

# Adverse Weather Policy

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### 1. Introduction/Context

1.1 The University recognises that staff may face difficulties attending their place of work and returning home during periods of adverse weather conditions such as heavy snow falls, flooding, or other adverse weather conditions which may result in journeys to work being extremely hazardous. However, while the University is committed to protecting the health and safety of all its staff, it must ensure that disruption caused to its services remains minimal.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of all members of staff, Heads of Institutions and line managers when considering attendance at work during adverse weather conditions, and to outline the appropriate procedures.

### 2. Eligibility

This policy applies to all staff and is designed to promote fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff throughout the University when considering attendance at work during adverse weather conditions.

### 3. Policy Statement

Staff should make every effort to attend work during adverse weather conditions without putting their personal safety at risk. However if it is unavoidable for staff to be absent from the workplace, with the agreement of their line manager and subject to operational needs and other relevant factors outlined in section 5.4, the manager in discussion with the staff member may agree one of the following options:

- Work from home (if practicable).
- Make the lost time up.
- Take annual leave.
- Take unpaid leave.
- Or apply a combination of the above options.

Paid leave may also be agreed in certain circumstances as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6 and 6.4. Full details of the Policy Options are outlined in section 6.

### 4. Responsibilities of Staff

4.1 Staff should not put themselves at unnecessary or inordinate risk when attempting to attend work.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the staff member to make every effort to attend for duty at their normal place of work, in accordance with their contract of employment. This includes adapting their means of travel if necessary, or using a combination of travel options, even if this results in arriving late for work. It should be noted that where additional expense is

incurred as a result of using different travel methods these expenses cannot be reimbursed by the University.

4.3 In the event of adverse weather conditions staff will take all reasonable steps to report his or her inability to attend work to their manager as soon as is practicably possible. This should be in line with the particular department's normal arrangements for reporting sickness absence or other unanticipated absence and this will apply for each day that the member of staff is unable to attend work. Please note that failure to comply with reporting arrangements may amount to unauthorised absence and could therefore be unpaid.

4.4 In the event that a member of staff cannot attend work due to adverse weather, by agreement with their manager, any lost time will be treated in accordance with the options laid out in section 6 below. One or a combination of these options may be applied on each day of adverse weather conditions.

## **5. Responsibilities of Managers**

5.1 The Head of Institution and line manager should ensure that all staff are made aware of the University's Adverse Weather Policy, and that all staff are treated fairly and proportionate to their needs taking into account individual circumstances.

5.2 The Head of Institution and line manager should ensure that reporting arrangements are clearly communicated to all staff. This should be consistent with information already provided to staff for reporting sickness absence or other unanticipated absences.

5.3 There are a range of factors which should be considered (see section 5.4 below) when deciding how time away from the workplace should be categorised and it is the responsibility of each Head of Institution and line manager to use a consistent and fair approach. While accepting that staff should not take unreasonable risks in attempting to get to work in difficult or extremely hazardous conditions, there should not be a disincentive to staff who do make a particular effort.

5.4 The following factors should be taken into consideration by the Head of Institution or delegated line manager when agreeing the appropriate action to take:

- The employee's safety.
- The operational requirements of the Institution.
- Distance travelled to work.
- Prevailing weather conditions and their expected duration.
- Information and guidance from the AA, police and/or local radio, e.g. about safe travelling.
- Modes of transport available to staff.
- The degree of effort exercised by staff and whether they have made attempts to make alternative travel arrangements.
- Working from home; this may be considered, dependant on the nature of employment and where circumstances permit. Any working from home arrangements should be closely monitored to ensure that it is productive.
- The use of existing on-call arrangements in order to establish contingency arrangements where adverse weather conditions are foreseeable (see section 7).
- The caring or childcare responsibilities of the staff member (see section 6.3).
- The health of the staff member; for example where it is known that they have a mobility or other health/medical condition special care should be taken in reaching a decision relating to attendance and pay.
- Other factors pertaining at the time (see section 7).

5.5 The Head of Institution or delegated line manager should decide on a case by case basis whether it is appropriate for staff to leave work early. In taking the decision, they should consider the factors outlined in section 5.4 above. If the total time lost is no more than half the staff member's normal working day then there will not be a deduction in pay. If the total time lost amounts to more than half of the staff member's normal working day the provisions outlined in section 6.1 below should apply.

5.6 In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for Heads of Institution to close a department. In such circumstances staff should be paid as normal.

## **6. Policy Options**

6.1 If a member of staff has made all reasonable efforts to travel to their place of work but has failed due to adverse weather conditions or disruptions to public transport, upon agreement with the line manager, and subject to operational needs, the manager may agree one of the following options to account for time lost:

1. Working from home (if practicable).
2. Making up the time/hours lost (usually within one month).
3. Taking a day's/half day's annual leave.
4. Taking unpaid leave.
5. Or apply a combination of the above options.

Paid leave may also be agreed in certain circumstances as outlined in 5.5, 5.6 and 6.4.

6.2 Where adverse weather is prolonged staff may wish to request a combination of points 1 to 5 above.

6.3 In certain situations, such as where schools/nurseries close without warning owing to adverse weather and staff are unexpectedly required to provide/arrange care for their dependants, or have other caring responsibilities, the University policy and provisions for [Emergency Leave for reasons connected with dependants](#) may apply.

6.4 If the staff member has made efforts to attend work on time and arrives late they will not be expected to make the time up if the lateness in total is no more than half the staff member's normal working day, having regard to the severity of the conditions and the personal circumstances of individual staff members. If the total time lost amounts to more than half the time of the staff member's normal working day the other provisions outlined in section 6.1 above should apply.

## **7. Other considerations**

7.1 Special care should be taken when applying this policy where it is known that an employee has mobility problems or a medical/health condition which may be exacerbated by adverse weather conditions.

7.2 Departments which offer a service or operate essential services may have more detailed local arrangements in place to maintain these services during adverse weather and this policy should be read in conjunction with those arrangements.

7.3 Staff who are already on leave (annual, maternity, sickness etc.) will not be entitled to a day off in lieu if their department is closed.

7.4 Further advice is available from your Human Resources School Team.

## **8. Policy Ownership and Status**

8.1 The HR Division will be responsible for reviewing this policy on a regular basis in consultation with the Unions and in the light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.