



Payroll Updates

It is also your responsibility to notify Lehigh's Payroll Office of any changes to legal name (with your new Social Security card), address, telephone number, and W-4 status/exemptions as a result of divorce/separation. Information on the payroll procedures, including access to forms, is available online at: www.lehigh.edu/~inctr/procedures_payroll.shtml.

Other Changes in Marital Status

While we've only addressed divorce or dissolution of a domestic partnership in this brochure, there are other marital status QLEs of which to be aware, including marriage/formation of a domestic partnership and the death of a spouse or domestic partner.

For more information on those QLEs, pick up or access the brochures titled *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Getting married/establishing a domestic partnership* and *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Dealing with the death of a dependent or spouse*. Both brochures are available in the Human Resources office and on the HR Website.

Other Resources

Divorce/dissolution of partnership is often an emotional and stressful process. Professional counseling and sup-

port services are available to eligible employees and dependents through Lehigh's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Integrated Behavioral Health. You can call them at 1-800-395-1616.

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Check out Human Resources' other *Making Sense of Your Benefits* brochures, including:

- *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Ensuring a rich retirement*
- *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Relocation of your residence*
- *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Changes to your child's dependency status*
- *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Having or adopting a child*

For additional information on the benefits offered at Lehigh University, access the Human Resources Website at: hr.lehigh.edu/benefits. For additional informational brochures, visit: hr.lehigh.edu/benefits/QLE.



**Making Sense of
Your Benefits:**
*Divorce/dissolution of
domestic partnership*

Making Sense of Your Benefits in a Tough Time

What you need to know when divorcing or dissolving a partnership

If you're in the process of getting a divorce or dissolving a domestic partnership, there are a few business items you'll want to take care of in terms of your benefits at Lehigh. We know the process is difficult, so we've provided some straightforward information to make it a bit easier.

Divorce/dissolution of a domestic partnership is considered a Qualifying Life Event (QLE).

But what is a QLE? Certain life events — such as marriage, birth or adoption of a child, or a change in a child's dependency status, for example — can result in changes in an employee's benefits needs and/or affect an employee's eligibility for some of Lehigh's benefits. A **“qualifying event” is one that allows adjustments to benefit elections in response to a life event.** So, because you're in the process of dissolving your marriage or partnership, you may elect to make some changes to your benefits choices without waiting for the next Open Enrollment season.

Those changes, however, must be requested in a timely manner — within thirty (30) days — and be consistent with the nature of the qualifying event and previous election choices.

It's important to remember that whenever a QLE occurs, the **employee is responsible for notifying the Human Resources (HR) Office** and providing the necessary forms and documentation to update the personnel file and/or change benefit elections, as applicable.

If you fail to file a QLE change request within thirty (30) days, we will retroactively cancel coverage in the case of a dependent whose benefit eligibility ends. However, we cannot refund premiums paid for coverage that was not available.

HR/Benefits Checklist

Whenever you experience a QLE, including divorce/dissolution of a partnership, there are a few things you should add to your “To-Do” list. These include:

- Notifying HR of personal information changes and providing supporting documentation;
- Reviewing health insurance options and making appropriate changes to plan enrollments*;
- Making appropriate changes to

flexible spending accounts;

- Re-evaluating life insurance needs for you (your spouse/domestic partner life insurance benefits stop); and
- Updating life and/or retirement plan beneficiaries.

*If previously covered under the former spouse/partner's health insurance plan, you may enroll in a Lehigh medical and/or dental plan. If the former spouse/partner was enrolled in a Lehigh plan, you must remove the former spouse/partner from coverage. Your former spouse/partner may elect continuation of coverage for up to thirty-six (36) months through Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) if application is made within the forty-five-day (45-day) enrollment period.

Tuition Benefits

Tuition benefits for courses still in progress remain valid until the end of the semester. This provision applies to courses in progress in which the former spouse/partner and/or dependents of the former partner are enrolled at the time of the official divorce/dissolution of domestic partnership. Any children that continue to be your dependents under IRS guidelines can continue to access your tuition benefits.