1. **Purpose**

The University Sick Leave Policy QA105 sets out the procedure and practice for taking sick leave during normal circumstances. This policy sets out the procedure and practice for Covid-19 related Special Leave with Pay, in accordance with the provisions set out in the circular from the Department of Education and Skills.

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees of the University, including full-time, part-time, temporary or those on fixed-term contracts of employment. It also applies to workers such as agency staff, and casual staff.

3. **Special Leave with Pay**

3.1 Special Leave with pay may be granted to an employee where medical confirmation is provided of COVID-19 diagnosis or recommendation to self-isolate or to restrict his/her movements in accordance with the [HSE Guidelines](https://www.hse.ie/).  

3.2 Any special leave with pay granted for the purpose of diagnosis of COVID-19, self-isolation or restricted movements will not be counted as part of the employee’s sick leave record. The Special Leave with Pay entitlement will apply for the number of days advised by the HSE/doctor to self isolate/restrict movements and will be recorded as Special Leave with Pay on the employee’s record.

3.3 Medical certificates confirming Covid-19 diagnosis or recommendation to self-isolate should be sent by email to the employee’s line manager, copying hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie. Please note that medical certificates should not be posted to the University.

3.4 Where the employee is already on special leave with pay due to self-isolation and subsequently contracts COVID-19, then the special leave with pay may continue for the duration of the illness, subject to medical certification confirming Covid-19 diagnosis being provided to the employer as per 3.3 above.

3.5 If the employee has an ordinary illness which is subsequently diagnosed as Covid-19, this can be retrospectively recorded as Special Leave with Pay subject to medical certification confirming same being provided to the employer as per 3.3 above.

3.6 The principles of the University Sick Leave policy QA105 still apply, such as maintaining contact with your manager in relation to your wellbeing throughout the period of absence.

3.7 If the employee has received a positive Covid-19 diagnosis, is fit to work and able to work remotely, they should submit a medical cert stating that they are fit to work for the period.
4. **Ordinary Illness**

Any non-Covid-19 related illness will be recorded as sick leave and the rules governing the University sick leave policy will apply. You should forward a clear legible photo/scan of your medical cert to your line manager, copying hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie. Medical Certs should not be posted to the University. If the absence is for more than 6 days, you should apply for illness benefit from the Department of Social Protection and Employment Affairs. A Sick Leave Return to Work or SL1 form should be submitted to your line manager for signing and forwarding to hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie, regardless of the duration of the absence.

5. **Returning to work**

- **If employee was diagnosed with Covid-19 or an ordinary illness**, employees should submit a Sick Leave Return to Work form (SL1 Form) on their return to work to their line manager for signing and forwarding to hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie

- **If employee was self-isolating**, when the recommended period of self-isolation has passed, medical advice and HSE Guidelines should be followed regarding return to work.

In both cases:
The Covid-19 Return to Campus Declaration form should be completed and submitted to your line manager 3 days prior to returning to work.

You must complete the CIF return to work induction training prior to returning to work in NUI Galway.

6. **Responsibilities for Implementation**

Employees, Line Management, the Human Resources Office and the University share the responsibility to implement this policy.

7. **Further information is available at:**

https://nuigalwayie.sharepoint.com/sites/ReturningtoResearch?CT=1591264162443&OR=OWA-NT&CID=2dab3522-b75e-9b67-94fc-9dba3d2cab6a

See Appendix 1 below for FAQs
Appendix 1:

Frequently asked questions:

What should I do if I have Covid-19/suspected Covid-19?

You should submit an appropriate medical cert - a clear legible photo or scan will suffice- by email to your line manager, copying hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie. The cert must confirm specifically your diagnosis of Covid-19/Suspected Covid-19. Special Leave with pay will be recorded rather than sick leave. Please note that the University sick leave policy still applies such as maintaining contact with your line manager regarding your wellbeing and submitting certs at the earliest opportunity. Medical certs should not be posted to the University.

Should I claim the special DEASP Covid-19 illness benefit payment?

Public Service Employees who can avail of the special leave with pay for Covid-19 are excluded from claiming the special Department of Social Protection and Employment Affairs Covid-19 illness benefit payment as they will continue to be paid as normal.

What should I do if I contract another illness?

Any non-Covid-19 related illness will be recorded as sick leave and the rules governing the University sick leave policy will apply. You should forward a clear legible photo/scan of you medical cert to your line manager, copying hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie. Medical Certs should not be posted to the University. If the absence is for more than 6 days, you should apply for illness benefit from the Department of Social Protection and Employment Affairs.

What should I do when I return from sick leave?

You should submit an SL1 form to your line manager for forwarding to hrsickleave@nuigalway.ie. The SL1 form can be found at the end of the sick leave policy, available here. You should also submit a Covid-19 return to work form and a CIF return to work induction form.

Further information in relation to working during the Covid-19 emergency is available here.