

1. Policy Summary

UCD's Managing Attendance & Sick Leave Policy demonstrates the university's commitment to employees' health and welfare at work, specifically outlining the university's managing attendance and sick leave policy in this regard. This policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of Employees, Heads of School/Units/Line Managers and UCD Human Resources in the effective management of attendance. It clearly sets out the functions of the Occupational Health Provider and the Employee Assistance Programme in assisting the university to support employee wellbeing. Practical guidance is provided for Heads of School/Units/Line Managers on promoting a positive culture of attendance in the workplace and managing sickness absence. Comprehensive details in relation to UCD's sick leave arrangements are also included.

2. Purpose of Policy

Effective attendance management is essential to the effective organisation of a high quality and cost effective university. The purpose of this policy is to set out UCD's commitment to supporting employee wellbeing and welfare as part of its overall managing attendance policy; with a view to assisting employees 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 employees who are absent from work due to injury or ill-health to return to work as soon as possible.

In addition, 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 co-operating 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 employees; addressing issues which may be adversely affecting employees' motivation to attend work; managing health and safety; monitoring attendance; ensuring compliance with the sick leave arrangements and dealing with employees whose attendance record is unsatisfactory in a fair and consistent manner.

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 Employees, 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

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy is applicable to all permanent and temporary employees in UCD.

4. Roles & 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 Employees, 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 Role of the Employee

- To provide regular and efficient service
- To minimise absences arising from accidents and ill health at work by complying with the Health & Safety Statement (<http://www.ucd.ie/safety/parentss.html>) 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 co-operate fully with rehabilitative measures to facilitate his/her return to work as soon as he/she is capable of doing so.

4.2 Role of the 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 employees
- To communicate HR policies (such as Dignity at Work and the Grievance Procedure) and deal promptly with issues which may affect an employee'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 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 employee 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 employee's work or work is affecting the employee's health

- To carry out a dedicated management follow up with the employee after every episode of absence
- To carry out informal discussions where the employee'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 Role of 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 through the Employee Relations Directorate or the HR Partner, if available 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 Role of the Occupational Health Provider (The Well at Work)

Available to staff following referral by UCD HR or the Safety Office
(<http://www.thewellatwork.ie>)

- To carry out pre-employment medical assessments
- To provide advice on any health related matter which is affecting the employee's work or the impact of work on the employee's health
- To advise about the employee's fitness to undertake his/her full range of contracted duties and to make recommendations on measures to assist the employee to return to work as quickly and safely as possible

- To advise on the employee'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 Role of Employee Assistance Programme

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

5. Sick Leave Arrangements

UCD operates a sick pay scheme for staff that are absent due to injury or ill-health; This is one component of the university's commitment to supporting employee wellbeing and welfare as part of its overall managing attendance policy.

5.1 Category of Staff

Permanent Staff on A1 PRSI, Full-Time or Part-Time

All permanent staff that pay A1 PRSI have sick leave entitlements as follows: During probation a sick leave entitlement up to a maximum of six and a half weeks at full pay and six and a half weeks at half pay in any twelve month period. This is reduced by any Social Welfare benefit payable.

Following successful completion of the probationary period, this entitlement increases to a maximum of six months at full pay and six months at half pay in any rolling four year period. This benefit applies also to pre 1995 staff on D1 PRSI.

Furthermore, eligible staff have an entitlement of up to a maximum of three days uncertified sick leave at any time. Please note in the Public Service and UCD, sick leave is calculated on a Monday to Sunday basis which means that if an employee is absent on a Friday, a medical certificate is required by the following Tuesday.

Any staff employed on manual grades must submit medical certificates for each sick leave absence in excess of 7 uncertified sick leave days in any calendar year.

Staff on A1 PRSI may be entitled to Social Welfare benefit. Under the terms of the 1992 Finance Act, the University is obliged to tax Social Welfare benefit and, unless informed to the contrary, will presume that benefit is payable.

On the second week of illness, a staff member's gross pay will be reduced by the basic Disability Benefit rate. On the fourth week of illness, the tax free allowance is also reduced. This has the effect of taxing the Social Welfare benefit. This continues up to and including week twenty six (but stops earlier if the illness is shorter) and the reduced tax free allowance will remain at that level until the staff member resumes work. In week twenty seven (and until the end of week fifty two or the end of illness, whichever is sooner) pay is reduced to half and no deduction is made for any Social Welfare received. The staff member may keep any benefit received.

During probation, a staff member's gross pay will be reduced on the second week of illness by the basic Disability Benefit rate and on the fourth week of illness the tax free allowance is also reduced. This continues up to and including week six (but stops earlier if the illness is shorter) and the reduced tax free allowance will remain at that level until the staff member resumes work. In week seven - and until the end of week twelve, or the end of illness, whichever is sooner - pay is reduced to half and no deduction is made for any Social Welfare benefit received. The staff member may retain any benefit received.

On return to work the staff member will receive full pay but his/her tax free allowance will be on a week 1/month 1 basis. This will continue for the rest of the tax year.

5.2 Temporary/Fixed Term Staff, Full-Time or Part-Time

All full-time temporary staff have sick leave entitlements as follows:

In any twelve months' period, a sick leave pro-rata entitlement up to a maximum of six and a half weeks at full pay and six and a half weeks at half pay, less Social Welfare Benefit. Eligible staff have an entitlement of up to a maximum of three days' uncertified sick leave at any time.

Part-time Staff

Regular part-time staff are those who (under the terms of the Worker Protection Act, 1991) have been in continuous employment for the same employer for thirteen weeks. This category has a pro-rata sick leave entitlement similar to that outlined above.

Part-Time Staff on A1 PRSI may be entitled to Social Welfare benefit. Under the terms of the 1992 Finance Act, the University is obliged to tax Social Welfare benefit and, unless informed to the contrary, will presume that benefit is payable.

On the second week of illness, a staff member's gross pay will be reduced by the basic Disability Benefit rate. On the fourth week of illness, the tax free allowance is also reduced. This has the effect of taxing the Social Welfare benefit. This continues up to and including week six (but stops earlier if the illness is shorter) and the reduced tax free allowance will remain at that level until the staff member resumes work. In week seven - and until the end of week twelve, or the end of illness, whichever is sooner - the staff member's pay is reduced to half and no deduction is made for any Social Welfare benefit received.

On return to work the staff member will receive full pay but his/her tax free allowance will be on a week 1/month 1 basis. This will continue for the rest of the tax year.

6. 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 fourth day must forward a medical certificate to him/her for transmission to UCD HR.

7. Absenteeism/Punctuality

Regular attendance and good time-keeping are an essential part of the smooth and effective running of the University. An employee'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 employees, 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 employee 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.