



Absence Management

Policy

Aims

The health and well-being of all employees of the University is essential if the institution is to achieve its strategic objectives. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the University meets its obligations under employment, equality and Health and Safety legislation with regard to employee welfare and absence and that all employees are treated fairly and equitably and with respect, understanding and sensitivity. This Policy aims to balance the needs of the individual with the operational needs of the organisation by encouraging and developing a positive culture towards attendance at work and reducing sickness absence.

The University recognises that employee absence due to ill-health cannot always be avoided. The effects of absence include disruption to students and increased workloads for colleagues which can then lead to increased tensions and low morale. The Policy and related procedures aim to minimise absence levels across the University whilst supporting employees with health difficulties and assisting them back to work at the earliest opportunity.

Scope

The Policy applies to all employees, across all grades and groups including academic and non-academic, fixed term and part time hourly paid lecturers, part time and full time, permanent and temporary. It can also apply to those temporarily associated with the University (e.g., wardens, Students Union, Agency Workers) if appropriate.

All managers and employees must recognise that any individual scheduled to work from home or at locations other than on University sites, including training courses or similar must follow the same procedures.

The University recognises that an individual's personal or domestic situation may require understanding and consideration by their line manager. In such circumstances, individuals should discuss their situation as openly as possible with their line manager who is encouraged to support the individual by considering the use of Time off for Dependents, Parental Leave, or Unpaid Leave where appropriate.

Please also see Time away from work pages. The University also has an Employee Assistance Programme provider that can provide help, advice and support, [LifeWorks](#) , the user id and password are on your membership card, if you have lost your membership card, please contact HR.

Responsibilities

Employee

- Attend work when fit to do so and maintain regular direct contact with their line manager when not fit to do so. Please note, migrant employees who fail to make contact may be in breach of their visa, which will affect their ability to remain in the country.
- Comply with the Absence Management Policy, Absence Reporting Procedure and Attendance Management Processes
- Advise their line manager of any medical condition they have that may affect their ability to carry out their role effectively
- Advise HR if the absence is caused by an actionable third party in respect of whom compensation is recovered. It is a condition that any payment made in respect of sick pay is repaid to the University. The amount of any repayment will be determined by the University but will not exceed the actual damages recovered or the part thereof identified as loss of earnings.
- N.B. If an award has been made by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, the University will not seek repayment of any proportion of the sum awarded.

Line manager

- Understand the Absence Management Policy, and related procedures, attending appropriate training as required
- Manage sickness absence effectively in accordance with the Absence Management Policy and related procedures
- Treat employees consistently and with respect, understanding and sensitivity
- Ensure that employees are aware of the Absence Management Policy and procedures
- Maintain regular direct contact with employees during periods of sickness absence, having regard for the nature of the illness. Advice & support on maintaining contact will be given by HR. Please note, if the employee is subject to a visa is essential that contact is maintained to ensure that the University

retains our licence to sponsor non-EEA nationals. Additional advice on maintaining contact with a migrant employee is available from HR.

Human Resources

- To provide training, coaching, advice, guidance and support as necessary
- Monitor absence and provide reports as appropriate
- Liaise with Occupational Health as appropriate

Sick pay

To qualify for occupational sick pay, the employee must adhere to the University's Absence Reporting Procedure, failure to do so could result in non-payment of occupational sick pay. Where employees do not receive occupational sick pay, they may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for which conditions apply. Once SSP is exhausted, an employee normally transfers onto benefits, paid directly by the Department of Work and Pensions. Details of sick pay entitlements are as follows:

Professional Services

| Year of service | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th/5th | 5+ |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Full pay | 31 days/1 month | 61 days/2 months | 122 days/4 months | 152 days/5 months | 183 days/6 months |
| Half pay | 61 days (after 4 months of service) | 61 days/2 months | 122 days/4 months | 152 days/5 months | 183 days/6 months |

For each period of absence any previous sickness absence in the last 12 months will be deducted from the above entitlements. The practice of including sickness absence in the last 12 months is known as a “rolling year”. If during a period of absence an employee

moves into a new year of service, the sickness entitlement will be adjusted accordingly.

