



**WITH EFFECT FROM 1 FEBRUARY 2014**

**THE PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING, RECORDING AND MONITORING SICKNESS ABSENCE**

**1. RECORDING AND MONITORING OF ABSENCES DUE TO ILL HEALTH**

- 1.1. All absences of half a day or more should be recorded on uBASE via myTeam.
- 1.2. All information is held and processed in accordance with the University's Policy on Personal Information and the Data Protection Act 1998, and in line with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.
- 1.3. To ensure the University continues to provide a safe and healthy working environment, and to enable the effective management of absence at both an individual and University level, the absence records of staff are actively maintained and monitored.
- 1.4. Staff are encouraged to disclose any disability so that appropriate support can be offered. Where they do so, the individual's manager should ask if colleagues, where relevant, can be informed of the disability status, and the staff member's wishes in this respect should be followed.
- 1.5. Very exceptionally there may be circumstances which lead the manager to believe that non-disclosure of impairment could cause a hazard to other staff/members of the University community. For example, for health and safety reasons, though in many cases reasonable adjustments could remove/mitigate such risks. Where potential hazards are identified the manager should undertake a management referral to Workplace Health & Wellbeing. Thereafter the disabled staff member should be notified of any decision by the manager as to any action required to remove/mitigate such identified hazards, including any communication to relevant parties.

**2. NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

- 2.1. Staff should make an effort to speak to their manager (or managers in the case of dual management relationships e.g. an NHS manager), notifying them as early as possible, and no later than the normal start time or in line with local arrangements, if staff are unable to attend work. Staff should advise:
  - date they became sick/incapable of working
  - the nature of their illness
  - whether the absence is due to an accident or injury at work or work-related illness
  - whether they will be seeking medical attention



- whether there are any potential serious implications for others within the University community (if known) e.g. Rubella
- the likely date of return (if known)
- whether any work issues need to be addressed in their absence, and
- agree the communication arrangements during the period of absence

**2.2.** Staff members are also required to notify their manager of their actual return to work as soon as is reasonably practicable.

**2.3.** Upon a return to work the manager should undertake a return to work discussion with the staff member. After the discussion, the manager should record the issues that were discussed. To ensure the appropriate level of discussion is undertaken and the relevant information is captured, managers are encouraged to refer to the guidance in relation to return to work discussions and complete the Return to Work discussion/interview form.

**2.4.** Staff are encouraged to bring to the attention of their manager, Workplace Health & Wellbeing or Human Resources, as soon as possible, any disability or work related issues/concerns that they feel is having an adverse impact on their health and wellbeing, in order that appropriate support/intervention can be offered.

### **3. CERTIFICATION/'MAY BE FIT' NOTES**

**3.1.** Where ill health lasts between half and 7 days, the provision of a 'Statement For Fitness to Work' (more commonly known as a Fit Note), is not required, unless specifically requested by the manager. For example: where a staff member is seeking to reclaim a period of annual leave due to sickness/injury or the manager believes that the sickness absences illustrate a pattern or warrants investigation. For a period of sickness absence of more than 7 calendar days, staff are required to submit a 'fit note' to their manager as soon as possible. Where a 'fit note' identifies the individual 'may be fit for work', they should promptly contact their manager, to consider how a return to work may be supported. (For further guidance on: fit note discussions and reasonable adjustments please refer to Managing Performance Toolkit).

**3.2.** Failure to follow the required notification/certification procedures may result in the temporary suspension of pay and/or disciplinary action.

### **4. TIME OFF FOR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

**4.1.** Staff members should where reasonably practicable seek to arrange medical appointments outside of work time. Where this is not possible the individual should: seek to arrange such appointments at times which are least disruptive to work obligations; gain permission in advance where possible; and be allowed reasonable time off with pay to attend such appointments.



- 4.2. Where regular and/or ongoing time off for medical appointments is required, for example in relation to a programme of rehabilitation or treatment associated with a disability, managers should liaise with Human Resources to determine on what basis, this may be reasonably accommodated. A staff member may be required to present evidence of the appointments.

## 5. MANAGEMENT REFERRALS TO WORKPLACE HEALTH & WELLBEING

- 5.1. Workplace Health & Wellbeing can support the manager and staff member in dealing with sickness absence management issues in a number of ways including assessing fitness to work and the development of rehabilitation programmes. Managers may refer a member of staff to Workplace Health & Wellbeing, at any point during employment where the manager deems that this may be beneficial. In some cases, where appropriate staff may be referred to other occupational health specialists by Human Resources or Workplace Health & Wellbeing.
- 5.2. A management referral to Workplace Health & Wellbeing will require the staff's informed consent. Please refer to Managing Performance Toolkit for further guidance.

## 6. PAY AND PENSION ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1. Staff should refer to their terms and conditions for information relating to sick pay provision.
- 6.2. Entitlements to paid sick leave are calculated from the date the absence commenced. If, due to length of service, a staff member's entitlement to paid sick leave increases during the absence, this increase will not take effect until the return to work. Human Resources will notify the individual at the point that entitlement to sick leave with full pay expires and at the point that any entitlement to half pay ends.
- 6.3. Staff whose salary is reduced as a result of sickness absence, should contact the Pensions Office for information, as a reduction in salary may affect pension contributions.

## 7. SICKNESS/ANNUAL LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1. Where prevented from taking the minimum statutory annual leave entitlement, due to sickness absence, in any leave year, a staff member will be able to request the carryover of any unused entitlement. Such a request should be made prior to the end of the leave year in which it was accrued and is limited to the minimum statutory carryover provisions defined by the Working Time Regulations 1998, as amended. Any annual leave carried over must be taken by 31 December of the new leave year or it will be deemed lost.



- 7.2. In cases where staff become ill or injured just prior to or whilst on a period of annual leave and seek to reclaim all or any part of their annual leave (limited to the statutory minimum entitlement), the University reserves the right to require them to provide satisfactory medical evidence, from a recognised medical practitioner, showing that the individual was unable to work due to the illness or injury at the time of the annual leave. Such medical evidence should cover the duration of the illness or injury whilst on leave. Any resultant overpayments would be reclaimable by the University. A staff member would also be required to follow the notification requirements (see section 3 above) to report the sickness, at the time it occurs.
- 7.3. Annual leave can be taken during periods of sickness absence, subject to the approval of the individual's Head of Department. Such annual leave will not impact on the calculation of any existing 12 month rolling period used to calculate sick pay entitlement.
- 7.4. Staff who are ill during public holidays, bank holidays and closure days', or during any other times that the University is closed, cannot re-claim these days.

## 8. OTHER PROVISIONS

- 8.1. Records of action taken under the sickness absence management procedure will be kept confidential and retained in accordance with the University's Information Security Policy. The handling of personal data is controlled by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and associated legislation. When discussing issues relating to ill health and sickness absence with a staff member, the individual should be advised that the conversation will remain confidential, but that it may be necessary to disclose certain details to relevant parties to ensure all relevant support is considered, the procedure can be implemented, and the University's duty of care is met.
- 8.2. Human Resources shall regularly monitor equality statistics relating to sickness absence matters and these will be shared with the Human Resources Committee (HRC) and the Joint Union and Campus Committee (JUCC).
- 8.3. The Procedure was formally approved by HRC and agreed by JUCC on 20 January 2014.