UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Health & Attendance Policy

Health and Attendance Policy

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1. Context

The University is committed to supporting employee wellbeing and providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff. Nevertheless, most employees will need time off due to illness at some point during their employment. This Policy applies to situations where an employee is medically unfit to work. It covers absence related to both physical and mental health conditions and recognises that some employees have long-term conditions, are disabled or neurodivergent.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Attendance Procedure. Guidance on supporting disabled employees is provided in the Disability and Employment Policy. Any performance issue that relates to health or disability should be addressed using the Capability Policy.

In this Policy and the accompanying procedure, the term 'manager' refers to the individual who holds responsibility for the activities, performance, and support of a team comprising one or more employees. As line management arrangements differ across the University, if necessary, the responsibilities outlined below may be fulfilled by another appropriate individual to ensure staff are appropriately supported.

This Policy is not contractual and may be amended from time to time, considering changes in legislation or operational requirements.

2. Eligibility

This Policy applies to all employees of the University of Cambridge.

Schedule to Statute C (formerly Statute U) applies when considering ill-health dismissal for Established Officers.

For employees holding honorary clinical contracts, attendance issues will be managed jointly by the University and the relevant NHS Trust.

3. Statement of Policy

This Policy is based on the following principles:

- Employees will come to work when expected if they are well enough to do so.
- Employees will take sick leave if they are not medically fit to work.
- Employees will not take sick leave if they are due to work and are medically fit. Another type of leave must be used to cover other situations where employees need or want to take time off.
- Managers will address sickness absence in a sensitive and supportive way.

- Managers will proactively explore reasonable workplace adjustments for disabled employees.
- Employees will engage with the steps outlined in the Health and Attendance Procedure.
- If a disabled employee is no longer able do their job with reasonable adjustments in place, medical redeployment will be explored to help retain them in employment with the University (see Redeployment Framework).
- If medical redeployment is not possible, the University will follow a transparent process to consider whether employment should be terminated on the grounds of medical capability. The University will do this compassionately, will keep the employee fully informed, and will explore whether they are eligible for ill-health retirement.
- The term "workplace adjustment" refers to the University's legal obligation to remove or reduce a disadvantage in the workplace related to someone's disability, including where the University could reasonably be expected to know that someone is disabled. Workplace adjustments funded by the University must be reasonable, as defined in the Disability and Employment Policy.
- Misuse of sick leave and pay will be addressed via the relevant disciplinary procedure rather than this Policy.
- For the purposes of this Policy, 'working day' is defined as any day except a Saturday, Sunday, bank holiday, or any day authorised by the Council as a closure day, irrespective of an employee's working pattern.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Head of Institution (or nominated deputy)

- Ensure that the Policy and Procedure is implemented within their Institution.
- Chair formal Stage 3 Absence Review Meetings.

Manager

- Ensure employees understand this Policy and what is expected of them.
- Monitor and ensure that there are accurate records of employees' sickness absence.
- Address attendance issues in a timely, fair and supportive way following the steps outlined in the Procedure.
- Seek input from Occupational Health (OH) and HR Business Partnering Team when needed.

Employee

- Comply with the steps outlined in the Policy and Procedure and engage with actions at each stage to support attendance and return to work following absence.
- Attend OH appointments if asked to do so. The manager will always ask the employee for their consent before making an OH referral. An employee can decline to attend an OH appointment, however they should be aware that management of absence will continue based on the information available to them and without medical advice from OH.

Human Resources

- Provide guidance to managers on the application of this Policy.
- Provide guidance to managers about workplace adjustments.
- Attend formal meetings to provide procedural advice.

Occupational Health

Taking into account the employee's role and the context in which they work, provide advice on:

- Whether an employee is fit to return to work or when they might be fit to return to work.
- Whether an employee has an underlying health condition and the likely impact on attendance or performance.
- Actions the employee or manager could take to support attendance including reasonable workplace adjustments.
- Whether an employee is likely to be considered disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Trade Union Representative, Work Colleague or Support Worker

- Support and advise the employee.
- Ask questions or make representations on behalf of the employee at formal meetings.

A work colleague needs to be an employee of the University.

Note Taker

The note taker is usually someone from HR with no previous involvement in the case. They will take notes of key points at formal meetings.

5. Further information

Employees with questions about this Policy should speak to their manager in the first instance. Managers needing guidance of the application of this Policy or the associated Procedure should speak to their HR Business Partnering Team.

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