



Personnel

SICKNESS ABSENCE & MONITORING POLICY

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Reviewed by:	Natalie Dermott
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SICKNESS ABSENCE AND MONITORING POLICY

1. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

Employee well-being is a strategic priority for Liverpool Hope University as demonstrated by the University's current corporate well-being initiative 'I Heart my Colleagues' campaign*. As part of a holistic approach to well-being the University is committed to ensuring that employees suffering from ill-health are treated with understanding and sensitivity whilst achieving an acceptable level of attendance.

This policy establishes guidelines for managers and employees in relation to sickness absence. It is aimed at enabling sickness absence to be addressed consistently and fairly across the University and sets out procedures for reporting and recording sickness absence. Accurate sickness absence records are important to enable the University to identify patterns of sickness, work-related health problems and to ensure compliance with the Equality Act, including identification of adjustments necessary in working practices or environment.

Employees who are ill will be treated sympathetically and every effort will be made to assist recovery and safeguard employment. It is recognised however, that the loss of working days through repeated sickness absence can be a significant cost to the University in terms of work not completed or the costs of arranging absence cover. Repeated sickness absence also places additional pressure on colleagues.

Responsibility for applying the provisions of the policy lies with Deans, Managers and their delegated representatives as well as Personnel.

2. Application of Policy

This policy applies to employees only. It is not contractual and may be amended from time to time. Any significant changes will be made after consultation with relevant stakeholders including recognised unions. Whilst it is accepted that the working patterns of academic staff allow a degree of flexibility, the provisions of the policy must apply to all categories of staff to ensure a consistent and equitable approach.

** The 'I Heart my Colleagues' campaign is a corporate well-being initiative focused on raising awareness and promoting good health, safety and wellbeing and encourages employees to 'look out for their colleagues'*

3. Sickness Absence Procedure

3.1 Sickness Absence Reporting and Recording

All sickness absences must, *where practicable*, be reported on the first day of absence by the employee to the Line Manager (or the person designated for the purpose within the department) within 30 minutes of the time when s/he is expected to start work (or earlier if known and possible to do so), *or as soon as possible thereafter*. Staff must report this sickness absence personally via telephone unless it is not possible for them to do so (i.e. they have been taken to hospital or are unable to speak due to their illness). Staff with a flexible or irregular work pattern should make contact as early in the day as possible, if they are expected at work. The Manager (or designated person) should be informed of the following:

- the nature of the illness or injury
- any appointments made with the GP or hospital
- whether the absence may be due to an injury at work or otherwise perceived
- the expected date of return, *if known*
- *reasonable* details of any outstanding or urgent work that needs to be dealt with

If an employee is unable to get hold of their Manager (or designated person) or another Manager by telephone then it is acceptable to then initially report the absence via email and text. If an employee fails to notify their Manager (or designated person) and does not have a valid reason for doing so, it may be treated as unauthorised absence and may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

The Manager and the employee should maintain reasonable contact whilst the employee is absent from work due to ill-health, taking into account the nature of absence. Contact between the employee and Manager will usually be via telephone, in the first instance, with the ongoing method of communication then mutually agreed. Communication should focus on the employee's health and wellbeing, and their return to work including any measures to facilitate a return. If a Manager is concerned about being unable to make contact with an employee they should contact Personnel for advice. Some faculties/subject service areas will have specific arrangements for reporting absences. It is the manager's responsibility to make these specific arrangements clear to staff and they must be observed by all staff.

Where a member of staff becomes ill whilst at work and feels too unwell to continue working, the individual should speak to their Line Manager advising them that they will be leaving work and where appropriate, seeking medical advice. Absence for part of a working day is not recorded as sick leave for monitoring purposes unless there is a pattern of a member of staff leaving work early on a regular basis due to illness. Further guidance about this issue can be sought from Personnel

If a member of staff believes that his/her condition may be related to an activity or incident at work, s/he should inform his/her line manager. In such circumstances an

Accident Report Form should be completed and forwarded to the Health & Safety Officer. Depending on the nature of the illness, the manager (or the member of staff) may also wish to contact the Personnel team to arrange Occupational Health support for advice on how to avoid recurrence of the problem.

It is the responsibility of Deans and Managers of subject/service areas to ensure that a record is kept of the whereabouts of the staff in their area (for example, who is on holiday, sick leave, other leave and the location of staff working off-site). Managers are responsible for ensuring that all incidents of sickness absence amongst their staff are accurately recorded.

