

Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy



Policy owner: UCD HR

Approval date and body:

UMT, 2 November 2021

1. Purpose

Effective attendance management is essential to the organisation of a high quality and cost effective university. The purpose of this policy is to set out UCD's commitment to supporting staff wellbeing and welfare as part of its overall managing attendance policy; with a view to assisting staff members to fulfil their contractual obligations and to render regular and efficient service, leading to the achievement of university goals in line with UCD's Strategic Plan. UCD is committed to maintaining the safety, health and welfare of staff while at work and doing all that is reasonably practicable to assist staff members who are absent from work due to injury or ill-health to return to work as soon as possible.

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To provide practical guidance to Heads of School/Units/Line Managers on promoting a positive culture of attendance in the workplace and managing sickness absence
- To clarify the role and functions of the Occupational Health Provider and the Employee Assistance Programme
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff members, Heads of School/Units/Line Managers and UCD Human Resources in the effective implementation of this policy
- To set out UCD's sick leave arrangements

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all permanent and temporary staff members in UCD

3. Principles

UCD's Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy demonstrates the university's commitment to staff members' health and welfare at work, specifically outlining the university's managing attendance and sick leave policy in this regard.

UCD operates a sick pay scheme for staff that are absent due to injury or ill-health. The continuing provision of UCD sick pay arrangements is conditional on staff members complying with this policy and cooperating with any measures to facilitate their return to work.

Heads of School/Units & Line Managers have a key role in managing attendance and their responsibilities include: communicating the importance of regular attendance to all staff members; addressing issues which may be adversely affecting staff members' motivation to attend work; managing health and safety; monitoring attendance; ensuring compliance with the sick leave

arrangements and dealing with staff members whose attendance record is unsatisfactory in a fair and consistent manner.

3.1 Responsibilities for Notification Requirements

On the first day of illness, a staff member who is absent from work through illness must notify his/her Head of School/Unit/Line Manager as early as possible before their scheduled commencement of duty and on the third working day must forward a medical certificate to him/her for recording and subsequent transmission to HR.

3.2 Absenteeism/Punctuality

Regular attendance and good time-keeping are an essential part of the smooth and effective running of the University. A staff member's immediate Supervisor/ Head of School will monitor attendance and time-keeping. All absences from work should be authorised by the University. Where absence is due to illness, procedures as outlined above for sick leave will apply.

It is the policy of UCD HR to advise on the absence records of all staff members, where known. Where a member of staff is absent for a continuous period of 4 weeks or on an intermittent basis, it is considered appropriate to refer the staff member to the University's Occupational Health Provider for professional advice on the staff member's fitness to work. This is done in the best interests of the staff member concerned.

All staff members must comply fully with this policy in order to avail of sick pay arrangements.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Regular attendance of staff is essential in order to deliver an efficient and high quality service. It is very important therefore that staff members and management ensure high standards of attendance at work. This section clarifies the roles and responsibilities of staff members, Heads of School/Units/Line Managers and UCD Human Resources in the effective management of attendance; and sets out the functions of service providers.

4.1 Staff Member:

- To provide regular and efficient service
- To minimise absences arising from accidents and ill health at work by complying with the Health & Safety Statement available on the SIRC webpage and taking reasonable care of their own safety and that of others
- To comply with all provisions of the Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy which include:
 - To notify the appropriate Head of School/Unit/Line Manager directly or in accordance with local arrangements as soon as possible before normal/scheduled starting time
 - To maintain regular contact during extended periods of absence to keep the Head of School/Unit/Line Manager advised of progress and likely date of return
 - To submit medical certificates to the Head of School/Unit/Line Manager as and when required. The duration of the medical certificate must be specified and follow up medical certificates submitted on a weekly basis unless otherwise advised
 - To participate in a return to work follow up with their Head of School/Unit/Line Manager following each episode of sick leave absence
 - To cooperate fully with rehabilitative measures to facilitate his/her return to work as soon as he/she is capable of doing so.

