



University of London

Reporting Absence and Sick Pay Entitlements Guidelines

1. Reporting absence

On the first day of sickness absence, the employee must inform their manager as soon as reasonably practicable that they will not be working because of illness or injury. Preferably, the employee should notify their manager of non-attendance by telephone before they are due to start work and in any event no later than one hour after they are due to begin work. If the employee's manager is unavailable, the employee should contact the next most appropriate person within the department.

The employee should where reasonably expected provide a clear reason (i.e. the nature of the illness or injury) why they cannot attend work, and estimate how long they think the absence will last. The employee should also be prepared to discuss briefly any consequences of their absence, for example if meetings need to be cancelled or any essential work needs to be covered.

If an employee comes to work, but needs to leave during the day because of ill health, they should inform their manager before leaving work. If the manager is unavailable, the employee should inform the next most appropriate person within the department.

As a guide, sickness absence that begins part way through the day will count as a half day's sickness absence, but managers should use their judgement as to whether this is reasonable.

For each subsequent sick day after the first day of absence, the employee should generally telephone their manager as soon as reasonably practicable in the morning. However, managers should use their discretion and can agree different arrangements with the employee, for example if the employee is hospitalised.

2. Self-certification of sickness absence

If sickness is for seven calendar days or less on the first day of the employee's return to work they must complete a self-certification form, setting out the dates of absence and the nature of the illness or injury on Business World.

3. Statement of fitness for work (fit note)

While the first seven calendar days of sickness can be self-certificated, all sickness that lasts longer than seven calendar days requires medical evidence. This medical evidence will normally be in the form of a doctor's fit note, also known as a "statement of fitness for work".

A doctor's fit note may state that the employee:

- is "not fit for work", in which case the employee should remain off work; or
- "may be fit for work", if the doctor's recommendations are followed (for example, a phased return, amended job duties, altered hours of work, or workplace adaptations).

While there is no legal obligation on the University to follow the recommendations, managers should take what the employee's doctor has written seriously and give fair consideration - in consultation with the employee and Human Resources - as to whether or not any of the changes recommended by the doctor can be accommodated.

4. Sick pay

The University operates a contractual sick pay scheme that is more generous than statutory sick pay (SSP).

During sickness absence employees will, in any 12-month period receive sick pay as follows:

Length of Service	Level and Length Allowance*	Level and Length Allowance*
During the first 3 months' service	2 weeks full pay	2 weeks half pay
3 months' to 1 years' service	2 months full pay	2 months half pay
Second and third year of service	3 months full pay	3 months half pay
Fourth and fifth year of service	5 months full pay	5 months half pay
After 5 years of service	6 months full pay	6 months half pay

* Nothing under this scheme will prevent the University applying its discretion to extend the application of the sick pay in exceptional circumstances.

The University reserves the right to withhold or suspend sick pay under its contractual sick pay scheme at its discretion. Circumstances in which contractual sick pay may be withheld include where:

- the employee has failed to comply with the University's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements;
- the employee refuses to attend a medical examination at the reasonable request of the University;
- the employee makes or produces any misleading or untrue statement or document concerning their fitness to work;
- the employee has given or received notice to terminate their employment;
- suspected misuse of sickness absence; and
- disciplinary proceedings are pending against the employee.

The employee will normally be entitled to receive SSP when contractual sick pay is withheld or suspended, although the University can withhold or suspend SSP if it is not satisfied that the employee is ill, and no evidence of sickness is provided.

Employees will be given written notice if their SSP or contractual sick pay is being withheld or suspended.

Sick pay under the University's scheme is subject to the usual deductions for PAYE, national insurance, pension contributions, etc.

5. Special cases

5.1 Pregnancy-related absences

Pregnant employees who are off work because of pregnancy-related ill health must abide by the University's absence reporting procedure. For example, a pregnant employee is subject to the usual notification and evidence requirements, and can be asked to attend a return-to-work interview when returning to work.

However, any sickness absence by a pregnant employee for a pregnancy-related reason should not be included when checking to see if the need for formal action under the University's attendance management procedure has been triggered.

If you are absent from work for a pregnancy-related reason in the 4 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), the University may start your maternity leave automatically regardless of the date on which you have notified us that you wish to begin your maternity leave. Please refer to the [Maternity Guidance](#) for further information.

If the manager is in any doubt as to whether or not a pregnant employee's absence is related to her pregnancy, the manager may ask for a Doctor's note to confirm the illness is pregnancy related or make a referral to Occupational Health. The manager should contact the Human Resources department.

In the unfortunate circumstance of a miscarriage under 24 weeks and you are signed off work by a doctor, this will be counted as pregnancy related sickness. If miscarriage occurs after 24 weeks an employee would be entitled to a period of recovery and/or maternity leave provisions. Managers and employees should discuss with HR for further guidance. In these circumstances, no action would be taken under the absence procedures.

5.2 Disability-related absences

Where an employee gives as the reason for absence an underlying health issue that could amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, the manager must refer to the Human Resources department. This includes where the employee states that they are suffering from stress.

Managers should remember that the University is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. The legal definition of a "disability" is wide and managers should refer to the Human Resources department for further information. Where the absence is wholly or partly for a disability-related reason, the trigger points referred to in this the University's Attendance Management Procedure may need to be modified to take proper account of the employee's disability. If in doubt, the manager should contact the Human Resources department for clarification.

6. Sickness absence and annual leave

Where an employee falls sick or is injured while on holiday, the University will allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement holiday at a later time. This is subject to the following strict conditions:

- The total period of ill health must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner.
- The employee must contact the University (by telephone if possible) as soon as they know that there will be a period of sickness during a holiday.
- The employee must submit a written request no later than 10 days after returning to work setting out how much of the holiday period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time.

Where the employee fulfils all of the above conditions, the University will grant the employee the same number of days' replacement holiday leave as the number of holiday days lost due to sickness or injury.

If an employee is ill or is injured before the start of a period of planned holiday, and is consequently unable to take the holiday, the University will agree to the employee postponing the holiday dates to another mutually agreed time. Any period of sickness absence will then be treated in accordance with the University's normal procedure on sickness absence.

7. Time off for medical appointments

Wherever possible, employees should arrange doctor, dentist and other medical appointments outside their normal working hours. Where it is not possible to arrange an appointment outside normal working hours, the employee should give the maximum prior notification to their manager. A manager may ask to see confirmation of the appointment.

Time away from work to attend doctor, dentist and other medical appointments will not be counted as sick leave but employees may be required to make up the time at manager's discretion dependent on the circumstances; alternatively, if an employee is away from work for half a day or longer, then this may be recorded as sick leave.

Human Resources

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