

2-12 Family and Medical Leave

All eligible employees will be provided with leave as required by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and applicable state laws. The College strictly prohibits interfering with, restraining, or denying the ability of any employee to exercise any right provided by the FMLA. The College also strictly prohibits any type of discrimination against an employee who has filed a complaint in regard to the FMLA. A copy of this policy will be provided to any employee who has requested FMLA-eligible leave.

For purposes of this policy, instructional personnel are considered to be teachers and any other employee whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting. Procedures to carry out this policy will be followed by all staff.

A. Entitlement to Leave

The College will grant unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks to employees who have been employed for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 month period for:

1. The birth of a child of the employee and in order to care for the child;
2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;
3. Taking care of the spouse, child, or parent of the employee, if the spouse, child, or parent has a serious health condition; or
4. A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's position.

The 12 month period in which the 12 weeks of leave entitlement occurs shall be a "rolling period". Therefore, an employee is entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks of leave for any period of 12 continuous months.

B. Serious Health Conditions

"Serious health conditions" means any illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves: (1) inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential care facility, or (2) "continuing treatment" by a healthcare provider which includes any period of incapacity as a result of:

1. A health condition lasting more than three consecutive days and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition that also includes (1) treatment two or more times by or

- under the supervision of a healthcare provider or (2) one treatment by a healthcare provider with a continuing regimen of treatment;
2. Pregnancy or prenatal care, including severe morning sickness;
 3. A chronic serious health condition that continues over an extended period of time, requires periodic visits to a healthcare provider, and may involve occasional episodes of incapacity;
 4. A permanent or long-term condition for which treatment may not be effective, if the employee is under the supervision of a healthcare provider (but not necessarily receiving active treatment); or
 5. Any absences to receive multiple treatments for reparative surgery or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three days if not treated.

For further information on what is considered “continuing treatment”, contact the Director, Human Resources. Where both spouses are employed by the College, they are jointly entitled to a combined leave of 12 workweeks of family leave in any 12 month period to care for a parent who has a serious health condition. However, each spouse may take up to 12 workweeks of leave to care for a child or spouse with a serious health condition.

C. Structure of Leave

When leave is taken for the adoption or birth of a child, an employee may take leave only for a continuous period of time unless the College agrees to another arrangement. For a situation involving an employee’s serious health condition or that of a family member, the employee may take leave continuously or on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule as is medically necessary.

Instructional personnel may be required to continue leave through the end of the school semester if any of the following conditions exist:

1. The leave is beginning more than five (5) weeks before the end of the term; the leave will last at least three (3) weeks; and the employee will be returning to work in the last (3) weeks of the academic term; or
2. The leave is for a purpose other than the employee’s own serious health condition; the leave would begin in the last five (5) weeks of the term; and the employee would be returning to work during the last two (2) weeks of the academic term; or

3. The leave is for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition; the leave would begin in the last three (3) weeks of the term; and the leave would last at least five (5) days.

If instructional personnel are required to take leave until the end of the academic term, only the period of leave until the employee is ready and able to return to work will be charged against the employee's FMLA entitlement.

In order to better accommodate an employee's need for intermittent or reduced leave for a serious health condition, the College may require an employee to take an alternative position during the period of leave. The alternative position must have equal pay and benefits but it does not have to have equivalent duties. If an instructional employee requests intermittent or reduced scheduled leave for more than 20 percent of the working days of the duration of the leave for the employee's or family member's serious health condition, the College alternatively may require the employee to take continuous leave for up to the entire duration of the scheduled leave.

D. Designation of Leave and Employee Notice and Verification Requirements

To ensure that employees receive proper notification of their rights and responsibilities and that leave is properly designated, all employees requesting any type of leave must make the request to the Director, Human Resources. The Director is authorized to ask any questions necessary of the employee in order to make a determination of whether the leave is FMLA-eligible. The Director may require notice of the need and the reason for leave. The Director's designation must be made within three (3) business days of having obtained the information, unless there is a justifiable delay, such as waiting for documentation. Leave cannot be designated as FMLA-eligible, and therefore count towards the 12 weeks entitlement, after the employee has returned to work from the leave. An exception to this requirement can be made if the Director did not learn the reason for the absence until the employee's return to work or a preliminary designation was made while waiting for all relevant information. Leave may be designated as both FMLA-eligible and as leave under the paid leave policy if paid leave has been substituted. Such leave would be counted towards the 12 weeks FMLA entitlement.

