



# Managing Sickness Absence Policy

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# **1. Statement of Policy**

## **1.1**

defined under the Equality Act (2010) i.e. age, disability, gender, race and by extension nationality, religion or belief, gender-reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, or sexual orientation. Sickness absence will always be managed sensitively and appropriately within employment legislation and will respect the employee's right to confidentiality.

**2.4** The University is a responsible employer and is committed to take steps to support disabled employees by way of putting in place reasonable adjustments to working practices and procedures to allow disabled employees, including those who become disabled, to remain in employment. The University will continue to support the retention of disabled employees through taking all reasonable action.

**2.5** The University actively encourages disabled Employees and Managers to participate in the Access to Work scheme.

**2.6** Where absence is caused by an underlying medical condition that is a disability under the terms of Equality Act (2010) the University' will formally consider reasonable adjustments and put these in place as appropriate.

### **3. Principles**

**3.1** Sickness absence will be managed positively and sensitively by Managers in line with this policy, with the support of the Human Resources Department. The University's duty of care to all employees will be at the centre of this policy.

**3.2** The University will treat employees who are absent due to a medical condition, sympathetically and supportively.

**3.3** The Managing Sickness Absence policy will be communicated clearly to all employees. Managers will receive training to enable them to manage sickness absence within their schools and departments in line with this policy.

**3.4** The recording and monitoring procedures used in the management of sickness absence will be applied in a fair and consistent manner and detailed under section 4.2.5 of the policy.

**3.5** The University recognises its obligations under the Equality Act (2010) for those employees with either disability or an underlying health condition which would constitute a disability under the Act and / or females in relation to pregnancy. Therefore absences arising from these protected characteristics will be recorded separately from general sickness absence against the employee's record.

**3.6** Where an employee is absent from work as a result of an accident in the workplace, they will be paid University sick pay (inclusive of statutory benefits) in line with their contractual entitlement.

**3.7** The University adopts the position that reported ill health is genuine, unless there is evidence to the contrary, and that employees will be supported and managed sympathetically to make a recovery and return to work. However, the University cannot in the interests of managing its duty of care for all employees, and in its

delivery of the expected standards of service to our students and other service users, permit absence to continue indefinitely. In such circumstances the reason for taking action to reach a resolution will therefore relate to the capability of an employee and will not be because of their illness.

**3.8** Capability is defined in Section 98 (3)(a) of the Employment Rights Act (1996) as follows:

“capability, in relation to an employee, means his [or her] capability assessed by reference to skill, aptitude, health or any other physical or mental quality, -

retains the right to reasonably expect the employee to call. This will also enable the Manager to fulfil their responsibility under point 4.2.6 of the policy.

**4.2.6** Managers are required to ensure all sickness absence is recorded accurately by the area's Sickness Notification Officer through the University's Manager self-serve System MyView in a timely manner.

**4.2.7**





**8.2** Managers should consider taking informal action initially where sickness levels reach the following trigger points:

A number of recurring absences due to sickness - 3 occasions or 6 days of sickness within any 4-month rolling period. NB Occurrences may be more significant than total days in establishing a pattern of absence and raising cause for concern

A long-term period of sickness absence that has lasted or is expected to last four weeks or more

## **9. Return to Work Meetings**

**9.1** Return to work meetings must be conducted by Line Managers following every period of sickness absence. The immediate Line Manager should arrange a meeting with the employee on their first day back, or as soon as possible thereafter. If an employee feels that they are unable to discuss the reasons for their absence with their Line Manager, they should contact a HR Representative.

**9.2** The purpose of the return to work meeting is:

To give the Manager the opportunity to check that the person is fit enough to return to work

To allow the Manager to express a proper interest in and concern for the member of staff's welfare

To give the member of staff an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have, and to identify any domestic, welfare or work-related problems that might affect their return to work

To raise awareness about the available services and support provision available to staff, e.g. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Occupational Health

Where appropriate to discuss the need for a referral to Occupational Health

To discuss where appropriate an agreed return to work programme, including phasing, where deemed necessary

To allow the Manager to ensure that the member of staff knows that they have been missed and to update them on events that may have occurred during their absence

**9.3** A record of the return to work meeting will be made by the Manager on the return to work form, and filed on the employee's personnel record.





period, the prognosis is still unclear, and the employee cannot return to work in the near future and / or redeployment or ill health retirement is not possible, then subject to consultation, it may be necessary to terminate the employment of the employee on grounds of medical incapability. Where such action is necessary, it will be conducted supportively, sympathetically and with full information and advice in order to help the employee to make an effective transition.

**12.8** Where medical advice is that the employee is not fit to carry out their role in the foreseeable future e.g. 3-6 months, it will be necessary to discuss this with the employee. It may be appropriate to discuss the possibility of redeployment into a suitable alternative role, and, where necessary and appropriate, advice should be sought from Occupational Health. If there are no suitable opportunities for redeployment, or redeployment is unsuccessful, subject to consultation, it may be necessary for the Line

**Stage 3 - Appeal:** The employee has the right of appeal against the decision. An appeal against the decision made can be submitted using the Appeal Form at Appendix 1 to HR. This must be done within 10 working days from the receipt of the decision letter.

### **13. Referrals to Occupational Health**

**13.1** There will be situations where it is appropriate to refer employees to Occupational Health in order that further medical information on their condition may be obtained in order to inform both the Line Manager and the employee in the best way to support the management of sickness absence.

**13.2** The University reserves the right to require employees in cases of long term or short term absence to undergo a medical assessment with an Occupational Health

## **14. Appendix 1**

### **Appeal Form Managing Sickness Absence**

To be completed by the employee and copies sent to Line Manager and Human Resources. Please keep a copy for your records.

# Managing Sickness Absence Policy

Owner	Last Reviewed
Operations	February 2021

