

ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The College is committed to promoting the health and well-being of all staff and to dealing with absence and periods of ill health in a fair, reasonable and sympathetic way. This policy and procedure is designed to promote good practice and to provide a framework for the effective management of absence.
- 1.2 The Absence Management Policy and Procedure applies to all staff and complements existing College Statutes and policies.
- 1.3 Staff sickness and absence from work are inevitable within any organisation and the level of absence will depend on a wide range of factors. Maintaining good levels of attendance is essential in terms of the efficiency of the College. Good attendance contributes to the College's ability to deliver high levels of service and helps to maintain high morale amongst members of staff. Research indicates that the effective management of sickness absence can reduce absence levels to the mutual benefit of both the individual and the organisation.
- 1.4 As part of its commitment to equal opportunities, the College wishes to ensure that all staff are treated consistently and fairly in all aspects of their employment. In dealing with staff absence, line managers are expected to show understanding and give support to those who genuinely need to be absent from work and take appropriate action against any member of staff who misuses these arrangements at the expense of their colleagues and the College.
- 1.5 Line managers are responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of absence levels within their department/section, for identifying areas of concern and ensuring that absence reporting procedures are followed correctly. Staff absences should be treated in a confidential and sensitive manner.
- 1.6 The procedures for reporting absence should be covered as part of the departmental induction for new members of staff. During the induction line managers are expected to explain to the new member of staff that they need to comply with the College's absence reporting procedures and that attendance will be monitored throughout their employment with the College.
- 1.7 The Absence Management Policy and Procedure is not a disciplinary procedure. Abuse of sick leave/pay and other leave provisions will be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures.
- 1.8 The Human Resources Department can provide support and advice on managing attendance. Line managers should discuss concerns regarding staff absence with a representative from the Human Resources Department at the earliest opportunity.

2. ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Heads of Departments are expected to clarify the reporting procedures to be followed by members of staff should an absence arise. A member of staff absent from his/her duties is required to notify their line manager, preferably by a telephone call, as soon as it is

practicable, although this should normally be at the start of his/her working day and not later than 2 hours after the normal start time. An appropriate person within the department should be nominated by the Head of Department to act as a point of contact for absence notification should he/she be unavailable. In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for a third party to contact the department. In some departments the reporting procedure may vary for business or operational reasons, this should be notified to all members of staff during their departmental induction.

2.2 When a member of staff reports their absence, the following information should be obtained:

- the reason for their absence
- how long he/she is likely to be absent from work
- any work related matters that may need attention in their absence
- to agree when the employee will contact the line manager again.

In addition, if the absence is related to ill health or injury, the line manager should establish:

- the nature of the illness
- whether he/she plans to visit their doctor
- whether the condition is a result of an injury or illness sustained at work
- remind the member of staff of the necessity to provide a medical certificate if the absence is to exceed 7 calendar days

2.3 If a member of staff fails to follow the absence reporting procedures or to provide appropriate medical certification (see Section 3 below), this will be treated as unauthorised absence. When this happens, it is the responsibility of the line manager to inform the Human Resources Department and an investigation may be initiated which could result in a suspension of pay.

2.4 In the case of an unauthorised absence it is advisable to try to contact the member of staff by telephone within 24 hours of the absence commencing. If this proves to be unsuccessful, the line manager should liaise with the Human Resources Department to seek advice and to clarify whether it would be appropriate to communicate formally with the member of staff, for example by sending a letter expressing concern at the lack of communication and asking the member of staff to get in contact immediately. If it proves necessary to send a second letter the member of staff should be advised that the unauthorised absence may be dealt with as part of the College's disciplinary procedures unless appropriate medical certificates are provided within a reasonable timeframe or a satisfactory explanation is given.

2.5 If there is concern over the member of staff's personal safety, it may be appropriate to make a home visit or to contact the member of staff's next of kin. This should again be done in consultation with the Human Resources Department.

