example 2 – Jason, a full-time employee, missed three hours of work on Tuesday because he wanted to go watch his daughter perform in a school play. On Wednesday,

he decides that he will work late to make up the time. This was not approved in advance, therefore, it would not be allowed and he would need to take vacation time.

- 12) There will be instances that an employee needs to arrive or leave early for medical or family reasons without being able to give at least a 24 hour notice. In response to these needs, an employee's request to leave work early may be considered by the supervisor. The approval of such absences should be based upon the urgency of the reason for the absence and the department staffing needs.
- 13) In the case of inclement weather conditions, NTC defers to the UNL Inclement Weather Policy, which you can find at <http://bf.unl.edu/policies/winter-weather-policy-and-procedures>

Corrective Action Process

The following corrective actions will be taken in the event of tardiness and/or unscheduled absences:

1. First offense: verbal notice of the tardy and/or absence date
2. Second offense: written notice of the tardy and/or absence date
3. Third offense: counseling session to discuss a 6 month probationary period
4. If a tardy or absence takes place during the probationary period, then termination will take effect immediately.

Procedures

- 1) Business center staff should indicate if they are in or out of the office using the magnet board on the wall located between the suite entrance and the cubicles. If you need to leave during normally scheduled hours for a meeting, appointment, etc., please indicate where you will be and what time you plan to return on the comment section of the board.
- 2) Hourly business center staff (excluding graduate research assistants) must fill out a time sheet every two weeks in order to receive pay. Pay periods end on the first and third Thursday of each month. Time cards must be filled out and turned in to the appropriate mailbox in the Resource Library by the Friday immediately following the end of the pay period.
- 3) NTC business center staff must fill out work tracking forms weekly using this website: <http://ntc.unl.edu/workTrackingLogin.php>. Work tracking is a method to account for all hours worked and document how much time is spent completing tasks. Each task is associated with a project title and cost object number. If you are unsure as to which project/cost object number your task falls under, ask your supervisor. For each project, employees must describe each task completed as well as the total number of hours spent.
 - a) The number of hours entered into work tracking must exactly match the number of hours turned in on your time sheet (this includes vacation and sick time). Work tracking must be submitted on the website by 5:00 pm on the Wednesday following the end of the pay period. Submitted work tracking forms cannot be edited, so it is important to review before submitting. If you need to make changes to a submission, you will have to contact NTC's web developer.
- 4) In addition to a time sheet, full-time employees must enter their hours for the two-week pay period on Firefly: [https://firefly.nebraska.edu/sap\(bD1biZjPTAwNQ==\)/bc/bsp/sap/zneptune/main.do](https://firefly.nebraska.edu/sap(bD1biZjPTAwNQ==)/bc/bsp/sap/zneptune/main.do).

Leave requests (e.g., sick, vacation, funeral, etc.) are also sent for approval using this system. Firefly submissions are due end of day Tuesday following the end of the pay period.

Full-Time Employees Taking Classes

For business needs, it is important to be here as much as possible. Because of this, NTC will only allow each individual to miss work for one class in a workday and to include the lunch hour. All scheduling of classes should first be discussed with the supervisor.

Exceptions for Student Workers

NTC realizes the priority that educational needs take in the lives of students. There will be times that work only presents a huge stress to the demands that classes place on a student. Because of this, during dead week, finals week, and upon the discretion of the student's supervisor, students are allowed to reduce their work hours to put their school work first.

Telework – Working Outside the Office

NTC BSC employees are allowed to work outside the office at the discretion of the supervisor with the NTC Director's approval. Typically, this is allowed for projects that are under a tight deadline for which working over the weekend may be required.

When setting up the arrangement, the following items should be discussed and documented when applicable:

- Scope of work and duties to be done outside the office
- How will the manager know the employee is working?
- How will the manager know the work is complete?
- What technologies will be utilized to maintain contact (email, cell phone)?
- What is the weekly, monthly, daily schedule for telework?
- Equipment to be used during telework
- Safety checklist
- Expectations for timelines for work to be completed and specific job tasks

UNL Work Scheduling Policy Guidelines - <http://bf.unl.edu/policies/hr/WorkScheduling.shtml>

Employees are encouraged to visit the UNL website above for more information about UNL's work schedule and rest period policies.

Office Etiquette

NTC has an open door policy that requires office doors to remain open while in the office so that it is clear employees are available. Exceptions include phone calls, meetings, and other business-related activities that should not be interrupted or may be disruptive to others.

The Resource Library, employee break rooms on the third floor, and other shared office spaces must be kept neat and clean. Keurig coffee machines are available for use, but employees must refill the water and bring their own K-cups. The kitchen supplies in the Resource Library are for the Center's use for events, not for personal use.

The office supplies in the Resource Library are for everyone's use, but please take only what you need. If you take the last of something, please let Larissa Sazama know so that more can be ordered.

Office Safety

The safety and wellness of NTC employees is a top priority. Ensuring that a work environment remains safe requires employees to report all work-related injuries, hazards, threats, and near misses/close calls to their supervisor immediately so that contributing factors can be identified and removed, or in the case of a near miss/close call, abated before they result in personal injury/illness or property damage. A near miss is an incident where no property was damaged and no personal injury sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage and/or injury or illness easily could have occurred. There is no risk of repercussions for reporting an incident or potentially hazardous situation. For further information regarding NTC's safety guidelines and policies, refer to the Nebraska Transportation Center Employee Safety Handbook.

Requesting Services from NTC's Business Service Center

Faculty and students should provide a department cost object number at the time of a request to cover the service cost. If students are completing the request, they must provide proof that their faculty advisor approved the use of the department cost object number.

Grammarly – Faculty and students who wish to receive editing services on their documents must first conduct a review through Grammarly. If you can sign up for a 'Premium' account with your @unl.edu or husker email address through Canvas at: <https://canvas.unl.edu/courses/28412/pages/grammarly-sign-up-and-faq>. Once your document has been reviewed by Grammarly, you may send it to NTC for more in-depth editing.

NTC Dress Code – Business Casual

At the Nebraska Transportation Center, it is very important to maintain a professional business image, as we are in direct interaction with the public, students, and other university employees. Our objective is to allow our employees to work comfortably in the workplace. Yet, we still need employees to project a professional image for our customers and visitors. **Business casual dress is the standard.** If you have questions about whether an article or style of clothing qualifies as appropriate business casual attire, please consult your supervisor.

On Fridays, employees are allowed to wear the NTC or MATC red polo and jeans in place of business casual. Jeans must be in good condition – no rips, holes, etc.

If clothing fails to meet business casual standards, as determined by the employee's supervisor, the employee will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again. If the problem persists, the employee may be sent home to change clothes and will receive a counseling session with their supervisor. All other policies about personal time use will apply. Corrective actions will be addressed if dress code violations continue.