

Phased return to work

The University wishes to create and support a healthy and efficient working environment, not only through its obligations to comply with Health and Safety legislations but also through a caring and rehabilitative approach towards sickness absence management. To this end the University seeks to be supportive and flexible in assisting staff if they need time away from work due to illness and in supporting their rehabilitation back to work.

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

After a member of staff has been absent from work due to illness and over a prolonged period of time, Occupational Health or the member of staffs GP may recommend in the first instance a phased return to work as part of a rehabilitation programme to allow the member of staff to re-adjust to full attendance/performance at the workplace.

The Line Manager and the member of staff will agree the general timescale, 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 the weekly range of duties to be performed.

If restrictions on certain duties are to be placed on a returning member of staff, it will be necessary for Occupational Health to review and reassess these restrictions within an agreed timescale.

Any request by the member of staff, or alteration by the Line Manager, in respect of the general timescale, duties and working arrangements during the phased return will be subject to agreement between the member of staff and the Line Manager and if necessary Occupational Health

The Line Manager will be responsible for updating the member of staff on any changes which have taken place within the department during their absence.

If a disabled individual has been on sick leave but has been certified as fit to return to work but is unable to do so straight away as they are waiting for the employer to make a reasonable adjustment, then the individual will be deemed to be on paid leave, not sickness absence. This might occur where the adjustment affects a key element of the role. In these circumstances the individual would be entitled to full pay and the absence should not be recorded as sickness. However, if an individual has been certified as fit to return to work but they are waiting for a reasonable adjustment to be made, the manager and the individual should discuss the possibility of the individual returning to work to undertake duties which are not affected by the need for the reasonable adjustment. The individual can fulfil those duties while waiting for the adjustment to be made.

Timescale for the phased return programme

The phased return to work programme will normally not exceed four weeks, bearing in mind the need for a degree of flexibility since the member of staff's progress might be difficult to predetermine.

The Line Manager should review the member of staff's progress on a weekly basis and should he/she recognise that the member of staff is unlikely to be able to resume his/her normal working hours and duties before the four week period expires; further urgent advice should be sought from Personnel.

Medical certificates

If the GP and Occupational Health have recommended that a phased return to work is appropriate, and the Line Manager has agreed a rehabilitation programme, the member of staff should submit a final Statement of Fitness to Work indicating a phased return to work.

Payment during phased return to work

Personnel will advise the member of staff on details of salary during the phased return to work programme.

In a full sick pay period hours not worked will be paid as full pay, if in half pay hours not worked will be paid as half pay and if in nil pay hours not worked will not be paid.

A member of staff with a large outstanding annual leave entitlement may use that leave to off set any reduction in sick pay.

May 2015