



AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA) HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY POLICY

PERSONNEL | 300.385

Last Evaluation

03/25/2026

Executive Staff Approval

05/11/2026

Board Approval

05/20/2026

1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define employee health care eligibility in accordance with the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and to establish consistent standards for employee classification, measurement of hours of service, and administration of benefits eligibility.

2. Definitions

ACA Full-time Employee - An employee who, at the time of hire, is “reasonably expected” to be employed for 30 hours or more per week on average. Health insurance coverage must be offered, excluding employees classified as seasonal employees, under ACA guidelines.

ACA Part-time Employee - An employee who is “reasonably expected” to be employed on average less than 30 hours per week, based on the facts and circumstances at the time of hire; subject to hours of service measurement.

Contract Employee - An employee who is an adjunct faculty, or staff contract/project based.

Employment Break Period - A period of at least four consecutive weeks, during which an employee has no hours of service. There are specific rules which regulate the length of these breaks in educational organizations.

Hours of Service - An hour of service is each hour for which an employee is paid, or entitled to payment, for the performance of duties or for a period of time during which no duties are performed due to vacation, holiday, illness, incapacity (including disability), layoff, jury duty, military duty, or leave of absence.

New Employee/Rehire - An employee who is either new to Mountainland Technical College (MTECH) or an employee who resumes work after a predetermined break of at least 4 weeks but less than 26 weeks .

Non-qualifying break - A break that does not qualify them to be considered a rehire.

Ongoing/Continuing Employee - An employee who has been employed for at least one complete standard measurement period without a qualifying break in service.

Qualifying break - A break that qualifies an employee to be considered a rehire, initiating a new Initial Measurement Period (IMP, see below).

Subject to Measurement - An employee whose service hours, after a review during the applicable measurement period, are determined to have averaged 30 hours or more per week. (Must be offered health insurance coverage regardless of current service hours expected)

Temporary Employee - An employee who is expected to be employed for five months or less with pre-determined minimum breaks between periods of employment.

Variable-Hour Employee - An employee whose hours are expected to fluctuate during employment. All variable-hour employees shall be subject to hours measurement.

3. Policy

3.1. Measurement Periods

- 3.1.1. **Measurement Period** – the period of time during which a variable-hour employee’s hours are measured to determine potential future eligibility for access to ACA healthcare coverage. Employees must not experience a qualifying break in service of at least 4 weeks but less than 26 weeks during this period. (also referred to as the “look back period”)

- 3.1.1.1. **Initial Measurement Period (IMP):** For new employees, the initial 12-month measurement period will begin on the first of the month after the employee's hire date.
- 3.1.1.2. **Standard Measurement Period (SMP):** For ongoing employees, this is a 12-month period beginning at the same time of year for all variable-hour employees.

3.2. Administrative Period

3.2.1. **Administrative Period** – the period of time allowed for MTECH Human Resources (HR) to take administrative steps to evaluate eligibility and to complete the benefit enrollment process.

3.2.1.1. **Initial Administrative Period (IAP):** For new employees, the initial measurement period and the administrative period combined cannot exceed 13 months from the beginning of the employee's IMP.

3.2.1.2. **Standard Administrative Period (SAP):** For ongoing employees, this is the period immediately following the end of the standard measurement period and ending immediately before the start of the associated stability period.

3.3. Stability Periods:

3.3.1. **Stability Period** – the period of time following the Administrative Period, during which an employee determined to be ACA full-time remains eligible for ACA healthcare coverage regardless of hours worked during this period, so long as they remain employed in any capacity. This period is of equal length to the Measurement Period.

3.3.1.1. **Initial Stability Period (ISP):** For new employees, this is the 12-month period beginning at the end of the IAP.

3.3.1.2. **Standard Stability Period (SSP):** For ongoing employees, this is a 12-month period beginning at the same time of year for all variable-hour employees deemed eligible for coverage.

