

ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS OR INJURY PROCEDURE

This procedure is governed by its parent policy. Questions regarding this procedure are to be directed to the identified Procedure Administrator.

Functional Category:	Human Resources
Parent Policy:	Attendance Management Policy
Approval Date:	December 13, 2021
Effective Date:	December 13, 2021
Procedure Owner:	Vice President, People and Culture
Procedure Administrator:	Manager, People Services

Overview:

This procedure will clarify roles and expectations of the employee, People Leader, and People and Talent related to absences due to illness or injury and details processes for providing employees of NorQuest College who incur a personal or work-related illness or injury support and assistance to return to suitable employment. It is the college's goal to support early and provide active management of each case.

Authority to establish this procedure is derived from the [NorQuest College Board of Governor's Policy No. 5](#) which delegates authority to the President and CEO to establish policies and procedures for the college's management and operation.

Procedures:

The following actions and conditions apply where an employee is away from work for reasons of illness or injury. Please refer to the Terms and Conditions of Employment or Collective Agreement applicable to the employee's position for details associated with illness leaves, proof of illness and Workers' Compensation.

For All Employees

Reporting of an Absence for Illness or Injury

- Employees who are unable to report to work because of illness or injury must notify their People Leader within one hour of their work starting time.
- Employees are expected to report to their People Leader or designate daily unless they have submitted a medical certificate that states they are unable to work for a defined period.
- Employees with frequent patterns of illness may be required to provide a medical certificate, or participate in the college's Employee Recovery Assistance Program (ERAP) to determine if further accommodations due to illness or injury are required.
- Employees in a permanent or eligible term position will be allowed time off with pay to attend medical appointments in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Employment and the applicable Collective Agreement provided their People Leader has given them prior authorization.
 - A People Leader may require a medical certificate as proof of attendance at the medical appointment; appropriate notice will be given when this is required.

Reporting of an Absence for Injury at Work

- Employees injured at work must, if they are able, report their injury to their People Leader within one hour of the injury.

Workers' Compensation (Workplace Injury)

- When an employee is injured at work, the employee's People Leader must submit a completed [Employer Report of Injury of Occupation Disease](#) to People Services no later than 24 hours from the time of accident.
- The employee should complete and submit to the WCB [Worker Report of Injury of Occupation Disease](#).

Reporting of an Absence or Injury at Work

- People Leaders are accountable for ensuring employees record all absences. If the employee is unavailable to record an absence, the People leader is responsible for entering and approving the leave.

For Employees in a Permanent or Eligible Term Position **Procedure for Casual Illness Absence**

- Eligible employees have access to casual illness leave each calendar year. People Leaders and employees may refer to the applicable Terms and Conditions of Employment or Collective Agreement for further details.
- Immediately upon return from a casual illness leave, employees are to report their absence using the college's Time & Labour reporting tool.
- The employee's People Leader is responsible for approving and ensuring submission of illness requests through the Time & Labor tool each reporting period and for verifying the employee's illness balance.

Procedure for Short-Term Illness (STI) Absence

- As soon as an employee is aware of the need for a leave exceeding three (3) consecutive work days, the absence must be reported to their People Leader, as it may transition into a STI Leave.
- The employee's People Leader must, by the fourth day of the employee's absence, report the absence to the Talent Coordinator, People Services, responsible for their area.
- An employee who does not have access to short term illness benefits may request a leave without pay
- STI benefits are subject to approval, and therefore the employee is required to submit medical documentation to NorQuest's ERAP provider for review.
 - People Services will provide the employee with a consent form by the fourth day of the leave, and submit the signed form to the ERAP.
 - The ERAP will provide the employee with the Attending Physicians Statement for their doctor to complete and return directly to the ERAP provider.

- The ERAP provider will reach out directly to the employee to review the medical reasons for the STI Leave. No medical information will be shared with NorQuest, however, the ERAP provider will advise People Services of the status of the STI claim.
- The employee shall also provide a personal email or contact information to their People Leader to be reached at while on leave.
- The employee must continue to submit an updated medical certificate, should the leave be extended, or as agreed upon with the People Leader, ERAP, or until they return to work.

If the employee refuses to submit sufficient medical information to the ERAP service provider as required supporting the employee's request for STI leave, an Independent Medical Evaluation (IME) may be required and the employee may be placed on a leave without pay until sufficient medical information is supplied.

