

Policy

Title: **DISRUPTION TO SERVICES IN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Ref: HR/ER/Version 1.1

Last updated: 15 February 2013

1. Employees of the University have a contractual obligation to attend for work. It is recognised, however, that there may be some very rare occasions when unusual/exceptional circumstances arise (for example, due to environmental and/or climatic conditions) and where the University and its employees will need to evaluate the situation in order to assess whether or not there are potentially serious and significant threats to the health and safety of employees if they were to attend.

2. Where the University considers that 'exceptional circumstances' do exist employees will be paid as normal as long as:
 - i. All reasonable actions were taken to follow University instructions
 - ii. The University was informed of absence at the earliest opportunity
 - iii. The employee worked at home where possible and attendance at the University was either not required or was not reasonable in the circumstances.

3. In these circumstances, working from home will be classed as 'ad-hoc' 'one-off' days and not regular arrangements. Employees must ensure they have taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that relevant health and safety issues are addressed.

4. Managers and employees who work in areas which are likely to be required to provide 'essential services' when exceptional circumstances arise must ensure that they are aware of the specific arrangements and procedures for their areas under these conditions and apply them as far as it is possible so to do. It is vitally important that every effort is made by both managers and employees in these areas to liaise in order to ensure that the optimal essential service provision is available.

5. The University reserves the right not to pay an employee or to insist that the employee takes paid or unpaid leave or makes up lost hours if there is evidence to suggest that this is reasonable taking into account all the circumstances. Where such action is under consideration, managers are advised to take HR advice before applying this penalty to ensure consistency of approach.

6. Where the University has not made a decision officially to close for business and/or to put restricted services into operation:
 - i. Employees who would normally attend work will be expected to have explored all safe travel options to enable full normal payment to be authorised.
 - ii. Assurances of this will normally be taken on trust unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise.
 - iii. Circumstances which may have affected an employee's ability to attend work such as the distance involved or health issues will be taken into account when assessing whether or not an expectation of attendance was reasonable.
 - iv. Where an employee attends work but because of disruption to their normal method of transport arrives late or has to leave early, their full normal day's pay will be credited to them regardless of how many hours they actually worked.
 - v. No additional payments beyond normal salary will be made for attendance in such circumstances unless payments arise as part of a separate 'essential services', business continuity or call out

agreement or employees have specifically been asked to work additional hours by their manager or another appropriate person.

7. Employees who are absent at the time that the 'exceptional circumstance' arrangements were implemented will not be eligible for any additional payments or time off in lieu. This applies whatever the reason for that absence whether it is related to sickness; their part time pattern of work, pre-booked holiday leave, pre-agreed care leave arrangements, maternity/paternity/adoption leave, pre-arranged medical appointments of any kind or any other pre-arranged absence from work.
8. Where the above arrangements do not provide sufficient support for employees who have caring responsibilities, the 'Leave for Domestic Incidents' policy may be used to provide additional support. That policy provides for employees to take leave (up to four days of which in any year will be paid) to care for a dependent and also covers the need to arrange care for the dependent and/or deal with disruptions to normal arrangements.

This would apply, for example, where bad weather causes school closures. For the specific purposes of the application of the Leave for Domestic Incidents' policy to the 'Unusual Circumstances' policy, a dependent may be defined as a spouse, child, parent or person to whom the employee has caring responsibilities and where the time off is necessary to provide direct support or to make arrangements for their care given the unusual circumstances.

If the provisions of the 'Leave for Domestic Incidents' policy are used to cover absence due to exceptional circumstances, the employee is regarded as being on leave and would not be required to work at home in order to receive pay.