3.4. Hiring/Employment

3.4.1. Eligibility

- 3.4.1.1. **Immediate eligibility** – if a variable-hour employee is expected, at the time of being newly hired, to be employed an average of 30 hours per week or more, the employee will become immediately eligible to enroll for healthcare coverage, effective on the corresponding eligibility date. If the employee at any point within the IMP, due to a change in assignment or status, is expected to be employed an average of 30 hours per week or more, they also become immediately eligible for coverage.
- 3.4.1.2. **Eligibility subject to measurement** – variable-hour employees who do not qualify for immediate eligibility are subject to a measurement period. If, during the administrative period, it is determined that they incurred 30 or more service hours per week during the measurement period, they will be eligible for coverage beginning with the corresponding stability period.

3.5. Affected Employee Classifications

3.5.1. Variable-hour Employees

The procedures below are meant to highlight the types of earnings that are typical for each of these employment classes. Measurement takes into account hours worked across all MTECH jobs and it is between the employee and the department to ensure that all job types are taken into account in determining weekly service hours.

3.5.2. Part-time Regular Employees

Regular hourly under half-time and half-time employees will be measured to ensure that they are under ACA full-time for all positions.

3.5.3. Temporary Non-student Employees

Temporary assignment(s) that is for five months or less. Initial eligibility and measurement rules will apply.

- 3.5.3.1. **Full-time:** An employee who is reasonably expected to be employed for 30 hours or more per week.
- 3.5.3.2. **Part-time:** An employee who is reasonably expected to be employed less than 30 hours per week.

3.5.3.3. **Seasonal employee:** An employee who is reasonably expected to be employed for 30 hours or more per week in a position for which the customary annual employment is five months or less and that period should begin each calendar year in approximately the same part of the year, such as summer or winter (academic year employees of educational organizations cannot be treated as seasonal employees).

3.5.4. Adjunct Faculty

Employees who are contracted to teach courses, including student employees who are the teacher of record, are considered adjunct faculty. ACA allows MTECH to calculate service hours based on credit hours.

3.6. Breaks in service

- 3.6.1. An employee who resumes providing services to an employer after a period during which the employee was not credited with any hours of service may be treated as having terminated employment and having been rehired. Such an employee is treated as a new employee upon the resumption of services, only if the employee did not have any hours of service for a period of at least 26 consecutive weeks (for educational organizations).
- 3.6.2. In addition, a parity rule states that an employee may be considered a rehire after a shorter period of at least four consecutive weeks during which no hours of service were credited, if that break period exceeds the prior employment period.
- 3.6.3. In no case will a break of less than four consecutive weeks qualify an employee to be considered a rehire; zero service hours will be credited to that break when determining average hours for the measurement period.
- 3.6.4. In the case where a break in service is greater than four consecutive weeks but less than a predetermined qualifying break (see 1 and 2 above), the break(s) will not affect the employee's existing measurement period. The employee's average hours of service for the measurement period will be determined by excluding the break period(s) from the calculation.

- 3.6.5. To ensure that we can appropriately calculate breaks, job begins and end dates must reflect accurate data in a timely manner. This applies to all employee classifications. HR will take steps to prompt departments when an employee goes unpaid during a pay period.

3.7. **ACA Periods**

3.7.1. Measurement/Look-Back:

- 3.7.1.1. Initial Measurement Period (IMP) is 12 months from the first of the month after the date of hire or returning after a qualifying break.
- 3.7.1.2. Standard Measurement Period (SMP) is the 12-month period from May 1 to April 30.

3.7.2. Administrative:

- 3.7.2.1. Initial Administrative Period (IAP) is the month starting from the end of the IMP.
- 3.7.2.2. Standard Administrative Period (SAP) is the 2-month period from May 1 to June 30.

3.7.3. Stability:

- 3.7.3.1. Initial Stability Period (ISP) is the 12-month period beginning on the 14th month from the beginning of the IMP.
- 3.7.3.2. Standard Stability Period (SSP) is the 12-month period from May 1 to April 30.

4. **Evaluation History**

Last Evaluation	Executive Staff Approval	Board of Trustees Approval
03/25/2026	05/11/2026	05/20/2026