

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Maternity/Adoption Leave Program

The basic purpose of maternity/adoption leave is to allow an employee a reasonable period of time for medical care and treatment preceding and following childbirth. Maternity/Adoption Leave also encompasses the adoption of a child under age 18, or under age 23 if the child is mentally or physically disabled. Maternity/Adoption Leave is an umbrella for the use of more than one type of leave. Various leaves are combined to allow a female employee to take up to three months off at the time of the birth or adoption of her child.

Maternity/Adoption Leave Eligibility

All benefits eligible female employees, regardless of marital status, are eligible for maternity/adoption leave after they have completed six consecutive months of employment at Northeastern. Faculty members must also review and comply with all general policies on leaves of absence as outlined in the Faculty Handbook.

Compensation while on Maternity/Adoption Leave

Maternity/Adoption leave is an unpaid leave of up to three months, during which time you may combine, if applicable, the use of sick time, vacation, disability leave, family leave and unpaid time. You may be compensated differently at various times during your leave.

- **Sick leave** may be used during the time that your doctor medically disables you from performing your job and before you are eligible to receive benefits under Interim Disability. For a normal pregnancy, you will be allowed up to two weeks prior to the birth and six weeks following the birth as your period of disability. If you have a cesarean section birth, you will be allowed eight weeks following the birth. If you do not need to use the two weeks you are allowed for medical disability prior to the birth, those two weeks cannot be added to your medical disability time after the birth. If you do not have enough sick time to carry you through to Interim Disability, you may use your accrued vacation time or you may take unpaid time.
- **Interim Disability** - Once you have been medically disabled for 30 days, and you have exhausted your sick leave, you are eligible for Interim Disability for the period you are medically unable to work. Interim Disability pays 60% of the base salary you had at the start of your disability. Generally, you will only be disabled for six weeks following the birth, (eight weeks if you had a cesarean section birth), unless there are extenuating medical circumstances. Any extension on your disability will have to be documented by your doctor. Please refer to the Interim Disability section for further detail.
- **Vacation** - From the time you are no longer medically disabled until you return to work at the end of three months, you may use any accrued vacation or take the time as unpaid.
- **Unpaid Time** - You may find that portions of your maternity leave may be unpaid either prior to or following coverage under interim disability.

Benefits while on Maternity/Adoption Leave

While you are in a paid status during maternity/adoption leave, deductions for your health, dental and retirement plan will be deducted from your paycheck. If you go to an unpaid status, you may continue to participate in the health and dental plans, provided you make arrangements in advance with HRM Benefits and pay your portion of the premium. Your life insurance and long term disability insurance remain in effect. Travel Accident, Workers' Compensation, Sick Leave Accrual and Vacation Accrual all cease once your unpaid status exceeds 30 days. The Tuition Waiver program will be limited to covered dependents during an unpaid leave in excess of 30 days.

Upon completion of your maternity/adoption leave, and the receipt from your physician stating you are medically able to resume your regular duties, you will be reinstated into your former assignment or to a reasonably equivalent assignment.

Application for Maternity/Adoption Leave

During the fifth month of pregnancy or earlier, you should contact HRM Benefits and schedule a meeting to review the maternity/adoption leave policy and your options for benefit coverage and compensation. You must also complete both a Leave of Absence form and an Interim Disability Form.

Faculty members who will use a non-teaching quarter instead of maternity leave must also meet with HRM Benefits to assure continuation of benefits, and to assure that you provide the necessary medical information that will allow you to return to work.

FAMILY LEAVE

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 provides that employees be eligible to take up to a maximum of 12 weeks of **unpaid** absence for the following reasons:

- Birth or adoption (or foster care placement) of a child
- Care of a child, spouse or parent of a faculty/staff member who has a serious health condition
- The faculty/staff member's own serious health condition

All benefits eligible employees, who have been employed for a minimum of twelve months, are eligible to take leave as long as it does not exceed 12 weeks in any 12-month period. For example, if an employee takes maternity/adoption leave for three full months, the employee would have used the maximum 12 weeks available for the 12-month period.

In addition to the specific leave programs (interim and long term disability, workers' compensation, and maternity/adoption leave) that have already been described and which are covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act, the following leaves are also offered:

New Child Leave

Spouses or same sex spousal equivalents (provided a Same Sex Spousal Equivalency Certification is on file with HRM Benefits) who wish to take time off upon the birth or adoption (or placement of a foster child) are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid time within the first twelve months following the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child. This leave will require the completion of a Leave of Absence Form.

- **Family Illness Leave**

Faculty and staff who request time off to care for an ill child, parent, spouse or same sex spousal equivalent (provided a Same Sex Spousal Equivalency Certification is on file with HRM Benefits), will be eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid time during any 12 month period. If medically necessary, this leave may be taken intermittently. This leave will require the completion of a Leave of Absence Form with accompanying medical documentation.

