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| Absence Management Policy & Procedure |
| FINAL – v0.08 |

# Absence Management Policy & Procedure

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*This policy does not form part of staff contracts of employment and may be reviewed and amended subject to agreement by all relevant parties.*

*This policy must be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice which overarches all the University’s policies and procedures and details generic aspects that apply to all of our policies and procedures.*

# Purpose

## Edge Hill is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of its employees, providing appropriate support in relation to health and attendance at work, and understands that individuals experiencing ill health may require periods of absence from time to time.

## The policy is designed to promote a supportive management approach and ensure that sickness absence is addressed in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner. It sets out the responsibilities for reporting, recording and managing sickness absence.

# Scope

## This policy applies to all employees of the University irrespective of the type of contract that they are employed under.

## The policy and its associated procedures relate to the management of absence due to ill health and its effects on the ability of employees to carry out duties. Ill health absences should be distinguished from unauthorised absence, which is an issue of conduct that may fall within the scope of the University’s disciplinary procedure.

## This policy is not designed to question the legitimacy of an employee’s sickness absence nor to pressurise employees into returning to work before they are fit to do so. However, that the University is aware that sickness absences may have an impact on an employee’s colleagues, its students and its customers. The policy aims to encourage employee attendance whilst offering employees who experience sickness absence support and guidance.

# Support

## The University places a high value on the health and wellbeing of all employees, it encourages health promotion and improvement through its occupational health service and in conjunction with its health and wellbeing provision.

## Employees are always able to seek advice or guidance from Human Resources (HR) in relation to their health and wellbeing. In addition, there are a number of important resources available to employees to support their ability to carry out their role effectively such as learning and development mechanisms, social engagement and wellbeing activities, and policies aimed at supporting employees to achieve a work-life balance. Further information can be found on the [HR](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents) WIKI Page.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## It is important that the University and its employees work together to ensure that sickness absences are dealt with reasonably and fairly, addressing each case on an individual basis. To ensure the appropriate application of the policy, the following responsibilities have been identified:

## Line Manager / Supervisor Responsibilities

## Managers should be supportive of the employees they have responsibility for when managing sickness absence and should ensure that absences are addressed in a caring and sensitive manner. Cases should also be dealt with by a fair and consistent approach, balancing the needs of individual employees with those of the University.

## As well as obligations under The Equality Act 2010, managers also have a duty of care for the health and safety of employees at work including:

* + Ensuring employee awareness of policies, procedures and training relating to health and safety.
  + Where an employee has failed to notify the line manager of their absence, the manager will try and make contact to ensure the employee is safe and well. If the manager is unable to reach the individual, the manager will consider what steps are appropriate in order to establish the employee’s wellbeing, including contacting the next of kin/emergency contact.
  + Encouraging employee engagement with health and wellbeing initiatives and interventions.
  + Ensuring employee awareness of sickness absence reporting procedures.
  + Effective management of sickness absence and conducting return to work and sickness absence meetings in a timely and sensitive manner.
  + Ensuring systems and procedures for reporting and recording absence are consistently followed.
  + Maintaining regular contact with employees during periods of absence, normally on a fortnightly basis for long term absences. Regularly reviewing team attendance to identify and address any work-related causes of absence and conduct risk assessments as appropriate.
  + Offering reasonable adjustments and other mechanisms of support to encourage attendance, where required, usually, based upon Occupational Health guidance.

# Human Resources Responsibilities

## Human Resources will provide advice and guidance to employees and managers regarding the monitoring and management of sickness absence and the relevant legislative requirements.

Human Resources will:

* Liaise with managers regarding relevant support e.g. Occupational Health.
* Provide case management guidance to managers to ensure a consistent University approach in handling sickness absence.
* Liaise with the pensions team in cases of ill health retirement.
* Monitor and review the working of this policy, including monitoring its equality impact, and identifying patterns and trends in sickness absences to spot underlying causes.

