

Short Term Disability / Long Term Disability / Return to Work / Accommodations  
Q and A - Academic

**SHORT TERM DISABILITY**

**What are the differences from being on Short Term Disability (STD) and being on Long Term Disability (LTD)?**

Both are part of the College's sick leave plan.

Short Term Disability (STD) /Sick Pay – is paid by the College and adjudicated by Wellpoint. You may not be totally disabled.

Long Term Disability (LTD) – follows STD and is an insurance benefit paid and adjudicated by Sun Life in which you must be totally disabled. It is possible to collect LTD until age 65.

**Do I have STD/sick leave benefits if I am a Partial-Load employee?**

Yes, you earn sick leave hours based on the length of your contract and weekly contact hours according to Article 26.08 of the Collective Agreement. These hours can be used for sick leave during the period of your current contract.

**Who do I contact when I am ill and can't attend class?**

You should update the class cancellation on eConestoga as soon as reasonably possible. Faculty may also wish to contact their Chair and Manager, Recruitment & Benefits to ensure they are aware of the expected return to work date.

**When do I need a medical/doctor note?**

5 consecutive working days or more of absence.

**What if I am absent more than 10 working days?**

You will be referred to Wellpoint Health Ltd.

**What is Wellpoint Health Ltd.?**

Wellpoint Health Ltd. is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party medical consultant which collects medical information on behalf of the College in order to advise on sick pay/short term disability benefits, make referrals, provide access to specialists and advise on appropriate accommodations and return to work plans. Employees of Wellpoint are bound by confidentiality and will not share your medical information with the College or any other party.

**Do I have to talk to the Wellpoint Health Ltd representative when I am ill?**

Yes. Wellpoint will make a call to you to confirm the details of your absence. They may also call or email you for clarification of medical information or to see how you are progressing. If you are not well enough to speak with them at the time they call, you should schedule an appointment time to talk.

**What is the qualification of the person at Wellpoint Health Ltd who is calling me?**

The individual is a Disability Case Manager – a specialist in assessing medical information and helping employees navigate the complexities of the health care system. The specialist has access to a team of medical professionals to support you while you are on sick leave and during the return to work period.

**Where do I send the Wellpoint Health Ltd paperwork if I cannot scan it from home?**

You can fax it to 1-844-300-3179 or mail it to Wellpoint Health Ltd., 201 – 1315 Bishop St. N., Cambridge ON N1R 6Z2.

**Does Wellpoint Health Ltd share the completed paperwork with the College?**

No, only confirmation of eligibility for ongoing sick pay/short term disability benefits and information related to restrictions and fitness for work are shared.

**Where is the paperwork stored?**

At Wellpoint Health Ltd in a secure location.

**When I sign consent is it just for my current condition but not any chronic or previous condition(s)?**

It is to secure information directly related to your current absence not to delve into past medical conditions; however, in some cases, previous conditions may be relevant to the determination of disability for the period of the current absence.

**I have scheduled surgery, may I submit the Wellpoint paperwork in advance of the surgery date?**

Paperwork should be submitted prior to the surgery or within 2 weeks of the surgery date. This would allow the physician to comment on the results of the surgery and the estimated return to work date. Additional medical documentation may be required prior to return to work.

**Who gets the medical note?**

For absences of more than 5 working days and up to 10 working days, the medical note, marked confidential, should be submitted to Human Resources, Manager, Recruitment & Benefits. You are not required to submit a medical note to your Chair.

**How do I deliver a medical note if I am too ill to travel to the College?**

Original is preferred – it can be scanned to Manager, Recruitment & Benefits or mailed/delivered by your family/designate.

**Do I need to tell my Chair my diagnosis?**

No one at the College needs to know your diagnosis or medications.

**Do I need to check my email when I am ill?**

You are not required to check your email when you are on sick leave. If you are not able to put an out-of-office message on your email, the College will do so on your behalf. For employees returning to work after an extended leave, the College will use your College email address to help you plan your return to work.

**Do I continue to grade assignments when I am ill?**

No, this is not required if you are on sick leave.

**Do I need to arrange to have my classes covered when I am ill?**

No, your Chair is responsible for making arrangements to cover your classes.

**How often should I check in with my Chair, while I am ill?**

This is not required if you are sick. You should inform your Chair when you are ready to return to work.