Academic staff

| Year of service | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4+ |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Full pay | 31 days/1 month | 92 days/3 months | 122 days/4 months | 183 days/6 months |
| Half pay | 61 days (after 4 months of service) | 92 days/3 months | 122 days/4 months) | 183 days/6 months |

1. For the purposes of calculating entitlement a month shall be deemed to include 22 working days (including Saturday where this is a working day). This scale is to be regarded as a minimum and the University has the discretion to extend the scheme in individual cases. For the purposes of this paragraph a working day is defined as any day on which the University is open but is not the lecturer's personal holiday entitlement.
2. The year shall be deemed to begin on 1st April of each year and end on 31st March of the following year. This is the case, except where a lecturer's service commences on a date other than 1st April. In this case service shall be deemed for the purpose of this scheme, to have commenced on the preceding 1st April subject to the completion of four calendar months actual service before half pay can be claimed. This is also in the case for a lecturer who is absent owing to illness on 31st March of any year. That lecturer shall not begin new entitlement to sick leave in respect of the following year until he/she has resumed teaching duty. The period from 1st April until the return to duty is deemed to be part of the preceding year for the purpose of the scheme.
3. In the case of a lecturer transferred from the service of one HEI to that of another, any sick pay paid during the current year by the previous HEI shall be taken into account in calculating the amount and duration of sick pay payable by the new HEI.
4. In the case of absence due to an accident attested by an approved medical practitioner to have arisen out of and in the course of a lecturer's employment, including any extracurricular or voluntary activity connected with the institution, full

pay shall in all cases be allowed, on the production of the appropriate medical certification. Payment will be from the day of the accident up to the date of recovery and not exceeding six months, after which the case will be reviewed for a decision on any extension of the period of sick pay. Absence resulting from such accident shall not be reconciled against the lecturer's entitlement to sick leave under the above.

5. Occupational sick pay shall not be paid in case of accident due to active participation in sport as a profession, unless the University by resolution decides otherwise, though Statutory Sick Pay may be payable.
6. N.B. Service related increases to sick pay entitlement will be applied as soon as they occur, including during any period of sickness absence.

If the University is of the opinion that the absence from work is due to misconduct, or if the employee has failed to observe the conditions of the scheme, or has been guilty of conduct prejudicial to his or her recovery, the payment of any sick pay under the scheme may be suspended provided that in any such case the University shall inform the employee may, at his or her option, have recourse to the grievance procedure.

Employees on reduced hours, either as a result of advice from a GP on a fit note or from the Occupational Health Service are still not fit for some hours and therefore sick when not at work. Employees in this situation will not suffer financial detriment during their phased return to work. If they are still receiving full or half sick pay they will continue to receive normal pay for the hours worked and normal sick pay for the hours not worked or at the individual employees request accrued annual leave can be used to cover the non-working hours. If the employee has exhausted all of their sick pay, they will only be paid for the hours worked during the phased return and accrued annual leave can be used to make up the additional hours, if wished. If the employee has not returned to normal working hours, within the agreed timescale, this will be reviewed.

How your sick pay is calculated

When you are off sick from work, you will be paid in accordance with your entitlement under the University's Occupational Sick Pay Scheme. The amount you will be paid depends on your length of service and the length of time that you have been absent from work during the qualifying period.

The pay you receive is calculated across the full calendar month in which it will be

paid (including weekends if you are sick for 7 days or more). For example:

A full time member of staff who is off sick for 9 days (e.g. Wednesday to Thursday) in June, who is entitled to receive full pay for the period of absence will receive pay as follows:

Salary £20,000 pa

June is a 30 day month. The daily rate of pay in June is therefore $\text{£}20\text{k} / 12 / 30 = \text{£}55.55$ per day.

The payslip will show:

- Basic Salary £1166.66 (full pay for 21 calendar days in June)
- Sick Pay £500.00 (full pay for 9 calendar days @ full pay (£55.55 per day))

Giving a total pay of £1666.66 which is exactly equal to 1/12 of your normal monthly pay.