## Occupational Health Responsibilities

## The Occupational Health Service provides an impartial and confidential advisory support service, supplying employees and managers with access to professional advice and guidance to aid the improvement of employees’ health, to assist a supported return to work and/or to help improve levels of attendance. Occupational Health may also provide guidance to the University on ill-health retirement and whether it should be considered for a particular employee.

Advice offered by Occupational Health could include:

* + Identifying potential support to aid an employee’s return from long-term sickness absence.
  + Guidance regarding rehabilitation, recovery and reasonable adjustments.
  + Guidance as to how an employee’s working environment may impact their health.
  + Reviewing the causes of an employee’s intermittent sickness.
  + Assessment of potential ill-health retirement situations.

## Occupational Health advice plays an important part in helping managers understand a health condition, its impact and its effect on their employee’s ability to attend work. The report provided to a manager following an Occupational Health appointment will answer the specific questions that have been asked, will be factual advice that is given with the employee’s informed consent, and will focus on achieving the best way forward to manage the health condition.

## Further guidance for employees and managers about the Occupational Health Service, including how to make an effective referral and what to expect during and after an appointment can be found [here](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents).

## Employees Responsibilities

## Employees have a responsibility to attend work and there is an expectation that they will do all they can to maintain their health to aid regular attendance. When unable to attend work due to sickness absence employees must:

* Contact their line manager, usually by telephone, before the normal start time on the first day of absence. Exceptionally it may be necessary for a family member to contact an employee’s manager, e.g. if the employee has been hospitalised.
* Keep in regular contact during the absence, advising their line manager of:
  + - * Any GP/hospital appointments.
      * Any outstanding or urgent work that needs to be dealt with.
      * Contact details.
      * The likely date of return (if known).
* Inform the manager prior to departure if, following medical advice, they intend to take time away from home or to travel abroad for recuperation.
* Submit self-certification for absences of up to seven calendar days, including half day sickness, immediately on return to work.
* Obtain a valid Statement of Fitness for Work (fit note) signed by a doctor for absences of more than seven calendar days and submit this to the line manager as soon as issued.
* Adhere to the notification and certification procedures set out above, providing self-certification or fit notes as appropriate, as failure to do so may result in ineligibility to receive Occupational Sick Pay or Statutory Sick Pay.
* Consultations with Occupational Health are not compulsory, however they are provided by the University as a means of support and employees are therefore encouraged to engage fully with the service (unless there is good reason that they are unable to do so) as the University can only make assessments based on the information available to it.

Support and reasonable adjustments which may be needed to be made to working arrangements are usually based on the advice received following the discussion with occupational health, hence why attendance at appointments with Occupational Health is important.

The report provided to a manager following an OH appointment will be factual advice that is given with the employee’s informed consent and will focus on achieving the best way forward to manage the health condition.

* Inform the manager when they are fit to return to work, (even if this is not one of their normal working days), to ensure that absence is recorded accurately.

## Employees should be aware that serious failure to follow the University’s Sickness Absence Procedure may result in disciplinary action and failure to provide appropriate self-certification or fit note in good time may result in occupational/statutory sick pay being withheld.

# Time off for Medical Appointments

## Wherever possible, employees should arrange doctor, dentist, optician and other medical appointments outside normal working hours. Where it is not possible to arrange an appointment outside normal working hours, maximum prior notification should be given to the manager. Managers may ask to see confirmation of the appointment, and time away from work will normally be covered by flexitime or annual leave. If the appointment lasts for half a day or longer, this will be recorded as a half or full day’s sick leave.

# Gender Transitioning Absences

## Employees undergoing gender transitioning may require time off for medical procedures / other relevant appointments. Any sickness absence relating to gender transitioning will be dealt with sensitively on a case by case basis and will take account of the employee’s individual needs

# 7 Pregnancy-Related Absences

8.1 Pregnancy-related illnesses do not count towards trigger points (which are discussed below), though are still recorded to ensure appropriate support is provided. Please see the Maternity Policy for further details [here.](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents)

# IVF-Related Absences

## While there is no statutory right to time off work for fertility treatment, the University recognises that fertility treatment can be a stressful and emotionally demanding experience and aims to support its employees going through the process.

