

# 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.

<b>Functional category</b>	Human Resources
<b>Parent policy</b>	Attendance Management Policy
<b>Approval date</b>	April 3, 2025
<b>Effective date</b>	May 1, 2025
<b>Procedure owner</b>	Vice President, People, Culture and Equity
<b>Procedure administrator</b>	Director, People and Talent Operations

## Overview

This procedure will clarify roles and expectations of employees, People Leaders, and People and Talent Operations as it relates to absences due to illness or injury (personal and work related). This procedure will outline processes for managing an employee's absence from work, and return to work, in a safe, timely, and effective manner.

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.

## Procedure

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 matters related to illness leaves and Workers' Compensation. To the extent there are any discrepancies between this Procedure and the applicable Terms and Conditions of Employment or Collective Agreement, the latter will prevail.

During a medical leave, employees should focus entirely on their recovery. The College strives to protect the well-being of employees, allowing them to take the necessary time to heal without the distractions of job demands. Employees should not engage in work activities or duties during a medical leave. The College encourages any employee on a medical leave to use the time to rest and recuperate.

### **WORK RELATED (WCB) ILLNESS OR INJURY ABSENCES**

#### **For All Employees**

#### **Reporting of an Absence for a Work Related (WCB) Injury or Illness**

- Employees injured at work must seek first aid or other necessary medical treatment as soon as possible.
  - Employees may seek expedited and specialized medical attention at an Occupational Injury Service (OIS) clinic. Find an OIS clinic [here](#).
- Employees injured at work must report their injury or illness to their People Leader and the College's [OHS Consultant](#) as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours of sustaining the injury or illness. The OHS Consultant can be reached at [safety@norquest.ca](mailto:safety@norquest.ca).
- An employee injured in a workplace accident must complete and submit a [WCB Worker Report](#) via fax or online as soon as possible. A copy of the Worker Report must also be provided to the OHS Consultant.
- Modified work options are available to employees in most circumstances for work related injuries and illnesses. Should the employee be unable to return to work in any capacity beyond the date of accident due to their

injury or illness, they must provide the OHS Consultant a medical certificate.

- If an employee is fit for modified duties, efforts will be made to determine whether a modified work arrangement can be offered. Any such arrangement will take into account the employee's restrictions, among other relevant factors.
- While off work, the employee is expected to remain in contact with their People Leader and the OHS Consultant.
- The employee may be required to participate in an incident investigation as determined by the OHS Consultant.

### **Benefits While on WCB Leave**

- Eligible employees will continue to participate in the College's benefits plan and pension plan while on an accepted WCB leave.
- Eligible employees will continue to have access to the Employee Assistance Program while on WCB leave.
- The WCB determines all claim decision regarding WCB entitlements that will be paid through and arranged by the WCB (e.g., physiotherapy, counselling, and vocational rehabilitation).
- Employees will be paid in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Act and the applicable Collective Agreement or Terms & Conditions of Employment.
- An eligible employee will continue to earn vacation time for the first forty-four (44) consecutive workdays of WCB leave.

### **Returning to Work from WCB Leave**

- Before returning to work from a WCB leave, the employee may be required to provide satisfactory medical evidence to the OHS Consultant confirming they are fit to return to work.
- Workplace accommodations, including with respect to both temporary and permanent accommodations, will be formalized as part of a written Workplace Accommodation Plan, which will be signed by the employee to whom it applies.

- In certain circumstances, the College may require a return to work meeting with the employee, their People Leader, the OHS Consultant and union representative (at the employee's request) when applicable.
- An employee who does not return to work on the agreed upon date, or who does not report to their People Leader, the OHS Consultant or the WCB after three (3) consecutive workdays, may be considered to have abandoned their position and resigned.

## **Responsibilities**

The foregoing is a general, non-exhaustive list of certain key expectations for stakeholders under this Procedure.

### Employee

- Advise their People Leader of their absence and expected return to work date as soon as possible.
- While on leave, remain available to respond to phone calls or emails from the College or the WCB. The employee shall provide the OHS Consultant a current personal email address or contact information they can be reached at while on leave.
- Ensure accurate and up-to-date contact information is shared with their People Leader and the OHS Consultant.
- Complete all required forms in a timely manner.
- Keep the OHS Consultant informed of their progress toward recovery and anticipated date of return to work at reasonable intervals. An employee is expected to notify the OHS Consultant as early as possible of their expected date of return to work.
- Actively participate and cooperate in the WCB process, including working with the OHS Consultant, providing documentation when required, and engaging in return to work planning.
- Provide updates to their status when requested.
- Where such a plan is in place, adhere to the Workplace Accommodation Plan and advise their People Leader or the OHS Consultant if changes are required.