For absences of between one and seven consecutive calendar days, a self-certification form (available from the manager or the Personnel forms section of the intranet) must be completed and signed by the individual on the day of return to work or as soon as possible thereafter. If the absence is in excess of seven calendar days, or more (including non-working days), the employee must obtain a Statement of Fitness for Work (fit note) from a doctor to cover the absence and forward it to the Line Manager as soon as possible.

Employees who receive a fit note stating that they “may be fit for work” should inform their Manager as soon as possible. When presented with a fit note that contains specific medical advice or recommendations, the Manager should discuss this with the employee and seek advice from Personnel. If the suggested adjustments cannot be implemented, the employee will remain on sick leave and a date will be set to review the situation.

Completed self-certification forms and doctor’s certificates must be forwarded to Personnel by the manager (or other nominated person) as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate recording, payment and other necessary actions may be taken.

The University confirms that employees have the right to confidentiality regarding illness. Such records constitute sensitive personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998 and considerable care must, therefore, be given to the security of records. Such records are held in a secure place and only made available to authorised staff.

3.2 Monitoring Sickness Absence

As an employer, the University has a responsibility to ensure that all of its staff are aware of their responsibilities in respect of the sick pay scheme and that the sick pay scheme is operated effectively.

Monitoring absence in a systematic fashion also facilitates an early identification of an employee’s health problems and instances of working practices or environments (for example demands, controls, support, relationships), which may be contributing to sickness absence. In dealing with sickness absence, the University should ensure a consistent approach across faculties and subject service areas and various categories of staff.

Deans and Managers should regularly review sickness absence to ensure that their area of operation is able to function effectively. They should also check for patterns that give cause for concern or indicate the possibility of health problems that may be exacerbated by the working environment. If an employee's absence pattern gives a manager cause for concern, it should be discussed with them informally or at the earliest opportunity.

Sickness absence returns from all Managers will be collated and recorded by Personnel and regular reports including sickness absence statistics will be provided back to Managers.

3.3 Return to Work Meeting

Following any period of absence, (whether it has lasted for one day or one month), the Manager should arrange to meet with the employee as soon as possible after his/her return to work. This return to work meeting gives the opportunity to:

- Welcome the employee back into work;
- Confirm the details of the absence;
- Identify any support that is required to ensure the employee's successful return to work, including discussing any measures that may have been recommended in a fit note or fit for work assessment;
- Update the employee on work progress and any events that took place during the period of their absence;
- Allow the employee an opportunity to raise any concerns or issues and bring any relevant matters to the manager's attention;
- Identify any underlying causes of the sickness absence and discussing an Occupational Health referral if appropriate.

A return to work meeting form (available via the Personnel forms section of the Intranet) must be completed by the Manager and forwarded to Personnel by the Manager (or other nominated person) as soon as possible.

If the employee hits sickness triggers (see below section 3.5) a separate Sickness Absence Review meeting should be scheduled.

Further guidance about return to work meetings can be sought from Personnel.

3.4 Occupational Sick Pay

The University pays occupational sick pay to eligible individuals in accordance with the information as set out below. All payments will be inclusive of any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) due, in accordance with applicable legislation in force at the time of sickness absence.

During the first year of service

- One month's full pay and after four months' service two months half pay or the statutory entitlement to sick pay, whichever is the greater.

During the second year of service

- Two months' full pay and four months half pay

During the third year of service

- Four months' full pay and four months half pay

During the fourth and fifth year of service

- Five months' full pay and five months half pay

After five years' service

- Six months' full pay and six months half pay

The amount of paid sick leave already taken at any time in the year (i.e. rolling twelve months) immediately prior to the date on which a period of sickness absence begins will be taken into account when calculating the amount of sick pay due to an employee. For the avoidance of doubt sickness benefit entitlement will be pro-rata'd according to an employee's contracted hours.

