

Attendance Management Policy

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Who can help?

- ☑ Human Resources (HR) can provide support and advice with the application of this policy and answer any questions that you may have. Call the team on x3344 or email HumanResources@napier.ac.uk
- ☑ If you are a member of the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS) or UNISON, you can receive support and advice from your trade union representative.

Please note

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment with the University and may be subject to change.

Context

We are fully committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all employees and ensuring that appropriate support is available to help maintain regular attendance at work.

Whilst this policy aims to maximise attendance levels we recognise that there will be occasions when employees may be unable to attend work due to ill health. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for reporting, recording and managing all sickness absence in a fair and consistent way whilst fully supporting employees throughout the process.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University.

Key principles

- ☑ Take a fair and reasonable approach when dealing with the management of sickness absence, ensuring the procedure is consistently applied.
- ☑ Support all employees through any periods of ill health in order to facilitate an early and sustained return to work.
- ☑ Take all reasonable measures to support and retain employees with a disability.
- ☑ Monitor attendance levels with the aim of reducing sickness absence through early intervention and support.
- ☑ Allow employees to be accompanied at formal meetings and have the right of appeal against the outcome of any formal meeting.
- ☑ Treat health records sensitively and in accordance with data protection legislation.

Responsibilities

Employees

Employees are responsible for their health and wellbeing and should consider appropriate support interventions as required to maximise their attendance at work. They are responsible for adhering with the requirements of the policy, particularly in relation to reporting and certifying sickness absence and keeping in regular contact with their manager during any period of absence from work.

Managers	<p>Managers have a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of employees and should work supportively in conjunction with HR and the University's Occupational Health provider to support staff who are absent from work due to ill health.</p> <p>Managers are responsible for managing sickness absence effectively, ensuring absence is recorded and monitored for their team. They are responsible for carrying out return to work meetings and other review meetings, promoting a positive working environment, motivating and managing their team to maximise attendance.</p>
Trade Unions	<p>Trade union officials are responsible for providing advice and support to their members and representing or accompanying them at formal meetings.</p>
HR	<p>HR are responsible for providing specialist advice and support to all parties involved on the application of the policy. HR are responsible for ensuring that any information is held in line with agreed retention schedules and confidentiality is maintained.</p>

Sickness absence definitions

- ☑ **Short-term absence** - Periods of sickness absence that last for less than four weeks.
- ☑ **Long-Term absence** – Periods of sickness absence that last for four continuous weeks or more.

Reporting sickness absence

If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness they must notify their manager by telephone as soon as reasonably practicable on the first day of absence from work, and no later than one hour after their expected start time that day.

If an employee is unable to make contact with their manager by telephone, they should leave a message with another manager, and their manager will contact the employee as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances, where the employee is unable to make contact themselves they should arrange for someone else to make contact on their behalf.

The manager will attempt to contact an employee if they do not arrive at work or receive a notification of their absence, to ensure their wellbeing. If the manager is unable to contact the employee, they should contact HR for advice.

If an employee attends work but is unable to stay due to illness, they should report this to their manager.

Absence may be deemed to be unauthorised if it is not reported without good reason and this may result in the withholding of sick pay and possibly disciplinary action.

Recording sickness absence

When an employee reports a sickness absence, the manager should record the absence (including absence reason if known) on HR Connect as soon as possible.

Absences that specifically relate to a disclosed disability are recorded separately from non-disability related absences on HR Connect.

If an employee goes home unwell after being at work for less than half of their working day this should be recorded on HR Connect as a half-day absence.

On the first day of returning to work following their absence, the employee should close their absence on HR Connect by checking or adding the reason for sickness, and entering the date of the last day of absence (not the date of return to work).

Maintaining contact

It is important to maintain regular contact during any period of sickness absence. To enable this, the employee and their manager should jointly agree when they will next be in touch at each point of contact. The frequency and nature of the contact should be appropriate to the situation and will depend upon the circumstances and nature of the illness. In cases of long-term absence, it is expected that contact will generally be made at least every two weeks.

The preferred method of contact is telephone; however, in exceptional circumstances other methods such as text or email may be used.