## As such, employees who are undergoing fertility treatment personally or supporting a partner (including same-sex partners) undergoing fertility treatment may take reasonable paid time off for the purpose of receiving IUI or IVF treatment. The employee may be asked to provide documentation confirming the appointment details and what is classed as reasonable will be determined by the University in consultation with the employee.

## Any time off that is related to an IUI or IVF operation, will not be counted towards the absence triggers points discussed below.

## Following implantation of a fertilised embryo(s) an employee will be regarded as being pregnant. Please see the Maternity Policy for further details [here.](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents)

# Annual Leave and Sickness Absence

## If an employee falls sick whilst on annual leave, the period covered by a fit note (but not a self-certification) will be treated as sick leave, allowing the annual leave to be reclaimed. Further guidance can be found [here.](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents)

# Reasonable Adjustments to Support a Person with a Disability

## Disability is defined in Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment [where] the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [a person’s] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

## The University is aware that sickness absence may result from a disability. At each stage of the sickness absence meetings procedure (set out below) particular consideration will be given to whether any reasonable adjustments could be made to the requirements of a job or other aspects of working arrangements that would provide support at work and/or assist a return to work.

## If an employee considers that they are affected by a disability or any medical condition which affects their ability to undertake their work, they should inform their line manager. Any information an employee provides will be handled in a confidential manner and in accordance with the University’s Data Protection Policy which can be found [here.](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/documents/data-protection-policy/)

## Employers have an obligation to consider potential adjustments, and implement where reasonable, for employees with disabilities under current Employment legislation (The Equality Act 2010), to support and assist them in their work. Guidance may be sought from Occupational Health and external agencies such as Access to Work or the employee’s GP via a fit note on what kind of adjustments, if any, may assist a particular employee. Risk Assessments will also be carried out where appropriate.

## Reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities may be based on advice from Occupational Health, including the use of risk assessments where appropriate.

Possible adjustments to assist a disabled employee, that have typically been used at Edge Hill, include:

* A phased return to work.
* A permanent or temporary adjustment to working hours/pattern, subject to business needs.
* New, or modifications to existing, equipment and tools.
* Physical adaptations e.g. ground floor office accommodation.
* Provision of training or mentoring
* Agreed time off to support the management of the condition.

# Mental Health Related Absences

## In order to ensure that employees potentially experiencing mental health related difficulties (e.g. stress, anxiety, depression) are provided with appropriate support, stress risk assessments and referrals to Occupational Health should be made at the earliest opportunity. Risk assessments will be subsequently reviewed if there is a significant change in circumstances.

## Employees should be sign-posted to the University counselling service and a range of other wellbeing support.

# Return-to-Work Discussion

## Return to work discussions have been shown to be a very effective and fair approach as they demonstrate a duty of care, provide the opportunity to identify any potential support that may be appropriate as well as an opportunity to identify any possible underlying cause(s) of frequent absences at an early stage.

## The discussion, between the manager and employee should be held as soon as practicably possible following the return to work, regardless of the length/reason for the absence.

## This approach provides the opportunity to:

* + Welcome the employee back to work.
  + Understand the nature of the absence.
  + Identify any support that may aid a successful return to work, including any measures and/or adjustments recommended in a fit note or by Occupational Health.
  + Consider any actions that could be taken to help improve attendance levels.
  + Agree whether a referral to Occupational Health would be helpful.
  + Provide an update on work progress and events that have taken place during the absence.
* Enable the employee to ask questions and raise any relevant matters.

