



## **SNU Policy: Return-to-Work Following FMLA Leave**

**SNU Policy ID: Benefits D-09A**

**Policy Reviewed by: Director of Human Resources**

**Approval Authority: Chief Financial Officer**

**Effective Date: April 27, 2026**

**Next Review Date: April 27, 2031**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for employees returning to work following leave taken under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Southern Nazarene University (SNU) is committed to complying with the FMLA and supporting employees in their safe and timely return to work while ensuring operational continuity.

This policy supplements SNU's FMLA Policy (Benefits D-09) and ADA Policy (Benefits D-10).

### **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff and faculty employees who have taken approved FMLA leave for:

- The employee's own serious health condition
- The serious health condition of a family member
- Birth, adoption, or foster placement
- Qualifying military exigency leave
- Military caregiver leave

### **III. General Return-to-Work Principles**

1. Employees returning from FMLA leave will generally be restored to:
  - The same position held prior to leave; or
  - An equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and employment terms, as required by law.
2. Certain "key employees," as defined by FMLA regulations, may be subject to limited reinstatement rights as outlined in the FMLA Policy.

### **IV. Fitness-for-Duty Certification**

#### **A. Employee's Own Serious Health Condition**



If FMLA leave was taken for the employee's own serious health condition, SNU may require a **Fitness-for-Duty (FFD) certification** prior to return to work.

- The requirement for FFD certification will be communicated in the Designation Notice.
- The certification must confirm the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the position.
- The University may provide the health care provider with a list of essential job functions for review.

Failure to provide required fitness-for-duty documentation may delay reinstatement until documentation is received.

## **B. Intermittent Leave**

SNU may require periodic fitness-for-duty certifications for employees returning from intermittent FMLA leave if permitted by law and stated in the Designation Notice.

## **V. Return with Restrictions**

If an employee is released to return to work with medical restrictions:

1. Human Resources will review the restrictions.
2. If restrictions impact essential job functions, the University will:
  - Evaluate whether the employee can perform essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation.
  - Engage in the interactive process in accordance with the ADA Policy (Benefits D-10).

FMLA does not require the University to provide light duty. However:

- If a temporary modified assignment is offered and voluntarily accepted, it does not extend FMLA leave entitlement.
- If an employee declines a voluntary light-duty assignment, the employee remains on FMLA leave until released to full duty or FMLA entitlement is exhausted.

## **VI. Exhaustion of FMLA Leave**

If an employee is unable to return to work at the conclusion of the 12-week (or 26-week, if applicable) FMLA entitlement:

1. The employee must notify Human Resources prior to exhaustion of leave.
2. The University will evaluate next steps, which may include:



- Additional unpaid leave consideration;
- ADA interactive process review;
- Long-term disability benefits review (if applicable);
- Separation of employment consistent with University policy and applicable law.

Continuation of employment beyond FMLA entitlement is not guaranteed and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## **VII. Employee Responsibilities**

Employees returning from FMLA leave must:

- Communicate their anticipated return-to-work date to Human Resources at least five business days in advance, when possible.
- Provide required medical documentation prior to return.
- Notify Human Resources immediately if circumstances change or additional leave is needed.
- Comply with all University policies upon return.

Failure to return to work following approved FMLA leave, without approved extension or documentation, may be considered voluntary resignation.

## **VIII. Benefits and Payroll Reinstatement**

Upon return from FMLA leave:

- Benefits will be restored consistent with the FMLA Policy.
- Payroll status will be reinstated according to regular pay cycles.
- Employees returning mid-pay period will receive pay consistent with time worked.

Employees who fail to return to work may be required to reimburse the University for employer-paid health insurance premiums during unpaid leave, as outlined in the FMLA Policy.

## **IX. Non-retaliation**

SNU strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who exercises rights under the FMLA. Concerns regarding reinstatement or treatment following FMLA leave should be directed to the Director of Human Resources. Employees may also report concerns through the University's established grievance procedures. The University will promptly investigate retaliation complaints and take corrective action where appropriate.



## **X. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed concurrently with the FMLA Policy (Benefits D-09) to ensure continued legal compliance and operational effectiveness.