The University reserves the right to withhold payment of occupational sick pay where an employee fails to co-operate or comply with reasonable requests or enquiries to ascertain his/her medical condition or in any way fail to apply these procedures. Failure to comply may also be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

The University will pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) who comply with the relevant statutory rules relating to sickness absence. Information on SSP eligibility can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/eligibility>

3.5 Sickness Triggers

The University has adopted the following sickness triggers:

- Three or more periods of sickness absence in a rolling twelve month period and/or;
- A total of more than ten working days (pro rata if part- time) sickness absence in a rolling twelve month period (i.e. a total of more than two working weeks' sickness absence in a rolling twelve month period)

If an employee's sickness absence hits any of the above triggers a documented Sickness Absence Review Meeting between the Manager and the employee should take place (see section 6.1 for more details).

3.6 Frequent Short Term Sickness Absence

Frequent short term absence refers to where an employee is frequently absent from work for short period of time due to ill-health. This type of absence can be particularly difficult as they are usually without notice and it is difficult to plan for their impact.

Whilst the University understands that employees may have some short term sickness absence, it is essential that frequent short term absence is dealt with promptly and consistently, with appropriate support, to ensure the smooth running of the University.

Understanding the reasons for frequent short term absence helps identify a resolution and a referral to Occupational Health may assist (see section 4.1 for more details). Managers should take positive steps to monitor and manage frequent short term absences. If an employee hits a sickness trigger a Sickness Absence Review meeting should take place (see section 6.1 for more details).

3.7 Long Term Sickness Absence

In cases of long-term sickness absence of one month or more, Managers should contact Personnel to discuss an approach to the case. Where there is a suggestion that the absence is in any sense work-related, the manager should contact Personnel immediately.

Where an employee has been absent for a month or more, the Manager (in consultation with Personnel) should arrange to meet with the member of staff at work, visit them at home or at a neutral venue. The aim of such a meeting is to provide support and assistance to the individual and to keep open channels of communication. Staff on long-term sick leave can become isolated and out of touch and such visits can be a method of making their return to work less stressful. Such visits or meetings should only be undertaken following consultation with Personnel. In cases involving debility, stress or other *work related* conditions a home visit or meeting or referral to occupational health may be arranged at an earlier date. Throughout the period of absence the Manager should maintain contact with the member of staff. Equally, the employee has a responsibility to update his/her Manager regularly on their *absence* and his/her likely date of return to work.

In cases of long term sickness absence. Personnel is likely to refer the employee to the occupational health doctor for advice on the nature of the illness, a likely date of return and any rehabilitation advice. The employee's agreement will be sought in advance. In accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988, permission may also be sought to obtain a report from the employee's G.P. Should an employee refuse to give consent, any decision that the University might have to take will then be taken on only those facts that are already available. The action that follows a referral will depend on the nature of the report and will be decided after discussion with the individual's Manager, Personnel and, where appropriate, the relevant Trade Union Representative.

If an employee has been referred by their GP to occupational health via the Fit for Work scheme a separate referral by Personnel to the occupational health doctor may not be required. For more information on the Fit for Work scheme follow the link to <http://fitforwork.org/>

An employee may be invited to attend a Sickness Absence Review meeting whilst on long term sickness absence (see section 6.1 for more details).

Following a period of long-term sickness absence, a phased return to normal working hours is sometimes recommended by the GP or occupational health. A phased return should normally be for a period of no more than four weeks and would be on full pay.

3.8 Time off for Medical Appointments

Employees are entitled to reasonable paid time off for Doctor/Dentist & Hospital appointments, but it is expected that wherever possible they will be made/attended in the employee's own time. However, if such appointments have to be made during the employee's normal working day, they should be arranged as close as possible to the employee's start/finish time to minimise disruption to work. Managers should request to see appointment cards in advance of the appointment.

4. Medical Health Advice and Support

4.1 Occupational Health

The University work with an independent occupational health (OH) provider to support and raise awareness of health issues with staff and support health and wellbeing events and initiatives.

OH provide professional advice on health issues at work and provide health assessments to:

- Advise on fitness for work with a view to supporting employees to continue at work;
- Advise on reasonable adjustments;
- Facilitate rehabilitation for employees returning to work following a period of ill-health; and
- Advise on capability issues

A wide range of information is available through our current OH provider, Health Management. Their website at <http://www.healthmanltd.com> offers a broad range of practical advice and guidance on health and wellbeing issues.

If a Manager is concerned about an employee's sickness absence they may be referred to an OH Advisor for a medical assessment to seek advice on reducing sickness absence and/or facilitating a return to work where this is possible.

