

How to Conduct a Return to Work (RTW) Meeting

It is essential all correspondence, meeting notes, OH reports and medical documentation are retained confidentially within the employee's HR personal file or departmental file at every stage of the absence process. All self-certification and fit notes should be attached to the relevant period of absence within the One University System. Human Resources will offer support and guidance, where requested, at any point of the Sickness Absence Management Procedure.

Introduction

Managers must acknowledge and discuss each individual sickness absence with the employee on the first day they return to work; regardless of absence duration. The meeting, in most cases will be brief and based around the most recent absence. Both parties will discuss the reason for absence, and any consequences resulting from the absence, for example, the application of agreed reasonable adjustments, follow up medical appointments or further anticipated absence.

A return to work meeting should be informal. The Return to Work Form is completed and attached by the Manager to the relevant period of sickness absence in the One University System.

Where absence levels have met one of the trigger points detailed below in the flowchart or is causing concern the return to work should be escalated and controlled by the Manager. Where an employee has met one of the trigger points an Absence Review Meeting should be held with HR in attendance. However, where extenuating circumstances apply, it is at the discretion of the manager to determine whether a formal Absence Review Meeting is required. An Absence Review is where the individual is given written notice to attend a meeting and requested to discuss their absence history.

Absence reviews are a formal process providing an opportunity to discuss multiple absences and can be introduced when an individual has met an absence trigger or their absence is causing concern. For example, frequency, length or a pattern of absence is emerging. Further guidance can be found within the recording and managing occasional, frequent and long term absence section under How to Conduct an Absence Review Meeting.

In cases where absence may be disability related Managers should liaise with Human Resources before determining next steps.

Conducting a return to work meeting (RTW)

The following areas are the foundation to an informal return to work:

- Welcome the employee back, providing them with an opportunity to confirm they are fit to return to work and discuss further issues or appointments relating to their health, which may impact their work or future attendance
- Bring the employee up to date with any changes, issues, and how their work was covered
- Offer the opportunity for the employee to raise work-related issues confidentially
- Employees are encouraged to bring to their Manager's attention, any issues, disability, or work-related concerns they may feel is impacting their health and well-being
- Managers are encouraged to direct employees to available support, where appropriate
- Advise the employee they will be invited to an Absence Review if applicable
- Attach the RTW form to the relevant period of sickness absence in the One University System

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Sickness Absence Management Procedure

⚠️ HR intervention required



Consideration of Equality Act (2010) required

Informal-Return to Work Meeting

Return to work meetings must be held for all employees on their first day back to work, regardless of absence duration.