- Upon returning to work on a Workplace Accommodation Plan or otherwise, checking in with their People Leader as required under this Procedure.
- Participate in an incident investigation if required by the OHS Consultant.
- Consider the option to consult with their union representative, if applicable, throughout the process.

### People Leader

- Ensure employees are aware of injury and illness reporting procedures.
- Ensure that an injured or ill employee receives first aid and/or medical attention. If medical treatment is required, the College will arrange appropriate transportation to a health care facility.
- Notify the OHS Consultant of a workplace injury or illness immediately by phone or [email](#).
- Complete the [C040 \(WCB Employer Report\)](#) and submit to the OHS Consultant no later than twenty-four (24) hours of being notified of a workplace injury or illness.
- Support the OHS Consultant in collecting required documentation from the employee, including the C060 (WCB Worker Report), Incident Flash Report and Work Accommodation Plan (if applicable).
- Participate in an incident investigation if required by the OHS Consultant.
- Assist in any discussions with an employee regarding their return to work.
- Report and provide information to the OHS Consultant in a timely manner.
- Ensure information related to an employee's WCB leave is kept secure and confidential between the People Leader, employee, and the People & Talent Operations team.
- Upon an employee's return to work, checking in with the employee as required under this Procedure.

### Occupational Health and Safety Consultant

- Provide guidance and consultation to the People Leader and employee on incident reporting and investigation requirements, and the WCB leave and return to work processes.
- Submit the C040 (WCB Employer Report) to the WCB.
- Serve as the key point of contact and employer representative for the WCB; liase between the WCB, employee and People Leader to ensure effective ability and claim management.
- Effectively manage the entirety of the WCB claim until the employee has been cleared for regular work duties and the claim has been inactivated or any other closure decisions applied by the WCB. The OHS Consultant will also manage and support any appeals as required.
- Coordinate with the Talent Coordinator to ensure the employee's timecards are entered appropriately.
- Provide the employee with [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) information.

### Talent Coordinator

- Track and process the WCB leave to ensure payroll and benefit related processes are completed.

### Ability Management Specialist

- Support ability management processes as requested by the OHS Consultant to offer additional guidance or recommendations.

## **NON-OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS OR INJURY ABSENCES**

### **Reporting of an Absence for Non-occupational Illness or Injury**

- Employees who are unable to report to work because of a non-work related illness or injury must notify their People Leader as soon as possible. This includes reporting about the duration of their inability to report to work.
- Employees with frequent patterns of illness may be required to provide a medical certificate or consult with the Ability Management Specialist.
- Employees in an eligible permanent or term position will be allowed time off with pay to attend medical appointments in accordance with either the

applicable Terms and Conditions of Employment or 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. If a medical certificate is required, the employee will be notified in advance of the medical appointment.

### **For Employees in an eligible Permanent or 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 & Labour 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 and the Ability Management Specialist.
- An employee who does not have access to STI benefits may request a leave without pay due to a non-occupational illness or injury.
- STI benefits are subject to approval. Employees seeking STI benefits must contact the Ability Management Specialist regarding any such requests. The Ability Management Specialist may request medical information, such as a medical certificate, Physician Assessment Form or Supplementary Medical Report.
- The Ability Management Specialist will ensure that all medical information gathered remains confidential.
- The employee shall provide the Ability Management Specialist a current personal email address or contact information they can be reached at while on leave.
- The employee is expected to remain in contact with the Ability Management Specialist during their absence.

- In certain circumstances, depending on the information provided by the employee to the Ability Management Specialist, an Independent Medical Evaluation (IME) may be required.
- Additionally, if an employee fails to provide medical information sought by the College in the timeframe required, then the employee may be placed on leave without pay until sufficient medical information is supplied.

### **Procedure for Long Term Illness Leave**

- Where an eligible employee is absent thirty (30) days or more due to illness or injury, on or about the 30<sup>th</sup> day, the Ability Management Specialist will provide the employee the application forms for Long Term Disability (LTD) benefits. The application forms will be sent 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.
- The Ability Management Specialist will work with applicable parties 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 eighty (80) consecutive work days of STI having been exhausted. The insurance provider will advise the employee in writing of the status of their claim.
  - An eligible 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 may seek to remain off work by requesting a leave without pay

### **Benefits While on Leave**

- Eligible employees will continue to participate in the College benefits plan and pension plan while on illness or injury leave.
- Eligible employees who qualify for STI will be paid STI benefits directly by the College, and all normal deductions will continue.
- An eligible employee will continue to earn vacation leave for the first forty-four (44) consecutive work days of STI, or during an authorized leave



without pay, an eligible employee will earn vacation leave for the first twenty-two (22) consecutive work days.