3. CERTIFICATION OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 3.1 A self-certificate must be provided by the member of staff after 3 working days' absence. The self-certificate form can be found at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Personnel/pages/Selfcertificate.pdf>
- 3.2 A medical certificate signed by a doctor or a hospital certificate (if in hospital) is required after an absence of 7 calendar days. Medical certificates must be submitted at regular intervals to cover all sickness absence until the member of staff is fit to return to work.
- 3.3 Should a member of staff return to work for a period of less than 1 working day before taking further sick leave for a related or similar illness, the period of absence will be considered to be continuous and further self-certification or a medical certificate may be required.
- 3.4 If a member of staff is still covered by a medical certificate but wishes to return to work, he or she should ask their GP for a further certificate confirming their fitness to return. Until such a certificate is received, the member of staff will not be allowed to work. If it is known that there is a need for recuperative duties and / or adjustment to the workplace this should be discussed with the College's Occupational Health Doctor and the Human Resources Department before returning to work.

4. MAINTAINING CONTACT DURING PERIODS OF ABSENCE

- 4.1 A member of staff has a responsibility to maintain contact with, and to update their line manager about their progress towards recovery (if unwell) and their anticipated return to work date. Members of staff should continue to advise their line manager at regular intervals as agreed.
- 4.2 Members of staff who refuse to maintain contact with the College may be deemed to be in breach of their employment contract and this will be investigated in line with the appropriate disciplinary procedure.
- 4.3 In cases of longer term sickness absence, it is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that regular contact is maintained with the absent member of staff, for example by telephoning them from time to time to ask about progress. This should be handled sensitively so that the member of staff is not put under pressure to return before he or she is fully fit. A home visit may also be appropriate and should be discussed in advance with the Human Resources Department.

5. INJURY SUSTAINED AT WORK

- 5.1 The reporting of injuries sustained at work is covered by the College Accident/Incident Investigation and Reporting Procedure, which can be found at: www.rhul.ac.uk/health-and-safety/Forms/accident-incident-reporting.doc

6. RECORDING & MONITORING ABSENCE

6.1 The College has a responsibility to record absences due to sickness and is open to audit from the Department for Work and Pensions. For this reason, it is important that line managers record and monitor all incidents of sickness absence lasting half a day or more.

6.2 To ensure that staff absence is centrally monitored in the correct way, each department is required to complete a Monthly Absence Return Form, attaching any self-certificates or medical certificates, and return it to the Human Resources Department by the monthly payroll cut-off date. Confirmation of these dates can be found at:

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/restricted/contensis/documents/pdf/finance/payrollcalendar2011-2012.pdf>

The absence reporting form should be signed and return to the Human Resources Department even when there are nil returns. A copy of the reporting form is included in the appendices and can be found at

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Personnel/Forms/MonthlyAbsenceReturnForm.doc>

6.3 The Human Resources Department will provide Heads of Departments with a monthly report detailing the level of sickness and other related absence incurred within their department over the preceding 12-month period. A separate report detailing an individual's absence can be provided if required.

7. ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE WITH IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION FOR MEMBERS OF STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER TIER 2 AND TIER 5 ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 In order to comply with immigration legislation, the College is required to report to the UK Border Agency any relevant information relating to unauthorised absence for overseas staff employed by the College and working in the UK. Staff employed under Tier 2 and Tier 5 arrangements are expected to comply with all sections of this procedure.

7.2 The UK Border Agency requires the College to report the following:

- If a Tier 2 or Tier 5 member of staff does not attend their first day of work a report must be provided by Human Resources within 10 working days and must include any reason given by the member of staff for the non-attendance (e.g. a missed flight).
- If a Tier 2 or Tier 5 member of staff is absent from work for more than 10 days without the College's permission a report must be provided within 10 working days of the 10th day of absence.
- Any suspicions the College may have that a Tier 2 or Tier 5 member of staff is breaching the conditions of their leave (permission to be in the UK) must be reported.

7.3 It is recognised that the nature of academic and research contracts require a level of flexibility in attendance. These two staff groups are therefore required to agree appropriate levels of expected contact with their Head of Department/ Principal Investigator in line with UK Border Agency regulations. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure

that these expected contacts are maintained, both in and out of term time, and to notify HR immediately if the member of staff fails to comply.

