



SICK LEAVE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It is the University's Policy to grant sick leave exclusively to enable a staff member to recover from illness. It must, however, be regarded as a very exceptional occurrence. It must not be viewed as an automatic perquisite of employment, but as an aid to staff, which is in their interest to safeguard, by ensuring that the privilege is not endangered by abuse.
- 1.2 Regular attendance and good time-keeping are an essential part of the smooth and effective running of the University. An employee's immediate Supervisor will monitor attendance and time-keeping. All absences from work should be authorised by the University. Where absence is due to illness, procedures as outlines in this policy will apply.
- 1.3 It is the University's Policy to monitor and advise on the absence records of all employees. Sick leave, certified and uncertified, may be granted subject to the University being satisfied in each case that its application is justified and subject to the condition that there is no evidence of permanent disability for service. Payment is also on the condition that a medical certificate in the prescribed form and/or medical examination by University's Occupational Health Advisor which may be required at any time.
- 1.4 Where a member of staff is absent for a long period of time or on an intermittent basis, it is considered appropriate to refer the employee to the University's Occupational Health Physician for professional advice on the staff member's fitness to return to work. This is done in the best interests of the staff member

2. ELIGIBILITY

All staff employed in the University are covered by this policy.

3. ENTITLEMENT

3.1 Uncertified/Casual Sick Leave :

- Employees can apply for uncertified sick leave up to 2 days on one occasion and this is subject to a maximum of 7 days in any 2 years rolling period.
- In the event of the above limit being exceeded the excess leave will be taken from the employee's pay.

3.2 Certified Leave:

Medical Certification Where an employee is absent on continuous sick leave of more than 2 days, a medical certificate is required. **If a sick absence extends from Friday to Monday inclusive, then a medical certificate must be provided.** If the employee fails to provide a medical certificate, the University, following due process, shall record the leave as a period of unapproved sick leave and payment will be withdrawn pending compliance with the scheme and may be dealt with under the agreed disciplinary procedures.

Medical certificates may not be accepted post factum and if excess casual leave has been taken, the University may not allow sick pay for such uncertified absences. Medical certificates must be forwarded to the People & Culture Department for each week of absence during the first month of illness. Certificates for periods of up to one month may be permitted at the discretion of the University. The university may request that the employee submit a medical certificate, at their own expense, for any absence on sick leave, no matter how short. Normally, further payment for sick leave will not be allowed until such medical certificate is received. Where sick pay ends, but the employee retains their post, medical certificates must continue to be provided.

A certificate of medical fitness is required by the university before an employee returns to work. Medical certificates must be issued by a qualified and registered medical practitioner registered with the Irish/UK Medical Council/Dental Council of Ireland. In exceptional circumstances, medical certificates may be accepted from overseas medical practitioners if the employee becomes ill abroad or is receiving recognized medical treatment unavailable in Ireland. The advice of the OHP must be sought in such circumstances

Occupational Injury

- Where occupational injury arises out of and in the course of employment in the University the employee should report the matter to their Supervisor and complete the Accident Report Form on Sharepoint. They should also make a claim for benefit under the Social Welfare (Occupational Injuries) Act 1966. Benefits under this Act are, like all other social welfare benefits, refundable to the University
- Sick pay will be paid at full rate for a maximum period of twelve months followed by six months at half pay.

4. GUIDELINES

All staff must comply with the following regulations:-

- 4.1 An employee is granted sick leave on the understanding that they:-
- comply with the guidelines and procedures outlined in the policy
 - sick leave taken is justified,
 - there is no evidence of permanent disability for service,
 - medical certificates must be produced on a regular basis
 - staff member must attend the University's Occupational Health Advisor for examination, if requested to do so,

In the event of abuse, the People & Culture Officer may suspend or withdraw the privilege.

