

Guidance on Staff Attendance during Severe Weather Conditions

1. Introduction

This guidance document is intended to provide staff and managers with a structured and consistent framework in relation to the University's approach in dealing with employee attendance during severe weather conditions.

The Met Office issue warnings in advance of severe weather that may cause one or more of the following: travel disruption, damage to property, utilities disruption and, in the most severe cases, danger to life. Other authorities such as the Police or Government may also issue advice in advance of and during periods of severe weather. Any University decisions relating to severe weather will be informed by these and other sources of information.

Staff should do their best to attend work in all circumstances. Where normal travel arrangements have broken down all reasonable safe alternatives should be explored to get to and from work, including walking if distance permits.

If at all possible the university will remain open and accessible during severe weather and priority will be given to maintaining academic activity and services to students

2. Scope

The guidance applies to all employees of University of the West of Scotland.

3. Principles

The aim is to keep its buildings open and running. In order to maintain this service, some staff may be required to work so long as it is safe to do so.

It is expected that every member of staff will attend work according to the terms of their contract. There is no automatic entitlement to payment for absence caused by severe weather and episodes of absence related to severe weather will be assessed on a case by case basis.

In the event of failure to report non-attendance at work, the appropriate amount of pay may be deducted.

4. Procedure when University remains open

If, after taking all factors into consideration, a member of staff is unable to attend work or is likely to be significantly delayed they should telephone their immediate line manager/nominated representative within half an hour of their normal start time. An expected arrival time should be discussed, if appropriate, or the likely length of absence.

If a member of staff is absent and does not contact his/her line manager/nominated representative in accordance with the timescale outlined in the above notification procedure, the absence may be treated as unauthorised.

If a member of staff is not able to attend their normal workplace their manager may authorise/require the individual to undertake work at an alternative campus if that is feasible.

If appropriate, a manager may authorise an individual to undertake work at home. If an individual employee cannot attend work at all and/or work cannot be undertaken elsewhere or at home, the line manager will determine how the absence is to be treated. The following options will be considered:

a. Annual Leave

It may be possible for the employee to be granted annual leave to cover the period of absence.

b. Repayment of time

It may be possible to agree that the time lost due to the absence can be repaid by working additional hours or days if operationally acceptable.

c. Unpaid Leave

If an employee is unable to use annual leave, and no other options are considered appropriate, the time lost can be treated as a period of unpaid leave and an appropriate deduction will be made from normal salary.

d. Dependants' Leave

A member of staff unable to attend work during severe adverse weather because of urgent domestic or personal circumstances may be eligible for leave under the terms of the University's Dependants' Leave Guidelines.

5. Procedure when University closes

The Principal (or designated representative) is responsible for co-ordinating the decision to close the University due to travel for staff becoming dangerous or impossible as a result of severe weather conditions.

If this closure takes place outside of normal office hours, communication with staff will take place via social media, emails, the UWS website, recorded switchboard message and other methods agreed locally e.g. text messages.

If a decision on campus opening is being made early in the morning, any staff who are due to leave for work before the decision has been communicated, every effort will be made to either stand these staff down or agree a later start time the day before, without any detriment to them. Communications will normally be made at approximately 7.00 am. Staff who are able to work remotely will be encouraged to prepare for this in advance when severe weather is forecast, and to do so during the closure.

Pay will not be deducted from staff who were scheduled to work during the period of the closure.

Members of staff who had already booked annual leave during a closure period will not be entitled to re-claim the leave as they were not prevented from coming to work by the closure.

6. Lateness caused by travel disruption

In the event that a member of staff arrives late during the severe weather and transport disruption, they will not be required to make up lost time, will not suffer any loss of pay and no action will be taken providing the manager is satisfied that all reasonable steps were made to attend work.

Members of staff who have been delayed returning from annual leave due to severe weather/disruptions to transport infrastructure are required to inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity. Absence will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.

7. Review of Guidelines

These guidelines will be reviewed as required.