8. ATTENDANCE MONITORING FOR ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF (INCLUDING STAFF EMPLOYED UNDER TIER 2 AND TIER 5 ARRANGEMENTS)

- 8.1 All staff are expected to advise their Senior Faculty Administrator/ designated member of staff in the department when they are likely to be absent, e.g. during vacation periods or when taking annual leave. Staff not attending College (e.g. working from home) are required to have regular contact with their manager/ Head of Department both in and out of term time.
- 8.2 The Senior Faculty Administrator/ designated member of staff should keep a record of annual leave for all staff. The monthly absence monitoring report should also be completed and returned to the Human Resources Department.

9. DOCTORS, DENTIST AND HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS

- 9.1 Doctors and dentist appointments for a member of staff or their dependant's should, wherever possible, take place outside of normal working hours. If this is not possible, the member of staff is expected to make appointments at the start or end of the working day. Staff may be required to make up the time lost due to medical appointments. The line manager may request to see an appointment card.
- 9.2 Staff should be given reasonable time off to attend hospital appointments. If the appointment keeps the member of staff away from work for more than 3 hours, this should be recorded as sickness absence. The line manager may request to see an appointment card or letter.

10. SICK PAY

- 10.1 The College will pay statutory sick pay if the member of staff qualifies for payment. Occupational sick pay is calculated according to length of service and is based on a rolling year from the first day of sickness. Entitlement to payment during periods of absence due to sickness is specified in the member of staff's terms and conditions of employment.
- 10.2 Statutory sick pay (SSP) is payable, subject to minimum qualifying criteria, for 28 weeks each time a member of staff begins a period of incapacity for work which is not linked to a previous period. Any SSP due will be included in the full or half sick pay entitlement. Where an employee has exhausted their entitlement to SSP or SSP is not payable, the Human Resources Department will advise the member of staff by forwarding them a SSP1 form which explains why SSP is not payable and the procedure for claiming sickness benefits for which they may be eligible.

11. ABSENCE AND ANNUAL LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 If a member of staff is ill during a period of annual leave or time off in lieu (not a Bank Holiday or College discretionary day unless the member of staff is normally required to

work on these days) a self-certificate to cover absence from day 1 or a medical certificate (as appropriate), detailing the start and end dates of the period of sickness, must be provided if the member of staff wishes to claim back the period of leave. In addition, the member of staff is required to contact their line manager at regular intervals, to be agreed during initial notification, and to keep him/her fully informed.

- 11.2 If a member of staff wishes to claim back a period of annual leave due to sickness a request should be made to the line manager who will liaise with the Human Resources Department before the request can be approved. This ensures a fair and consistent approach across the College.
- 11.3 Staff should be aware that requests for reimbursement of annual leave are subject to determining whether the nature of the sickness was such so as to have precluded the member of staff from deriving any benefit from the annual leave. For example, should the nature of the sickness be such that the member of staff is unable to go on holiday or else suffer some form of incapacity, i.e. bad back or broken limb, the College may agree to the request to claim leave back. However, a cold or sore throat would not normally be deemed to be sufficient reason for claiming back annual leave. This also applies if the member of staff is abroad at the time. The College has the right to request a member of staff to provide a medical certificate if further clarification on the reason for their claim for reimbursement is required.
- 11.4 Members of staff continue to accrue paid holiday whilst on sick leave and are permitted to take annual leave on their return from sick leave or to be paid in lieu of it if their employment ends.
- 11.5 Annual leave during periods of unpaid leave of 3 months and over, for example parental leave, will accrue at the statutory rate in accordance with the College's Career Break Policy and Procedure.

12. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

- 12.1 In most cases a referral to the College's Occupational Health Doctor can assist in identifying whether there are underlying reasons for a period of absence and its likely duration. Guidance on associated support and advice is also available and, where appropriate, the Occupational Health Doctor may make recommendations to help facilitate an earlier return to work, e.g. by means of a phased return-to-work plan.
- 12.2 Referrals to the College's Occupational Health Doctor will be made by the Human Resources Department, with consultation with the appropriate line manager. Referrals are appropriate:
 - In cases of persistent short-term absences if there is no reasonable improvement after a return-to-work meeting has taken place and the line manager wishes to ascertain if there is an underlying medical problem.
 - If a member of staff has a serious illness causing long-term absence from work (any period of absence over 28 days).