Length of Leave

The Family Leave Act allows for a maximum of 12 weeks of leave to be taken in any 12 month rolling period. For example, if you take a four-week leave covered under Family Leave in September, and then need additional time the following April, you will be eligible for a total of 8 more weeks until the following September.

Many of Northeastern's leave programs covered by the Family Leave Act are more generous than the Act requires. However, all time taken, whether specifically under the Family Leave Act or under one of the other leaves, will be included in the calculation for determining the length of leave available to you under the Family Leave Act.

Using Paid Vacation Time during Family Leave

Staff members may choose to have a portion of their leave paid by taking earned vacation time. All vacation time used during this time is included in the 12 weeks of leave.

Benefits While on Unpaid Leave

Whenever a leave exceeds 30 days, you may continue participation in all benefit plans except Travel Accident, Workers' Compensation, Sick Time Accrual and Vacation Time Accrual. While you are on leave you must continue paying your portion of the medical and dental premiums. Arrangements to make these payments can be done when you apply for the leave and meet with HRM Benefits. The Tuition Waiver Program is limited to your covered dependents during any unpaid absence that exceeds 30 days.

Status Upon Returning From Leave

If you are returning from a leave covered under Family Leave, you will return to your same or reasonably-equivalent position, provided you return no later than at the end of the 12 week maximum.

Requesting a Leave

You are asked to give early notification of leave when it is foreseeable and make a reasonable effort to accommodate the University's needs, if possible, when scheduling a leave.

You will need to request the leave through your supervisor and complete a Leave of Absence Application with HRM Benefits. Depending upon the type of leave being requested, you may be required to provide medical documentation in order for the leave to be approved.

MILITARY LEAVE

All University arrangements governing military duty are subject to modification caused by any special circumstances that may exist during an emergency period and any government regulations that may be in effect.

Annual Leave of Two Weeks or Less

If you are ordered to active duty for a period of two weeks or less, the University will make up the difference, if any, between your military pay and your regular wages. Individuals taking military leave should submit an Application for Leave of Absence, together with a copy of the orders to report for duty, to your department head.

Annual Leave of More Than Two Weeks

If you voluntarily go on military duty, for training etc., you may request an unpaid leave of absence from the University, subject to the same regulations as leaves of absence for nonacademic purposes.

If You are Drafted into the Armed Forces or Called to Active Duty

If you are drafted into the armed forces, or are a reservist ordered to active duty, you should submit an Application for Leave of Absence form through your department head. This leave will extend for the period of involuntary active duty. Upon completion of involuntary active duty, you will be reinstated to your former or a reasonably equivalent position without loss of seniority or status. You must receive a discharge certificate of satisfactory completion of service and forward it to the University within 90 days after release from active duty.

OTHER LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

You may apply for a leave of absence without pay for taking care of personal affairs, study, travel, etc. The department head's initial approval for such leaves is discretionary, but should be guided by the need for compassion, impact on normal department business, workloads, or similar compelling reasons. Leaves of this type should be scheduled, insofar as possible, to coincide with the activity level in the department. Travel leave normally should be used in conjunction with accrued vacation.

One or Two Days

Leaves of absence for one or two days are administered directly by the respective department head. Only one leave of this type may be granted to any employee in any one calendar year. You must either make up the excused work time or arrange for an adjustment in pay. In addition, if you are paid weekly, an Employee Absence Report Card should be filed with Payroll.

More Than Two Days but Less Than One Month

Leaves of absence for more than two days must be approved by HRM Benefits. To apply for the leave, you must complete an Application for Leave of Absence form, obtain your department head's approval for the leave, and return both the form and the approval to HRM Benefits for final approval.

If the leave is approved, all benefits remain in force. Since some plans require a contribution from you, it is up to you to make arrangements with HRM Benefits to continue your contributions to these plans. If you do not continue making contributions to these plans, your participation in these plans will terminate.

More Than One Month

Leaves of absence of more than one month are generally not allowed, except in cases of extreme emergency. Such leaves require approval by your department head, your academic dean or vice president and HRM Benefits. In cases involving leaves of absence in excess of one month, **all benefits will remain in force except** as follows:

- Vacation and sick time will not accrue during the absence.
- Group medical and dental will continue provided you make arrangements with HRM Benefits to continue your contribution to these plans.
- Contributions to the Retirement Plan will cease.
- Tuition scholarship benefits will be discontinued.

FACULTY LEAVES

Faculty leaves, such as sabbaticals and leaves for academic study, are covered in the Faculty Handbook. Any questions regarding faculty leaves should be addressed to the Provost's Office. It is important that you let HRM Benefits know when you are going on one of the faculty leaves. You must meet with HRM Benefits if you are entitled to continuation of benefits during your leave. As with any other type of leave, you must continue your contribution to the health and dental plans if you wish to have continued coverage during your leave.