If regular contact is not maintained during a period of sickness absence without good reason, it may be deemed unauthorised and this may result in the withholding of sick pay and possibly disciplinary action.

Certification

Self-certification – Up to seven days absence

Employees can self-certify any absence that lasts up to seven calendar days using HR Connect.

Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) – More than seven day's absence

An employee is required to obtain a fit note from their doctor if their absence lasts for more than seven calendar days on a continuous basis.

A doctor provides a fit note if they consider that an employee's fitness for work is impaired. The fit note can state either that an employee 'may be fit for work' taking into account the doctor's opinion and advice stated on the note, or that the employee is 'not fit for work'.

Upon receipt of a fit note, the employee should contact their manager by telephone to discuss the fit note and send a copy of it to HR who will update HR Connect with the details.

Where a doctor has stated that, the employee 'may be fit for work' and has provided recommendations on the fit note, the manager should consider if these can be accommodated. Further advice should normally be sought from Occupational Health and/or HR.

Employees are free to return to work prior to the expiry of their fit note should they well feel enough to return and with agreement from their manager. Upon expiry of the fit note, the employee is required to return to work on their next working day or speak to their manager and inform them when they will next go to their doctor. As a minimum, they should provide a new fit note to cover the new period of absence **within 3 working days** of when the last fit note expired.

If the employee does not provide a new fit note within 3 working days, the manager should notify HR. If sickness absence is not supported by appropriate documentation, it may be deemed unauthorised absence and this may result in the withholding of sick pay and possibly disciplinary action.

Occupational Health (OH)

The purpose of Occupational Health (OH) is to provide information about the impact of an employee's medical condition on their ability to perform their role and any reasonable adjustments that may help support them at work and/or facilitate their return to work.

Managers should always seek to refer an employee to Occupational Health if their absence:

- ✔ Has been for a continuous period of four weeks (long-term sickness absence) or is expected to last more than four weeks;
- ✔ Is due to stress or mental health;
- ✔ Is due to an illness that is pregnancy-related;
- ✔ Is due to a workplace accident or injury and has lasted for 3 days or more.

The manager should inform the employee when they wish to refer them to Occupational Health and explain this reason for this with them. Following an Occupational Health assessment, the employee will have the opportunity to review the Occupational Health report and comment on it before it is released to HR.

It may be appropriate, through Occupational Health, to request details about the employee's health from their doctor or specialist. Employees will be informed of their rights of access to any such reports.

Once HR receives an Occupational Health report, they will share it with the employee's manager who will arrange to meet with the employee to discuss the report and agree next steps.

If an employee does not wish to attend an Occupational Health appointment or withholds consent for the release of medical information, decisions may be made about their employment based on the information that is available and without the benefit of medical input, which may be to their detriment.

Stress Risk Assessment

Where an employee's absence may be caused or exacerbated by factors in the workplace, appropriate steps should be taken to address the issue wherever possible. The employee and manager should normally complete a [Stress Risk Assessment](#) to help identify appropriate actions to mitigate any identified sources of stress.

Pregnancy-related absence

When an employee notifies their manager of their pregnancy, they should complete a [New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment](#) together to identify any risks and agree any adjustments to make to their role or work environment.

If an employee is absent from work due to an illness related to pregnancy their manager should refer them to Occupational Health for an assessment to ensure that necessary support and any required adjustments are put in place. If an employee is, absent from work wholly or partly because of a pregnancy-related illness within four weeks of the due date, the period of maternity leave will begin automatically from the commencement of the current period of absence.

Sickness absence related to pregnancy is recorded on HR Connect in the normal way, but it should not be taken into account when reviewing attendance levels.

Disability and reasonable adjustments

Sickness absence may be caused or exacerbated by a disability. The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and long-term’ negative effect on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities”.

Whilst there is no obligation to disclose a disability, employees are encouraged to inform their manager if they have a disability or health condition, particularly if it may affect their ability to fulfil the requirements of their role and/or may pose a health and safety risk.

Where an employee discloses a disability, as defined under the Equality Act (2010), we have a responsibility to consider any reasonable adjustments to provide appropriate support at work and/or facilitate a return to work. Occupational Health should be involved to help identify any support measures that may be appropriate and managers should contact HR for advice.