- If a member of staff is unwilling to disclose the nature of their illness, which has been the cause of an absence from work.
- For absence due to a stress-related illness.

If contact needs to be made with a member of staff's General Medical Practitioner (GP) or a Consultant the College's Occupational Health Doctor will usually undertake this correspondence. Individuals will always be asked to complete a medical consent form before a medical report is requested. .

- 12.3 It is expected that the member of staff shall not unreasonably refuse to attend an appointment with the Occupational Health Doctor. Where a member of staff refuses to attend an appointment, the College reserves the right to take appropriate action under the terms and conditions of employment. The College also reserves the right to suspend the occupational sick pay of the member of staff.

13. RETURN TO WORK FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF ABSENCE

- 13.1 When a member of staff returns to work after a period of absence it is the line manager's responsibility to ascertain through informal discussions with the member of staff, full information about the reasons for the absence and to identify that the member of staff has fully recovered and any possible work-related causes that can be corrected. The line manager should also establish whether medical advice was sought, if any follow up appointments may be necessary, if medication is still being taken and if this may affect their ability to operate machinery, if applicable to their role, or cause drowsiness. The line manager will also help to facilitate further support as appropriate. This is an effective means of ensuring that absences are not treated casually.

14. MANAGING PERSISTENT SHORT-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 14.1 If a member of staff is frequently absent from work the line manager may schedule a return-to-work meeting following the last period of absence. This is usually required if a member of staff has had 3 separate episodes of short-term sickness absence within a 6-month period. The meeting should take place on the day the member of staff returns from their sickness absence and would normally:

- enable the line manager to establish the reasons for the absence whether any medication being taken after their return to work may impact on the performance of the member of staff and to offer additional support or adjustments where appropriate.
- give the member of staff an opportunity to discuss any underlying personal/domestic/work-related reasons which may be the cause of the absence
- enable the manager to consider the situation carefully, particularly in relation to the individual's medical condition, possible underlying causes, the severity of the medical issue and the length of time this has been apparent.
- enable the line manager to propose a course of action to reduce the member of staff's absence level and to ensure that the individual understand what improvement in attendance is expected.

- 14.2 It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that a written record of a return-to-work meeting is produced and that the return-to-work interview form (Appendix A and available

at <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Personnel/Forms/Returntoworkinterviewform.doc>) is completed. Ideally, both parties should agree the information on the form before signing it and returning a copy to the Human Resources Department. The return-to-work meeting does not form part of the formal disciplinary procedure but failure to improve may result in disciplinary proceedings.

- 14.3 If there is no reasonable improvement and a further episode of sickness absence occurs within 3 months of the interview, the line manager will normally meet with the member of staff again and a referral to Occupational Health should be initiated (please refer to section 11) The period of monitoring the absence level of the member of staff may be extended for a limited period of time for exceptional circumstances.
- 14.4 If the assessment with Occupational Health concludes that there is no underlying medical reason for the level of sickness absence the member of staff will be invited to a formal meeting with a representative of the Human Resources Department and the line manager. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the absence and the member of staff has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague. A written summary of the outcomes of the meeting, including any objectives for future improvement and reasonable timescales, will be produced.
- 14.5 If the member of staff fails to meet the objectives of the meeting outlined in 13.4. a hearing will be arranged in line with the College's appropriate disciplinary procedures.
- 14.6 At the hearing, there should be a fair review of the member of staff's absences and their reasons. Revised objectives may be set and a review will be arranged within a specified period, not normally exceeding 3 months. This may be brought forward at any time should absences reach an unacceptable level before the end of the review period. During the review period the line manager will closely monitor the member of staff's sickness absence and any apparent patterns.
- 14.7 The outcomes of the hearing will be confirmed in writing and the member of staff will be warned that failure to meet objectives may lead to further warnings, and dismissal.
- 14.8 If there is no reasonable improvement a second disciplinary hearing may be necessary, during which the same steps as outlined in section 13.6 will be followed. Depending upon the individual case, this meeting may lead to a final written warning and the member of staff should be made fully aware that a continuation of unacceptable sickness levels may result in dismissal.
- 14.9 If there is no substantial improvement after the second hearing a third and final hearing will be arranged unless satisfactory reasons are given for the continued absence. Any dismissals resulting from this process will occur in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary policy or College Statute.
- 14.10 Where the majority of the frequent short-term absences have a definite underlying medical cause then the member of staff should be treated similarly to staff on long-term sickness absence.

