

# Sickness Absence Policy

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## 1. Introduction

The Open University is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of its staff. This document sets out the University's policy on sickness absence.

This policy applies to all staff.

## 2. Responsibilities

All members of staff are required to comply with University guidelines relating to the reporting of sickness absence.

Staff are responsible for notifying their manager of their sickness and recording their sickness absence in the system. Managers are responsible for monitoring and managing sickness absence in accordance with University guidelines.

## 3. Sick pay

### Contractual sick pay

Entitlement to contractual sick pay will be as determined in the appropriate Terms and Conditions of Service.

### Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Members of staff who are unable to work due to illness may be entitled to receive SSP. The University is responsible for paying SSP, which can be paid for up to 28 weeks. Further information is available on the Government website ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

Any SSP due will be included in normal full sick pay. Staff in receipt of half sick pay will receive any SSP due in addition to their half pay, subject to the total gross pay being no more than normal salary on full pay.

## 4. Medical and dental appointments

Members of staff are allowed reasonable paid time off for appointments where these cannot be made in their own time. Time off for appointments should be approved in advance by the manager, where this is feasible. For further information, please refer to the Sickness Absence Procedures.

## **5. Sickness during holidays**

The University's policy on granting compensatory days of holiday for sickness incurred during an agreed period of holiday entitlement is outlined in the appropriate Terms and Conditions of Service.

## **6. Holidays during sickness absence**

Annual leave continues to accrue at the normal rate throughout any period of sickness absence (paid and unpaid). Members of staff on long-term sickness absence have the right to take this annual leave while off sick, subject to normal carry over rules. Further guidance is available in the Sickness Absence Procedures.

## **7. Referrals to Occupational Health**

In line with Terms and Conditions of Service, the University may require employees who are absent due to sickness to undergo a medical examination by a registered medical practitioner. Further details about Management Referrals to Occupational Health are available within Sickness Absence Management - A guide for Managers. The procedure for making a referral can be found on the People Services Intranet or via Ask People Services.

## **9. Phased returns**

If an employee has had a severe illness or a prolonged absence, a phased return to work may be appropriate (please refer to Sickness Absence Management - A guide for Managers for further details). Where this is the case, University policy is that a phased return on full contractual salary (subject to the approval of the Head of Unit) will be over a one month period, or exceptionally two months if the circumstances require the extension. If the circumstances are not exceptional or the phased return needs to continue beyond the two months, members of staff may use holiday entitlement during the extended period to make up their hours, or alternatively, contractual hours may be changed temporarily.

## **10. Redeployment on ill-health grounds**

Redeployment may be considered where illness or injury requires alternative work arrangements on a permanent basis.

The University recognises its duty under equality legislation to consider redeployment as one of a range of possible reasonable adjustments, where applicable.

For further guidance, please refer to the Sickness Absence Procedures.

## **10. Equality, diversity and inclusion**

Policies are inclusive of all Open University staff, regardless of age, care experience, caring status or dependency, civil status, disability, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnership, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or trades union membership status.

## **11. Useful references**

Sickness Absence Procedures  
Sickness Absence Management - A guide for Managers  
Terms and Conditions of Service