

# UHI | INVERNESS

## PROMOTING ATTENDANCE POLICY

**REFERENCE: PL/HR/2025/006**

Policy Owner	Assistant Principal – Operations and External Relations
Lead Officer	HR Manager
Review Officer	HR Business Partner
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Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact
HR Manager	29.03.11	Review Approved
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## 1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to maintaining a healthy and productive workforce and aims to achieve this through a positive approach which promotes attendance. In doing so, this ensures the College operates effectively, providing the necessary support for staff and continuing to deliver a high-quality service to the students.

Through promoting a culture of supportive management and a high standard of staff health and wellbeing, the College aims to prevent unnecessary or avoidable absence wherever possible, thereby reducing the need for absence management. However, where absence does occur, staff experiencing ill health will be treated fairly, reasonably, consistently, and with understanding and sensitivity.

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that sickness absence has an impact on the College and other staff, in terms of increased workload for colleagues, disruption to work, and subsequently, College performance. The Promoting Attendance Policy and Procedure aims to provide a template for managing staff absence by clarifying individual responsibilities and providing line managers with guidance on how to manage, monitor and minimise absence, and provide employees with the support needed to return to work when well enough to do so.

The main objectives of this policy are:

- To encourage and support staff to maintain optimum attendance at work and/or to help facilitate a sustained return to work.
- To ensure staff receive maximum support to assist them in attending work.
- To provide a consistent framework to staff and line managers for reporting, monitoring and managing sickness absence.
- To encourage productive communication around health and wellbeing.
- To identify those staff requiring additional support to return to work and/or to undertake their duties, identifying any reasonable adjustments required.
- To ensure staff, line managers and HR are aware of their responsibilities in relation to sickness absence.
- To ensure the College acts in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner when dealing with sickness absence.
- To minimise the impact of staff absence on the College and the service it provides to the students.

## 2. Legislative frameworks/ related policies

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 (AMRA)
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights (Dispute Resolution) Act 1998
- ACAS Guidelines and Best Practice
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Inverness College UHI Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Inverness College UHI Performance Improvement Policy

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed at Inverness College UHI.

## 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Short-term absence	A period of sickness absence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lasting less than 2 calendar weeks for stress/anxiety, or</li><li>• lasting less than 4 calendar weeks for any other reason.</li></ul>
Long-term absence	A period of sickness absence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lasting 2 calendar weeks or more for stress/anxiety, or</li><li>• lasting 4 calendar weeks or more for any other reason.</li></ul>
Absence trigger	10 days or more of absence over 4 or more episodes in a 12-month rolling period.

## 5. Responsibilities

### 5.1. Human Resources (HR)

- Provide advice, guidance and support to managers and staff on absence management, capability, and other related policies and procedures.
- Provide information to managers on absence levels, highlighting issues or patterns which give cause for concern.

- Provide advice on the legal requirements and implications when dealing with sickness absence cases.
- Attend meetings and hearings as requested to provide advice and support.
- Advise on strategies for reducing sickness absence on an individual, departmental, and organisational basis.
- Provide training to managers to support the implementation of the Promoting Attendance Policy and Procedure.
- Monthly and quarterly absence reporting and monitoring.

## **5.2. Line Managers**

- Maintain accurate records of staff absence within CIPHR.
- Open absence record within the HR database on the same day as being advised of absence (see Appendix C).
- Hold a 'Welcome Back to Work' discussion with staff on the first day back, or as soon as practicably possible thereafter (and no longer than 3 working days after return) for every absence and submit a completed 'Welcome Back to Work' form to the HR department (Appendix A).
- Ensure staff close absences within the HR system upon return to work.
- Seek advice from HR in relation to referring staff to Occupational Health (OH).
- Complete OH management referrals and meet with staff to discuss OH report once received.
- Progress OH recommendations where reasonable and appropriate.
- Maintain regular contact with staff whilst absent from work, ensuring they are kept informed of organisational changes, particularly those with health, safety, or security implications.
- Implement informal and formal procedures where necessary with advice from the HR department.
- Ensure that all staff understand and follow the procedures for reporting absence.
- Ensure that all staff are supported and encouraged to attend work.
- Ensure consistent and fair treatment of staff, whilst considering individual circumstances.

## **5.3. Staff**

- Attend work in accordance with the contract of employment, unless unfit to do so.
- Raise any concerns in relation to health which may impact on work so that support mechanisms or adjustments may be considered at an early stage.
- Comply with the sickness absence notification procedures.
- Maintain regular contact with line manager as agreed whilst absent from work.
- Attend medical referrals/ appointments/ review meetings as requested.
- Adhere to safe working practices and procedures and take personal responsibility for own health and wellbeing whilst at work.
- Participate with Occupational Health (OH) treatment, signposting, and referrals, as recommended, to improve health and wellbeing.

- Participate in scheduled “Welcome Back to Work” discussions upon return to work following a period of absence.
- Close absences within the HR system upon return to work.

## **6. Occupational Health (OH)**

Occupational Health (OH) is a medical service which can be utilised for both physical and mental health conditions to:

- support staff and their managers on how to deal with medical conditions in the workplace; and
- help to ensure wellbeing in the workplace.

The College engages in a contract with an external OH service to obtain expert medical advice when an employee is absent, returning to work following absence, or suffering from ill-health which is having an impact on them at work.

Following referral, the OH practitioner will carry out an assessment of the employee and report back to the manager to help them to understand what steps they need to take to support the employee.

The service provided by OH includes:

- Providing managers and staff with expert medical advice on health and fitness for work.
- Advising managers and HR on the appropriate course of action to facilitate a timely and sustained return to work for staff, where appropriate.
- Seeking further medical information from GPs and/or specialists where necessary.
- Advising on expected recovery periods and/or return to work dates where possible.
- Making recommendations on ill-health retirement or redeployment on medical grounds as appropriate.
- Providing appropriate management information to HR.
- Adhering to agreed service level agreements (SLAs) and standards.

The OH provider is not a diagnostic service and will not treat medical conditions. Staff requiring treatment or diagnosis should visit their GP and/or specialist.

## **7. Monitoring**

Each college policy will be reviewed regularly, and its implementation and effectiveness monitored. Appropriate procedures for reviewing and monitoring are the responsibility of the policy lead officer. These procedures will be subject to audit by the Quality department.

The following health and wellbeing performance indicators will be used to monitor implementation of the Promoting Attendance Policy and Procedure:

- Percentages of short and long-term absence and average number of sick days per employee.
- Number of interventions to aid return to work (e.g. Occupational Health referrals).
- Percentage of staff on leave for reasons other than sickness.
- Breakdowns of these performance indicators by department.

Further breakdown of these performance indicators will be used to identify any emerging patterns on sickness absence and wider organisational performance.

Monitoring of performance indicators will take place at the HR Committee and Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee on a quarterly basis in advance of taking to the Board of Management.

## **8. Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed on at least a 3 yearly basis, to continue to meet College requirements and any legislative changes to ensure currency of content.

This policy must be complied with as outlined above and will be audited regularly with reports going to the appropriate committee.