



INFOSHEET

Programs and Services
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Returning to University – Membership and Benefits

Introduction

Every year, many teachers in this province take either unpaid or paid educational leave to return to university for a semester or for a full school year. The purpose of this Infosheet is to inform teachers returning to university of the procedures they have to follow in order to (a) maintain membership in the Association, and to (b) have certain benefits continued.

Paid Educational Leave

Teachers who are granted paid educational leave under the collective agreements (Provincial Collective Agreement Article 20, Labrador West Collective Agreement Article 31) will receive 80% of their salary during the period of leave. Salary will continue to be received bi-weekly. All deductions such as NLTA fees, group insurance premiums, pension premiums, EI premiums, etc. will be deducted from these cheques. Consequently, teachers on paid leave do not have to initiate any procedures to maintain membership and will be credited with pensionable worked service based on their regular full salary during the period of leave.

Unpaid Educational Leave

A teacher may be granted unpaid leave for educational reasons under the collective agreements. Once the last pay cheque has been received, it then becomes the responsibility of the teacher to take the necessary steps to maintain membership in the Association and continue benefits related to that membership. The purchase of this leave period as pensionable service should be arranged within six months of returning to employment. Failure to do so will result in a much higher cost to the individual.

A) Membership in the NLTA

By-law III.A.(4)(b) grants active membership to “teachers on leave without salary who are pursuing studies.” The dues for the period of study leave are \$5.00 per semester and the deadline for receipt of such dues is two months after the commencement of the semester. This money should be sent directly to Corporate Services at the NLTA office with a note stipulating the period of time for which the dues are paid. To receive print information from the Association during the period of leave, teachers should contact NLTA and ask to be placed on the mailing list.

B) Group Insurance Benefits

Once dues have been paid to the Association for the term of leave, a teacher is eligible to retain coverage for all options of the Group Insurance plan to which the teacher is entitled. Arrangements must be made with the plan administrator, Johnson Inc., to have premiums paid via bank deduction during the unpaid leave period. Since government does not contribute its share of premiums for those on unpaid leave, there will be an increase in premiums paid by the teacher during the unpaid leave period. Arrangements can be made for the payment of these premiums by calling the plan administrator, Johnson Inc., at 737-1528 or 1-800-563-1528. If premiums are not paid during the period of leave, insurance coverage will terminate and upon return from the leave, the teacher would have to apply for coverage and provide evidence of insurability. Because medical evidence may be required, the teacher could be denied coverage depending on medical circumstances.

C) Recognition of Unpaid Educational Leaves as Worked Service

Unpaid Educational Leave for the purpose of upgrading teacher qualifications and/or experience is credited as teaching experience for the purpose of seniority and salary increments. The period of unpaid leave can also be purchased for pension purposes and be counted as worked pensionable service. To make such a purchase, teachers must email the Teachers' Pension Plan Corporation at memberservices@tppcni.ca and request a contract to purchase the period of leave for pension purposes. If the request is made within six months of return from the leave, the cost will be the contributions that would have been paid had the teacher been working, matched by government. After six months, the cost is full actuarial value, with no government contributions.

Resigning to Study Full-Time

In some circumstances, teachers may not be able to receive either paid or unpaid leave to enable them to continue their university studies. As a result, some teachers choose to resign their positions rather than put their study program on hold. Teachers are advised to consult with the NLTA before resigning.

A) Membership in the NLTA

By-law III.A.(4)(d) provides active membership for "teachers who have resigned... and who in the opinion of Executive, are actively involved in some work (studies) connected with improving their qualifications as teachers." If Executive approves active membership, By-law III.C.(2)(a) and (b) re membership dues would also apply.

Johnson Inc. Bursaries

Johnson Inc. makes \$2,000 available to the NLTA annually to be awarded to teachers in full-time attendance at university. The value of the awards will depend on the number of awards granted annually by the Professional Issues Committee (e.g. two \$1,000 or four \$500). Applications must be received at the NLTA office by **April 1**. Bursaries awarded are to be used for study undertaken in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter semesters following this deadline.

Centennial Study Award

These study grants are awarded to active members on an annual basis to support professional development of certified teachers in full-time studies. The Professional Issues Committee will present at least two awards annually, valued at \$2,500 each provided suitable applications are received and sufficient funds are available. Applications must be submitted to the NLTA on or before **March 31** for study in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter semesters following the deadline.

Teachers requiring further information or an application form should contact Programs and Services staff at the NLTA office.

<p>Note: In the event of a discrepancy between this Infosheet and the Group Master Policy, the terms of the Group Master Policy will apply</p>
