

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: POLICY ON PAID TIME OFF

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2015

1. WHY HAS NORTHEASTERN UPDATED THE POLICY ON PAID TIME OFF?

The enhancements to the [Policy on Paid Time Off](#) are intended to meet – and in some instances exceed – the requirements of the [Massachusetts Earned Sick Leave Law](#) which becomes effective on July 1, 2015.

2. WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE POLICY ON PAID TIME OFF?

- For eligible employees, the policy provides that faculty and staff may use up to 40 hours per year of earned time for sick family members.
- For part-time and temporary employees, sick time will accrue at a rate of one hour of sick time per 30 hours worked with a maximum of 40 hours per year.
- Most student employees will not be eligible to accrue sick time. However, non-work study co-op students will be eligible (approximately 100 students). Student employees are not eligible to accrue sick time if they are (a) participating in a federal work study program or substantially similar financial aid or scholarship program; (b) providing support services to residents of a resident hall in exchange for a waiver or reduction in room, board, tuition or other education-related expenses; or (c) exempt from FICA.
- Northeastern faculty and staff who work outside of Massachusetts will be provided with the same sick time benefits unless another state law prevails.
- Employees who are eligible for Personal Time will no longer need to use Personal Time for a sick family member. This frees up Personal Time to be used for other needs such as parent teacher conferences and other personal appointments.

3. WHAT IS SICK TIME?

Sick time provides paid time for eligible employees who are unable to work due to personal illness, illness of an immediate family member, and other circumstances outlined below.

4. HOW CAN SICK TIME BE USED?

As of July 1, 2015 eligible employees of the university can utilize up to 40 hours of accrued or allotted sick time annually to:

- Care for a physical or mental illness, injury or medical condition that requires home care, professional medical diagnosis or care, or preventative medical care affecting the employee or the employee's child, spouse, parent, or parent of a spouse;

- Attend routine medical appointments of the employee or the employee’s child, spouse, parent, or parent of a spouse;
- Travel to and from an appointment, a pharmacy, or other location related to the purpose for which sick time was taken; or
- Address the psychological, physical, or legal effects of domestic violence on the employee or the employee’s dependent child.

5. WHICH EMPLOYEES CAN RECEIVE PAID SICK TIME?

The following categories of employees are eligible to receive paid sick time:

- Full-time and benefits-eligible employees – faculty and staff
- Part-time faculty and staff
- Temporary employees
- Student employees – certain categories only. See below.

6. WHICH CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE TO EARNED SICK TIME?

Most student employees will not be eligible to accrue sick time. However, non-work-study co-op students will be eligible to accrue one hour of sick time per 30 hours worked with a maximum of 40 hours per year. Student employees are not eligible for sick time if they are (a) participating in a Federal Work-Study Program or substantially similar financial aid or scholarship program; (b) providing support services to residents of a resident hall in exchange for a waiver or reduction in room, board, tuition or other education-related expenses; or (c) exempt from FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) tax.

7. DO THE CHANGES IN THE POLICY ON PAID TIME OFF AND SICK TIME APPLY TO EMPLOYEES WHO WORK OUTSIDE OF MASSACHUSETTS?

Northeastern faculty and staff who work outside of Massachusetts will be provided with the same sick benefits unless another state law prevails.

For employees who work in Seattle, the [Seattle Paid Sick and Safe Time](#) law applies. For employees who work in California, the [Healthy Workplaces/Healthy Families Act of 2014 Paid Sick Leave](#) law applies.

8. HOW MUCH SICK TIME DO I ACCRUE?

No changes have been made to the accrual or allotment of sick time for faculty and staff that already had this benefit.

Eligible employees accrue or are allotted sick time. The amount of sick time varies based on position and, in some instances by length of service. Please visit HRM's website for a complete overview of [Paid Time Off](#).

9. WHEN MAY I USE SICK TIME?

You may use sick time if the following is true:

- You are eligible for sick time benefits,
- You use the time for permitted purposes, and
- You have a balance of sick time.

10. IF I AM A NEW EMPLOYEE, WHEN CAN I START USING SICK TIME?

New employees can begin using sick time once one hour of sick time has been accrued.

