

## **APPENDIX 1 – ABSENCE NOTIFICATION AND RECORDING PROCEDURES**

### *Notification from the member of staff*

1. Staff should be made aware of the notification procedure for sickness absence during their departmental induction, and of the fact that their attendance levels will be monitored throughout their employment with the University. They should be made aware that they will not be entitled to receive any sickness benefits if they do not follow the absence notification procedure.
2. Staff are required to inform their immediate line manager as early as possible on their first day of absence, and no later than two hours after the normal time of starting work. If the immediate line manager is unavailable they should contact another senior member of staff. They should give the following information:
  - An assessment of the nature of the illness
  - The date on which the illness started
  - The date on which they expect to return to work
  - How they can be contacted if necessary
  - ill without giving a reason. Where there is a risk of contagion to staff or students, this will not apply.

Where any responsibility for the notification and/or record-keeping of sickness leave detailed above has been delegated to another member of staff, or the absence is reported to another senior member of staff, it is essential that the line manager of the employee is informed promptly of planned and/or unplanned absence, including sickness absence.

This will allow the line manager to have full oversight of when their employee(s) should be present at work, and to identify any unauthorised absence promptly. Following this policy will ensure that all appropriate steps are taken by the line manager and Human Resources in a timely manner. Additionally, this will ensure that the Home Office (UKVI) reporting obligations for Tier 2 and Tier 5 sponsored employees are met by the University, as required by our sponsorship licence(s).

3. Staff should later inform their line manager if the illness is likely to last longer than first expected.
4. A self-certificate must be completed by the member of staff on return to work in cases of absence between four and seven days (including sickness at week-ends).
5. A medical certificate must be submitted to the line manager for absences greater than seven days. In exceptional circumstances, where the illness is of a personal nature, the certificate may be forwarded to the relevant HR Adviser, who may agree to inform the relevant manager that the member of staff is

### *Absence recording by managers*

6. Accurate recording of sickness absence is essential in order to develop a fair and consistent approach to attendance. All absences, including those of faculty, should be noted on a sickness absence form by the Head of School or Division (or nominee), and reported to Human Resources (Payroll) at the end of each month for monthly paid staff, using the form given in Appendix 2. This information will be used to ensure that accurate Statutory Sick Pay records and payments are made.

### *Unauthorised absence*

7. Absence that has not been notified according to the above procedures should be treated as unauthorised absence, unless a reason is subsequently given which the manager considers to be

acceptable. If a member of staff does not report for work and has not informed their immediate line manager or other senior member of staff why they have not attended, their line manager should make all reasonable efforts to contact them, e.g. by telephone, by writing to them or by visiting them (if appropriate) and should record any actions taken.

The HR Adviser for the Unit and the HR Compliance Office ([HRCompliance@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:HRCompliance@sussex.ac.uk)) should be informed as soon as possible once an unauthorised absence is identified. In the event of any unauthorised absence of a Tier 2 or Tier 5 sponsored visa-holder, it is a requirement of the University sponsorship licence(s) that we must report an unauthorised absence to the Home Office (UKVI) within 10 working days of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence.

In any event, the manager should not take measures to instigate any formal action, e.g. to discipline or dismiss them, prior to contacting the HR Adviser and HR Compliance Officer who will advise on the most suitable procedure to follow, taking into account any legal implications.

**APPENDIX 2 – MONTHLY ABSENCE RETURN FORM**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX  
HUMAN RESOURCES (PAYROLL)**

Reference No:

**RETURN OF ABSENCES OF MONTHLY PAID STAFF FOR THE MONTH**

**OF.....**

The following staff in my school/unit were absent from work due to sickness or unpaid leave last month:

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>First date of Absence</b>	<b>Last date of Absence</b>	<b>Total days absent</b>	<b>Reason for Absence (sick or unpaid leave)</b>

Authorised ..... School/Unit:.....

Name and job title..... Date: .....

.....

(in capitals)

- Please compile this return as at the first working day of each month and send it to Human Resources (Payroll), Sussex House, to arrive by the 5th of the month
- All sickness absence and unpaid leave should be included, stating the first working day and the last working date off.
- Approved absence on compassionate grounds with pay and normal holidays with pay need not be included.
- All staff (including faculty) in your school/unit should be included in this return.
- Where staff have not returned by the last day of the month, please state this.
- For one day absences, just show the date under the "first date of absence".

## **APPENDIX 3 – GUIDANCE ON CONDUCTING A RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEW**

### **Preparing for the interview**

A return to work interview provides the correct forum for the member of staff's sickness record to be discussed. Prior to the interview, you should gather all relevant information regarding his or her absence record, giving consideration to the following factors:

- Are the member of staff's absences regular or erratic?
- Does the absence precede or follow annual leave?
- In which part of the week do their absences occur?
- What is the average length of their absence?
- What is the reason given for the absence?
- Are the reasons varied, or is there a pattern?
- How does their absence record compare with those of the other staff in the Unit?

### **Conducting the interview**

During the interview, ensure that you give the member of staff every opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have with regard to their absence. Do not be judgmental, become over-involved, make assumptions about their absence, or attempt to give any advice which you are not qualified to give.

The following structure should be followed:

#### **1. Welcome back**

Begin the interview by welcoming back the member of staff and letting them know that they have been missed. Explain the purpose of the interview, and make it clear that it is routine to conduct one with all members of staff who are absent due to sickness and on every occasion of absence.

#### **2. Enquire about health**

You need to gain information on the following:

- Whether the member of staff is fit enough to resume their duties
- Whether the absence was work related
- What steps the member of staff has taken towards their recovery
- What preventative measures they are taking to reduce the likelihood of such absence occurring in the future.

These areas should be explored in a caring and concerned manner. The best way to do this is by active listening, i.e. listening carefully to what the person has to say and by not challenging them at this stage.

#### **3. Any consequences of absence**

In cases of persistent absence, you should take this opportunity to remind the member of staff of the importance of full attendance wherever possible. You should point out the actions that either you or other colleagues had to take as a result of their absence e.g. working extra hours, employing extra help. Discuss any observations you have made regarding their absence e.g. if their absence seems to form a pattern, and explore ways in which you can help the member of staff attend as required.

#### **4. Future action**

In cases of persistent absence, you should explain that continued periods of absence could lead to formal action being instigated. In all cases, you should summarise any action that you have agreed should take

place e.g. referral to the Occupational Health Service, referral to counselling, changes to working arrangements, etc. You should ensure that it is clear who will be taking this action and whether anyone else needs to be involved.

#### 5. Completion of formalities

You should now complete the Return to Work form, ensuring that you note any future action you have agreed to take as above.

**APPENDIX 4 – RETURN TO WORK FORM**

**RETURN TO WORK FORM**

**Staff Member’s Name:** .....

**Manager:** .....

I was ill/absent from (date) ..... to (date) .....

because (give details, symptoms, etc.)

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.....

I returned to work on (date) .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Manager’s Comments

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Action to be taken (e.g. date of review meeting, referral to Occupational Health, special leave, provision of special equipment etc.)

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Signed ..... Date .....

**This form should be kept confidentially by the manager with other records relating to the member of staff**