15. MANAGING LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 15.1 Longer-term sickness absence refers to those cases where a health problem or condition has been medically certified and the issues associated with a long-term sick member of staff are different from those related to intermittent sickness.
- 15.2 Depending upon the circumstances of the medical condition, when a member of staff has been continuously absent for 4 calendar weeks, it may be appropriate for the member of staff to be seen by the Occupational Health Doctor to ascertain whether or not the individual is likely to be able to return to work and when.
- 15.3 Line Managers should maintain contact with the member of staff in order to reduce feelings of isolation, to remain informed about the likely duration of the sickness absence and to keep them in touch with any major workplace developments. Managers should not, however, have detailed discussions regarding work-related issues with staff who are absent. The member of staff has a responsibility to update his/her manager regularly on his/her likely date of return to work.
- 15.4 If the member of staff refuses to co-operate in providing medical evidence or to undergo a medical examination, the member of staff should be advised that any further decisions about their continuing employment with the College will be made on the basis of the information available.
- 15.5 Where the member of staff is unable to attend work for a meeting, the line manager may need to visit the member of staff at home or in hospital with a member of the Human Resources Department. All meetings should be notified in advance and in writing.
- 15.6 In compliance with Disability Discrimination Act 1995 long-term sickness is normally regarded as an issue of capability, not as a disciplinary matter, and will therefore be handled with care. If it is established that the member of staff will be unable to attend work regularly for a period of time or return to the same job (using medical information from the College's Occupational Health Doctor, the member of staff's GP or a Consultant report) a decision will be made whether the member of staff is capable of alternative employment. If this is not feasible, the member of staff will be made aware that the College is under no obligation to create a job for the member of staff involved. As part of this process, the line manager, in conjunction with the Human Resources Department, should consult fully and regularly with the member of staff who must be kept informed of any contemplated action. The following factors should be considered:
- nature of the illness/ injury and the length of time the member of staff is likely to be absent
 - paid sick entitlement of the employee
 - physical/mental condition of the member of staff upon return to work
 - nature of the job/work environment
 - feasibility of providing alternative work, if appropriate
 - feasibility of early retirement on ill-health grounds
 - feasibility of a phased return to work, i.e. on a part-time basis

15.7 Only after careful consideration of all options can the member of staff be dismissed from his or her post on the grounds of capability due to ill-health. A final capability hearing will be arranged to consider whether the member of staff's employment should be terminated. This will be done in accordance with the relevant section of the College's Capability Policy and Procedure for non-academic staff and in compliance with the arrangements for removal for incapacity on medical grounds detailed in the College Statute for academic staff.

15.8 Termination will become effective when all entitlement to occupational sick pay has been exhausted. This will depend upon the circumstances of the sickness absence and, where appropriate, notice will run concurrently with occupational sick pay.

15.9 Phased Return to Work After Long-Term Sick Leave Absence

15.9.1 The purpose of a phased return to work is to rehabilitate a member of staff to their full duties and gradually build back up to undertaking their normal working hours within the earliest agreed timescale.

15.9.2 It should be noted that a 'Statement of Fitness to Work' certificate (MED3) must be obtained in all cases as a requirement for consideration of a phased return to work. The GP's advice will usually be based upon the general condition, rather than being specific to the particular work environment and supplements rather than replaces Occupational Health advice. Serious consideration should be given to the fit note advice to assist in helping employees return to work and, a rehabilitation period and adaptations could be agreed for a short period of time between HR and the Line Manager.

15.9.3 If necessary, more detailed guidance can be sought from Occupational Health, subject to an assessment with the College's Occupational Health Doctor, to establish fitness to return to work. It may be appropriate for members of staff who have been on long-term sick leave to have an agreed a phased return to work plan to allow the member of staff to re-adjust to full attendance/performance at work.

