

Faculty Serious Illness and Parental Leave

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 Print

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Category	Personnel
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Contact	Director of Benefits, Human Resources: (252) 328-9825 Assistant Vice Chancellor for Personnel & Resource Administration (Academic Affairs): (252) 328-2587
Related Policies	UNC Policy Manual 300.2.11, Serious Illness and Disability Leave for Faculty (https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/doc.php?id=102) Leave Policy for Twelve-Month Faculty POL06.45.03 (https://policy.ecu.edu/06/45/03) ECU Faculty Manual, Part XI, GENERAL FACULTY EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES AND BENEFITS (pdf) (https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part11section2.pdf) ECU Faculty Manual, Part VIII, PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE FACULTY (pdf) (https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part8section1.pdf) ECU Faculty Manual, Part IX, TENURE AND PROMOTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF TENURED FACULTY (pdf) (https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part9section1.pdf)
Additional References	ECU Human Resources Benefits (https://humanresources.ecu.edu/benefits/) UNC Policy Manual 300.2.11[G], Guidelines on Serious Illness and Disability Leave for Faculty (https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/doc.php?id=102) Benefits, Shared Services & Technology regarding Serious Illness and Disability Leave for Faculty, Benefits, Shared Services & Technology regarding Serious Illness and Disability Leave for Faculty (pdf) (https://cdn.ecu.edu/docs/prr-uploaded-docs/01_29_2016_%20UNC%20Policy%20300%202%2011%20Clarification%20Memo%20re%20FSIL%20(002).pdf) Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla) State Human Resources Manual, Family and Medical Leave (https://oshr.nc.gov/policies/leave/family-and-medical-leave) ADA Faculty Accommodations (https://accessibility.ecu.edu/)

1. Purpose

This policy provides leave with pay for eligible faculty (defined in Section 2 below) for cases of a serious health condition and/or parental leave (defined as birth, adoption, and foster care placement of a child). For further explanation, see the federal Family and

Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") link under Related Policies, above. In addition, faculty to whom this policy applies shall also be subject to the same family and medical leave policy as may be prescribed for employees subject to the State Human Resources Act. For further explanation, see the State Human Resources Manual, Family and Medical Leave link under Related Policies, above. To the extent this policy conflicts with the State Human Resources Manual, Family and Medical Leave, this policy shall govern.

2. Eligibility

2.1 This policy applies only to faculty members who meet all of the following conditions:

- 2.1.1 have been continuously employed by East Carolina University for at least twelve (12) consecutive calendar months, and
- 2.1.2 have continuously held a permanent appointment of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of full-time, and
- 2.1.3 participate in either the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina or the Optional Retirement Program, and
- 2.1.4 have met all other requirements for FMLA leave as described in the State Human Resources Manual, Family and Medical Leave [see link under Related Policies, above].

2.2 This policy does not apply to faculty members with temporary appointments or to faculty who are employed with less than seventy-five percent (75%) appointments. In addition, the benefits provided in accordance with this policy for those faculty members whose appointments are less than 1.0 FTE will be pro-rated accordingly.

2.3 A period of employment in a non-eligible status may not be used to partially meet the requirement for twelve (12) consecutive months in an eligible capacity.

2.4 Leave benefits are available to faculty members who meet the eligibility requirements, and paid leave may be taken during the term of appointment.

2.4.1 For a twelve (12)-month faculty member, the term of appointment is twelve (12) calendar months (usually defined as July 1 through June 30).

2.4.2 For a nine (9)-month faculty member, the term of appointment is August 16th through May 15th.

2.4.2.1 An eligible nine (9)-month faculty member may receive leave with pay for a documented qualifying event that begins during the regular academic term of appointment. If the documented qualifying event begins outside of the appointment term (i.e., August 16th through May 15th), the faculty member may receive leave with pay after the beginning of the next appointment term (i.e., August 16th) up to a maximum of twelve (12) calendar weeks from the date of the documented qualifying event.

2.4.2.2 Teaching duties in the summer terms by nine (9)-month faculty members are covered under a separate contract, and paid leave under this policy is not provided for absence during a contracted summer term.

2.5 This policy applies only to faculty and not to other employment categories including, but not limited to, categories of Senior Academic and Administrative Officer (SAAO Tier I or Tier II), EHRA Non-faculty (NF-EHRA Instructional, Research, or Information Technology), SHRA/CSS, Postdoctoral Fellows, or student employees.

2.6 Any faculty member who is on a less than twelve (12)-month appointment will be treated as a nine-(9) month faculty member for the purposes of this policy.

