



Policy:	O-5.9
Approved By:	College Executive Team
Approval Date:	April 23, 2003
Amendment Date:	
Policy Holder:	Exec. Dir. Human Resources

UNPAID LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Purpose / Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to establish College-wide principles and practices for unpaid leaves of absence.

Scope / Limits

1. This policy applies to all College employees who:
 - a) have passed initial probation; and
 - b) have served at least 24 months in a part-time or full-time continuing appointment.
 - c) are requesting partial or full leave of absences without pay.
2. This policy will not interfere with the rights and obligations specified in current Collective Agreements or Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Principles

1. An unpaid leave of absence is intended to: promote and support employee career growth and development opportunities; to facilitate the resolution of personal or family health issues; or to engage in activities of a personal nature. An unpaid leave of absence is not normally granted to facilitate secondary employment with an outside employer unless the period of external employment will benefit the College.
2. The College recognizes that employees may request leaves from work for a variety of personal or professional reasons.
3. The College may provide an unpaid leave in accordance with the guidelines contained in collective agreement language provided there is: no significant operational and/or financial impact on the employee's department or school; no significant impact on service delivery to students; and it fits within the operational cycle of the employee's position. An unpaid leave of absence may also be approved where there are compelling compassionate grounds to do so.
4. Each unpaid leave of absence request will be evaluated on its own merits including its potential benefit to the College, the individual, and/or society.
5. College management retains the discretion to grant or refuse an unpaid leave of absence request. This discretion will not be exercised in an unreasonable, discriminatory, or arbitrary manner.
6. Normally, an unpaid leave of absence request is required to be submitted far enough in advance to ensure ongoing maintenance of operational requirements.

7. The maximum allowable length of an unpaid leave of absence will be governed by the limits contained in the applicable collective agreements, or terms and conditions of employment. Where no such limits exist, the maximum allowable length of an unpaid leave of absence is normally twelve months; however, extensions may be granted in certain cases with the approval of the Executive Director of Human Resources.
8. An unpaid leave of absence request requires the approval of the appropriate authority. (See the Authorities Grid that follows.)
9. An unpaid leave request may be granted only if the employee has a bona fide intention to return to the College following the leave.
10. Normally, an employee returning from a leave is required to serve a period of not less than 24 months before requesting an additional unpaid leave of absence.
11. In the absence of legitimate reasons, an employee who fails to return to work within **ten (10) working days** of the leave's expiry date shall be considered to have abandoned their position.
12. An employee seeking approval to amend his/her established return to work date is required to submit a letter of request to his/her Dean/Director. (See guidelines below.) Amendments will only be approved in cases where there is no impact on service delivery to students or disruption to the established teaching schedule.

A. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR AN UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. Unpaid leaves of absence requests for periods of **(10)** consecutive working days or less will continue to be processed in accordance with current departmental / school practices.
2. Employees applying for an unpaid leave of absence **that exceed ten (10)** consecutive working days **must complete** the *O-5.9.1 Unpaid Leave of Absence Request Form* available from Human Resources or online (see link below).
3. Authority Grid for Approval of Unpaid Leaves of Absence:

College Group	Length of Requested Leave	Recommending Authority	Final Approval Authority
CCFA	Up to 52 weeks	Department Chair/ Supervisor	Dean / Director* or designate
	Extensions beyond 52 weeks	Dean / Director	Executive Director, Human Resources
BCGEU	Up to 52 weeks	Department Chair	Dean / Director or designate
	Extensions beyond 52 weeks	Dean / Director	Executive Director, Human Resources
CUPE	Up to 52 weeks	Immediate Supervisor	Dean / Director or designate
	Extensions beyond 52 weeks	Dean / Director	Executive Director, Human Resources
EXEMPT STAFF	Up to 52 weeks	Immediate Supervisor	VP Responsible - consult with Exec Director of Human Resources
	Extensions beyond 52 weeks	Immediate Supervisor	Executive Director, Human Resources

* Leaves which are deemed to be of benefit to the college under 13.01 of the CCFA Collective Agreement require the approval of the Vice President Education.

4. Once signed by the Dean / Director (or designate) responsible, a copy of the [O-5.9.1 Unpaid Leave of Absence Request Form](#) must be provided to the Dean's/Director's Administrative Support staff for forwarding to the appropriate Human Resources Consultant who will send a leave approval letter. This letter will include information regarding the impact on employee benefits resulting from the leave and a *Benefits Advice Form* to identify which benefits the employee will maintain while on leave. A copy of the signed approval form must also be provided to the appropriate Vice President for their information.
5. The employee taking leave is required to sign and return the *Benefits Advice Form* along with their selected method of payment (cheques, VISA/Mastercard No.) to the Human Resources office at Lansdowne Campus within **five (5) working days** of receipt.
6. Employees returning from an unpaid leave of absence are required to provide a notification of intent to return to work at least **four (4) weeks** before the conclusion of the leave.

7. A request to extend a period of unpaid leave of absence shall be made through the Dean/Director (or designate) responsible, at least **eight (8) weeks** prior to the conclusion of the leave period.
8. In instances where there is a disagreement between an employee and their supervisor regarding application of this policy, the matter shall be presented to the Executive Director of Human Resources and the Dean/Director (or designate) responsible for a final determination.

B. ADMINISTRATION OF BENEFITS DURING UNPAID LEAVES OF ABSENCE

1. Employees approved for a 100% unpaid leave of absence that exceed ten (10) consecutive working days are required to make provisions for benefit maintenance according to the table below and within **five (5) working days** of receiving approval for leave. Therefore, employees are strongly encouraged to discuss benefit coverage with their HR Consultant before declining/dropping any coverage while on leave.
2. Employees granted unpaid leaves of absence of less than 100% are required to consult with their HR Consultant to determine appropriate benefit coverage within **five (5) working days** of receiving approval for leaves.
3. Employees do not receive statutory pay for holidays occurring within the leave of absence period.
4. Employees will not accumulate vacation or sick leave during the unpaid leave of absence period.
5. Seniority accrual while on unpaid leave of absence will be managed in accordance with the relevant section(s) of the appropriate Collective Agreement(s).

	Extended Health	Dental	MSP	PSP / EFAP	Group Life	AD&D	Short Term Disability	Long Term Disability	
BCGEU	1) Must maintain coverage	1) Must maintain coverage	1) Must maintain coverage	Must maintain while on leave	Must maintain while on leave	Must maintain while on leave	N/A	Must maintain while on leave	
CCFA	OR	OR	OR			Must maintain while on leave	N/A		Must maintain while on leave
CUPE	2) May opt out with proof of alternate coverage	2) May opt out with proof of alternate coverage	2) May opt out with proof of alternate coverage						
ADMIN	2) May opt out with proof of alternate coverage	2) May opt out with proof of alternate coverage	2) May opt out with proof of alternate coverage						

C. COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT REFERENCES

CCFA Local Agreement Article 13.01
BCGEU / CCFA Common Agreement Article 7.3, 7.5
BCGEU Collective Agreement Article 10.4
CUPE Collective Agreement Articles 13.03(c), 21.08, 22.07

D. LINK TO RELATED FORM

[O-5.9.1 Unpaid Leave of Absence Request Form](#)