15.9.4 The member of staff will be advised that there is no obligation to take on board the GP's/Occupational Health recommendations if they are not workable. Departments should endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employee's return to work. Where a department is unable to make the GP's suggested adjustments or other reasonable adjustments the employee must be provided with a written explanation setting out the reasons. Where the department cannot facilitate the GP's suggestions for workplace adjustments, the status of the fit note defaults to 'not fit for work'. There is no 'fit for work' option and GPs are not expected to certificate a person is 'fit for work'.

15.9.5 Where it is recommended that a member of staff returns to work on a reduced-hour/workload basis for an agreed period of time, this would not normally be longer than six weeks unless in exceptional circumstances. For example some mental health issues may require longer rehabilitation periods and some illnesses such as chronic fatigue syndrome, cancer rehabilitation or complex limb surgery may require longer rehabilitation periods. Where the period of rehabilitation is expected to be more than six weeks it may be useful to obtain specialist opinion regarding a prognosis for the illness.

- 15.9.6 When a recommended return to work programme is recommended by Occupational Health the member of staff will be advised that it is subject to the agreement of their Line Manager relative to the general timescale, duties and working arrangements. A Line Manager and the member of staff will agree the general timescales, duties and working arrangements. Targets should be agreed for each week of the phased return period in relation to the weekly times of attendance and weekly range of duties to be performed.
- 15.9.7 Occupational Health will set review dates and reassess the member of staff within an agreed timescale and any suggested alterations to the rehabilitation plan will be subject to agreement between the member of staff and the Line Manager supported by guidance from Occupational Health and HR.
- 15.9.8 The Line Manager should review the member of staff's progress on a weekly basis and if it is recognised that the member of staff is unlikely to be able to resume normal working hours and duties before the six week period expires further advice should be sought from Occupational Health. This could result in a further time-limited extension of the phased return or a temporary contractual reduction in working hours, or agreeing the need for the member of staff to resume sick leave and re-submit fitness for work statements. Where none of the measures are appropriate due to the nature of the illness, consideration may have to be given to beginning the capability procedure.
- 15.9.9 If the member of staff's progress improves at a faster rate than the six week period it is recommended that the Line Manager refers the member of staff to Occupational Health for advice about shortening the rehabilitation period.
- 15.9.10 The Line Manager or HR will advise the member of staff on details of salary during the phased return to work programme. Based on agreed working hours and irrespective of the stage at which the phased return takes place i.e. during the full sick pay period, half pay period or no pay period payment will be as follows:
- During the first six weeks payment will be at full pay. In respect of any further agreed extension of a phased return beyond six weeks payment will be pro rata to hours worked, unless only a short extension of the phased return to work is envisaged. In this case agreement to continue full pay will be subject to agreement between the Line Manager and HR.
- 15.8.11 A During the phased return period the Line Manager will meet with the member of staff weekly to assess progress and identify any problems. If problems are encountered there should be a discussion on how best to resolve them involving the Line Manager, Occupational Health and the member of staff, with advice from HR as appropriate.

16. ABSENCE FROM WORK WHICH IS UNRELATED TO SICKNESS

- 16.1 The College has separate policies and procedures in place relating to maternity, paternity and adoption leave and for sabbatical and leave of absence arrangements for academic members of staff.

- 16.2 The College's public commitments policy covered various forms of voluntary public service including jury service.
- 16.3 The College has a separate policy in place for flexible working arrangements which may include periods of unpaid leave.
- 16.4 Copies of the above policies can be found on the Human Resources website at: http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Personnel/Pages/pols_procs.htm
- 16.5 The College also has separate arrangements in place for study leave and further information can be obtained from the Human Resources' Staff Development team.

16.5 Bereavement and Compassionate Leave

- 16.5.1 The death or serious illness of a relative, partner or dependant affects every individual differently and the personal circumstances surrounding such an event must therefore be taken into consideration. Members of staff may be granted paid leave to attend a funeral, to attend to urgent family affairs after bereavement, or to provide care in the case of a serious illness. Compassionate leave is granted at the discretion of the Head of Department who should at all times treat the request with sympathy.
- 16.5.2 Other circumstances, or any further time requested, may be agreed as annual leave and/or unpaid leave.
- 16.5.3 Further advice can be sought from the Human Resources Department.