3. Description of Benefits

3.1 The total maximum leave benefit for an individual faculty member for all leave benefits is as described in section 3.2 below for leave with pay and as described in section 3.3 below for leave without pay. All leave benefits provided pursuant to this policy are in accordance with the FMLA and run concurrently with the FMLA for up to twelve (12) calendar weeks within any consecutive twelve (12) calendar month period regardless of the number of qualifying events that occur. [See section 4.6.] Note in section 3.3.1.3 below, under the North Carolina Family Illness Act, a faculty member is entitled to additional leave without pay that, combined with FMLA or the paid leave under this policy, totals up to fifty-two (52) weeks of leave during a five (5)-year period in cases of serious illness of a child, spouse, or parent.

3.1.1 The start date of the first leave starts the clock for the twelve (12)-month period for leave with or without pay under this policy.

3.2 Leave with pay

3.2.1 For qualifying reasons as defined in the FMLA, leave with pay is available to a faculty member who meets the eligibility criteria defined in section 2 above.

3.2.2 Serious Health Conditions: For documented serious health conditions, as defined in the FMLA, faculty members are

eligible for leave with pay in accordance with this policy for a maximum of the following amounts in any consecutive twelve (12)-month period:

3.2.2.1 For nine (9)-month faculty, twelve (12) calendar weeks; and

3.2.2.2. For twelve (12)-month faculty, sixty (60) calendar days. (Twelve (12)-month faculty may also be eligible to take accrued sick and/or vacation leave in accordance with the *Leave Policy for Twelve-Month Faculty* in addition to paid leave pursuant to this policy.)

See section 4.3 for certification requirements.

3.2.3 Birth, Adoption, or Foster Care Placement of a Child

3.2.3.1 For the documented birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child, faculty members are eligible for leave with pay in accordance with this policy for a maximum of the following amounts, beginning on the date of the documented qualifying event:

3.2.3.1.1. For nine (9)-month faculty, twelve (12) calendar weeks; and

3.2.3.1.2. For twelve (12)-month faculty, sixty (60) calendar days. (Twelve (12)-month faculty may also be eligible to take accrued sick and/or vacation leave in accordance with the *Leave Policy for Twelve-Month Faculty* in addition to paid leave pursuant to this policy.)

See section 3.4 regarding intermittent leave and section 4.3 for documentation requirements.

3.2.4 Health/medical complications arising due to pregnancy and childbirth will be treated as any other serious health condition [see section 3.2.2 above].

3.2.5 Care for an Immediate Family Member: For required care of an FMLA-defined spouse, child (son or daughter), or parent who has an FMLA-qualified serious health condition, faculty members are eligible for leave with pay in accordance with this policy for a maximum of the following amounts in any consecutive twelve (12)-month period:

3.2.5.1 For nine (9)-month faculty, twelve (12) calendar weeks; and

3.2.5.2. For twelve (12)-month faculty, sixty (60) calendar days. (Twelve (12)-month faculty may also be eligible to take accrued sick and/or vacation leave in accordance with the *Leave Policy for Twelve-Month Faculty* in addition to paid leave pursuant to this policy.)

See section 3.3.1.3 for additional family illness provisions. See section 4.3 for certification requirements.

3.3 Leave without pay

3.3.1 For qualifying reasons defined in the FMLA, leave without pay is available to faculty members who meet the eligibility criteria defined in section 2 above.

3.3.1.1 For qualifying events defined in section 3.2 above, after a period of approved leave with pay is exhausted in accordance with this policy, faculty members unable to return to work and who may otherwise qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will be referred to the University's ADA Coordinator to engage in the interactive process to determine what reasonable accommodations are needed in order to return to work, which may include a period of additional unpaid leave as an accommodation. In order to be approved for additional unpaid leave as an accommodation under the ADA, faculty members must participate in the interactive process through the University's ADA Coordinator.

3.3.1.2 For qualifying events defined in section 3.2 above, after a period of approved leave with pay is exhausted in accordance with this policy, twelve (12)-month faculty may be eligible for additional leave (e.g., without pay; and/or, to the extent eligible, accrued sick and/or vacation leave) in accordance with the *Leave Policy for Twelve-Month Faculty*.

3.3.1.3 After exhausting twelve (12) calendar weeks of leave with or without pay pursuant to this policy, a faculty member with twelve (12) months of eligible service is entitled, under the North Carolina Family Illness Act, to additional leave without pay that, combined with FMLA or the paid leave under this policy, totals up to fifty-two (52) weeks of leave during a five (5)-year period in cases of serious illness of a child, spouse, or parent. Application is made through the Department of Human Resources Benefits Office.