- ☑ Further information and examples of reasonable adjustments are contained within the [Disability Guidance for Employees and Managers](#)

Returning to work

Return to work (RTW) meetings provide an opportunity to discuss any underlying causes of absence and put in place any appropriate support that is required. Managers should invite employees to an informal return to work meeting each time they return from a period of sickness absence.

The manager should explore any reasonable adjustments/assistance that can support their full recovery and update them on work matters. In many cases, this is likely to need only a “light touch” discussion and a brief note to record that this conversation has taken place using a RTW form.

- ☑ A script and form to structure return to work meetings are contained within the **Attendance Management - Policy Guidance for Managers**

Phased return to work

A phased return may be recommended by Occupational Health, normally when employees return from long-term absence and is an arrangement whereby an employee who has been absent from work, returns to their full duties/hours gradually over a defined period of time of up to four weeks. Whilst not needed in all cases, in some circumstances, a phased return can provide a valuable period of readjustment, enabling employees to get back to work duties and routine whilst maintaining their recovery.

We support a phased return period of up to a maximum four weeks on full pay, thereafter it is expected that employees should be fit to resume normal duties and working hours. In exceptional circumstances whereby a phased return of more than four weeks is required, employees may use accrued annual leave to extend their phased return. When a longer term phasing of hours is required and can be accommodated, employees can reduce their contractual hours/pay temporarily to facilitate their return to work.

In circumstances where problems arise, where the phased return to work appears to be unsuccessful or where further absence occurs, advice should be sought from Occupational Health.

Absence review points

Whilst we recognise that there will be some absence from work due to sickness or ill health, regular attendance by employees is important to ensure the smooth running of the University.

Managers will review employee attendance records whenever there have been three or more occurrences of sickness absence (irrespective of length) in any six month rolling period; where there is a concern regarding absences, patterns or part day absences or when employees have been absent for a continuous period of four weeks or more (long-term absence).

It is important to understand the absence reason(s) so that appropriate support can be provided to help employees achieve the expected level of attendance. Any action taken because of poor attendance should

be proportionate and appropriate in each situation, particularly where employees have a disability or underlying health condition.

Where an employee has been absent on a number of occasions and to support a sustained and significant improvement in attendance, it may be appropriate to set an improvement target over a specific period with regular reviews held during this period. When determining an appropriate improvement target and review period, the manager will discuss with the employee what is considered reasonable in the circumstances, taking into account any health conditions or relevant factors.

Informal Support

Where there are concerns about sickness absence, the manager should have an informal discussion with the employee about their attendance in the first instance.

During an informal discussion, any specific concerns or patterns of absence should be raised with the employee. The employee should be given the opportunity to explain the reasons for their absence, and encouraged to disclose any health issues or mitigating factors which have contributed, or are contributing, to the absence. The manager should explore appropriate support measures and ways in which the employee can achieve the necessary improvement to their attendance level with the employee. If there appears to be an underlying health issue, the manager should offer the appropriate support and seek to refer the employee to Occupational Health.

Where an employee has been absent on a number of occasions, it may be appropriate to set an improvement target over a specific period with regular reviews held during this time.

If the employee achieves the required improvement in attendance, there will be no further action at this stage. However, if the employee does not meet the agreed improvement target, it may be appropriate to progress to the formal procedure.

When an employee has been absent for a continuous period of four weeks, their manager should discuss a referral to Occupational Health with them. Where a fit note indicates that an employee is likely to be absent for more than four weeks, or there is an indication that work related matters may have caused or contributed to the absence, an early referral to Occupational Health should be made. The purpose is to obtain an assessment of the effects of their condition, the likely duration of the illness or condition and whether there are any steps to take to facilitate their return to work.

When an employee has returned to work after a period of long-term sickness absence, their manager should meet with them on a regular and informal basis to ensure that they continue to receive appropriate support to return to normal duties and working hours.

The manager should take a brief note of all informal discussions and share this with the employee following each discussion to support the process and ensure clarity.