If an employee is asked to attend an appointment with an OH Advisor they can request a copy of the medical report. A follow up meeting will be arranged with the employee's manager and a HR Advisor to discuss the findings of the report with the employee.

4.2 Staff Counselling Service

The University provides a counselling service for employees which usually allows up to six sessions. Counselling gives the employee the opportunity to talk about their concerns in a confidential setting with a trained counsellor. For more information follow the link to <http://www.hope.ac.uk/personnel/healthandwork> on the Personnel web pages.

5. Disabilities

The University acknowledges that sickness absence may result from a disability. Disability is defined under the Equality Act (2010) as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities. There is no automatic obligation for employees to disclose a disability or health condition to the University, although employees should inform their manager if they consider their disability and/or health condition affects their ability to undertake their work and/or poses a health and safety risk.

Where an employee chooses to disclose a disability, as defined under the Act, Managers should consider and discuss the necessary support, adaptations and reasonable adjustments to the workplace or other aspects of working arrangements that will provide support at work and/or assist a return to work with support from Personnel. In addition, Managers must take advice from Personnel before arranging a Sickness Absence Review meeting if an employee's sickness absence is related to a disability.

6. Sickness Absence Review Process

6.1 Informal Sickness Absence Review Meeting

An informal Sickness Absence Review Meeting will normally take place between a Manager and employee where the trigger number of absences (or days absent) is reached. There may be occasions when a Sickness Absence Review Meeting is not required even though sickness triggers have been reached, i.e. a broken leg or post-operative recuperation for example, may require a period of absence exceeding the trigger period and would not normally lead to a Sickness Absence Review Meeting.

The employee will be given at least seven days' written notice of the Sickness Absence Review Meeting (unless the employee agrees to less) and the meeting should cover the following areas:

- A record of the employee's sickness absences over a rolling 12 month period;
- Confirmation of which sickness trigger has been hit;
- Determine if any support is required to assist the employee to improve their attendance;
- Where the employee is on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last, taking into account any available medical evidence;
- Determine whether a referral to OH if appropriate;
- Considering whether the employee has a disability that may necessitate reasonable adjustments being made;
- Confirmation that an employee will be placed on a sickness review period for a period of generally three months and the level of improvement that is expected;

- Confirmation that if an employee's sickness absence exceeds the improvement target during the review period this may trigger the formal process;

A Sickness Absence Review Meeting form (available via the Personnel forms section of the Intranet) must be completed by the Manager at the meeting and forwarded to Personnel by the Manager (or other nominated person) as soon as possible.

If following a Sickness Absence Review Meeting, the Manager wishes to refer the employee to the Occupational Health service they should contact Personnel to discuss this.

If the employee's absence levels reduce, the target is met and the desired improvement is made, no further action will be taken. However, if, after a period of satisfactory improvement, sickness absence levels deteriorate again within the following year, it may be appropriate to invoke the formal process rather than repeat a Sickness Absence Review Meeting.

6.2 The 3 Stage Formal Process

The sickness absence review process has three formal stages, with a provision for appeal at each stage.

Timescales for each stage will depend on individual circumstances and some sickness absences may be dealt with over a longer or shorter period than others. The point at which a Manager decides to move an employee to the next stage of the sickness absence review process will vary from case to case and will be determined in discussion with Personnel. In addition nothing prevents the formal procedure being invoked at any stage of the process depending on the seriousness of the situation.

6.2.1 Conducting Formal Meetings

Managers should seek to resolve sickness absence issues informally wherever possible. However, if informal action is not considered appropriate or has not succeeded in improving attendance to an acceptable level, the employee will be required to attend a formal Absence Review meeting.

The employee should receive at least seven working days' written notice of the formal Absence Review meeting and be sent a copy of their sickness absence/attendance record, Occupational Health report and any other relevant documents. The letter inviting the employee will outline the purpose of the meeting, the date, time and location, supporting documentation to be referred to, the employee's right to be accompanied and an outline of the potential sanction, including dismissal if a Stage 3 Absence Review meeting. The employee may be accompanied to the meeting by a work colleague, Trade Union representative or an official employed by a Trade Union. The Absence Review meeting will be chaired by the employee's Line Manager or a more Senior Manager and will be attended by a representative from Personnel. In the case of a Stage 3 Absence Review meeting it will be conducted by a member of the USET Team (who has not previously been involved at any of the formal stages) with a representative from Personnel.

