

# Faculty Employment/Contracts/Appointments

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## **Eligibility for State Health Benefits Program Coverage**

Health plan coverage is available to regular, full-time or part-time salaried faculty members.\* For the purpose of health plan eligibility, a full-time faculty member must work 30 or more hours per week. This would include limited appointments if the employer knows at the start of employment that the employee will work 30 or more hours per week, even if the employee is hired for a limited time period (e.g., one semester). Regardless of the length of the faculty member's contract, there is no waiting period for health plan coverage.

Health plan coverage for eligible faculty members will be effective the first of the month coinciding with or following the first day of employment if the enrollment is completed within the 30-day window. Eligibility for coverage may continue until the end of the month in which the employment period ends as defined by contract, the health plan coverage ends as defined by policy, or employment is otherwise terminated.

\*Some exceptions may apply to university employees working outside of the United States. Contact DHRM for additional information.

## **Coverage During Summer Months**

The start of coverage for faculty members often coincides with the academic year (starting August or September 1), runs for 12 months, and can include summer months when the faculty member may not be actively at work. However, if a faculty member terminates employment during the academic year, coverage will terminate at the end of the month in which the termination event occurs. Faculty members who retire at the end of the academic year and are eligible for and elect to enroll in the State Retiree Health Benefits Program may not maintain active employee coverage during any summer months after their retirement date, regardless of the provisions of his or her employment contract.

If eligibility for coverage during the summer months is otherwise available based on contract or policy, it is not contingent upon a contract for the next academic year.

## **Faculty Members on Leaves Without Pay (LWOP)**

If a faculty member is granted LWOP, the same health plan benefits and LWOP rules that apply to all classified employees will apply to faculty members for the purpose of determining eligibility for active employee coverage during the leave, including Extended Coverage and premium payment obligations (see *Leaves Without Pay/Returning from Leaves Without Pay*). However, if the faculty member waives coverage during a LWOP and exhausts the eligibility period for active coverage, he or she has lost eligibility for plan coverage until he or she

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returns to work. Even though leave periods may run concurrently with Extended Coverage/COBRA, COBRA eligibility will generally be lost when the coverage is waived.

### **Premium Responsibility During LWOP Extending Into Summer Months**

There is an impact on the cost of coverage for a faculty member whose leave extends into the summer months. An example follows:

The employee is a faculty member with a 12-month contract whose contractual coverage starts on September 1. In this example, the employee takes a personal leave beginning February 1. The academic year ends May 10. If the employee does not return to work prior to the first of the month in which the academic year ends, the leave continues into the summer months. This means that the employee remains ineligible for the employer contribution during the summer. If the six-month maximum coverage period in the active group during a personal leave without pay ends during the summer months (e.g., in this example, the six months of personal LWOP would expire in July), the employee is eligible for Extended Coverage for up to a total of 18 months (per the offer that should have been made at the start of the personal LWOP), including the personal leave time that has run concurrently with Extended Coverage. No additional coverage will be available if the employee is terminated without ever returning to work and enrolling in active employee health plan coverage. In this example, the Extended Coverage period would be exhausted on July 31 of the year following the year in which the personal leave of absence began, a total of 18 months based on reduction of hours. (Note that termination of employment after reduction of hours is not a separate Extended Coverage qualifying event.)

### **Collecting Premiums During the Summer Months**

Premiums for the summer months must be collected by payroll deduction or by personal check if an employee with premium liability does not receive pay during the summer months. Premiums paid by personal check are due the first day of the coverage month. If timely premium is not received, notify the employee in writing that there is a grace period of 30 days from the first of the month for which the premium was due.

If the faculty member fails to make payment for his/her share of the premium during the summer months, coverage must be terminated on the last day of the month for which premium payment in full has been received, and the BES record must be terminated accordingly.