UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES

UAS ABSENCE RECORDING

GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENTAL ABSENCE ADMINISTRATORS

All new staff members will receive a guidance note on the reporting of sickness absence and line managers will receive a guidance note on their responsibilities relating to sickness absence and reporting. The departmental absence administrator is responsible for collating records for each occurrence of (but not the reason for) absence, using the monthly absence return form, and for returning this information to the UAS Personnel team in a timely fashion.

When managing and reporting sickness absence, it is important that absence administrators are aware of the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). The relevant Code of Practice under the DPA states that where possible sickness records (i.e. the reason for absence) should be kept separate from absence records (i.e. the occurrence of absence). Sickness records of individual workers are classed as sensitive data and should not be made available to other workers unless it is necessary for them to do their jobs. Employees are not required to give a reason for their absence when they contact their line-manager. If they do so out of choice, the line-manager should not make a record of it and should not inform the absence administrator of the reason for absence – the absence administrator should only be made aware of the occurrence of absence. The reason for absence may be captured on the notification of absence form, should the employee choose to disclose it, or on any doctors’ certificates supplied. Employees will send such certificates and any notification of absence forms direct to the UAS Personnel team, where they will be kept securely. The line-manager will not see the completed notification of absence form or any doctors’ certificates.

The process for absence recording is as follows:

1) On the first day of absence, employees should contact their line-manager as soon as possible, and give some indication of when they expect to return to work. If the period of absence continues beyond a day the absent employee should keep their line-manager informed of their status.

2) Line-managers will inform the departmental absence administrator when an employee is absent from work. This should be logged on the absence return form. Absence should be recorded in blocks of not less than half a day. The absence return form should be sent, by the departmental absence administrator, to the UAS Personnel team on a monthly basis.

3) When the employee returns to work, the line-manager will ensure that a notification of absence form is completed, to be signed by the line-manager and the employee. The employee will send the notification of absence form and/or any doctors’ certificates direct to the UAS Personnel team. A notification of absence form should be completed for every occasion of absence, except where a doctor’s certificate is provided. The line-manager should inform the departmental absence administrator of the date on which the employee returned to work.
4) If an employee is taken ill during annual leave, their annual leave allowance can be credited and taken at a later date provided a) the normal sickness absence reporting procedures (see above) have been followed and b) they have provided a notification of absence form or doctor’s certificate (as appropriate) to the UAS Personnel team.

5) It is important to maintain confidentiality on sensitive personal information. Employees are asked to forward their notification of absence forms and certificates directly to the UAS Personnel team (University Offices, Level 4). All absence records will be kept centrally by the UAS Personnel team, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. After the monthly absence return form has been sent to the UAS Personnel team, neither the departmental absence administrator nor line-managers should keep any copies of absence data locally.

6) It is anticipated that in the longer term, where possible, departmental absence administrators will have the opportunity to attend the appropriate training with CoreHR and subsequently input their absence records direct to the HR Information System database, thus negating the need for a monthly absence return form. The UAS Personnel team will have access to the absence data held on CoreHR for all UAS departments for reporting and comparison. Departmental absence administrators interested in attending the training should contact the UAS Personnel team.

7) **Monthly sickness absence return form**: this form is to be completed by the absence administrator and should only record days or half-days of sickness absence (i.e. not annual leave, maternity/paternity leave, or compassionate leave etc). It should be sent to UAS Personnel on a monthly basis. Alternatively, the monthly sickness absence return form can be sent electronically to personnelenquiry@admin.ox.ac.uk. **Important note**: if the employee, line-manager or absence administrators are aware of any absence notifications with pay implications, these should be sent direct to a UAS Personnel Administrator immediately, and should not wait for the end of month. Such notifications should also be included on the normal monthly sickness absence return form in addition to immediate notification of the UAS Personnel Administrator. Full details of sick pay entitlements are available in the staff handbooks (section 4.1.2). Please note that sick pay entitlement under the University’s sick pay scheme is dependent on length of service.

8) All forms and guidance are also available on the UAS Personnel Team website: [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personneluas/employmentwithuas/sicknessabsence/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personneluas/employmentwithuas/sicknessabsence/)

If you have any questions relating to the absence recording guidelines, please contact a member of the UAS Personnel team: [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personneluas/uaspersonnel/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personneluas/uaspersonnel/)