



Ask Your Union – Benefits

October 2014

How many sick days have I earned?

If you work ½-time or more, you earn 1.5 days per month (pro rata – eg. if you work ½-time, then you earn 1.5 half-time days per month). You can log into mylangara (using your employee number) and look up your contract type, number of sick days accumulated, vacation days, etc.

I worked ½-time last year on a reg-in-temp contract; does that mean I get 22 days of vacation instead of 44?

No, you will get 44 days at ½-time pay. This means you will be employed every day and so have your benefits covered for all those days.

I'm on a term contract. When can I take vacation?

Technically you are being paid out for your vacation. You can, however, speak with your department chair about whether you can spend some of your non-teaching duty days off-campus between semesters.

To what benefits am I entitled?

Your level of benefits coverage depends on contract type (Term vs Regular) and fraction of workload (less than ½-time, or ½-time-or-more) and time worked.

Be sure to carefully read through the documentation that you receive with your first contract, particularly in terms of Pension and Medical and Dental Coverage. Consider carefully before you decide to opt out of a plan, particularly in terms of if and when you can opt back in. Caution – at first hire, you'll receive a stack of forms to sign. Some are forms to sign up, and others are waivers to say you do not want to sign up. Be careful! The Human Resources Consultants are reliable sources of information if you have questions about benefits.

- **Pension Plan (Article 8.5)**

If you work at least ½-time or if you earn more than 50% of pensionable earnings, then you must join the Pension Plan (and the College will so inform you). If you opt in, then you cannot later opt out, even if your income level drops. If you decide to opt out (because, for example, you are a ¼-time employee), then you must sign a waiver, and you cannot later try to “buy back” that service from which you opted out. If you opt out, and then in some subsequent year you decide that you want to get into the program, then it is up to you to approach the College – they assume your waiver is in force until such time as you direct them otherwise, or until you reach either the ½-time or 50% conditions. We strongly recommend that you not opt out until you have consulted with your financial advisor. Remember that your Pension Plan contributions are matched by the employer; if you at some point have to buy back pensionable service then you'll have to pay both your share and the employer's share. The Pension Plan is a fully vested plan; it is not statutorily indexed. See www.pensionsbc.ca for additional information.

- **Medical and Extended Health Insurance (Article 8.6)**

All Regular (including REGULAR, REG-IN-TEMP and CONTINUING) faculty, regardless of workload, have their basic and extended health benefit premiums paid by the college. Term faculty have these premiums paid if they work at least ½-time. Otherwise, Term faculty can opt to purchase the coverage. For Extended Health claims, submit receipts to Pacific Blue Cross (you can submit online through the PBC website, or use the forms above the photocopier in the

mailroom, or available on the college intranet – after logging in to mylangara, select the Employees tab, then College Intranet/All College Forms).

- **Group Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance (Article 8.7)**
Premiums are paid by the college for all Regular faculty working at least ½-time, and for all Term faculty working at least ½-time who have worked at the college for at least one year.
- **Disability Insurance (Article 8.8)**
All Regular faculty, and Term faculty employed at least ½-time after one year of service, have their Short Term Disability (STD) premiums paid by the College, and pay their own Long Term Disability (LTD) premiums.

After your sick leave runs out, you can apply for Short Term Disability and, after that runs out (one year) then Long Term Disability. These programs are run by an insurance company and you will need to apply to that company, including submitting letters and documentation from appropriate medical professionals ... caution: when dealing with the insurance company, usually your family doctor is not satisfactory as the primary medical professional; be prepared to visit other medical “experts”. Langara Human Resources staff will advise you when it is time to apply for Disability, and may assist you a bit with the paperwork. Be prepared for the possibility that an illness that qualified you for sick leave will not qualify you for Disability.

STD coverage starts when your sick leave runs out or after 15 days, whichever occurs last. So if you only have (say) 4 sick days, then you’ll have a gap of 11 days before STD can start (assuming you meet the requirements). The College will advance you up to 10 sick days to help cover this gap.

- **Dental Plan (Article 8.14)**
Premiums are paid by the college for all Regular faculty employed at least ½-time, and for Term faculty employed at least ½-time after one year of service. Caution: If you are on Regular contract and you opt out, then you may not subsequently opt in. There is really no reason to opt out after you have been regularized at ½-time or more.
- **Family Illness Leave (Article 9.3)**
Up to five days per year, with pay. Complete a Leave form (available on the College intranet).
- **Bereavement Leave (Article 9.5)**
Up to five days with pay. Complete a Leave form (available on the College intranet).
- **Pregnancy Leave and Parental Leave (See Article 9.4 and Appendix 1)**
The birth mother gets 6 weeks at full time pay, then there is 55% top-up to Employment Insurance benefits for the birth mother, birth father, or other parent. Faculty on temporary contracts should talk with HR about their eligibility for leave.
- **Compassionate Care Leave (Article 9.3)**
Leave without pay to care for a gravely ill family member.
NOTE: “Leave” means “Leave of Absence”, and you must have a contract from which to take leave. Term and Reg-In-Temp faculty have end-dates to their contracts and a Leave typically ends with the contract end. Check with HR about your leave dates.