3.4 Intermittent and Reduced Leave

3.4.1 Leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule if the qualifying event has created a documented medical need as allowable under FMLA that may be best accommodated through an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. Any revisions to a faculty member's assignments or schedule will be documented in a written agreement signed by the unit administrator and the faculty member, based on the advice of an eligible health care provider (as defined under the FMLA).

3.4.2 Intermittent leave is leave taken in blocks of time due to a single qualifying event rather than for one continuous period of time. This allows employees to engage in work between leave periods without exhausting the requested leave time in a continuous span. Leave for birth and bonding with a child must be taken in a continuous period of time from the date of the qualifying event, unless intermittent leave is medically necessary.

3.4.3 Reduced leave is a reduced schedule (e.g., shifting from full to part time) where the documented medical need as allowable under FMLA is best addressed by partial return to work.

3.4.4. The Human Resources Benefits Office and the respective Division Office (the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Personnel & Resource Administration for faculty in the Division of Academic Affairs and the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Human Resources for faculty in the Division of Health Sciences) will assist the unit in determining any and all faculty workload adjustments that become necessary as a result of intermittent leave requests and approvals. These offices will also work together to assist the unit in the calculation and documentation of leave taken.

3.5 Short-term Disability Benefits

3.5.1 Employees are eligible for short-term disability benefits under the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina after both of the following conditions are met:

3.5.1.1 one (1) year of contributing membership within the past thirty-six (36) months in the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina or the Optional Retirement Program, and

3.5.1.2 a sixty (60) calendar-day waiting period from the date of disability onset. More information about disability benefits can be found on the Human Resources Benefits web site [see link in Additional References, above].

3.5.2 Employees may purchase supplemental disability insurance coverage offered by plans approved and available through the Human Resources Benefits Office. [See link in Additional References, above]

4. Administration of Benefit

4.1 The faculty member's request for leave with pay must be made in writing to the Human Resources Benefits Office by completing the form entitled FSIL Request located on the Human Resources Benefits web site.

4.2 It is the faculty member's responsibility to inform the unit administrator in writing of the anticipated absence under this policy at least sixty (60) calendar days in advance of the leave or as soon as practicable after the need for leave is foreseeable so that qualified substitute personnel can be secured by the unit administrator as early as possible.

4.2.1 The unit administrator is responsible for securing, to the extent possible, substitute personnel for the duration of the faculty member's approved leave (with or without pay). Cost of substitute personnel will be supported by the academic unit when funds are available within the unit. When the academic unit is unable to provide the funds to support substitute personnel, the unit administrator will submit a written justification to request funding from the next higher administrator up to the appropriate vice chancellor. Any adjustments in work schedules within the unit are at the discretion of the unit administrator, with the approval of the next higher administrator, and are subject to unit and institutional needs and resources. [See section 3.4.4.]

4.2.2 Upon the faculty member's return to work after a period of approved leave (with or without pay) under this policy, the unit administrator and the faculty member will jointly determine the completion of assigned responsibilities during the remainder of the academic term. Similarly, when a faculty member will begin a period of approved leave (with or without pay) after the academic term has begun, the unit administrator and the faculty member will jointly determine the faculty member's assigned responsibilities for the period of the academic term not covered by approved leave (with or without pay).

4.3 Certification and Documentation Requirements for Qualifying Events

4.3.1 Serious Health Conditions: Medical certification of the faculty member's serious health condition, including a statement from an eligible health care provider (as defined under the FMLA) about the probable length of absence from normal duties, is required. If the request is for the purpose of caring for a FMLA-defined spouse, child (son or daughter), or parent who has an FMLA-qualified serious health condition, the University also requires medical certification of that person's illness or disability and documentation of the circumstances which make it impossible or difficult for the faculty member to carry on with normal duties.

4.3.2 Birth, Adoption, or Foster Care Placement of a Child: Documentation of the qualifying event is required. Note that a faculty member who meets the eligibility requirements in section 2 above and who is an expectant mother may take leave pursuant to this policy before the birth of a child for prenatal care or if her condition makes her unable to work or requires a reduced work schedule in accordance with section 3.4. Also, leave pursuant to this policy may be granted before the actual placement or adoption of a child if an absence from work is required for the placement for adoption or foster care to proceed.

4.3.3 Forms for certification and documentation of each category of qualifying event are located on the Human Resources

Benefits web site and must be submitted by the faculty member within fifteen (15) calendar days after submitting the request for leave benefits.