16.6 Emergency Leave for Care of Dependants

- 16.6.1 All members of staff have the right to take a reasonable period of unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant and to make any necessary longer-term arrangements. This may include:
- if a dependant falls ill or has been involved in an accident
 - to make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
 - to deal with an unexpected disruption of breakdown in care arrangements
 - to deal with an incident involving their child at school/nursery.
- 16.6.2 A dependant is the partner, child or parent of the employee, or someone who lives with the employee as part of their family. A dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the member of staff for assistance. This may be where the member of staff is the primary carer or the only person who can help in an emergency. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home.
- 16.6.3 There is not a set limit to the amount of emergency leave which can be taken. In most cases the amount of leave will be 1 or 2 days, but this will depend on individual circumstances. For example, if a child falls ill, the leave should be enough to help the member of staff to deal with the immediate care of the child, visiting the doctor if necessary, and to make longer-term care arrangements. It does not mean that the employee may take two weeks' leave to look after a sick child.

16.7 Parental Leave

- 16.7.1 The right to unpaid parental leave applies to members of staff who have completed 1 year's continuous service with the College and allows parents with a child born or adopted after 15th December 1999 to take unpaid parental leave to care for that child.
- 16.7.2 A member of staff has the right to take a total of 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave for each child under the age of five until the child's fifth birthday
- 16.7.3 A member of staff who are the parents of a child placed with them for adoption each have the legal right to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave until the fifth anniversary of the adoption or until the child's 18th birthday, whichever occurs sooner.
- 16.7.4 The parents or adoptive parents of a child who has been awarded disability living allowance or personal independence payment are each entitled to take up to 18 weeks' parental leave until the child's 18th birthday.
- 16.7.5 Normally, parental leave is taken in blocks or multiples of 1 week (with the exception that parents of disabled children can take leave in multiples of 1 day). Normally, up to a maximum of 4 weeks' parental leave per qualifying child can be taken in a year, by agreement with the Head of Department.
- 16.7.6 Members of staff wishing to take parental leave should submit a written request to their Head of Department, normally providing 21 days' notice. It may be necessary for parental leave to be postponed if the Head of Department considers that the member of staff's absence will unduly disrupt the operation of the department, but normally such a postponement will not be for more than 6 months. Notice of postponement and associated reasons must be given within 7 days of the employee giving notice that he/she wishes to take parental leave. Parental leave cannot be postponed when the member of staff gives notice to take it immediately after the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.
- 16.7.7 Pension arrangements during unpaid leave should be discussed with the College's Pensions Officer in conjunction with the Human Resources Department.



RETURN-TO-WORK INTERVIEW FORM

A return to work interview is usually held if a member of staff has had 3 separate episodes of sickness absence within a 6 month period. The interview should take place as soon as possible upon their return to work from the last period of absence. This form should be completed and signed by both the member of staff and line manager and returned to the Human Resources Department. A copy will be held on the member of staff's personal file.

Further guidance on undertaking return to work meetings can be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

Employee Details

Name: Job Title:

Department:

Absence Details

Sickness absence over the past 6 months:

From	To	Reason for Absence (please see list overleaf)

Interview

Date: Line Manager conducting interview:

.....

1. Was medical advice sought for the most recent period of absence and for the previous absences detailed above?
2. Are any follow up medical appointment needed?
3. Is a self certificate or medical certificate required?
4. Was medication prescribed for the above periods of absence?
5. Is any medication being taken at present?
6. If yes, could this medication affect the ability to operate machinery or cause drowsiness?
7. Has the member of staff fully recovered?
8. Are there any on-going health conditions that the College should be aware of?
9. Is any support required?
10. Is there anything else related to the periods of absence that the College should be aware of for the future?
11. Might a referral to the College's Occupational Health Doctor be required?
(If yes, please contact your Human Resources Officer)
12. Is the member of staff aware of the sickness reporting procedure?
13. Has the employee received a copy of the College's Absence Management Policy and Procedure?

Conclusions arising from the interview and any further action to be taken

.....
 ...

 ...

 ...

