

# Faculty Guide to Filing a Medical Leave of Absence with MetLife

Northwestern's Faculty Medical Leave policy (excerpted from the Faculty Handbook, pgs. 46-47):

*"Faculty members with benefits-eligible, half-time or greater appointments who are unable to work as a result of a medically certified disability [see notes] become eligible for paid sick leave. Such faculty members may receive up to six consecutive months (including summer) at budgeted salary. Faculty members*

- .1 Speak with your physician to determine how much time you
2. Contact MetLife at 1-800-396-8876 or <https://mybenefits.m>

\_\_\_\_\_ to initiate the leave process. More information on MetLife's role and process is provided below.

3. Inform your department chair or supervisor as soon as possible once you know you need a medical leave. You are only required to tell them the dates during which you will be on leave. You are not required to disclose any medical information.

## MetLife's role:

Northwestern's medical leave program operates within the legal framework defined by state and federal regulations about such benefits. The University is required to inform you about your eligibility for state and federal medical benefits under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

important for two reasons. First, MetLife assists by serving as a secure third party, gathering information about your eligibility for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) without your having to

Second, the University is required to report all FMLA usage to the federal government, and MetLife assists in tracking this. Please note that any leave of absence time taken for parental reasons counts as usage of your available FMLA leave, but there will be no interruption in your pay or benefits, since the University's faculty family leaves are always paid leaves.

MetLife will need to contact your physician as part of this process, so please be sure to have the physician's name, phone, and fax number handy before contacting MetLife. MetLife can be reached at [1-800-396-8876](tel:1-800-396-8876) or online at <https://mybenefits.metlife.com>.

## Speaking with MetLife

*Some questions MetLife may ask you, and what they mean:*

Question:	What it means:	Guidance on your response:
"What is the first day of work you missed?"	"What is your first day of leave?"	It is understood that faculty schedules vary, and you may not be in your office, lab, or classroom every day. For the purposes of this question, provide the first day that you will formally be on leave, even if you were not scheduled to be on campus that day.
"What was your last day worked"	"What was the last day before your leave began?" or, if your leave has not yet begun, "What is the day before your leave is scheduled to begin?"	It is understood that faculty schedules vary, and you may not be in your office, lab, or classroom every day. It is recommended that you tell MetLife the last day before your leave of absence is to begin, regardless of whether you were scheduled to be on campus that day.
"Do you know your HR contact's name and phone number?"	If we need to confirm any information with Northwestern, whom should we call?	You can provide the contact information for the faculty affairs representative in your school, or you can refer to Alex Rot, Assistant Provost of Faculty Operations in the Office of the Provost, 847/467-4127, <a href="mailto:alex.rot@northwestern.edu">alex.rot@northwestern.edu</a>

## What to expect after speaking to MetLife:

Following your conversation with MetLife, MetLife

After you speak with MetLife to request a medical leave, MetLife will issue you an eligibility letter documenting the amount of leave that you are likely eligible for. However, they may not issue a formal approval letter until your leave actually begins, as they may need to verify the actual leave start date with you once the leave has begun.

**It seems like there are a lot of different names for medical leave. Are these all the same thing?**

Faculty medical leave can also be called sick leave, extended sick time (EST), or short-term disability (STD). The term FMLA (which stands for the Family Medical Leave Act) is often mentioned in conversations about faculty medical leave, but does not mean the same thing as faculty medical leave. See next question for further information on FMLA.

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## For further questions:

if you have any questions regarding the amount of leave you are eligible for under Northwestern's policy, you can contact your school's dean's office or faculty affairs office, or the Office of the Provost (Alex Rot, Assistant Provost for Faculty Operations, 847-467-4127, [alex.rot@northwestern.edu](mailto:alex.rot@northwestern.edu)).