- ✔ Guidance for setting improvement targets and information about the informal support process is contained within the **Attendance Management – Policy Guidance for Managers**

Formal Attendance Review Procedure

If an employee's level of attendance continues to be of concern and informal support is no longer appropriate, or has not succeeded in improving attendance to an acceptable level, consideration will be given to progressing to the formal procedure. The formal procedure focuses on supporting the employee help them achieve the expected attendance level and it is applicable to both frequent short-term absence and long-term absence.

There is the provision to appeal the outcome of each formal attendance review meeting. The timescale between meetings will be dependent upon individual circumstances and the point at which an employee progresses to the next stage of the procedure will vary from case to case. Managers should seek advice from HR before commencing the formal process.

Invite to formal attendance review meeting

An invite letter will issue to the employee providing at least five working days' notice of the meeting and will:

- ✔ Confirm the arrangements and explain the purpose of the meeting;
- ✔ Provide details of the sickness absence record and reasons for any concerns (if appropriate);
- ✔ Explain the potential outcome of the formal attendance review meeting;
- ✔ Advise the employee of their right to be accompanied at the formal meeting.

It may be appropriate to enclose additional information with the letter such as the employee's attendance record and copies of any other relevant documents, e.g. Occupational Health report or notes of previous attendance review meetings.

Right to be accompanied

A work colleague, a trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union, may accompany employees attending any formal stage of the attendance review procedure. Legal representation is not permitted.

Postponements

It is expected that attendance at formal meetings will be prioritised, however if, for genuine reasons, any party is unable to attend, the meeting will be rescheduled without reasonable delay and wherever possible, within five working days of the original date. If the employee feels unable to attend for a reason related to their health, they should inform their manager and consideration will be given to making alternative arrangements, where appropriate.

If an employee does not attend a formal meeting without good reason, it may be held in their absence. Whilst every effort will be made to find a time that is suitable for all parties, if the work colleague or trade union representative accompanying the employee is not available at the rearranged time, then consideration will be given to insisting that the employee is accompanied by another person.

Outcome of a formal attendance review meeting

The outcome of an attendance review meeting will be communicated to the employee verbally wherever possible, and confirmed in writing by the manager within five working days' of the meeting. If more time is required, the employee will be notified of this. The letter will explain the reasons for the decision reached and provide the right of appeal.

Appeals

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Timing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ An employee may appeal against the outcome of any of the formal stages of the attendance review procedure within 10 working days of being notified of the decision. The appeal should be made in writing to the next level of manager or to HR. The appeal will be acknowledged and heard within a reasonable timeframe, normally within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the appeal. |
| Grounds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ The letter should clearly state the grounds for the appeal. ☑ The appeal process is not a re-hearing, therefore the grounds for appeal must be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New evidence coming to light which was not previously available at the time the decision was made or which was unreasonably withheld (other than by the employee) and which could have materially affected the outcome; • A flaw in the procedure which could have influenced the final outcome; • Unfairness of the outcome. |
| Appeal Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ An appeal manager will be appointed who is more senior to the manager who chaired the formal attendance review meeting or capability hearing where appropriate; they |

will not have had any prior involvement in the matter, and where appropriate they will be in the same employee group, e.g. academic or professional services, as the employee.

Appeal Hearing

- ✔ At the appeal hearing, the employee will be given the opportunity to state their appeal.
- ✔ The employee's manager and/or chair of the capability hearing will attend to explain the reasons for their decision.
- ✔ The appeal manager may adjourn the meeting to make further investigations or seek advice/further information if necessary ensuring that they inform the employee of any additional information that is considered.
- ✔ The appeal manager will make a final decision and will notify the employee of their decision in writing within **5 working days** of the appeal hearing, unless otherwise notified.

The following are potential outcomes of the appeal stage of the attendance review procedure.

- ✔ Appeal upheld or partially upheld – recommend other appropriate action
- ✔ Appeal not upheld - the original decision stands

Recurring absence

If after a period of satisfactory attendance of less than a full year, the employee's attendance level returns to a level which gives cause for concern, for example persistent short-term absence, repeated patterns of long-term absence or a combination of short-term and long-term absence, it may be appropriate to seek further advice from Occupational Health. Following receipt of this advice, the manager should review the employee's attendance record and may hold a further formal attendance review meeting returning to the last stage previously reached in the procedure.