# Monitoring Procedure

## The University acknowledges that there will be occasions when employees are unable to attend work due to sickness. Frequent short-term absences can be a problem for the University as it is difficult to plan for their impact, which can potentially be substantial, disrupting the normal operation of a department, which could ultimately have a negative effect on students, customers and on employee’s work colleagues.

## The University has therefore identified levels of absences which may necessitate close review, and careful management which may include implementing support mechanisms deemed appropriate to improve an employee’s attendance.

The following criteria/trigger points for review are as follows:

* 3 or more absences / 15 working days of absence (pro rata) in a rolling 12-month period.

or

* 4 weeks continuous absence (long-term).

## Managers may seek advice from Human Resources to discuss an appropriate course of action based on the circumstances and the employee’s previous attendance record. It should be emphasised that not all cases that meet the above criteria will require action.

## Managers will be expected to keep a record of the decisions and any actions taken, which could include:

* + Requesting a referral to Occupational Health and/or the University Counselling Service (accessed via Occupational Health).
  + Absence details and any reasonable adjustments implemented.
  + Keeping the case under review.
  + Highlighting to the employee any concerns relating to level of absence.

## If a manager is concerned about any case that does not meet the identified criteria, (3 occasions or 15 working days) in a 12-month period (pro rata) but is causing significant operational difficulties, the matter should be discussed with Human Resources. Cases where absences appear to form a pattern (e.g. same days of the week, term time etc.) and/or evidence of trigger avoidance and/or persistent high levels of absence, will be subject to a wider review to fully consider attendance levels. Further action may be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure if appropriate.

# Sickness Absence Categories

Sickness absence may be categorised in one of the following ways:

## One-off absences (less than 4 weeks absence)

In these cases, for example a minor operation, a period of recuperation and possible therapy following the operation will usually be sufficient to enable a successful return to work. No further action should be necessary other than a return to work meeting to identify and enable any appropriate support and ensuring the absence is recorded on the Absence Management Application.

## Series of absences due to one diagnosed cause

Absences falling into this category could include those for which surgery resolves the health condition and then only requires support to return to work, as guided by Occupational Health, and a review period to ensure that the employee has returned to full health. An example could be a series of gallbladder related absences followed by cholecystectomy surgery.

If the diagnosed cause is on-going, for instance if relating to mental ill-health, the employee’s health and attendance will be monitored to ensure Occupational Health referrals are made where appropriate and relevant support is provided.

## Long term illness

The University considers an absence of 4 weeks or more to be long-term. The manager in conjunction with Human Resources, will determine how to support the employee. See [section 17](#_Managing_Long_Term) Managing Long-Term Sickness Absence for further guidance.

## Minor unrelated absences

If an employee has had several absences due to minor and unrelated illnesses, for example cold, headache, eye infection, their manager will discuss their attendance levels and any concerns, during a return to work meeting.

## The aim of any discussion and resulting actions is not to question the legitimacy of absences, but to discuss any reasonable adjustments, to reflect on their adverse operational impact of absences and to clarify where improvement in attendance levels are required.

## Cases where no improvement is demonstrated or where the impact is significant may progress to formal action in accordance with [section 16.7](#_Formal_Stages).

# Short-Term Absence Procedure

## This process deals with cases of high levels of short-term sickness absence which could be in the form of a number of absences that meet the criteria described at section 14 or other patterns of absence that are causing significant operational difficulties.[\_Monitoring\_Procedure](#_Monitoring_Procedure)

## All cases should in the first instance be referred to Human Resources for advice. In some circumstances, following a review, it may not be necessary to take any action other than to keep the case under review. However, in other situations it will be necessary to have recourse to the informal or formal stages described below.

## See also the Short-Term Absence flowchart for further guidance.[\_bookmark3](#_bookmark3)

## At any stage of the procedure it may be appropriate to refer the employee to Occupational Health Professional for assessment and/or support. If there is an underlying medical condition, confirmed by a medical professional, the manager in conjunction with Human Resources will consider how best to support the employee and whether it is necessary and appropriate to continue following the short-term absence procedure.