Procedure for Long Term Illness Leave

- Where an employee is absent 30 days or more due to illness or injury, on or about the 30th day, People Services will send a letter along with an application forms for Long Term Disability (LTD) benefits to the employee's home address or personal email.
 - The employee and the employee's physician application forms should be completed and sent directly to the insurance provider as soon as possible to avoid interruption of earnings.
 - People Services will work with the employee's People Leader to complete the employer portion of the LTD application and will submit it directly to the insurance provider.
- If the claim is approved, the employee will transition to LTD after 80 consecutive days of STI have been exhausted. The insurance provider will advise the employee in writing of the status of their claim.
 - A permanent or term employee who is approved for LTD will be paid directly from the insurance provider.
 - If not approved for LTD, the employee may appeal the decision to the insurance provider.
 - While awaiting the appeal decision, an employee with satisfactory medical evidence to remain off work may request to be on vacation or an unpaid leave of absence. Vacation taken while awaiting an appeal decision will not be reinstated if they are successful in their appeal.

Benefits While on Leave

- Employees will continue to participate in the college benefits plans and the pension plan while on illness or injury leave.
- Employees will be paid by the college while receiving STI pay, and all normal deductions will continue.

- An eligible employee will earn vacation leave for the first forty-four (44) consecutive work days of STI or WCB.
- Where an employee is approved for LTD:
 - The employee will be paid via the insurance provider.
 - Both the employee and employer portion of pension contributions will be paid for by the college.
 - Premiums for Life Insurance, Accidental Death & Dismemberment, and LTD will be waived.
 - The college and the employee shall continue to pay their portion of Extended Health Care and Dental premiums. On the first of each month, employees will be required to provide the college with an e-transfer or post-dated cheque. If, at any time during their leave, an employee allows payment of premiums to lapse, benefits will be suspended immediately until such time as the employee submits the required payment.

Returning to Work after an Illness or Injury

- Before returning from STI, WCB, or LTD, employees must provide and submit to their People Leader and People Services satisfactory medical evidence that they are fit to return to work. If a gradual return to work plan is in place, the plan may include returning to:
 - modified work or part-time hours, or
 - work with specified worksite modifications in place,
 - duration of the return to work plan, and when the employee can return to full, regular duties.
- When an employee returns from LTD, a return to work meeting will be arranged with the employee, their People Leader, People Services and their rehab consultant (if involved) to ensure all parties agree to and can manage the expectations of the return to work plan.
- An employee who does not return to work on the agreed return to work date, who does not have prior authorization, and who does not report to their People Leader or People Services, after three (3) consecutive work days will be considered to have abandoned their position and have resigned.

Responsibilities

Employee

- Advise their People Leader of the absence and expected return to work date through a phone call or email.
- After three (3) consecutive days of absence, the employee must provide satisfactory documentation supporting the absence from work.
- An employee on a leave for illness or injury must be available to respond to phone calls or emails from the college or the insurance and/or ERAP provider.
- Actively participate in the process, including working with the college's ERAP, providing documentation when required, and engaging in a return to work plan. Failure to do so could put eligibility for sick leave benefits at risk.

- Employees must keep their People Leader informed of their progress toward recovery and anticipated date of return to work at reasonable intervals during their leave. An employee is expected to notify their People Leader as early as possible of their expected date of return to work.
- Provide updates to their status when requested.
- If the absence is due to an injury or occupational disease at the workplace, if able, complete and submit the required WCB forms to WCB for an injury or occupational disease.

People Leader

- Ensure employees are aware of procedures for calling in sick or reporting an absence and submitting an accommodation request.
- Accountable for ensuring all absences are reported and approved.
- Ensure that an injured or ill worker receives first aid and/or medical attention if something were to happen on the employer's premises. If the worker requires medical treatments, the college will arrange appropriate transportation to a health care facility.
- Gather necessary details of the leave through effective communication with their employee when the leave is reported.
- Provides a supportive role to discuss the reason for leave, duration of the leave, work task distribution, and possible work restrictions if required.
- Work with the Talent Coordinator on requesting and obtaining additional medical documentation when required.
- Report and provide information to the respective Talent Coordinator.
- Ensure information is kept secure and confidential between the People Leader, Employee, People & Talent.
- Maintains contact with ill/injured employee through frequent check-ins.
- Ensure required WCB forms for an injury or occupational disease are completed and submitted to People Services no later than 24 hours from the time of accident.