4.4 The Human Resources Benefits Counselor will review the certification or documentation of the qualifying event and determine the eligibility of the faculty member for leave with pay under this policy. If the Human Resources Benefits Counselor determines that the employee is not eligible for leave with pay benefits under this policy, the Human Resources Benefits Counselor will notify the faculty member of the decision in writing, including the grounds for denial of the requested leave benefit. The faculty member may appeal this decision to the Director of Benefits. The decision of the Director of Benefits is final.

4.5 The Human Resources Benefits Counselor will provide the appropriate vice chancellor with written notification of the faculty member's eligibility for leave with pay under this policy. For approved leave with pay, the appropriate vice chancellor will issue a letter to the faculty member informing him or her of the beginning and ending dates of authorized leave with pay, with copies to appropriate unit administrators.

4.6 The FMLA entitlement of twelve (12) weeks of leave without pay will run concurrently with any period of leave with pay under this policy. The period of leave with pay will also be designated as family medical leave under the FMLA.

4.7 Leave (with or without pay) applies to the faculty member's employment during a regular term of appointment as defined in section 2.4 above.

4.7.1 If the illness or disability requires an absence from faculty duties longer than twelve (12) calendar weeks within a twelve (12) consecutive calendar month period, the faculty member may apply in writing to his or her unit administrator for a leave of absence without pay in accordance with provisions of the ECU Faculty Manual.

4.7.1.1 The faculty member may also apply to the Human Resources Benefits Office for salary continuation through the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina and through any other optional disability program(s) in which he or she may be enrolled.

4.9 Any unused leave pursuant to this policy is not eligible for terminal leave payment when the faculty member leaves the employment of the University, and it may not be used to extend years of creditable state service for retirement benefits. However, it must be exhausted prior to participation in the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina available to eligible employees.

5. Use of Leave with Pay

5.1 Leave with pay provided under this policy may be used for serious health conditions, pregnancy, birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child as defined in section 3.2 above. A faculty member who anticipates an absence from duties for longer than three (3) days for qualifying reasons as defined by the FMLA shall inform the unit administrator at least sixty (60) calendar days in advance of the leave or as soon as practicable after the need for leave is foreseeable. (See section 4.2 above.)

5.2 A faculty member will not be penalized because of time required away from work caused by or contributed to by conditions such as pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, or recovery. Disabilities resulting from pregnancy shall be treated the same as any other covered disability.

6. Record-Keeping

6.1 This policy provides an important financial benefit; therefore, accurate records must be maintained. The Human Resources Benefits Office and the Office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Personnel & Resource Administration for faculty in the Division of Academic Affairs will maintain all official records.

7. Coordination with Other Policies

7.1 When a faculty member takes intermittent or reduced leave in accordance with section 3.4 above, the relative weights among teaching, research, service, and clinical care may be revised [see Part VIII of the Faculty Manual] so long as the reassignment of responsibilities is completed in a manner that minimizes the impact on academic program quality.

7.2 Consistent with Part IX of the Faculty Manual, an untenured, probationary term (tenure-track) faculty member who is granted leave under this policy may be eligible for an extension of the probationary term. If the faculty member wishes to request an extension of the probationary term on the basis of leave granted under this policy, he/she must submit a written request in accordance with the requirements of Part IX of the Faculty Manual for Extensions of the Probationary Term.

7.3 The leave with pay provided under this policy shall have no effect on the faculty member's other employment benefits.

7.4 Consistent with the Faculty Manual, Part XI and Part VIII, the faculty member may not engage in other employment or compensated arrangements during the period of leave with or without pay under this policy.

7.5 If a faculty member granted leave under this policy wishes to request that his or her five (5)-year post-tenure review be delayed, he/she must submit a written request to the unit administrator. The terms of such an agreement will be stated in writing, signed by the faculty member, and approved by the unit administrator, dean (or other appropriate administrator), and the

appropriate vice chancellor.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 Communications and documentation concerning leave requested or approved pursuant to this policy shall constitute confidential records in accordance with North Carolina law.

9. Effective Date

9.1 This policy is effective July 1, 2011, and shall supersede any previous policies granting leave to faculty members for qualifying events as defined by the FMLA. A faculty member who is absent on approved leave at the time this policy becomes effective will continue to receive the leave benefits approved for that absence until the period of approved leave expires.

9.2 Any revisions and/or amendments to this policy shall become effective upon the approval of the ECU Board of Trustees.

East Carolina University

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