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Name:	Sick Leave Policy – Administrative, Professional and Confidential Staff
Policy Number:	6-2010
Origin:	Human Resources
Approved:	1 January 2009
Issuing Authority:	Vice-President, Administration
Responsibility:	Director, Human Resources
Effective Date	1 January 2009

Sick leave is defined as the period of time an employee is absent from work with full pay as a result of an injury or illness. When employees must be absent from work and are on sick leave, they are expected to take appropriate measures to ensure their timely return to work.

The University has the right to a reasonable explanation for any employee absence. Where the employee asserts they are unable to work due to illness or injury, it is reasonable for the department to request medical documentation as defined below, in order to assess the claim for paid sick leave.

A. ELIGIBILITY:

All regular full-time, regular part-time and regular sessional Administrative, Professional and Confidential Staff qualify for sick leave benefits.

1. Administrative & Professional Staff:

One hundred percent of the employee's regular salary will be paid for the first ninety (90) calendar days of sick leave. Sick leave benefits cannot be accumulated. To re-qualify, an employee must return to work on a full-time basis for a minimum period of two (2) continuous weeks. In order to return to work, the University requires medical documentation from the employee's treating physician confirming return to work date, fitness to resume normal duties and any medical restrictions and/or functional limitations upon the return to work.

Sick leave entitlement is intended primarily to provide income protection in cases of major illness or injury during the qualification period for the University's Long Term Disability (LTD) program. Also, it provides coverage for short-term absence, reasonable in incidence and duration, due to illness or injury. Short-term absences are defined as absences of less than fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days.

If the frequency and/or amount of an employee's short-term absence in any twelve (12) month period is excessive and if it is not attributable to a continuing medical condition, the employee will qualify for a maximum of eight (8) days of paid sick leave in the ensuing twelve (12) month period. However, the employee will qualify for regular coverage in the event of major illness or injury.

This limitation will be withdrawn if, after twelve (12) months of active employment, the amount and/or frequency of short-term illness/absence returns to normal. If sick leave is depleted, the leave will be considered as absence without pay and the employee's pay will be adjusted accordingly.

2. Confidential Staff:

Sick leave credits are cumulative monthly at the rate of one and one quarter (1¼) days per month. For the purposes of computing credits earned, any calendar month in which the employee is entitled to salary for a minimum of fifteen (15) working days shall be taken as a full month of service. If there are insufficient sick leave credits, the unearned leave will be considered as absence without pay and the employee's pay will be adjusted accordingly.

For regular part-time and regular sessional employees, sick leave credits are earned on a prorated basis based on the percentage of time worked.

B. REPORTING OF SICK LEAVE:

1. Administrative & Professional Staff:

Sick leaves that are of fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days must be reported to Human Resources immediately. The immediate supervisor and/or director/department head must notify the HR Officer (Benefits & Compensation) in writing *via* e-mail or memo. Last day worked and expected return to work date should also be indicated in the e-mail or memo.

2. Confidential:

All absences must be reported *via* the Application for Leave form. The form should be completed by the employee and signed by the immediate supervisor and director/department head and submitted to Human Resources for processing of sick leave.

C. PROCESSES:

When illness or injury causes absence from work the following will apply:

- (a) The University may require medical evidence, but not normally for periods of less than five (5) consecutive working days. Such medical evidence will verify the disability or illness and inability to carry out normal duties. Failure to provide requested medical evidence may result in disciplinary measures.
- (b) The University shall make every reasonable effort to accommodate employees in performing their normal duties or in finding alternate related duties in the department if employees are unable to perform their own duties due to illness or injury, and such requirement is substantiated by medical certification.
- (c) Frequent periods of sick leave may be reviewed to determine if employees are medically fit to carry out responsibilities on a full-time basis.
- (d) Following the qualification period under the terms of the University's Long-Term Disability (LTD) program, eligible employees shall claim any entitlement under the terms of such program.

