

Absence Reporting Procedure

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1. Introduction

This procedure sets out the process you should follow if you have an unplanned absence from work. It outlines how you should report your absence, what medical certification may be needed, as well as our expectations around keeping in touch throughout your absence.

This procedure also explains what will happen if you don't follow this process and how we will deal with absences which we class as 'unauthorised'.

This procedure should be read alongside our [Sickness Absence Policy](#), which sets out our approach to managing sickness absence at the University.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. Who is Covered by this Procedure?

This procedure applies to all University employees.

All employees must ensure they follow this procedure. Failure to follow this procedure may affect your pay and we may investigate matters under our [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

3. Discussing Absences Related to Sensitive/Personal Issues

We understand that talking about medical and personal issues can sometimes be difficult and, as such, you may not always feel comfortable discussing these matters. For example, due to the nature of the health issue, or for reasons of religion, belief, or culture, you may prefer to discuss your health with someone of the same gender. Please be assured we're here to support you and your manager will always handle things as confidentially and sensitively as possible and avoid intrusive questions. They'll also offer an early referral to [Occupational Health](#) (staff login required), the [Staff Disability Adviser](#) (staff login required), or other wellbeing support should this be appropriate. If you still have concerns, please contact [Human Resources](#) for advice. For anyone who is trans, non-binary or gender diverse, we also have our [Ask Alex](#) service.

More information about how we process your medical and sickness information can be found in our Sickness Absence policy.

Just so you know, the University offers a range of resources and support services for staff and managers. Please see our [Wellbeing Hub](#) for more information.

4. Initial Notification

If you can't work because of sickness or injury, you need to let us know. You must call your manager (or other designated contact) before your usual start time or within the first hour.

You need to make sure you know who to call and have the phone numbers you need. Managers should ensure appropriate reporting arrangements are in place for any days they may be working remotely and ensure this is communicated to their team.

You're expected to contact your manager by phone or video call (rather than by email or text) so that a meaningful conversation can take place.

You're expected to make contact personally, rather than send a message through a family member or friend, unless you really can't call yourself (for example due to severe illness/injury or hospitalisation). If you're unable to speak directly to your manager when you call, leave your contact number and your manager will call you back later.

When you call, let your manager know:

- why you're absent.
- whether you have sought, or intend to seek, medical advice.
- when you think you might be back to work, and
- details of any outstanding or urgent work that requires attention, or meetings/classes that need rescheduled, while you're absent.

As a minimum, you'll normally be expected to make contact again on the fourth day of absence. And for ongoing absences, for contact to be weekly thereafter. But we know every situation is different, so in some cases it might be appropriate for you to make contact again sooner or later than this. Your manager will agree with you what is appropriate in the circumstances.

If you feel that the reason for your absence is to do with your work, it's important that you let your manager know as soon as possible so that we can try to resolve things. If you feel you can't discuss the matter with your manager, you can speak to an alternative manager or someone in Human Resources if you'd prefer.

5. Keeping in Touch

You're expected to keep in contact with your manager (or other designated contact) at regular intervals throughout your absence.

You should keep them updated with any new information about your health and how you're progressing towards recovery.

It's important that you follow the absence reporting procedure and maintain regular contact for every unplanned absence. If you don't, your absence may be regarded as unauthorised and appropriate action may be taken.

And remember, if you're sponsored by the University under the UK Visa and Immigration system, you have additional obligations under the terms of your visa to maintain regular contact with the University during a period of absence. Any unauthorised absences of more than 10 working days will result in the University formally reporting the matter to UK Visas and Immigration, which could result in the withdrawal of your visa permissions. Please go to [International Staff, Visas, and Immigration](#) (staff login required) for more information.

6. Certification Requirements

Absences lasting seven calendar days or less

For absences lasting **seven calendar days or less** (including weekends or other non-working days, public holidays, and University closure days), your manager will ask you to complete a [self-certificate](#) (staff login required), once you are back at work.

Absences lasting eight calendar days or more

If your sickness absence lasts **eight calendar days or more** (including weekends, non-working days, public holidays, and University closure days), you'll need to obtain a medical certificate from your General Practitioner (GP) or other authorised healthcare professional. The medical certificate is formally called a 'Statement of Fitness for Work' or 'fit note'.

Fit notes are required from the 8th calendar days regardless of whether you work full or part time.

You must submit your fit note to your manager who'll take a copy and return the original to you. If you've been given a fit note via email, the email can be forwarded to your manager – you don't need to print it out.

After you submit your first fit note, further fit notes are required as soon as your current fit note expires. You must ensure the full period of absence is covered without any gaps.

We want your pay to be right, so, if you think there's going to be any delay in submitting fit notes, you need to let your manager know in advance, otherwise your absence may be classed as unauthorised, and your sick pay withheld.

7. Returning to Work

You can return to work once your fit note expires without needing to get another fit note from your doctor to confirm your fitness for work. If you feel better and want to return to work before the expiry of your fit note, you should contact your manager to discuss and agree this. If your manager is concerned that you aren't well enough to return, they may refer you to [Occupational Health](#) (staff login required) for an assessment of fitness for work.

8. Unauthorised Absence

If you fail to follow the absence reporting procedure, or don't have the correct fit notes to cover your absence, your absence may be regarded as unauthorised. This includes where you provide the required medical certificates, but you fail to keep in regular contact with your manager (or other designated contact) without good reason. In these circumstances we reserve the right to withhold your Occupational Sick Pay (OSP). If you do not send us the required medical certificates, we will also stop your Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Following an investigation, you may be required to attend a formal meeting under our Disciplinary procedure where you could receive a disciplinary sanction, up to and including summary dismissal. If there are mitigating circumstances, we encourage you to let us know so that we can support you.

9. Further Information and Support

If you have questions about any aspect of this policy, you can speak to your manager, or contact [Human Resources](#). More information and support, for both staff and managers, can also be found on our [Staff Wellbeing](#) (staff login required) pages and in our [Sickness Absence Manager Toolbox](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.

And remember, our free and independent Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider, can also offer confidential support. Visit our [Wellbeing Hub](#) for more information.

10. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please refer to our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.