

# SICK LEAVE

Use this Checklist to familiarise yourself with what to do when someone you manage is unwell or on prolonged sick leave.

## Procedures for Managers for Reporting Sick Leave Absence and Returning to Work

Managers play a key role in ensuring all employees are treated equally during their sick leave absence. They should:

- Ensure all employee's sick leave is recorded
- Pass all medical certificates to HR as they receive them for timely processing of sick pay benefits
- Have a discussion with employees on their return to work following each absence from work due to illness (following consultation with HR if appropriate). This should be done informally, in private, on the day of the employee's return to work or as soon as possible thereafter. The aim of this discussion is to:
  - Welcome the employee back to work
  - Offer support as required
  - Advise re. the Employee Assistance Programme, as appropriate
  - Update the employee on any relevant work-related matters
  - Identify any possible health and safety issues in the workplace which may be affecting the employee's attendance

A record of these discussions should be retained by the manager for future reference and discussed with HR where appropriate

## Managers should be aware of the 'Procedures for Employees for reporting sick leave absence'

All employees are required to inform their manager if they are unable to attend work due to illness in accordance with the University's Sick Leave Policy, as follows:

- They must notify their manager, by telephone, at the earliest opportunity on the first day of absence
- This notification should indicate whether or not a certificate will be furnished and the likely return to work date
- Text or email is only acceptable when the employee attempts to telephone their manager, are unable to get through and/or are unable to leave a voicemail

## Procedures for Dealing with Persistent Short-Term Sick Leave Absence

- The procedure for managing frequent short term sick leave absence is designed to be supportive and aims to help employees achieve regular attendance at work
- Sick leave absences should be dealt with promptly and consistently. Managers shall discuss all absences with employees as they occur
- Where frequent short term sick leave absences occur (whether certified or uncertified), employees may be referred to the University's Occupational Health Provider and/or Employee Assistance Programme, even if at work
- Where there is no underlying medical reason, the employee should be advised that their sick leave absence levels are unsatisfactory. Managers should advise such employees that improvement is required and of the consequences if their attendance does not improve

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- If there is no satisfactory improvement in attendance over time, the matter may be dealt with under disciplinary procedures, in consultation with the HR department

## Procedures for Dealing with Long Term Sick Leave Absence

- *Long-term sick leave is defined as any absence of 20 consecutive working days or more*
- Regular contact should be maintained between the manager and the employee during extended periods of sick leave. Weekly medical certs should be sent by the employee to their manager/Head of Department or HR. On occasions, monthly medical certificates may be submitted, with the agreement of the manager, in consultation with HR. The employee is responsible for keeping their manager informed of their progress and the likely return to work date
- During long-term sick leave absence, the employee may be advised of the Employee Assistance Programme and/or be referred to the University's Occupational Health Provider
- A fitness to return to work certificate is required after four week's continuous absence or greater
- Employees may not return to work unless they are medically fit to do so. In cases of long-term sick leave absence, the employee's own treating medical specialist and/or GP must certify that the employee is fit to return to work. In certain situations, the employee may be required to attend the University Occupational Health Provider prior to return
- Where sick pay and TRR have been exhausted, the Manager should liaise with HR regarding next steps

## Phased Return to Work following Sick Leave Absence

- A phased return to work may be recommended by the University's medical advisors where an employee has been absent due to a long-term illness, an injury or following surgery. Any such recommendation made by a treating specialist/GP will be assessed and confirmed by the University's Occupational Health Provider.
- A phased return to work is considered a reasonable accommodation under the Disability and Equality Acts. A phased return to work is not suitable in every situation and is assessed on a case by case basis
- In the event that a phased return to work is recommended, the manager should contact the employee (following consultation with HR) to discuss:
  - When the phased return to work is to start
  - What attendance pattern the employee will work in terms of days/hours (if not advised by OHP)
  - Location of where the employee will work
  - If there are any other changes to working arrangements required (e.g. a special chair or computer equipment)
- The manager should liaise with and notify HR of the final agreed arrangements
- Employees on a phased return to work are considered to be on certified sick leave for the duration of time they are not fit to work. They will receive salary for the time that they are at work and sick pay for the time that they are unfit for work, in accordance with their sick pay benefits