11. HOW IS SICK TIME CALCULATED FOR PART-TIME FACULTY?

- Part-time faculty are provided a lump sum of 40 hours of earned sick time each fiscal year; for 2015, part-time faculty received the 40 hours on July 1, 2015 when the law became effective.
- Part-time faculty hired during the course of the year will also receive a lump sum of 40 hours for use during the balance of the year.
- When part-time faculty take earned sick time it will be calculated as one (1) hour for each "classroom hour" worked.
- The maximum amount of earned sick time that can be taken in a fiscal year is 40 hours.
- Part-time faculty may have up to 40 hours of earned sick time in the bank in a fiscal year.
- Part-time faculty shall not be required to make up time off from work as a condition for using the earned sick time.
- Department chairs, managers and/or supervisors do not need to track sick time accruals for part-time faculty.

12. IS THERE A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SICK TIME I MAY USE AT A TIME?

Northeastern allows you to use sick time in increments first of one full hour and then in increments of 15 minutes.

13. WHAT NOTIFICATION DO I NEED TO PROVIDE TO USE SICK TIME?

Employees must make a good-faith effort to notify their manager in advance if the need for the use of sick time is foreseeable. If an employee anticipates a multi-day absence from work, employees must provide notification of the expected duration of the absence, or, if unknown, must provide notification on a daily basis, unless the circumstances make such notice

unreasonable. If the use of sick time is not foreseeable, sick time must be reported as soon as practicable.

14. DO I NEED TO PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT MY ABSENCE?

Employees who are eligible for and use sick time may be required to submit documentation to the HRM/Benefits Department, that has been signed by a health care provider, certifying that the use of sick time was for an authorized purpose when the absence:

- exceeds twenty-four (24) consecutively scheduled work hours or three (3) consecutively scheduled work days;
- occurs within two (2) weeks prior to an employee's final scheduled day of work before termination of employment, except in the case of temporary employees; or
- occurs after four (4) unforeseeable and undocumented absences within a three (3) month period.

15. CAN I GO INTO ARREARS ON SICK TIME?

The university does not permit employees to have a negative sick time balance. If all sick time has been utilized, personal or vacation time must be used if this time is available.

16. IS AN EMPLOYEE REQUIRED TO FIND A REPLACEMENT IF THEY ARE OUT SICK?

No. Northeastern does not require an employee to find a replacement.

17. WILL SICK TIME CARRY OVER FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT?

Part-time, temporary, and eligible student employees can carry over up to 40 hours of accrued unused sick time to the next fiscal year, but may not use more than 40 hours in a fiscal year.

Faculty and Professional/Administrative employees who receive a sick time allotment do not carry over sick time to the next year as they receive a new allotment of sick time at the start of the fiscal year, July 1.

Office Support, Technical, Crafts, and Service employees who accrue one day a month carry over all their days up to 150 sick days. However, they may not use more than 40 hours in a fiscal year for family sick time.

18. WHAT HAPPENS TO MY SICK TIME IF I LEAVE THE UNIVERSITY?

Sick time is not paid out when you leave the university.

19. WHAT IF I HAVE A BREAK IN SERVICE?

An employee retains the right to use accrued sick time after a break in service, whether voluntary or not, for up to one year from the last date of work if the employee returns to work.

- Breaks in service up to four months: employees maintain the right to use any unused sick time accrued before the break in service.
- Breaks in service between four and twelve months: employees maintains right to use sick time accrued before the break in service if the employee’s sick time balance equals or exceeds 10 hours.

20. HOW CAN PERSONAL TIME BE USED?

Eligible employees may use up to three days of earned paid sick time as personal days for personal matters including, but not limited to, appointments, parent-teacher conferences, and religious observances. This benefit allows the use of up to three days of accrued or allotted sick time annually from the start of the fiscal year, July 1. This time must be pre-arranged with the manager.

21. ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHANGES TO THE POLICY ON PAID TIME OFF OTHER THAN SICK TIME AND PERSONAL TIME?

No. The changes to the policy include sick time and personal time only.

22. WHEN DO THE CHANGES IN THE PAID TIME OFF POLICY BECOME EFFECTIVE?

The changes are effective July 1, 2015.