- 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 day 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.
- Where an employee is on an approved unpaid leave of absence for health reasons, premium contributions shall be applicable as per the applicable Terms and Conditions of Employment or Collective Agreement.

### **Returning to Work after an Illness or Injury**

- Before returning from illness or injury leave, employees may be required to provide satisfactory medical evidence to the Ability Management Specialist that they are fit to return to work.
- Employees are required to check in with their People Leader daily for the first ten (10) work days. Employees may also be asked to do further check ins with their People Leader.
- Workplace accommodations, including with respect to both temporary and permanent accommodations, may be formalized as part of a written Workplace Accommodation Plan, which will be signed by the employee to whom it applies.
- In certain circumstances, the College may require a return to work meeting with the employee, their People Leader, the Ability Management Specialist and union representative (at the employee's request) when applicable.
- An employee who does not return to work on the agreed upon date, who does not have prior authorization, and who does not report to their People

Leader or the Ability Management Specialist, after three (3) consecutive workdays may be considered to have abandoned their position and have resigned.

### **Responsibilities**

The foregoing is a general, non-exhaustive list of certain key expectations for stakeholders under this Procedure.

#### Employee

- Advise their People Leader of the absence and expected return to work date as soon as possible.
- After three (3) consecutive work days of absence, the employee must connect with the Ability Management Specialist regarding their medical status and the medical documentation that may be required to support the absence from work.
- An employee on a leave must be available to respond to phone calls or emails from the College or the insurance provider.
- Actively participate in the process, including working with the Ability Management Specialist, providing documentation when required, and engaging in return to work planning.
- Upon a return from leave, employees must complete daily check-ins with their People Leader as outlined under this Procedure.
- Keep the Ability Management Specialist informed of their status as required under this Procedure.
- Consider the option to consult with their union representative, if applicable, throughout the process.

#### People Leader

- Ensure employees are aware of procedures for calling in sick or reporting an absence.
- Accountable for ensuring all absences are reported and approved.
- Gather necessary details of the leave through effective communication with their employee when the leave is reported.

- Provide a supportive role to discuss the reason for leave, duration of the leave, work task distribution, and possible work restrictions if required.
- Report and provide information to the Ability Management Specialist.
- Ensure information is kept secure and confidential between the People Leader, employee, and People & Talent Operations.
- Following an employee's return from leave, connect with employees daily as required under this Procedure.

#### Ability Management Specialist

- Provide consultation and advice to the People Leader and employee on the leaves and medical accommodation process.
- Provide consultation on requirements of medical documentation, and return to work plans.
- Provide information and support when an employee is medically cleared to return to work.
- Liaison between the employee on leave and their People Leader, ensuring appropriate communication is maintained.
- Notify Talent Coordinator regarding any status changes to ensure pay and benefits are administered appropriately, all while maintaining confidentiality.

#### Talent Coordinator

- Track and process leaves in the HRIS system including STI and LTD to ensure payroll and benefit related processes are completed.
- Assist with the completion of the Employer Information in the LTD Plan Sponsor Statement.

#### 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.

## Definitions

**Casual Illness:** 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.

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

**People Leader:** an employee whose job function requires them to organize, direct and control the work of others. People Leaders 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.

**Short Term Illness (STI):** 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.

## Related information

### NorQuest College

- [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](#)
- [Terms and Conditions of Employment for Out of Scope Employees](#)

### External

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

- [Worker Report of Injury or Occupation Disease](#)

## Next review date

April 2029

## Revision history

Date	Version Number	Action
April 2014	V1	New
November 2014	V2	Update for change in procedure owner and document links
September 2015	V3	Update for document links and next review date
November 2016	V4 (Published as V3)	Update to include online reporting tool, update for document links and general review of terms
October 2018	V5 (Published as V3)	Change of 15 days to 7 days and removal of the word voluntary regarding the ERAP
August 2019	V6 (Published as V3-C)	Compliance Office template & reorganization update
January 2020	V7 (Published as V4)	Update to include NOVAtime time and labour online reporting tool, re-structuring of procedure and general review
December 2021	V8 (Published as V5)	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.
January 2024	V9	Information, Risk & Compliance template update.
April 2025	V10	Amended the WCB section and include new internal Ability Management program