The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend a meeting. If an employee or their companion are unable to attend at the time specified the employee should immediately inform the manager chairing the meeting who will seek to agree an alternative time. Failure to attend a meeting without good reason may be treated as misconduct, or may result in the meeting proceeding in the absence of the employee.

If an employee wishes to submit any documents in advance of the meeting then these should be made available to the Manager chairing the meeting at least four working days in advance of the Absence Review Meeting.

The employee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the Absence Review Meeting, which will explain the reasons for the decision reached and the right to appeal. This should be provided within seven working days of the meeting (unless this timescale is not practicable, in which case it will be provided as soon as possible). There is a right of appeal against a decision at any formal stage of the sickness absence review process (see section 6.4 for more details).

If any time the employee's Manager considers, based on reasonable evidence, that the employee has taken or is taking sickness absence when they are not unwell, or is not following the required sickness absence reporting procedure, they may refer the matter to be dealt with under the Disciplinary procedure.

6.2.2 Formal Stage 1 Absence Review Meeting

A formal Stage 1 Absence Review Meeting may be held when an employee's absence due to sickness is of concern and informal action is no longer appropriate and/or has not succeeded in improving attendance to an acceptable level.

The purpose of the Stage 1 Absence Review Meeting will depend on the type of sickness absence being investigated but may include:

- Discussing the reasons for absence and giving the employee the opportunity to explain their absence and any mitigating circumstances;
- Where the employee is on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last, taking into account any available medical evidence;
- Where the employee has been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences;
- Considering whether medical advice is required, including a referral to OH if this has not already been arranged;
- Considering whether the employee has a disability that may necessitate reasonable adjustments being made in the application of the formal process;
- Considering what, if any, measures might improve the employee's health and/or attendance;
- Agreeing a way forward, any action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting under the sickness absence review process;

Possible outcomes may include:

- Adjourning the meeting to obtain further medical evidence;
- No further action at this stage;
- A return to work programme, possibly with a phased return (where the employee has been on long term sickness absence);
- Issuing a First Improvement Notice setting out the required improvement in attendance. The employee should be advised that if the requisite improvement is not achieved this may result in further formal action which will include attending a Stage 2 Absence Review Meeting.

A First Improvement Notice will establish the commencement of a formal absence monitoring period and will set out any required attendance levels and the implications for not meeting those levels, the review process during the monitoring period and the employee's right of appeal against the decision.

A copy of the First Improvement Notice will be retained on the employee's personnel file. The First Improvement Notice will remain active for a specified period (e.g. three months) after which time it will be disregarded.

The manager will monitor the employee's attendance during the review period. On completion of the review period the employee will be advised in writing of the outcome that either:

- The employee has met any required attendance levels set and no further action will be taken;
- Significant progress has been made towards meeting the attendance levels set, but they have not been fully achieved (or other factors have been present) and the review period will be extended or other options considered;
- The employee has not met the required attendance levels set and the matter will be progressed to the second stage of the Absence Review Process.

6.2.3 Formal Stage 2 Absence Review Meeting

A formal Stage 2 Absence Review Meeting may be held when an employee has been unable to return to work, a return to work programme has been unsuccessful or an employee's absence levels have continued to be in excess of those set out in the formal absence monitoring period and/or remain a concern.

The purpose of a Stage 2 Absence Review Meeting will depend on the type of sickness absence being investigated but may include:

- Discussing the reasons for absence and the impact of the employee's ongoing absence (s)
- Giving the employee the opportunity to explain any mitigating circumstances;

- Where the employee is on long-term sickness absence, determining how long the absence is likely to last;
- Where the employee has been absent on a number of occasions, determining the likelihood of further absences;
- If it has not been obtained considering whether medical advice is required. If it has been obtained, considering the advice that has been given and whether further advice is required;
- Considering the employee's ability to return to/remain in their job in view of their capabilities and the University's business need and any adjustments that can reasonably be made to the job to enable the employee to do so;
- Considering whether redeployment support is appropriate and whether any adjustments that can be reasonably be made to assist with redeploying the employee to a suitable available vacancy;
- Where the employee is able to return from long-term sick, to their existing job, or a redeployed job, agreeing a return to work plan;
- Agreeing a way forward, any action that will be taken and a timescale for review and/or a further meeting.

