

Timesheet Charges FAQ

1. What is the \$100 penalty for and when does it go into effect?

Mason is at risk for an audit finding because we are not in compliance with the Commonwealth's Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS). It was for this reason that a joint decision was made by HR & Payroll and Fiscal Services to implement a procedure to charge departments for not properly approving bi-weekly wage timesheets.

The new procedure goes into effect beginning with the new fiscal year (payroll 26-15) which begins on June 28, 2015 (timesheet approval due on July 13, 2015).

2. Who is being charged the \$100 per bi-weekly wage timesheet?

The approver's department will incur the \$100 fee for any bi-weekly wage timesheet not properly approved by the deadline.

3. What does "properly approved" mean?

Properly approved means that one of three things has occurred:

1. The timesheets are approved electronically and on time via PatriotWeb.
2. If the timesheet approver missed the deadline for submitting approval, *within 4 business days of the deadline* he or she (or designated proxy):
 - a. Responds to the follow up email sent by Payroll asking for confirmation of approval.
 - b. Sends an email to payroll@gmu.edu with a confirmation of approval including the names and G numbers of the employees for whom approval is being given.
3. In very limited cases, and only when circumstances warrant, an approved paper timesheet may be submitted. However, the approver is still required to respond to the follow up email sent by Payroll.

4. Why is this charge being implemented now?

Mason is at risk for an audit finding because we are not in compliance with the Commonwealth's Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS). It was for this reason that a joint decision was made by HR & Payroll and Fiscal Services to implement a procedure to charge departments for non-compliance.

5. How can I obtain a list of who is not completing the approval process in my department?

Currently there is no systemic way to copy the appropriate HR liaison on the override email that is currently sent to any approver who does not complete the approval process by the deadline. In the interim, HR & Payroll, in consultation with Fiscal Services, is working on a process to manually notify the HR liaisons of any timesheet overrides so that they can intercede and assure that the timesheets are reviewed and approved.

6. Will timesheet approval proxies receive the timesheet approval reminders?

After research and consideration, HR & Payroll will not be including timesheet proxies on reminder emails for two reasons:

1. Proxies are maintained by individual timesheet approvers hence it is extremely difficult to ensure that the information is accurate and current.
2. The timesheet approver is the final responsible party regarding the process. While proxies permit the delegation of the task, it does not transfer the ultimate responsibility.

7. Is there a way for me to obtain a list of all the timesheet approvers in my department?

This report is currently under development.

8. Is charging departments the only option available for resolving this problem?

While charging departments is not the preferred option, previous attempts to facilitate the proper approval of timesheets have not achieved the level of compliance that is needed for audit purposes. The University relies on supervisors to be diligent in ensuring that wage employee timesheet submissions are accurate because, without this careful oversight, there is an opportunity for employees to intentionally submit incorrect timesheets which could lead to overpayment. Internal Audit has substantiated allegations of some wage employees falsifying timesheets.

To ensure the accuracy and integrity of the process, it is imperative that timesheets be properly reviewed by a supervisor.

Given the risk to the University community of non-compliance and our responsibility to be careful stewards of resources, the decision was made to signal that there is a cost for non-compliance.

9. What options are available if a current timesheet approver is not able to approve timesheets properly?

If the current timesheet approver cannot properly approve timesheets, they should work within their departments to transfer timesheet responsibilities to another approver by completing a [Timesheet Approver Change Form](#). Please email the completed form to hrdm@gmu.edu.

It is a highly recommended that approvers name a proxy for both planned and unplanned absences. Information on the proxy process is available at <http://hr.gmu.edu/payroll/docs/CreatingaProxy-1.pdf>.

10. Can I avoid the fine by submitting paper timesheets?

No, please see examples below:

Example 1: Someone doesn't open their timesheet.

The "approver" or "proxy" should send an e-mail to payroll@gmu.edu asking that the timesheet be extracted. This request should be submitted before the timesheet approver deadline (1:00 pm on Monday).

Example 2: Someone submits a paper timesheet by the deadline.

If the papertimesheet is received by Payroll before 1:00 pm on Monday then Payroll will open the employee's timesheet in PatriotWeb and contact the approver to ask them to enter the hours and approve the electronic version of the timesheet.

Example 3: Someone submits a paper timesheet after the 1:00 pm deadline.

Payroll will open the employee's timesheet in PatriotWeb and email the approver to ask them to enter the hours and approve the electronic version of the timesheet. Please understand that this means the employee's pay will have to be delayed until the following pay period. We do not want any employee to be in this situation which is why it is so important that timesheets be properly approved so wage employees are paid both accurately and on time.

NOTE: Approvers need to respond to the email sent by Payroll even when submitting a paper timesheet after the deadline, otherwise they will be charged the \$100 fee.