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**Managers Guide to Managing Sick leave**

The University believes that a healthy, productive workforce is essential to our ability to provide quality service. We recognize that on occasion, employees may experience ill health which prevents them from attending work. The Sick Leave/Occupational sick pay scheme is designed to provide income protection and support should an employee be unable to work due to ill health. Managers play a key role in managing sick leave. This document is a guide which provides important information for Managers about the scheme and what to do when an employee illness or injury occurs. It does not alter/amend the University's Sick Leave scheme and in a case of doubt the Sick Leave scheme is the definite document.

**What to do when you are aware of an employee’s absence?**

Managers will monitor all absences. An employee who is unable to report to work due to illness is required to contact his/her manager or designate by normal commencing time, but in any case prior to 12.00 noon on that day. A staff member must stipulate the reason for the absence and the likely return date. This reporting of absence should be by telephone call, a text message is not acceptable.

 If a staff member remains absent for a second day then the same procedure applies in relation to notifying their Manager on the second day.

Where a staff member is absent for three days or more they are required to submit a medical certificate from their doctor on the third day to their manager. The Manager is required to forward the sick leave certificate to the Human Resources Office immediately on receipt except in the case of Craft & General Operatives, where it should be forwarded to the Salaries Office.

The manager should already have a good understanding of the circumstances of the case from the initial telephone call. They should also know when to expect the medical cert to arrive. It may be a day late due to the staff member being confined in hospital. However where a medical cert is not received on time the manager is required to contact the staff member and remind them to submit it in a timely manner. This ensures that the staff member continues to benefit from the University's sick leave scheme. Where such a follow up by telephone does not result in the cert being submitted the manager should write to the employee concerned seeking the required certification by return and remind them that their participation in the sick leave scheme is at risk should they not comply fully.

The manager should also inform HR of the difficulty and obtain advice if necessary.

 **What is my role in managing the sick leave?**

1. The Manager must forward all medical certificates to the Human Resources Office.  If the illness persists additional medical certificates must be submitted on a regular and timely basis.  Please read the [Sick Leave Scheme](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hr/documents/sick_leave.pdf) for further information. An employee who is eligible for social welfare payment must claim the relevant benefit.  Social welfare claim forms are generally available from GP’s.  The employee must complete the form and submit it directly to their Manager for forwarding to the [Human](http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Schemes/IllnessDisabilityAndCaring/Pages/default.aspx) Resources Office.

*Please note that delay in doing so may affect an employee’s salary*

1. The Manager must record sick leave on core time (where applicable)
2. Where frequent short-term absences occur (whether Certified or not) a medical opinion should be obtained to establish whether or not there is an underlying medical reason for the absence. The Manager should contact the Human Resources to arrange same. More than three illnesses in a twelve month period would warrant closer scrutiny.

The Manager should contact the employee regularly in order to provide support and contact during this vulnerable time. This will help to keep the employee in touch with work developments and aid their return in the long term. It will also provide information on the recovery and likely return date. This contact should become the norm and be expected by all members of staff in your area.

1. The Manager should ask when he/she is likely to be able to return to work, following consultation with his/her Doctor.
2. The manager must be familiar with the following policies/programs:
* Sick Leave
* EAP
* Managing Absence
1. The manager must ensure that the employee is familiar with and complies with the sick leave process, ensuring that they are reporting in and forwarding Doctor’s certificates as per the sick leave policy.
2. The Manager must inform staff when they have taken the maximum number of uncertified sick leave days. The current limit is 7 days in a two year rolling period. Where a staff member is absent for more than this number of days they are required to provide a medical certificate from their doctor. Unpaid leave or annual leave is not an option. Staff should be kept aware at all time of when they are required to provide a medical certificate. Absence without a medical cert where it is required is considered as being absent without leave and is subject to disciplinary sanction.
3. The Manager must participate in the development of the return‐to‐work plan, and offer modified work and/or schedule when appropriate in consultation with the Human Resources office.
4. The Manager must inform and educate co‐workers prior to any employee’s return to work in order to ensure a supportive environment for the returning employee.

**What is the EAP?**

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provides free and confidential professional counseling and information services which are available to all employees of National University of Ireland, Galway and members of their families/households. The service is provided by Vhi Corporate Solutions, a firm of external consultants who operate independently of management. The EAP offers help in the following areas:

* General information queries
* Family relationships
* Emotional problems
* Relationship problems
* Work related problems
* Marital problems
* Face-to-Face & Telephone Counseling
* Legal advice
* Independent financial advice
* Support to line managers
* Critical incident response

**What can employees expect after I have notified Human Resources?**

If there is no prospect of an early return to work, or if this is not clear, the employee will be referred to the University’s occupational health doctor by the Human Resources Office.

Based on the medical evidence i.e. the nature of the illness and whether or not a return to work is likely within a reasonable time scale, a decision will be taken to either advise the employee that termination of employment is likely, if he/she cannot return to work or that a decision is to be deferred for a period of time.

In some cases it may be that retirement on grounds of ill health may be considered by the University. This is subject to medical reports and sanction by the DES.

Alternative work will be considered where it may be suitable and available and where the medical advice is that this would be helpful.

**Where can I direct an employee for additional information?**

All policies and procedures regarding employee sick leave and the Employee Assistance Program can be found on the [HR Website](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hr/documents/sick_leave.pdf)

**How do I arrange a temporary replacement?**

During this time if you are in need of a replacement staff please contact the Human Resource Office.