Possible outcomes may include:

- Adjourning the meeting to obtain further medical evidence;
- A return to work programme, possibly with a phased return to work (where the employee has been absent for a long time);
- Issuing a Final Improvement Notice setting out the required improvement in attendance. The employee should be advised that if their requisite improvement is not achieved this may result in further formal action, which may include dismissal;
- Consideration of other options such as redeployment or retirement on ill-health grounds;
- No further action at this stage.

A copy of the Final Improvement Notice will be retained on the employee's personnel file. The Final Improvement Notice will remain active for a specified period (e.g. six months) after which time it will be disregarded.

6.2.4 Formal Stage 3 Absence Review Meeting

A formal Stage 3 Absence Review Meeting may be held when an employee has been unable to return to work, a return to work programme has been unsuccessful or an employee's absence levels have continued to be in excess of those set out in the formal Stage 2 absence monitoring period and/or remain a concern.

The employee must be informed in writing that an outcome of the Stage 3 Absence Review Meeting could be dismissal. The Stage 3 Absence Review Meeting will be conducted by a member of the USET Team who will be accompanied by a Personnel Advisor.

The purpose of a Stage 3 Absence Review Meeting may include:

- A review of the meetings that have taken place and matters discussed with the employee to date;
- A review of the history of the employee's absence, its effect on the University and any actions previously taken to address the situation, including any support provided to the employee;
- The consideration of medical evidence;
- In the case of an employee who remains on long term sickness absence, considering whether there have been any changes since the last meeting under Stage 2 of the procedure, either as regards a possible return to work, permanently reduced hours or opportunities for return or redeployment support;
- Considering any matters that the employee wishes to raise such as mitigating factors;
- Considering whether there is a reasonable likelihood of the employee returning to work or achieving the desired level of attendance in a reasonable time;
- Considering alternative options or ill-health retirement;
- Considering, after all options have been considered, the possible termination of employment.

Following the meeting the member of the USET team may consider one or more of the following options (this list is not exhaustive):

- To extend a Final Improvement Notice and set a further review period (where a substantial improvement in attendance is likely in the review period);
- To consider other options such as redeployment support, ill-health retirement or other appropriate action short of dismissal;
- To dismiss on grounds of capability (ill-health);
- No further action.

In the event that the decision is taken to dismiss the employee the letter will include the reasons for dismissal, the date that their employment will terminate and the right of appeal.

6.3 Appeals

There is no right of appeal against the informal part of the process.

An employee has the right to appeal against the decision of any formal sanction including dismissal.

The employee should submit their appeal in writing, outlining their reasons for appeal, to the Director of Personnel (or nominated representative) within seven working days of receiving the outcome letter confirming the formal sanction. This letter must be accompanied by a clear statement specifying the basis upon which an appeal is sought.

An appeal may be made on the basis of any one of the following circumstances:

- the procedure was not used correctly
- new evidence can reasonably be brought forward
- the formal action was unreasonable
- the penalty imposed was disproportionate to the offence

Normally appeals will be conducted by an appropriate manager more senior than the manager who made the decision and not previously involved in the matter and a Personnel Adviser not previously involved with the case to advise. If the appeal was from a senior manager and the Vice Chancellor has heard the original review, then the Chair of Staffing Committee or his/her nominee would hear any appeal.

Where the appeal is against dismissal an appeals panel will be convened and will include at least one member of University Council.

The role of the Appeals hearing is to review the process that led up to the management decision, ensuring that the procedure was used correctly, the action taken reasonable and to consider any new evidence brought forward.

As soon as reasonably practicable and not normally less than seven working days before the hearing the parties will be notified of the time and date of the appeal hearing.

At least five working days before the hearing, the parties will provide Personnel with their written submissions. The employee should also notify Personnel of any relevant witnesses they intend to call. Personnel will forward all of the above submitted information as soon as reasonably practicable and not less than three working days before the date of the hearing.

At the Appeal hearing the employee will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague, Trade Union representative or an official employed by a Trade Union. The employee and/or his/her companion will present his/her case to the panel.

The Appeal hearing will consider its decision in private.

If at any time, evidence arises which needs further investigation, the Appeal hearing will be adjourned to a later date.

The Chair has the right to question any relevant witnesses he/she may deem appropriate in helping to reach a decision.

The Chair of the Appeal Hearing will write to the employee informing him/her of the outcome as soon as possible normally within seven working days.

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