4.2 Head of School/Unit/Line Manager:

- To promote a positive attendance culture in the workplace by communicating the importance of regular attendance, fostering teamwork and fostering a dignity at work environment for all staff members
- To communicate HR policies (such as Dignity at Work and the Grievance Procedure) and deal promptly with issues which may affect a staff member's motivation to attend work e.g. alleged bullying/harassment, grievances
- To familiarise themselves with best practice management guidelines in relation to managing attendance
- To manage health and safety in the workplace
- To ensure that staff are familiar with the sick leave procedure
- To ensure compliance with the notification and certification requirements
- To ensure that where staff members take more than the seven day limit of self-certified leave, any such period will be considered an unpaid absence from work and UCD HR should be informed that a recoupment from salary needs to be made, unless a medical certificate is provided to cover the period of absence
- To maintain accurate attendance records in accordance with standard procedures
- To identify patterns and trends of sickness absence, particularly frequent and persistent short term absences which may or may not be related to health reasons
- To maintain contact with the staff member during extended periods of absence
- To liaise with UCD HR in relation to the services provided by the university's Occupational Health Provider where it is believed that health related matters are affecting the staff member's work or work is affecting the staff member's health
- To carry out a dedicated management follow up with the staff member after every episode of absence
- To carry out informal discussions where the staff member's attendance record is giving cause for concern with and advise him/her of the required improvements
- To invoke the disciplinary procedure where appropriate

4.3 UCD Human Resources:

- To provide advice and support to Heads of School/Unit/Line Managers in the monitoring and management of sickness absence; in particular, specific guidance can be sought from the HR Partner in your area
- To help monitor the effectiveness of the Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy and ensure that it is being applied consistently throughout the organisation
- To work with Heads of School/Units to help assist in identifying where improvements can be made
- To liaise with the Occupational Health Provider and Heads of School/Unit/Line Managers in the case of UCD HR/Safety Office referrals to Occupational Health and advise on the implementation of recommendations arising from medical assessments
- To collaborate with Occupational Health Providers/Health and Safety Unit and the Employee Assistance Programme Providers to develop initiatives to promote a safe and healthy working environment

4.4 Occupational Health Provider (CHI-Corporate Health Ireland):

Available to staff following referral by UCD HR or the Safety Office

- To carry out pre-employment medical assessments
- To provide advice on any health related matter which is affecting the staff member's work or the impact of work on the staff member's health
- To advise about the staff member's fitness to undertake his/her full range of contracted duties and to make recommendations on measures to assist the staff member to return to work as quickly and safely as possible
- To advise on the staff member's fitness to undertake modified or alternative duties, if possible and as appropriate
- To advise managers and individuals about any areas of support for health-related problems which may be affecting employment

4.5 Employee Assistance Programme:

- To provide a confidential and professional support and advisory service to assist staff members who are experiencing personal difficulties or need information on the range of services available
- To refer staff members to sources of specialist advice or support where appropriate.

5. Related documents

Further information on sick leave, related policies and procedures can be found on the UCD HR website at www.ucd.ie/hr/leave/

6. Version history

Version	Date	Description	Author
3.1	December 2011	Policy Versioning implemented	UCD HR
4.0	January 2013	Policy updated: Sections 4.2, 5.1 and 5.2 Section 7 days maximum uncertified leave in a rolling 24 month period	UCD HR
5.0	March 2013	Clarification to section 5.2 regarding 7 days self-certified leave on a pro rata basis for Temporary/Fixed Term Staff on contracts of less than 2 years	UCD HR
6.0	May 2013	Section 5.1 and 5.2: clarification in relation to the consequences of not producing a cert once the 7 days self-certified leave limit has been reached and clarification on Pensionability of sick leave.	UCD HR
7.0	September 2013	Section 4.3 amended to take account of HR restructuring	UCD HR
8.0	September 2014	Policy Redrafted as a result of changes to the scheme as directed by DES. Also includes changes to recording of sick leave from 7 to 5 days and the requirement on day 3 of illness.	UCD HR
9.0	July 2020	Policy moved to new template, formatting changes	S Raleigh, UCD HR
10.0	May 2021	New HR website page inserted	P. Fitzgerald, UCD HR