**Do I make up missed classes, when I am ill?**

You are not required to make up classes; however, depending on how long you are absent, the Chair will need to decide how the course objectives will be met.

**If I have a planned vacation and become ill before the vacation may I reverse the one week of vacation to one week of sick days?**

If you become ill before a 1-2 week vacation, you can reverse the days for sick days. You may be required to provide supporting medical documentation. Once you have started your vacation, you cannot change the time to sick days.

**If I am on approved STD and it is my assigned vacation period, why must I use vacation when I am still ill?**

Academics earn salary over 10 months, but the College pays it over 12 months. The vacation period is paid from salary deferred from the academic year in order to compensate for the two-month vacation period. For this reason, vacation is booked according to the previous year's vacation schedule for all faculty on sick leave. Please refer to the Vacation Guidelines [http://myconestoga.ca/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=6a32b938-807f-4f06-969e-724d3e6f2b2e&groupId=380341](http://myconestoga.ca/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=6a32b938-807f-4f06-969e-724d3e6f2b2e&groupId=380341) .

**If I am still ill at the end of my vacation period, do I go back on STD?**

Yes

**If Wellpoint Health Ltd does not approve my STD, what are my options?**

You may appeal the decision by providing new or additional medical documentation within 31 days. When claims are denied, it is often due to insufficient medical information provided by the treating physician. During the appeal process, you may be asked to attend an appointment with the Wellpoint physician or a specialist in a related field.

**What happens if I do not have enough sick days in my bank, before I am eligible for LTD?**

Days in your bank are paid at 100% salary and remaining days are paid at 75% salary until you satisfy the elimination period for LTD which is 130 sick days.

**LONG TERM DISABILITY (LTD)**

**Once I reach 130 days of illness, must I go on LTD even if I still have sick days in my bank?**

You will have the option to continue using sick leave credits remaining in your bank. You will be provided with a chart outlining the pros and cons of using your sick leave credits. See Appendix A for the comparison.

**What happens if I have a chronic condition and routinely use all my sick days and sometimes more, every year of my employment?**

Should this be the case, you should review the situation with the Manager, Recruitment & Benefits who will advise you of your options.

**When I go on LTD, what happens to my position at the college?**

During the first 24 months of LTD, your position at the College will be held for you.

**RETURN TO WORK**

**When I am ready to return to work what do I need and who do I contact?**

Wellpoint Health Ltd should be provided with updated medical information to support your return to work including information regarding any gradual return to work plan and/or accommodations. If you have a projected return to work date, you can begin the process by contacting Manager, Recruitment & Benefits.

**What is a “Return to Work” meeting?**

A return to work meeting is a meeting where your return to work plan is discussed including – establishing the gradual return to work schedule (if required), any restrictions or limitations, accommodations required, workload, workplace changes during your absence and any matters of concern for either party are discussed.

**Who attends a “Return to Work” meeting?**

The employee, the Chair, the Manager, Recruitment & Benefits, a union representative, and an accommodation specialist (if required).

**When is a “Return to Work” meeting scheduled?**

Although it will vary, the meeting is scheduled at the earliest opportunity once you are cleared to return to work. The objective is to bring you back to work as soon as possible.

**Will my Chair have a SWF discussion with me while I am on STD?**

No. While you are on STD, your Chair will not be discussing workload. This discussion will likely take place at the return to work meeting.

**If I return to work after my assigned vacation, when will I get a SWF?**

You will receive your SWF at the return to work meeting or immediately following.

**If I am ill a week before a new semester, how will I be able to prepare and be ready for the first day of classes?**

It will depend on the severity and length of your illness. If you are unable to prepare, this should be discussed with your Chair or the Manager, Recruitment & Benefits at the earliest opportunity.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

**Do I need a medical note for an accommodation?**

Supporting medical documentation is required and will be reviewed by Wellpoint Health Ltd. Contact the Manager, Recruitment & Benefits to discuss your accommodation needs.

**If I need an accommodation, should I discuss this with my Chair?**

You are not required to discuss it with your Chair.

**Are medical notes for accommodations time limited? How often do I need a medical note for a chronic condition that will not change, during my employment?** It depends on the supporting medical information. Most accommodations are subject to a review each year. Even a permanent condition may change over time so annual reviews will be conducted to ensure the accommodations continue to be appropriate.