Managing frequent short term absence

Formal stage 1 attendance review meeting

The aim is to resolve issues at this stage wherever possible and the purpose of a formal stage 1 attendance review meeting is to review an employee's attendance level. The manager should outline the sickness absence concerns that have led to the meeting, review the circumstances of the case and the actions taken to date. The employee will be given the opportunity to respond and raise any factors they wish to have considered.

The manager should identify if there are any support measures that may be appropriate and may discuss an improvement target and timescale for review.

It may be appropriate to adjourn the meeting to obtain further medical advice or take a decision that no further formal action is required.

Where an employee has been absent on a number of occasions, it may be appropriate to set out in writing the required improvement in attendance. The letter would also confirm the timescale for improvement, any support measures that will be provided and how attendance will be monitored during the review period. It will also confirm that a potential consequence of not meeting the improvement target within the review period may be progression to the next formal stage of the attendance review procedure.

The manager should monitor the employee's attendance during the review period and meet with the employee regularly.

At the end of the review period or during it if the employee's sickness absence exceeds the required level, the manager should meet with the employee to confirm the outcome, which may be:

- ✔ **Satisfactory improvement** – Where the employee has met the required level of attendance and no further action;
- ✔ **Partial improvement** – Progress has been made towards meeting the required level of attendance, but it has not been achieved fully due to a mitigating factor, so the review period may be extended or other options considered;
- ✔ **Required improvement not achieved** – The employee has not met the required level of attendance so the matter will progress to the second stage of the formal attendance review procedure.

Formal stage 2 attendance review meeting

A formal stage 2 attendance review meeting may be held if the required level of improvement in attendance has not been achieved, or sustained, during the stage 1 review period and the level of absence remains a concern.

A formal stage 2 attendance review meeting will follow the same format as a formal stage 1 attendance review meeting. The manager should also seek to establish if there have been any changes to the employee's circumstances that may be affecting their ability to maintain the required improvement level, or return to work, and if so, ensure that any new information is properly considered. It may be appropriate to adjourn the meeting to obtain further medical advice or take a decision that no further formal action is required.

Where an improvement target has not been achieved or there has been no sustained improvement during the review period, it may be appropriate to issue a second letter stating a further improvement in attendance that is required. The letter would also confirm the timescale for improvement, any support measures that will be provided and how attendance will be monitored during the review period. It will also confirm that a potential consequence of not meeting the improvement target within the review period may be progression to the next formal stage of the attendance review procedure.

The manager should monitor the employee's attendance during the review period and meet with the employee regularly. At the end of the review period or during it if the employee's sickness absence exceeds the required level, the manager should meet with the employee to confirm the outcome, which may be:

- ✔ **Satisfactory improvement** – Where the employee has met the required level of attendance level no further action;
- ✔ **Partial improvement** – Progress has been made towards meeting the required level of attendance, but it has not been achieved fully due to a mitigating factor, so the review period may be extended or other options considered;
- ✔ **Required improvement not achieved** – The employee has not met the required level of attendance so the matter will progress to the third formal stage of the attendance review procedure, which is a capability hearing.

Stage 3 - Capability hearing

A stage 3 capability hearing may be held if the required level of improvement in attendance has not been achieved, or sustained, during the stage 2 review period and the level of absence remains a concern.

The purpose of a capability hearing is to consider the matter fully and review all of the information presented in order to determine appropriate next steps. Two managers who are senior to the employee, and where appropriate are in the same employee group as the employee, will constitute the panel. The employee's manager will attend to present the management case and to answer questions and a HR representative will attend to offer procedural advice and take notes.

At the hearing, the panel will consider the employee's full attendance record and review all of the information, which will include:

- ✔ Full absence history and impact of the absence;
- ✔ Actions that have been taken to address the situation including provision of support measures;
- ✔ Any mitigating factors;
- ✔ Occupational health and medical advice obtained.
- ✔ Any reasonable adjustments that are required to facilitate a satisfactory attendance level or return to work.

