

McMaster University
Long-Term Disability (LTD)
Frequently Asked Questions

The information provided in this document applies to the Long-Term Disability Plan that is insured by Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada on behalf of McMaster University. The information below does not apply to members of Clinical Faculty who participate in the disability insurance plan that is underwritten by RBC Insurance.

What is LTD?

McMaster University's Long-Term Disability (LTD) plan is an income protection benefit plan for eligible employees who become totally disabled as a result of non-work-related illnesses or injuries.

McMaster's LTD plan provides a benefit to eligible members of Faculty, Librarians, The Management Group (TMG) and Unifor, who become totally disabled while covered by the Plan. The LTD plan is 100% employee-paid and participation in the LTD plan is mandatory for eligible employees.

Why do premium rates vary by employee group?

Effective July 1, 2016, a new provision was introduced resulting in premium rates that are experience-based by employee group – meaning that rates are set for participating employee groups based on the volume and duration of claims incurred by members of that group. This change resulted in each participating employee group paying a different premium rate.

How are LTD premium rates determined?

Sun Life conducts a renewal analysis to determine any required adjustments to premium rates. LTD rates are renewed each year and are adjusted for each employee group based on the number and duration of claims incurred during the benefit year.

Why was there an increase in premium rates in July 1, 2018?

The July 1, 2018 LTD premium rate increases follow a period of a 2-year freeze of rates which were guaranteed as a result of confirming Sun Life as our provider in July 2016. Sun Life has advised that the July 1, 2018 premium rate increases are necessary given the plan experience and increase in claims volume for each of the participating employee groups.

When will premium rates be evaluated next?

The next premium rate renewal will take effect July 1, 2019. Plan experience and rates continue to be closely monitored and are discussed with the respective representatives of each participating employee group. Any change in rates will be communicated to employees in the participating employee groups prior to the new rates taking effect in July.

What initiatives does McMaster have in place to help reduce time away from work associated with LTD?

The threshold for entitlement to LTD benefits is based on total disability. Sun Life, as the LTD provider, reviews medical documentation and determines the level of disability and entitlement to benefits. The goal of the LTD program is to incorporate treatment programs geared toward return to work, as appropriate, and return employees back to work as soon as possible.

The University has a variety of programs designed to lessen the duration of absences due to illness or injury. This includes management of medical leaves during the Salary Continuance entitlement period, supportive return to work initiatives, and providing workplace accommodations to assist employees with return to work. McMaster also provides accommodation to employees to enable employees to stay at work.

We are fortunate to have a wide variety of Workplace Wellness Programs at McMaster: <http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/healthy-workplace/>. Employees of McMaster have access to the [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) with Homewood Health.

All of these programs and policies are aimed at providing support to employees and reducing the number and duration of employees' absences.

Where can I find more information about the LTD Plan?

Additional information about the LTD Plan can be found in the [Sun Life Benefit Booklet](#).

Who should I contact if I have questions about LTD?

Please contact your area [HR Advisor](#).

The information contained in this document is intended to answer commonly asked questions regarding the main provisions of the LTD Plan. This document is not intended to have legal effect. In the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency, the official Plan text will govern.

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