## Cases where absences appear to form a pattern (e.g. same days of the week, term time etc.) and/or evidence of trigger avoidance and/or persistent high levels of absence, will be subject to a wider review to fully consider attendance levels, mitigation and/or any extenuating circumstances. Further investigation may be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure if considered appropriate.

## Informal Stage

## If it is established that the employee has met one of the trigger points, the manager will normally arrange a meeting to explore the reasons for this and how the employee could be supported to better manage their absences. There may be personal, work or health issues which need to be addressed. The aim of the meeting will be to seek to help the employee improve their attendance to an acceptable level. An outcome of the meeting will normally include the setting of a 6-month review period and attendance targets. The manager will keep a record of the meeting and ensure that any agreed support mechanisms are put in place.

## Where informal action does not result in an improved attendance level, it may be necessary to progress to the formal stages.

## Formal Stages

## Human Resources will attend the formal stages outlined below to provide advice and guidance; employees also have the right to be accompanied to all formal meetings by either an Edge Hill colleague or a trade union representative.

## Stage One Meeting

## The meeting will discuss the employee’s recent absence / attendance record and any underlying health issues or other relevant matters. If during the meeting the employee raises a previously undisclosed underlying health issue, it may be appropriate for the manager to complete an Occupational Health referral to obtain further guidance on potential support.

During the meeting the manager will:

* + Discuss the reasons for absence.
  + Identify any adjustments or support provided.
  + Identify any further action or support that could be provided.
  + Discuss the impact of the absence.
  + Discuss actions the employee is taking to improve their health.
  + Review the most recent feedback from Occupational Health, if relevant.
  + Provide the opportunity to discuss any factors other than health which may be impacting attendance.
  + Identify any actions to be taken or to make appropriate recommendations.

A formal review period will be set, based on the employee’s circumstances.

## Formal Review Period

## The manager will arrange to meet with the employee to formally review their absence record, absence reasons and any reasonable adjustments put in place, normally 6 months from the stage one meeting, however, may be sooner if their attendance level deteriorates.

## If a sustained improvement is not achieved during the review period the formal procedure may progress to stage 2.

## If an improvement is achieved during the review period, the formal process will cease, and the employee will revert back to the normal monitoring process. However, if, during the next 6-months, their attendance level deteriorates, the formal procedure may progress to stage 2.

## Stage Two Meeting

## This meeting, which will review and further explore the continued levels of absence, will cover:

The.

* + - * The outcome of any Occupational Health Assessment
      * Reasonable adjustments.
      * Any other support that could be made available.
      * The reasons why attendance continues to be a concern.
      * Any mitigating circumstances.
      * The impact on the department.
      * The expected level of attendance.
      * A formal review period will be set, relevant to the circumstances.

## Formal Review Period

## The review period will be agreed during the stage 2 meeting and will consider the absence record, reasons for absence and any reasonable adjustments that have been or could be put in place. The review meetings will normally take place on a quarterly basis over the twelve-month period which follows the Stage 2 meeting, however may be sooner if their attendance level deteriorates.

## If a sustained improvement is not achieved during the review period the formal procedure may progress to stage 3.

## If a sustained improvement to the expected level (or better) is achieved during the formal review period, the formal process will cease, and the employee will revert back to the normal monitoring process. If however, at any point during the next 12 months their attendance level deteriorates, the formal procedure may progress to stage 3.

## Stage Three Meeting

## If the attendance does not improve to the identified level during the review period and there is no underlying health issue, a stage 3 meeting will be held to fully consider the staff member’s absence record. Termination of employment may be considered at this stage depending on the circumstances.