Signatures:

Signed: Date:

 Member of staff

Signed: Date:

 Line Manager

Reasons for Sickness Absence Categories:

SICKNESS CODE	SICKNESS CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
C	Cancer	
DD	Digestive disorder	Diarrhoea, IBS, gallstones, chrohn’s disease
E	Endocrines	Thyroid, diabetes, glands
G	Gynaecology	Hysterectomy, painful periods, cervical screening
HD	Heart disease	Hypertension, congenital heart disease
I	Infections	Influenza, respiratory infection
MH	Mental Health	Depression, anxiety, stress related illness, addictions
MAI	Minor ailments/illness	Coughs, colds, headaches, toothache
MJB	Muscles, joints & bones	Broken bones, back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome
PSR	Post surgery recovery	
PRI	Pregnancy related illness	
IW	Injury at work	
O	Other – please specify	

If you are uncertain what category to use please contact the Human Resources Department



MONTHLY ABSENCE RETURN FORM

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETION

This form should be completed for every member of staff who has been absent from work. The completed form should be emailed to the Human Resources Department by the **7th of each month** so that any entitlement to sick pay or necessary pay adjustments can be actioned in the same month's salary payment.

Please confirm the type of absence and reasons for any sick leave by entering the appropriate category code in the boxes below. Codes should only be entered against the days when the member of staff was absent. Category codes are confirmed below and further information is available from the Human Resources Department

Absences are recorded to the nearest half day. Any absences of half a day or more should be recorded. If a period of absence is for half a day, please tick the relevant box. Otherwise absences will be recorded as a full day.

The number of hours a member of staff would normally work per day also needs to be entered in the Normal Hours box if any absence during that week has occurred.

Please forward (or attach if sending a paper copy) any necessary self certificates or doctor/hospital certificates to the Human Resources Department. A self certificate form needs to be completed by the member of staff for sickness absence lasting between 3 and 7 days and can be downloaded from the Human Resources website. A doctors/hospital certificate is required for sickness absence exceeding 7 days. If a member of staff returns to work for less than 1 working day before taking further sick leave for a related or similar illness, the period of absence will be considered to be continuous and a further certificate may be required. If a medical certificate is to follow, please indicate by ticking the relevant box below.

ABSENCE CODE	ABSENCE CATAGORY
SL	Sick Leave
CL	Compassionate Leave
DL	Dependant Leave
PL	Parental Leave
SL	Study Leave
UA	Unauthorised Absence
OP	Other paid leave
OU	Other unpaid leave
SAB	Sabbatical Leave

SICKNESS CODE	SICKNESS CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
C	Cancer	
DD	Digestive disorder	Diarrhoea, IBS, gallstones, chrohn's disease
E	Endocrines	Thyroid, diabetes, glands
G	Gynaecology	Hysterectomy, painful periods, cervical screening
HD	Heart disease	Hypertension, congenital heart disease
I	Infections	Influenza, respiratory infection
MH	Mental Health	Depression, anxiety, stress related illness, addictions
MAI	Minor ailments/illness	Coughs, colds, headaches, toothache
MJB	Muscles, joints & bones	Broken bones, back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome
PSR	Post surgery recovery	
PRI	Pregnancy related illness	

IW	Injury at work	
O	Other – please specify	

Name:
Return:

Payroll No:

Month/Year of

W/C ___/___/___					
	Absence Code	Sickness Code	Half Day	Normal Hours	Certificate to Follow
SUN					
MON					
TUE					
WED					
THU					
FRI					
SAT					

W/C ___/___/___					
	Absence Code	Sickness Code	Half Day	Normal Hours	Certificate to Follow
SUN					
MON					
TUE					
WED					
THU					
FRI					
SAT					

W/C ___/___/___					
	Absence Code	Sickness Code	Half Day	Normal Hours	Certificate to Follow
SUN					
MON					
TUE					
WED					
THU					
FRI					
SAT					

W/C ___/___/___					
	Absence Code	Sickness Code	Half Day	Normal Hours	Certificate to Follow
SUN					
MON					
TUE					
WED					
THU					
FRI					

W/C ___/___/___					
	Absence Code	Sickness Code	Half Day	Normal Hours	Certificate to Follow
SUN					
MON					
TUE					
WED					
THU					
FRI					

Completed by:

Signed:

Date:

DRAFT