An employee must provide at least 30 days notice if the employee can anticipate the need for FMLA leave. If this is not possible, the notice will be given as soon as "practicable," taking into account all the facts and circumstances. If the employee does not provide 30 days notice, and there is no reasonable justification for the delay, the College can deny the taking of FMLA leave until at least 30 days after the employee provides notice of the need for FMLA leave. If an instructional employee fails to give required notice for foreseeable leave for an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, the employee may be required to take

leave continuously for the duration of the treatment or be temporarily transferred to an alternative position for which the employee is qualified and that has the same benefits.

An employee requesting intermittent or reduced leave time for medical treatment of a serious health condition may be required to give the reasons for the intermittent or reduced leave schedule and the schedule for treatment. Normally, employees also would be expected to discuss scheduling with their immediate supervisor prior to scheduling any medical treatment in order to accommodate the work schedule.

The College may require employees to provide medical certification to confirm the employee's or the employee's family member's serious health condition. The information requested will be no more than that allowed by the FMLA and the Americans With Disabilities Act. Under certain circumstances, the Director, Human Resources may request a second or third verification if there is reason to doubt the validity of the medical certification.

Before returning to work from FMLA leave for a serious health condition, the employee will be required to present a "fitness-for-duty" certificate which states that the employee is able to return to work, unless the employee took intermittent leave or took leave for a family member's serious health condition.

All employees while on leave are expected to promptly report to the Director, Human Resources any change of status in their need for leave. Any employee who is taking leave through the end of an academic semester will be required to report on his/her intent to return to work no later than four (4) weeks before the end of the academic semester. The employee, while on FMLA leave, must report on his/her intent to return to work on a regular basis.

E. Substitution of Paid Leave

Accrued vacation or personal leave will be substituted for any FMLA-eligible leave upon the request of the employee or the decision of the College. Employees also may substitute paid sick leave or disability leave for FMLA-eligible leave in circumstances that otherwise qualify for paid sick and disability leave. If paid leave is substituted under circumstances which qualify as FMLA leave, the leave can be counted towards the 12 week entitlement of FMLA leave if designated as FMLA-eligible at the time leave is taken.

If paid leave is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave for continuous leave of more than three (3) days, all employee responsibilities in the FMLA to provide notice for foreseeable and unforeseeable leave, medical certification, fitness for duty certification, and notice of intent to return to work, apply as specified in this policy and College policy.

F. Restoration to Equivalent Position

Employees, except “key” employees, will be restored to an equivalent or the same position upon return from FMLA leave.

The equivalent position will have virtually identical pay, benefits and working conditions, including privileges, perquisites and status, as the position held prior to the leave. The position also must involve substantially similar duties and responsibilities, which must entail substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority. All positions within the same job classification are considered to be “equivalent positions” for purposes of this policy, so long as these conditions are met. For licensed employees, all positions with the same salary and licensure requirements also will be considered equivalent positions, so long as these conditions are met.

Key employees do not have the right to be restored to an equivalent or the same position upon return from FMLA leave. Key employees are salaried FMLA-eligible employees who are among the highest paid 10 percent of all employees. If restoring a key employee would result in substantial and grievous economic injury to the College, then there is no obligation to restore the employee to the same or an equivalent position. Employees will be informed at the time leave is taken if they are considered key employees and will be informed once a determination is made that the employee will not be restored to the same or an equivalent position. A key employee who has been informed that he or she will not be restored still has rights to health benefits for the full period in which he or she is eligible for FMLA leave.

G. Continuation of Health Benefits

Health benefits will be continued for the duration of FMLA leave. This includes key employees who have been notified that they will not be restored to an equivalent position. The health care benefits will be the same as if the employee were continuing to work. Employees do not have the right to the accrual of earned benefits during the leave. If an employee takes intermittent or reduced leave, he or she has the right to maintain the same health care benefits, but earned benefits may be reduced in proportion to hours worked where such a reduction is normally based upon hours worked.

Health insurance premiums paid while an employee is on FMLA leave may be recovered if the employee does not return to work after leave, so long as the reason for not returning does not relate to a serious health condition or to circumstances beyond the employee’s control.

H. Posting Requirements

The Director, Human Resources will ensure that notices of FMLA provisions and information on procedures for filing complaints are posted in places where employees and applicants would find it readily accessible.

I. Record Keeping Requirement

The Human Resources Office will be responsible for maintaining records of the following information for at least three (3) years: basic payroll and identifying employee date; date (or hours) of FMLA leave taken by each employee and premium payments of employee benefits. Medical information, such as that relating to medical certifications, also will be maintained in the Human Resources Office in confidential medical records.

Copies of employee notices, including general and specific notices, as well as any other documents describing employee benefits or policies and records of disputes between the College and any employee regarding designation of FMLA leave will be maintained by the Director, Human Resources for at least three (3) years.

J. Miscellaneous

The College will comply with any other requirement of the FMLA not contemplated or set forth in this policy.