A full time member of staff who is off sick for 9 days (eg Wednesday to Thursday) in June and entitled only to receive half pay during this period of absence, will receive pay as follows:

June is a 30 day month. The daily rate of pay in June is therefore $\text{£}20\text{k} / 12 / 30 = \text{£}55.55$ per day. The daily rate at half pay = $\text{£}27.78$ per day

The payslip will show:

- Basic Salary £1166.66 (full pay for 21 calendar days in June)
- Sick Pay £250.02 (ie 9 calendar days in June @ half pay (£27.78 per day))

A part time member of staff (working 18.5 hours/0.5 fte) who is off sick for 9 days (eg Wednesday to Thursday) in June and entitled to receive full pay during

this period of absence, will receive pay as follows:

June is a 30 day month. The daily rate of pay in June is therefore $\text{£}20\text{k} / 12 / 30 / 37 * 18.5 = \text{£}27.78$ per day.

The payslip will show:

- Basic Salary $\text{£}583.38$ (full pay for 21 calendar days in June)
- Sick Pay $\text{£}250.02$ (ie 9 calendar days in June @ full pay ($\text{£}27.78$ per day))

A part time member of staff (working 18.5 hours/0.5 fte) who is off sick for 9 days (eg Wednesday to Thursday) in June and entitled only to receive half pay during this period of absence, will receive pay as follows:

June is a 30 day month. The daily rate of pay in June is therefore $\text{£}20\text{k} / 12 / 30 / 37 * 18.5 = \text{£}27.78$ per day. The daily rate at half pay = $\text{£}13.89$ per day

The payslip will show:

- Basic Salary $\text{£}583.38$ (full pay for 21 calendar days in June)
- Sick Pay $\text{£}125.01$ (ie 9 calendar days in June @ half pay ($\text{£}13.89$ per day))

Sickness and annual leave

1. If an employee becomes unwell during a period of annual leave, on a Public Holiday or one of the other leave days fixed by the University, their leave entitlement will only be reinstated if the employee informs their line manager on the first day of sickness, or as soon as practicable thereafter, and submits a medical certificate.
2. Leave entitlement will not be reinstated to employees without certification.

Disability related absence

A person is disabled if they have a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse impact on their ability to carry out day to day activities.' Where an employee has declared a disability covered under the Equality Act 2010, any absence that occurs as a direct consequence of the disability will be recorded separately for monitoring purposes, but will be calculated for sick pay purposes.

These absences will be subject to return to work interviews to ensure that the line manager can check the health and well-being of the employee and consider the need for reasonable adjustment. They are not likely to be the subject of formal meetings or target setting unless the absence surrounding the disability is higher than anticipated. Line Managers are encouraged to seek advice from an HR Adviser if an employee declares they have a disability.

Pregnancy related absence

1. Pregnancy-related sickness absence should be recorded separately for monitoring purposes and should not be taken into account when looking at triggers. However, sickness absence levels will be calculated for sick pay purposes.
2. An employee who is absent due to a pregnancy-related illness during the four week period prior to her due date will be required to start her maternity leave, and will therefore receive maternity pay and not sick pay. Ad-hoc days of pregnancy-related illness during this period may be disregarded if the employee wishes to defer the start of her maternity leave period.

Stress related absence

The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.” Stress takes many forms and as well as leading to anxiety and depression it can have a significant impact on an employee’s physical health. Employers have a legal duty to assess the risk of work-related stress and to take measures to control these risks. Employees have a shared obligation to manage stress by keeping managers informed when they consider they are becoming stressed. Please see further guidance and advice on LifeWorks and in our area on [Stress](#).

Occupational Health

1. The University may use the services of an Occupational Health provider to seek medical advice and guidance on existing employees with the authorisation of the employee. This independent medical advice assists line managers and HR to make informed decisions and taken appropriate action with regard to fitness for work. All appointments to the University may also be subject to satisfactory health clearance.
2. Employees can be asked at any time to attend Occupational Health. While employees have the statutory right to withhold their consent to their employer approaching their own GP or Occupational Health for a medical report, if an

employee does choose to withhold their consent the University will still have to form a view as to how the illness and/or absence levels are affecting the employee's work, but without the benefit of medical advice and opinion.

3. With effect from 1st April 2015 the Government introduced the "Fit for Work" scheme, which provides work related health advice for employees and employers. Further information can be found at [Fit for Work](#) or by telephoning the helpline (0800 032 6235). This process includes an occupational health assessment referral via the employee's GP or the employer. The Fit for Work service is not mandatory, nevertheless, the University does expect employees to participate if recommended by their GP, and for employees and line managers to have due consideration for any recommendations made by the service. These will be considered in line with paragraph 5.2 of the Absence reporting procedure, and the University will work with the employee and the "Fit for Work" service to facilitate a return to work, where possible. The University will continue to use its own occupational health referral process as per the paragraphs above.