During the meeting the manager and employee will discuss:

* + - * + Support already provided.
        + Any mitigating personal circumstances.
        + Any disabilities which may have contributed to absences.
        + Any adjustments made to triggers, including as a result of a disability.
        + Reasons for absence and any ongoing medical condition or treatment.
        + Any adjustments which have been made / could be made to aid improved attendance levels.
        + Any recommendations which may have been suggested by Occupational Health.
        + The impact of the absence on students, the employee’s team and customers and the associated financial consequences.
        + Business and operational needs of the University.
        + Efforts made by the employee to improve their health and attendance.
        + The employee’s overall pattern of attendance whilst employed at the University, where appropriate.
        + Whether there is a reasonable likelihood of the employee achieving the desired level of attendance.

## Based on the findings of the Stage 3 review meeting the manager will prepare a report for consideration by a Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominated deputy. If the Pro Vice-Chancellor / nominated deputy determines that termination is appropriate, the employee will be advised in writing of the decision, the date of termination and the right of appeal see section 18. Notice of termination will be in line with contractual entitlement.[\_Appeal\_Process](#_Appeal_Process)

# Managing Long Term Sickness Absence

## The University considers an absence of 4 weeks or more to be long-term.

## See also the [Long-Term Flowchart](#_Long-Term_Absence_Procedure) for further guidance.

## On-going contact between the employee and the manager is an important means of support and has been shown to have a significant impact on the likelihood of a successful return to work as it helps to reduce feelings of isolation and keeps the employee updated on departmental matters (e.g. office moves, changes within a team etc.). It can also help the manager to understand the likely duration of the absence and potential support that may be appropriate, including referral to Occupational Health.

## Contact will normally be made on a 2-4-week basis, dependent upon the circumstances, usually via telephone or email with some agreed face to face contact at appropriate junctures.

## The meeting location will be agreed and may take place on campus, at the employee’s home or other appropriate off-site venue.

## The manager, in conjunction with Human Resources, will determine how to take the issue forward, considering any Occupational Health recommendations or advice. Where there is a prospect of recovery within a foreseeable timeframe, employees will be supported and a return to work plan should be agreed before the employee returns to work. Where appropriate, a risk assessment will be undertaken. The manager will be responsible for ensuring that the return to work plan is put into place.

## When an employee returns following a period of long-term sickness, they will normally be monitored for a 6-month period, to ensure return to work plans and risk assessments are completed, and that appropriate support is maintained.

## Workplace Rehabilitation

## Managers should be aware that employees returning from long term sickness absence may require additional support and encouragement to reintegrate successfully back into the team. In particular they may feel extremely tired during the first few days whilst they adjust to the work routine.

## In certain cases, such as following a long-term illness or in support of a serious health condition, an individual may also require a rehabilitation plan, either to facilitate a return or to assist in maintaining a satisfactory attendance level. Managers should seek guidance from Occupational Health on suitable changes to duties or environment.

## The rehabilitation plan may include some or all of the following:

* Reduced number of working days and shorter working days over an agreed period of time; Refer to section 16.13.
* Avoidance/restriction of certain tasks
* Modification of workstation and or provision of appropriate equipment
* Reasonable adjustment to the workplace
* Referral for more specialist treatment, e.g. Physiotherapy, Counselling; or
* Time away from work to attend medical appointments, physiotherapy or counselling sessions.

## After any agreed rehabilitation plan it is envisaged that normal working hours and duties should be achieved within 4 -6 weeks; however, a longer period may be required dependent on the nature of the illness.

## The suggested rehabilitation plan should consider the needs of the employee as well as the faculty/department. Progress should be monitored by the manager as required during the course of the programme, as well as after a period of full time working. Advice should be sought from Occupational Health.

## Phased Return

## Sometimes an employee may not be fit to return to full duties and working hours immediately after a period of absence but is able to return on a phased basis. To support rehabilitation back into the workplace a phased return may be agreed, if recommended by Occupational Health and operationally feasible.

## It is usual for the first 2 weeks of the phased return to be paid at the employee’s normal salary level; in the first week working 2 days and 3 days in the second (pro-rata for part-time employees).