Human Resources Consultant

- Provides consultation and advice to the People Leader and employee on the leaves and accommodation process.
- Provides consultation on requirements of medical documentation, return to work.

Talent Coordinator

- Track and process leaves including Short Term Illness and Long Term Disability and ensure Payroll processes are completed.
- Liaison between the employee on leave and their People Leader, ensuring appropriate communication is maintained.
- Liaise between the employee on leave and the ERAP provider, ensuring the proper forms are signed and submitted in support of the process.
- Obtains completed forms required by the college's insurance provider.
- Sends requests for additional medical documentation, when required.

Union or Association Representative

- When requested by the employee, support employee throughout health-related absences.
- When requested by the employee, participates in Return to Work plans.
- leaves process.
- Provide consultation on requirements of medical documentation and return to work.
- Provide consultation to the Union or Association Representative when required.

OHS Consultant

- Support the process for obtaining a Jobs Demand Analysis and reviewing the information.
- Support the return to work plans as required, and offer additional information, guidance, or recommendations.

Employee Recovery Assistance Program (ERAP)

- The college provides an ERAP to assist permanent and eligible term employees during leaves and returning to work.
- With the employee’s consent, People Services will provide the employee’s name and contact information to the ERAP service provider.
- An ERAP case manager will contact the employee and will work in the utmost confidence to assist the employee while they are off work on STI. This includes working with the employee’s physicians and other health professionals to address factors that may impact their return to work.
- The ERAP case manager will provide information and support for a return to work when an employee is ready to return as prescribed by their attending physician.

Definitions:

Casual Illness: means an illness which causes an employee in a permanent or eligible term position to be absent from duty for a period of three (3) consecutive work days or less.

Employee: includes a person who is engaged by NorQuest College to perform a service in accordance with existing terms and conditions of employment, employment contracts or collective agreements.

Long Term Disability (LTD): means an income protection plan for illness or injury that prevents an employee from returning to work within the 80 consecutive short-term illness days.

People Leader: means an employee whose job function requires them to organize, direct and control the work of others. Supervisors can include team leads, chairs, associate chairs, managers, deans, directors, Members of Executive, or the President and CEO. Another term for People Leader is Supervisor.

Permanent position: means a position designated by the college as continuing to meet the ongoing operational requirements of NorQuest’s core programs. A permanent position may be full time or part time of not less than half time.

Related NorQuest College Information:
Related External Information:
Next Review Date:
Revision History:

Return to Work Plan: means a plan developed to facilitate an employee who has been off work due to illness for an extended period of time. Return to work plans can include reduced hours of work or reduced duties. They are normally for a short period of time to assist the employee during their recovery period. People Leaders should work through with their HR Consultant, the ERAP program or a Long-Term Disability rehab consultant to facilitate return to work plans for employees.

Short-Term Illness (STI): means an illness which causes an employee in a permanent or term position to be absent more than three (3) consecutive days but does not exceed 80 consecutive work days or the equivalent of pro-rated days for part time employees.

Term Position: means a position designated by the college as a project or replacement position or term-certain for other specified reasons, having a set expiry date. A term position shall be at least six (6) months in duration and may be full-time or part-time of not less than one-half time.

- [Attendance Management Policy](#)
- [AUPE Collective Agreement](#)
- [Employee Accommodation Procedure](#)
- [Faculty Association Collective Agreement](#)
- [Out of Scope Employees Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Terms and Conditions of Employment for Management Employees](#)

- [Alberta Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Employer Report of Injury or Occupational Disease](#)
- [Worker Report of Injury of Occupation Disease](#)

February 2025

April 2014: new
 November 2014: update for change in procedure owner and document links
 September 2015: update for document links and next review date
 November 2016: update to include online reporting tool, update for document links and general review of terms
 October 2018: change of 15 days to 7 days and removal of the word voluntary for regarding the ERAP
 August 2019: Compliance Office template & reorganization update
 January 2020: update to include NOVAtime time and labour online reporting tool, re-structuring of procedure and general review
 December 2021: update to include procedures for accommodation, add attending physicians' statement, ERAP provisions, format for procedures. Updated procedures and policy for STI and LTI, adding mandatory participation in ERAP.