

UNUM Leaves of Absence: Manager FAQs

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Overview

UVA partners with UNUM for the administration of leave and disability claims. As a manager or supervisor, having an employee off work due to injury, illness, or the care of a family member can be challenging. Please review the following information regarding the leave process as you work to support your employees.

UNUM Leaves

UNUM administers the following benefits for employees:

- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for all UVA employees
- Short-term disability for Medical Center team members and Academic Division employees who participate in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)
- Long-term disability for Medical Center team members and Academic Division employees who participate in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)
- Paid Parental Leave for Medical Center team members and University Staff

How should an employee request leave or disability benefits?

An employee should call UNUM's Leave Management Center at 866.269.0979 to initiate a leave request related to their own or a family member's serious illness, or file online at www.UNUM.com after completing a short registration process.

What if an employee is unable to contact UNUM?

If an employee is unable to make contact with UNUM but the supervisor becomes aware of the employee's health condition, the supervisor or HR may report the employee's leave request directly to UNUM at 866.269.0979.

Questions

Questions UNUM cannot assist with include:

- Questions related to paid time off (PTO)
- Workers' compensation
- Kronos/Workday entries
- Pay
- Job status questions

Please reach out to the UVA HR Solution Center at 434.243.3344 or askhr@virginia.edu for questions UNUM cannot assist with.

How can managers contact UNUM?

Managers can contact UNUM by calling 866.269.0979, replying to emails from UNUM, or reaching out to the UVA liaison via amcclientliaisons@UNUM.com. For additional assistance managers may reach out to the UVA HR Leave team via leave@virginia.edu.

You can contact UNUM for questions related to leave or disability claim status, clarification of a request sent by UNUM, or an expected deadline related to leave or disability.

My employee is out but the leave status is not updated in Workday. What should I do?

Please contact leave@virginia.edu so that we can confirm the reason for the missing entry. Please note the Intermittent FMLA is not entered into Workday as a leave status.

Communications from UNUM

UNUM reaches out to supervisors directly for various information related to an employee's leave of absence. Timely response will prevent further follow-up and allow UNUM to make a determination about an employee's leave allocation as soon as possible. If you're unsure of what is being requested, you may reply to the email to ask for clarification.

UNUM will also notify a supervisor of any leave or claim initiation, approvals, or extensions.

What requests can I expect to see from UNUM?

Requests to the department include:

- Verification of the last day worked before the start of the leave and first day missed.
- Verification of an employee's schedule prior to their leave start. This could include additional periods if the employee's schedule has recently changed. UNUM may ask for the employee's schedule on or before a particular date.
- Return to work verification to confirm what date an employee returned, if they returned on their next scheduled shift after their leave ended, and if they returned to a normal schedule.

I have a question about dates indicated on a status email from UNUM; what should I do?

You may reply to the email you received from the UNUM leave specialist or reach out to the UVA liaison.

I received a status email that shows the leave in a “Pending – Waiting 1st Absence” status. What does this mean?

An employee’s eligibility status under FMLA must be reviewed as of the first reported absence. This status would indicate either a future start date or that the employee has not yet reported an absence for the specified leave reason.

FMLA

What if an employee is ineligible for FMLA?

If an employee is ineligible or has exhausted entitlement under FMLA, UNUM will review to determine if the employee is eligible for UVA’s non-FMLA medical leave.

What happens when an employee works a partial day prior to a continuous leave?

UNUM reviews time missed on a partial last day worked prior to a continuous leave to confirm if FMLA applies, and UNUM will track how much time was missed.

How do employees replenish FMLA?

UVA follows the “rolling backward” calculation method. FMLA is replenished based on leave taken within the last 12 months. If an employee is eligible for and has used FMLA, he or she will replenish FMLA the same day the following year.

For example, if FMLA was taken on 2/1/23 (8 hours missed and deducted from their FMLA balance), the employee will replenish the same amount of time taken (8 hours) the following year on 2/1/24.

What happens when an employee’s FMLA is exhausted?

Exhaustion of FMLA does not mean that an employee is able to return to work. There may be an ongoing disability claim or additional time off needs related to the employee’s condition.

If the employee is on a continuous leave and needs to remain out, once FMLA exhausts they may transition to a medical leave of absence. Medical leave is not a job-protected leave; however, certain circumstances may provide job protection outside of FMLA.

If FMLA has exhausted and there are no other job protections afforded, you may reach out to leave@virginia.edu, your HR Business Partner, or Employee Relations for guidance related to staffing needs due to the employee’s continued absence. The other HR departments may assist in these situations in collaboration with the Leave team.

If the employee is on intermittent FMLA and their FMLA exhausts, there are no other intermittent leave options available. You should work with your HR Business Partner and/or Employee Relations to determine if continued accommodations are available to the employee if they are still in need of intermittent time off.

Short-term disability

What is the elimination period with UNUM?

The elimination period is the length of time between the beginning of an injury or illness and receiving benefit payments. During the elimination period of short-term disability (STD), no benefits are paid to the employee.

