

Explanation of Sick Leave, Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and Disability

Faculty members suffering from extended illness should contact the department chair and administrative coordinator, who will notify the students or the classes affected by the absence. Any extended period of absence (i.e., beyond one week in length should be reported to the Dean for Faculty Development). (“Necessary absence from duty shall be arranged with the Dean for Faculty Development.”) Statute, Article II, Section 10.C) [to be approved]

Note: Personal illness/accident or a qualifying illness/injury to a member of the immediate family that causes a faculty member to be absent from his/her duties for five or more working days may also meet the criteria of the federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The College’s FMLA Policy is printed in the *Faculty Handbook* and is posted on the web page.

When five or more days of absence for illness or as the result of an injury is anticipated or has occurred, the following steps should be followed:

Sick Leave – also designated as FMLA Leave for serious illness or injury

1. **Inform the Dean for Faculty Development, who will inform the department chair and the Assistant Dean for Academic Administration.** In consultation with Human Resources, the Dean for Faculty Development will inform the faculty member how to obtain FMLA information and the required certification form to be completed by the physician.
2. **The faculty member should forward the FMLA certification form to the physician** who should return the completed form to the Director of Human Resources where it will be filed in the faculty member’s medical file (kept confidentially in Human Resources). The completed form should indicate the physician’s best estimate of the length of the medical leave. This information will be communicated through Human Resources to the Assistant Dean.
3. The Provost will work with the faculty member and the department chair to arrange for the coverage of academic responsibilities.
4. When the faculty member feels he/she is ready to return to work, **he/she should request a Physician’s Release to Return to Work statement from the physician.** This statement should be sent to Human Resources and should provide the date the faculty member should return and any medical restrictions for the individual. HR will forward a copy of the Physician’s Release statement to the Assistant Dean for Academic Administration, who will inform the department chair of the faculty member’s return. The original statement will be filed in the faculty member’s medical file in HR. The faculty member should schedule a meeting with the Dean for Faculty Development **before** resuming teaching responsibilities.

When the sickness or injury is of a more serious nature, full-time faculty and faculty contracted for at least half time are eligible to receive salary payments under the Sick Leave/Salary Continuation Plan. This salary continuation program may provide salary payments for a twelve month period. The employee will first receive each month a full month’s salary for each year of service. For the remainder of the period, if any, the employee receives each month 50% of monthly salary. Worker’s Compensation payments, if any, will be considered a part of the monthly salary benefit. Sick Leave/Salary Continuation Plan payments will change according to length of employment when Long Term Disability Coverage begins, if approved.

If the available Sick Leave benefit is used before the end of the medical leave, the Dean for Faculty Development will contact the faculty member to discuss details and options.

Long Term Disability Coverage

In the event that the medical leave for a personal accident or injury extends past the 12 weeks covered by the FMLA, **the faculty member (or responsible party) will be contacted by a College Benefits Administrator in the fourth month of the leave** to plan for the need to apply for Long Term Disability (LTD) to continue income payments after the sixth month of medical leave.

Note: LTD insurance does not apply for coverage requested by the faculty member to care for members of the immediate family, but only for the faculty member's personal illness or injury.

When an absence of longer than six months for illness or as the result of an injury is projected by the physician, the following applies:

1. The Benefits Office in Human Resources completes the Long Term Disability (LTD) Employer Statement in order to initiate the claim for benefits with UNUM (the insurance carrier).
2. The faculty member is contacted by the Benefits Office and sent **the LTD Employee Statement, to be completed by the employee and sent** directly to UNUM.
3. The faculty member is also sent **the LTD Physician Statement, to be forwarded to his/her physician** and sent by the physician directly to UNUM.
4. If the LTD claim is approved, the faculty member will receive from UNUM 60% of his/her pre-disability monthly earnings to a maximum benefit of \$6,000 per month after a 180 day waiting period.
5. If the LTD claim is denied for any reason by UNUM, the faculty member will continue to receive salary during the medical leave under the provisions of the Sick Leave Continuation Policy of the College (see policy).

Maternity/Paternity Leave Requests – also designated as FMLA Leave:

A faculty member who desires to request a maternity/paternity leave of absence should contact the **department chair**, who will arrange with the Provost for the accommodation of the request.

It has been the practice of Academic Affairs to facilitate a reduced teaching load during the semesters of the Maternity/Paternity Leave and thus reduce the FMLA Leave to a “reduced work” status instead of a full leave. The faculty member requesting Maternity/Paternity Leave is not required to submit the customary Physician's Certification form used for a full-time leave or a Physician's Release to Return to Work statement at the time they resume their full teaching load. It is the College's position that a faculty member who chooses to take a reduced teaching load agreement does not stop “working” during the Leave.

In the event that a faculty member requests a full 12 week/semester Maternity/Paternity Leave without academic responsibilities, the standard FMLA protocol will be followed.

Likewise, in the event that there are medically-related complications for either the new-born child or the employee/parent, a standard FMLA Leave may be designated to cover any unanticipated and extended time away from academic responsibilities.

Note: for faculty who participate in The College of Wooster medical plan, it is important to add the new-born child to the medical coverage following birth by contacting one of the College's Benefit Administrators.