The employee will be given the opportunity to present their case and raise any factors they wish to have considered. When reaching their decision, the panel will consider the following:

- ✔ Any points raised by the employee;
- ✔ The nature of any illness and prognosis based on the information available;
- ✔ Whether further medical input is necessary;
- ✔ The likelihood of the employee achieving the required level of attendance in a reasonable timeframe;
- ✔ If the employee has a disability, whether there are any other reasonable adjustments that would support them;
- ✔ The effect of further or continued absence on the University.

Possible outcomes may include:

- ✔ Setting a further review period set (where a substantial improvement in attendance is likely within the review period) and at the end of the extended review period a further stage 2 attendance review meeting would be held.

- ✔ Considering other options such as redeployment where a suitable alternative role exists or other appropriate action short of dismissal.
- ✔ Dismissing the employee with full notice on the grounds of capability (ill health) due to inability to achieve a sustained and acceptable level of attendance at work.

Managing long term absence

Formal long-term attendance review meetings

It will normally be appropriate to hold a formal long-term attendance review meeting with an employee who is absent on a long-term basis upon receipt of an Occupational Health report.

If the employee continues to be absent, or where a return to work programme has been unsuccessful, further formal long-term attendance review meetings should be held at regular intervals.

Purpose

The purpose of a formal long-term attendance review meeting is to establish how the employee is and the likely duration of their absence, taking into account medical advice. Appropriate support measures that may improve the employee's health or facilitate their return to work should be explored at the meeting. These may include a phased return, amended job duties, altered working hours or workplace adaptations. It is also important that employees understand their entitlement to sick pay and at the end of each meeting; the manager and employee should agree when they will next make contact.

Outcome

An outcome of a long-term attendance review meeting may be to continue with ongoing support to allow a longer period of rehabilitation where there is a prospect of recovery within a reasonable timeframe.

If medical advice indicates that an employee is, or may soon be ready to return to work, the manager should take appropriate steps to facilitate this, taking into account any recommendations. Such steps may include making reasonable adjustments to working arrangements, redeploying to a suitable alternative role, retraining or agreeing a phased return to work.

Ill-health retirement

The option for ill health retirement is subject to meeting the eligibility criteria set out in the relevant pension scheme and the final decision on whether or not to grant ill health retirement rests with the appropriate pension provider.

Consideration should be given to Ill health retirement before any decision is taken to dismiss on the grounds of capability (ill health).

Capability hearing

A capability hearing may be convened when an employee has been absent for an extended period, but not necessarily on a continuous basis, and there is no reasonable prospect of them returning to work in a reasonable timeframe.

The purpose of a capability hearing is to consider the matter fully and review all of the information presented in order to determine appropriate next steps. Two managers who are senior to the employee, and where appropriate are in the same employee group as the employee, will constitute the panel. The employee's manager will attend to present the management case and to answer questions and an HR representative will attend to offer procedural advice and take notes.

At the hearing, the panel will consider the employee's full attendance record and review all of the information, which will include:

- ☑ Full absence history and impact of the absence;
- ☑ Actions that have been taken to address the situation including provision of support measures;
- ☑ Any mitigating factors;
- ☑ Occupational health and medical advice obtained.
- ☑ Any reasonable adjustments that are required to facilitate a satisfactory attendance level or return to work.

The employee will be given the opportunity to present their case and raise any factors they wish to have considered. When reaching their decision, the panel will consider the following:

- ☑ Any points raised by the employee;
- ☑ The nature of any illness and prognosis based on the information available;
- ☑ Whether further medical input is necessary;
- ☑ The likelihood of the employee returning to work in a reasonable timeframe;
- ☑ If the employee has a disability, whether there are any other reasonable adjustments that would support them;
- ☑ The effect of further or continued absence on the University.

Possible outcomes may include:

- ✔ A decision for the employee to remain on sick leave until they have recovered (typically where an approximate return date can be identified)
- ✔ Consideration of other options such as redeployment where a suitable alternative role exists or other appropriate action short of dismissal.
- ✔ Dismissal with full notice on the grounds of capability (ill-health)

Terminal illness

We will always seek to ensure that employees diagnosed with an illness or medical condition that is terminal (i.e. where the prognosis is clear that they will not recover) receive both practical and compassionate support with their circumstances. Managers should contact HR for advice on appropriate support and assistance to consider.