D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DURING SICK LEAVE:

Employee:

In case of absence due to illness or injury, the employee will:

- When unable to report to work because of illness or injury, employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- The employee must inform the immediate supervisor of the expected length of absence.

- If a scheduled absence is upcoming, the employee shall notify the immediate supervisor as early as possible.
- Following a discussion with the physician about job requirements, provide medical certification stating limitations and indicating how the medical condition affects ability to perform the job.
- Seek appropriate medical treatment; absence and rest may not be enough. A referral to a specialist or other health care professional may be required.
- Maintain regular contact with the immediate supervisor and/or the University.
- Make the physician aware that, if medically necessary, the University supports accommodations, including gradual return to full duties and hours.
- Keep the immediate supervisor updated as to the anticipated return to work date as it may take some time to prepare for the return and/or possible accommodation.

Department (Immediate Supervisor and/or Department Head):

- Assess the claim for paid sick leave and liaise with Human Resources as required.
- Keep a record of all employee absences including sick, vacation, and personal leaves.
- Report sick leaves as indicated above (Reporting of Sick Leave).
- Report any extensions or early returns to Human Resources.
- Maintain regular contact with the employee.
- Maintain confidentiality of medical information.
- Work with the employee, physician, and Human Resources to make arrangements for the return to work.

Human Resources:

- Mail out application for LTD benefits once the employee has been on sick leave for 45 consecutive calendar days.
- Maintain confidentiality of medical information.
- Provide consistency in policy/procedure in administering claims.
- Provide advice/assistance in assessing claims for paid sick leave.
- Provide advice/support to the employee as requested.

E. MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION:

Employees must submit the medical certification directly to the immediate supervisor (copy to Human Resources) or Dean/Vice-President as requested, substantiating the inability of the employee to perform regular duties for the period of absence, confirming appropriate treatment is being sought, indicating the expected return to work date, fitness to resume normal duties and any medical restrictions and/or functional limitations upon the return to work. The Department/University is responsible for treating medical information confidentially.

Alternatively, the employee may contact Human Resources to receive and assess the medical certification. Human Resources will advise the immediate supervisor if the medical certification is sufficient to assess the claim for paid sick leave. The medical information will be kept confidential; only the medical restrictions/functional limitations (as it relates to job requirements) will be discussed with the immediate supervisor.

The University may require an employee to provide medical documentation from his/her treating physician(s) or appropriate health care practitioners to determine:

1. the employee's fitness to continue working or return to work, including limitations and/or restrictions relating to job demands, including in cases of excessive absenteeism; or
2. the University's obligation in regard to an employee's request for accommodation.

Where the University does not receive sufficient medical information to make these determinations, it will provide the employee with details on the deficiency and give the employee the opportunity to respond. Where an employee does not provide sufficient information, the University will be entitled to make inferences based on the information provided.

F. PROOF OF ILLNESS:

Where the University has reason to suspect an employee's absence is not legitimate, for example, a pattern of absences not explained by a medical condition, or by being excessive when compared to other employees, the employee may be required to produce certification acceptable to the employer and/or certification from a physician in order to qualify for paid sick leave.

G. RETURNING TO WORK:

An employee who has been absent from work as a result of a disabling injury or illness, must submit a medical certificate to the immediate supervisor (copy to Human Resources), confirming that the employee is medically fit to resume work. This medical certification must be received prior to the employee's return to work. This medical certification must be completed by the employee's treating physician and must confirm the employee's return to work date, fitness to resume normal duties and any medical restrictions and/or functional limitations upon the return to work.

The University supports a proactive and collaborative return to work program. The employee, the University and the physician or appropriate health practitioners have a responsibility to work cooperatively in exploring a timely return to work including a graduated return to work program or modifications that address medical restrictions/functional limitations.

H. RESTRICTIONS:

Sick leave benefits are never reimbursable.

I. INTERPRETATION:

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for the interpretation of this policy.

In situations where a collective agreement is in place, the policies and processes for sick leave outlined in the collective agreement will prevail.