

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVE TOP-UP FOR BCGEU STAFF

When should I start my leave?

HRDC website states:

"Please note that the date you file your claim is very important in order for you to receive the maximum maternity benefits you are entitled to. If you are unsure about your most advantageous maternity period to receive maximum benefits, please contact us."

More information is available at this website:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/ei/types/special.shtml#Maternity3>

How do I apply for the benefits? What are the conditions of taking the benefits?

HR will forward the forms and details when they are notified of the impending leave. You will receive a form to state if you are accepting the top up benefits – please forward this to payroll as soon as possible. Once you receive your benefit statement from Employment Insurance (detailing the amount of your Employment Insurance benefit), please forward it to payroll so your top up can be calculated. Top-up benefits will not be issued without these forms.

In order to receive the top up benefits, you must agree to return to work at Kwantlen for a period of at least six months or equivalent to the length of leave (i.e. took only 4 months, but must return for at least 6 months; took 1 year, must return for 1 year).

What benefit amount will I receive?

It is dependant on your level of income. For your first two weeks of leave, you will receive 75% of your average weekly earnings in the last 26 weeks. After that you receive approx. 55% of your gross weekly salary from EI and we top that up to 75%. The maximum weekly EI benefit is \$413.

What deductions come off the benefit?

CPP, union dues, pension and tax.

Please note that both Kwantlen and EI deduct minimal tax and this could result in a tax payable when you file your tax return. To plan for this liability you can increase the amount of taxes deducted from your Kwantlen pay by completing a revised TD1 form. Please contact Payroll for more information.

I will be on my repeating term leave when I start my maternity leave. When do my top-up benefits begin?

They will begin on the date when you would have returned from your repeating term leave. For example, you start your repeating term leave on May 15th and during your layoff, you begin a maternity leave. You were normally due back at Kwantlen on August 28th. Your top up benefits will begin on August 28th.

I was on Short Term Disability prior to my maternity leave. How will this affect the calculation of my average weekly earnings?

Kwantlen will use the salary level in effect on the last day you worked prior to disability to calculate your average weekly earnings.

I was on maternity leave for a year and just returned. I have just found out that I'm pregnant again and will be starting my new maternity leave before I have completed my year back to work. Will I have to pay benefits back?

No. For example, if you returned to work for 10 months and then left on another maternity leave, you would have to return to Kwantlen for 14 months after your next maternity leave ends.

How many weeks of maternity/parental leave do I get from Kwantlen?

An employee who is the birth mother shall receive up to 52 weeks of leave.

An employee who is the spouse, the biological father, the common-law partner or adoptive parent who is caring for the child shall receive up to a maximum 37 weeks of leave.

My husband and I want to split the parental leave. What are our options?

Since there are several options, it is recommended you contact the Human Resource Services department for more information.

I'm a repeating term leave employee. How does this affect my top up benefit?

If an employee has been on unpaid leave for part of the preceding 26 weeks, then up to 4 weeks of that unpaid leave will be subtracted from the 26 weeks for the purpose of calculating the average base salary.

Please note that you will not receive top up benefits from Kwantlen during your normal repeating term leave.

I'm a posted auxiliary with benefits. Am I entitled to the maternity top-up?

No. Per the collective agreement, auxiliaries are not entitled to these benefits.

I'm a full time regular employee. During my maternity leave, I have accepted a repeating term position to begin upon my return. When my maternity leave is over I will be on my repeating term layoff. When do my top up benefits end?

Since you have accepted a different posting during your leave, your status has changed and your top up will be affected. If applicable, your top up benefits will end when your repeating term layoff would have started (had you been working).

I'm a posted auxiliary with benefits who is not entitled to the top up. While on my maternity leave I've accepted a full time regular position with Kwantlen to begin upon my return. When will my top up benefits begin?

As an auxiliary employee at the beginning of your leave, you are not entitled to the top up benefits.

What happens to my EI benefits if I work while I'm on maternity leave?

According to EI guidelines (www.hrsdc.gc.ca), if you work while on maternity benefits, your earnings will be deducted dollar for dollar from your EI benefits.

On the other hand, if you work while on parental benefits you can earn \$50 per week or 25% of your weekly benefits, whichever is higher. Any monies earned above that amount will be deducted dollar for dollar from your EI benefits.

You must, of course, report any earnings you make while collecting maternity or parental benefits. If you chose not to complete reports, you must declare your earnings by calling HRDC's automated telephone information service at **1-800-206-7218**, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. You can also go in person to your Service Canada Centre to report your earnings.