Time off for medical appointments

- ✔ **Routine or non-emergency medical appointments.** Wherever possible, employees should make every effort to schedule routine or non-emergency medical appointments outside of their normal working hours. Where this is not possible, employees should try to schedule them for the beginning or end of their working day. If the appointment is during working hours, employees should agree with their manager if they will make up the time or use flexi-time/TOIL to cover the absence. Managers should show a degree of flexibility to ensure that employees are able to attend medical appointments.
- ✔ **Emergency, specialist, hospital appointments.** We recognise that employees have little control over the timing of emergency, specialist and hospital appointments and therefore permit paid time off work in these circumstances. Employees should discuss their need to attend a medical appointment with their manager as early as possible. Employees may be required to provide an appointment card or evidence of the medical appointment.
- ✔ **Surgery, treatment and recuperation.** Where this relates to a medical or psychological condition and is covered by a fit note, this will be treated as sickness absence.
- ✔ **Elective surgery.** Annual leave should be taken for surgery, which is not considered medically necessary, including cosmetic procedures.
- ✔ **Fertility treatment.** The University's Special Leave Policy contains pay and leave provisions for employees undergoing fertility treatment

Occupational Sick Pay (OSP)

The amount of enhanced Occupational Sick Pay that employees are eligible for relates to their length of reckonable service¹ with the University.

The University pays Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in accordance with applicable legislation in place at the time of the sickness absence and all OSP is inclusive of any SSP due. OSP is calculated on a rolling 12-month period therefore any previous sickness absence within the 12-month period immediately prior to the date on which a period of sickness absence begins is taken into account when calculating the amount of OSP due.

Eligible employees receive OSP in accordance with the following service requirements:

Continuous reckonable service	Full pay	Half pay
Less than 3 months ²	1 week	1 week
Between 3-6 months	3 weeks	3 weeks
Between 6-12 months	5 weeks	5 weeks
Between 1-2 years	9 weeks	9 weeks
Between 2-3 years	18 weeks	18 weeks
Between 3-5 years	22 weeks	22 weeks
5 or more years	26 weeks	26 weeks

¹ **Reckonable Service** - the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government, etc.) (Modification) Order 1999 (The 1999 Order) requires certain public sector employers, when considering continuous employment under section 162 of the 1996 Act, to consider, in certain circumstances, previous employment with other public sector employers.

² Employees must have undertaken at least one days' work at the University to be eligible to receive OSP.

Sickness absence and annual leave

Sickness absence during annual leave

Employees who are ill during a period of pre-booked personal holiday, may reclaim those days lost through sickness if they inform their manager on the first day they became sick, or as soon as practicable thereafter, and submit a fit note or medical certificate to cover the absence. The requirement to provide a medical certificate applies for all durations of absence. If an employee is sick on a day they would not normally work (e.g. a weekend day or fixed leave day), they cannot reclaim this day.

Accrual of annual leave during sickness absence

Annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue during any periods of sickness absence and it is expected that it will normally be taken in the leave year it accrued. However, if employees have been unable to take their statutory leave entitlement³ by the end of the leave year because of long-term sickness absence, they can carry part or all of their untaken statutory leave into the next leave year and use it by the end of that leave year.

Related Policies

- Annual Leave Policy
- Maternity Leave Policy
- Disability Leave Policy
- Stress Management Policy

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³ As per the Working Time Regulations 1998 of 28 days per year (pro-rated for an employee who works on a part-time basis)

Appendix – Sources of additional support

- ✔ Attendance Management Policy: Employees' Frequently Asked Questions
- ✔ Attendance Management Policy: Guidance for Managers
- ✔ Disability Guidance for Employees and Managers
- ✔ Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace – Guidance for Managers
- ✔ Equality Act - Disability (Government Guidance)
- ✔ Fit Notes (Government Guidance)
- ✔ Employee Assistance Programme
- ✔ Statutory Sick Pay (Government Guidance)
- ✔ Occupational Health