Sickness Absence Policy

1. Introduction
The Open University is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of its staff. This document sets out the University's policy on sickness absence.

This policy applies to all internal and Associate Lecturer (AL) staff. However, due to the operational requirements of the AL role some procedural arrangements will vary and AL staff should refer to the AL terms and conditions.

2. Responsibilities
Managers are responsible for recording, monitoring and managing sickness absence in accordance with University guidelines.

All members of staff are required to comply with University guidelines relating to the reporting of sickness absence.

3. Sick Pay

Contractual Sick Pay
Entitlement to contractual sick pay will be as determined in the appropriate Terms and Conditions of Service.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)
Members of staff who are unable to work due to illness may be entitled to receive SSP. The University is responsible for paying SSP, and it can be paid for up to 28 weeks. Further information is available on the Government website.

Any SSP due will be included in normal full sick pay; staff in receipt of half sick pay will receive any SSP due in addition to their half pay, subject to the total gross pay being no more than normal salary on full pay.

4. Medical and Dental Appointments
Members of staff are allowed reasonable paid time off for appointments where these cannot be made in their own time. Time off for appointments should be approved in advance by the manager, where this is feasible. For further information please refer to the Sickness Absence Procedures.
5. Sickness During Holidays

The University’s policy on granting compensatory days of holiday for sickness incurred during an agreed period of holiday entitlement is outlined in the appropriate Terms and Conditions of Service.

6. Holidays During Sickness Absence

Annual leave continues to accrue at the normal rate throughout any period of sickness absence (paid and unpaid). Members of staff on long-term sickness absence have the right to take this annual leave while off sick, subject to normal carry over rules. Further guidance is available in the Sickness Absence Procedures.

7. Referrals to Occupational Health

In line with Terms and Conditions of Service, The University may require employees who are absent due to sickness to undergo a medical examination by a registered medical practitioner. Further details about Management Referrals to Occupational Health are available within Sickness Absence Management - A guide for Managers. The procedure for making a referral can be found on the People Services Intranet Site.

8. Phased Returns

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for a phased return to work to be agreed following a period of sickness absence (please refer to Sickness Absence Management - A guide for Managers for further details). Where this is the case, University policy is that a phased return on full contractual salary (subject to the approval of the Head of Unit) will be over a one month period, or exceptionally two months if the circumstances require the extension. If the circumstances are not exceptional or the phased return needs to continue beyond the two months, members of staff may use holiday entitlement during the extended period to make up their hours, or alternatively contractual hours may be changed temporarily.

9. Redeployment on Ill-Health Grounds

Redeployment may be considered where illness or injury requires alternative work arrangements on a permanent basis.

The University recognises its duty under equality legislation to consider redeployment as one of a range of possible reasonable adjustments, where applicable.

For further guidance, please refer to the Sickness Absence Procedures.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policies are inclusive of all Open University staff, regardless of: race, sex, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression or gender reassignment.

11. Useful References

Sickness Absence Procedures
Sickness Absence Management - A guide for Managers
Terms and Conditions of Service