## Should Occupational Health consider that a longer phased return is appropriate, employees will normally use outstanding annual leave or unpaid leave if their annual leave has been exhausted. In exceptional cases, Occupational Health may recommend a longer paid phased return, dependant on the circumstances.

# Potential Resolution

## If medical opinion suggests a return to an employee’s substantive role within a reasonable timeframe is not deemed possible, it may be necessary to consider other potential formal options, including:

* Job redesign.
* Redeployment.
* Ill-health retirement.
* Termination of employment.

## Job Redesign

## If an employee is unfit to return to their substantive post but is fit to return to work, (based upon medical evidence and/or advice from Occupational Health), managers should consider the potential for the employee’s role to be redesigned. This should initially be agreed for a limited time of no longer than 3-months, after which time the redesign will be reviewed by the employee, manager and HR. This situation may, for example, arise following the onset or deterioration of a physical disability, where a role contains an element of manual handling, which could perhaps be assisted by equipment or distributed to others.

## Attempts will be made to accommodate requirements, such as amendments to the job description and/or hours of work, however this may not always be possible and may affect the grade of the role.

## Redeployment

## Where Occupational Health advice or medical evidence indicates that it is unlikely an employee will be able to carry out the duties of their substantive post (including with reasonable adjustments or redesign) within the foreseeable future, the University will make every effort to offer redeployment to a similar graded role within the university within a timely manner.

## Please see the Redeployment Guidelines for further information [here.](https://go.edgehill.ac.uk/display/humanresources/Forms%2C+Policies+and+Documents)

## Ill Health Retirement

## After taking relevant medical and financial advice, employees may wish to consider retirement on the grounds of ill-health. If they are not a member of a pension scheme this is a relatively straight forward resignation, however if employees wish to access their pension they will need to ensure they fully understand and meet the pension scheme criteria.

## Human Resources will arrange an Occupational Health Referral. While TPS, LGPS and USS all have slightly different processes for ill health retirement, all require an Occupational Health Physician’s opinion as to whether the scheme requirements are met. Physicians must have the relevant Occupational Health qualifications and be on an approved register with the scheme.

## Employees considering an application for ill health retirement should access pension guidance to fully understand the pension procedures and their options.

# Potential Termination of Employment on the Grounds of Attendance

## In signing a Contract of Employment, employees have made a commitment to attend work. Where they have not been able to meet this requirement, the circumstances of their absence/s will be fully reviewed. Termination may be considered dependent on findings.

## Termination may be considered at the Short-Term stage 3 meeting or earlier if exceptional circumstances prevail, e.g. if the employee’s poor attendance levels are causing significant operational difficulties or if there are persistent high levels of absence; evidence of trigger avoidance and/or evidence of trends and patterns. Additionally, termination may be considered during the Long-Term process if medical advice indicates that a return to work in any capacity in the foreseeable further is unlikely and alternative solutions have been exhausted.

# Appeal Process

## Employees have the right to appeal any recommendation for termination of employment on ill-health grounds. Guidance on the appeal process may be obtained from HR. To exercise the right of appeal, the employee should, within 10 working days of the date of the letter advising of the outcome of the formal process, write to the Senior HR Adviser outlining the reason for appeal. A member of Directorate who has not previously been involved with the issue will normally consider the appeal.

## Following receipt of an appeal the employee will be invited, in writing, to attend an appeal hearing, usually within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Employees have the right to be accompanied to the Appeal Hearing by an Edge Hill colleague or trade union representative. The appeal outcome will normally be conveyed in writing within 10 working days of the meeting and the appeal manager’s decision is final.

# Short-Term Absence Procedure



# Long-Term Absence Procedure



# Endmatter

| Title | Absence Policy and Procedure |
| --- | --- |
| Document Owner | Director of Human Resources |
| Approved By |  |
| Date of Publication |  |
| Date of Review |  |