Reporting of accidents and dangerous occurrences

All accidents, near misses and hazards must be reported to the Health, Safety and Fire Manager on the 'Accident/Dangerous Occurrences' form. Please see further guidance and relevant forms on in our [Medical Matters section](#). These forms can also be obtained from First Aiders, Receptionists and School administration offices. The form must be completed by the employee and when signed sent to the Safety, Health and Environment Office.

Alcohol and substance abuse and smoking

The University has an Alcohol and Substance Abuse Policy which aims to:

- Promote the health and well-being of employees and to minimise problems at work arising from the effects of alcohol or drugs
- Identify employees with problems relating to the effects of alcohol or drugs at an early stage
- Offer support to employees known to have alcohol or drugs-related problems affecting their work, with referral to an appropriate source for diagnosis and treatment if necessary.

An employee suffering from drug or alcohol dependency should declare such

dependency, and the organisation will subsequently provide reasonable assistance, treating absences and/or rehabilitation as any other sickness absence. But failure to accept help, or continue with treatment which has further impact at work, will render the employee liable to normal disciplinary procedures.

The University recognises the need to provide a healthy and safe environment that is smoke-free for all employees, students, visitors and contractors. Advice and support for employees who wish to quit smoking can be found at

- [Go Smoke Free](#)
- [NHS Smoke Free guidance](#)
- [We Quit](#)

Absence reporting procedure

The purpose of the Absence Reporting Procedure is to ensure that the University has accurate records of individual sickness absence. This is so that individuals' health can be managed using fair and accurate data and that the University has accurate data to enable it to run its service for the benefit of its service users. Please note that failure to comply with this reporting procedure will affect entitlement to occupational sick pay.

Absence reporting

What to do if absent from work due to sickness:

1. Advise line manager of sickness
2. All employees unable to attend work due to sickness must personally, where possible to do so, contact their line manager, or other previously agreed contact, by telephone in the first instance, preferably within 1 hour of their normal start time, giving details of:
 - The reason for absence (use the drop down list on the online process)
 - How long they expect to be off
 - Any outstanding or urgent work issues including meetings that need attention
3. If an employee becomes sick at work, requiring them to leave, they must advise their line manager accordingly. This should be prior to leaving the premises.
4. Maintain contact with line manager

5. If the absence continues for more than the originally expected period, contact the line manager again and advise how long the absence is expected to continue.
6. Obtain a medical certificate if the absence lasts longer than 7 calendar days
7. If the absence continues for longer than 7 calendar days, a doctor's certificate must cover all of the absence after that date. Continuous doctor's certificates must be obtained until the employee returns to work.
8. N.B. Occupational and Statutory Sick Pay is dependent upon the production of valid certification.

Medical appointments

1. Employees are usually expected to make doctors and dental appointments outside their normal working hours. If this is not possible, appointments should be made at the beginning or the end of the day and line manager agreement must be sought prior to attending appointments in normal working time. Employees will not be required to make up reasonable time spent at doctors or dentists. A common sense approach will be used by line managers with regard to time spent travelling to and from doctors and dentists.
2. Employees attending hospital appointments will not normally be required to make up reasonable time spent attending these appointments as long as an appointment card/letter is shown to line managers prior to attendance. Employees, who are required to attend regular hospital appointments over a lengthy period should, as far as is practicable, make them outside of normal working hours.
3. If an employee is undergoing fertility treatment, GP and hospital appointments should be managed as above. Where treatment means taking a full day or longer period of time away from work this will be recorded as sickness absence and the employee should follow the usual absence reporting procedures.
4. When time recording, the maximum amount of time that can be credited for days where they have attended at doctors, dentists and hospital appointments is 7.5 hours (Monday to Thursday) and 7 hours on a Friday.

Online absence recording process

Absence will be recorded electronically by the line manager using BSU's online absence monitoring process. The purpose of the online monitoring process is to provide managers and employees with a simplified recording procedure. As it is

electronic it will reduce paper and improve reporting, the forms will be quicker and easier to complete and therefore should save time.

