

of which to be aware, including divorce or dissolution 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: Divorce/dissolution of domestic partnership* and *Making Sense of Your Benefits: Death of a dependent or spouse/partner*. Both brochures are available in the HR office and on the HR Website.

— Updated October 2009

**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: Relocating your home*
- *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: [www.lehigh.edu/~inhro/benefits\\_administration.html](http://www.lehigh.edu/~inhro/benefits_administration.html). For additional informational brochures, visit [www.lehigh.edu/~inhro/benefits\\_life\\_events.html](http://www.lehigh.edu/~inhro/benefits_life_events.html).

**Making Sense of Your Benefits:**  
*Marriage or establishment of a domestic partnership*



HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

428 Brodhead Avenue  
Bethlehem, PA 18015-1687

ph: 610-758-3900  
f: 610-758-6226

[www.lehigh.edu/~inhro](http://www.lehigh.edu/~inhro)

## Just Married or Established a Domestic Partnership?

### *Time to check out your benefits*

If you've just gotten married or established a domestic partnership, congratulations! Before settling in to your new relationship, there are some things you need to be aware of in terms of your benefits at Lehigh.

**Getting married/establishing 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 relocation of your residence, 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've gotten married or formally established your domestic partnership, you can 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 of the event — 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.

A marriage certificate or affidavit of domestic partnership and/or other supporting documentation is required for changes to the flexible benefits plan.

### **HR/Benefits Checklist**

Whenever you experience a QLE, including marriage or forming a domestic 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 (i.e. marriage certification or affidavits);
- 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 and your spouse/partner; and
- Updating life and/or retirement plan beneficiaries.

\*A new spouse/partner may be added to your current Lehigh medical and/or dental plan as well as any other newly eligible dependents resulting from the marriage or partnership. Call or visit HR for necessary forms.

### **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 a new marriage or domestic partnership. Information on the payroll procedures, including access to forms, is available online at: [www.lehigh.edu/~inctr/procedures\\_payroll.html](http://www.lehigh.edu/~inctr/procedures_payroll.html).

### **Other Changes in Marital Status**

While we're only addressing getting married or establishing a domestic partnership in this brochure, there are other marital status QLEs