Please enter any paid time off an employee wishes to use for the elimination period prior to the start of short-term disability benefits. Please note that employees are not required to utilize paid time off during this period but will not receive pay unless it is applied.

How do I manage the employee's timecard while on short-term disability?

The manager or timekeeper will:

- Enter any PTO requested by the employee during the elimination period.

The Leave team will:

- Enter short-term disability into Workday for the paid benefit period, after the elimination period.
- Enter any supplemental PTO, if requested by the employee, into Workday,
 - If the employee would like to supplement their STD benefits with PTO, they should email leave@virginia.edu to make the request.

*** Note for managers of Medical Center employees only:** You may enter FMLA or medical leave codes approved by UNUM into Kronos. Since STD paid benefits and supplemental PTO are entered through Workday, you will not see these entries on the employee's timecard in Kronos.

When is long-term disability initiated?

The maximum duration of short-term disability is six months. UNUM will begin reviewing the employee's eligibility for long-term disability (LTD) if an employee is nearing exhaustion of short-term disability benefits and may be unable to return to work.

For employees on a Medical Leave related to Workers Comp, UNUM will also start to review the employee's eligibility for LTD when they near six months on leave.

Intermittent Leave Management

How does UNUM manage frequency and duration appropriateness?

UNUM will review intermittent leaves monthly to ensure that all absences reported are within the expected frequency and duration.

If an employee's absences are outside the allowable frequency or duration, UNUM will consult with their clinical team for review and may request recertification as needed.

What is UNUM's process for reviewing patterns of absence?

As part of the monthly intermittent leave review, the specialist will look at leave taken across all leaves, if the employee has more than one intermittent leave, to determine if there are any patterns of absences that should be addressed. If you have any concerns, please bring those concerns to the UVA UNUM liaison for further review. If a pattern is identified, UNUM will consult with UVA HR for review of next steps and could initiate a recertification process.

What if I still have concerns that my employee is abusing FMLA?

UNUM can review the employee's FMLA usage to confirm it's in line with medical guidance as noted above. Please contact the UVA HR leave team for additional guidance at leave@virginia.edu.

How long is an intermittent leave approved for?

UNUM recertifies leave every six (6) months to ensure the most updated and accurate information is captured in the leave file. For longer-term, more permanent conditions, an intermittent leave may be certified for up to one year at a time.

How does an employee extend an intermittent leave?

If an employee needs to extend a leave, the employee should call UNUM to request an extension at 866.269.0979 or update their claim online with UNUM.

How are intermittent absences reported to UNUM?

Employees should report intermittent absences within seven (7) days of using that time by calling UNUM or using the mobile app. Managers can also report intermittent FMLA usage on the employee's behalf by calling UNUM at 866.269.0979.

Employees can report absences to UNUM via phone call, UNUM's website, or their Mobile App. UNUM can assist employees with questions related to these other reporting options.

In addition to contacting UNUM, employees should follow normal departmental call-out procedures.

Can intermittent absences be reported in advance?

Episodes cannot be reported in advance; however, scheduled appointments can be reported in advance. UNUM will capture the appointment date and health care provider information in the event it is needed later.

Paid Parental Leave

How will I be notified if an employee is taking Paid Parental Leave?

Paid Parental Leave (PPL) is administered as a separate claim and will be sent in a separate email. You may see that email approvals for the STD and FMLA portions of the leave are not sent on the same day as the Paid Parental Leave approval, but they will be sent as timely as possible based on the specific situation of each claim.

How do I manage the employee's timecard while on Paid Parental Leave?

No entries are needed by the manager once Paid Parental Leave begins. The Leave team will enter Paid Parental Leave into Workday.

***Note for managers of Medical Center employees only:** You may enter FMLA codes for FMLA approved by UNUM into Kronos. Since Paid Parental Leave is entered by the leave team through Workday, you will not see these entries on the employee's timecard in Kronos.

Return to Work

What is the process for an employee to return to work?

If the leave is for the employee's own health condition, except for maternity, the employee should present a return-to-work release from their health care provider to their supervisor or to leave@virginia.edu.

What if the employee asks to return to work at less than a full schedule or with restrictions?

Employees may work directly with UNUM on the need for any restrictions indicated by their healthcare provider, including a reduced schedule. UNUM will assess the information and reach out to you for confirmation on what can be accommodated. UVA HR can assist with return to work with restriction requests. Your HR Business Partner, and/or Employee Relations may assist if you are

unsure about the department's ability to accommodate such restrictions. If you are unable to accommodate, please let UNUM or the UVA HR Leave Team know so that the employee can be evaluated for an extension of continuous leave or disability benefits.

If an employee returns to work on a partial schedule, you may receive a request from the UVA HR Leave Team or Payroll to confirm hours missed that may be covered by Short-Term Disability benefits.

Why does UNUM send return to work confirmation emails?

UNUM reaches out to the manager to confirm that the employee has returned to work before they close an employee's leave. Please respond to this email with the requested information. If an employee has not returned to work, UNUM will review the certification on file to determine if additional time is supported and request additional documentation if needed.