- 4.2 Paid sick leave for all staff, is subject to medical certificates being submitted
- 4.3 During a period of sick leave an employee may not leave their home location without informing the University unless the departure is for urgent medical attention. A medical certificate giving reason for the change should support the application.
- 4.5 Casual/uncertified sick leave is included in reckoning sick leave records in both the 12 month and 4 year periods.
- 4.6 A persistent record of casual absences may indicate some recurring medical defect which the university may require to be investigated by the University Medical Advisor.
- 4.7 Sick pay will be paid at the basic rate for the category and shall also include, where appropriate, Shift Premium, Service Pay, Driving Allowance (full-time), Supervisory Allowances, but does not include any extra in respect of overtime or other allowances.
- 4.8 A 'working day' for part-time staff is a day on which the employee is rostered for duty.
- 4.9 Medical, dental or other appointments are not allowed as sick leave and should be arranged for times outside of normal working hours. Exceptions to this rule will be permitted only under special circumstances.
- 4.10 Where injury occurs through the alleged negligence of a third party and legal action is pending, the University's sick leave payments will be way of advance payments (which may be covered by the employee from the negligent party) and refunded to the University.

When notifying the absence or as soon after as practicable, the employee should inform the University of –

- a) Details of circumstances in which the accident occurred.

- b) The alleged responsibility of the third party.
- c) Whether the employee had claimed for damages and if legal action will ensue.
- d) The names of the employee's solicitor.

The employee will be requested to complete a form of indemnity undertaking to refund to the University the amount of payment made by the University by way of wages or salary if they should recover damages from a third party.

Absence due to injury outside of the university will be counted as sick leave unless the amount of salary/wage payments is refunded to the university.

- 4.11 Paid quarantine leave will not be considered justified in cases of contact with Measles, German Measles or Chicken Pox. If an infectious disease is suspected, the University would be directed by the advice of the Health Authority and could insist on the infected person absenting themselves from duty for the duration of the infection and producing a certificate of medical fitness before return to duty.
- 4.12 All staff, who are contributing to the University's Income Continuance Plan, may be entitled to additional income support for sick leave exceeding three months. UCC has partnered with Willis Towers Watson (WTW) to bring you **Embark**, a new personalized way to manage your benefits. You can register for Embark from a desktop/laptop or mobile device. For further details, please view on <https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/benefits/icp/>
- 4.13 From January 2024, the University, in conjunction with the University Insurance Broker, Willis Towers Watson (WTW) has introduced **Specified Illness Cover (SIC)**. The benefit pays a once off lump sum in the event of a member being diagnosed with a specific illness. Full payment benefit is 25% of annual salary and there is also a partial benefit which is the lesser of €15,000 or 16.5% of annual salary. There is automatic cover for staff who are paying ICP.
- 4.14 The provisions of the Sick Leave scheme may be reviewed, altered or added to at the discretion of the University. The privilege is offered in the belief that it will not be abused. In the event of abuse the University may attenuate or withdraw the privilege for a period altogether.
- 4.15 Paid special leave due to Covid-19 infection is for 5 calendar days. Proof of the infection is required via a positive antigen test. On return to work, the staff member must complete Appendix 2 indicating the dates of absence. If symptoms persist, then sick leave will be recorded.
- 4.16 The University's Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by **Spectrum Life** which is a confidential counselling service providing support to employees for a wide range of issues. For further information, please view on <https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/eap/>

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 Notification of Sick Leave by Staff Member

- The employee must advise their immediate supervisor before the normal starting time of duty if possible, but no later than **two hours** after normal starting time. Failure to do so, without a valid reason, may disqualify the employee from payment for the absence.

5.2 Uncertified/Casual Sick Leave

- If the absence is uncertified/casual sick leave, the staff member should submit these dates via ESS on their return to work for the Line Manager to approve on their Manager Dashboard. The staff member should log into ESS and select the leave type i.e. **Uncert Sick Leave (Max 2 days)**. Select the dates of the sick leave (maximum of 2 days) Enter the reason for the illness in the Narrative and select **SAVE**. The staff member will receive an email once they have submitted the application and a 2nd email once it is approved by the Line Manager.
- If the illness is 3 days or more, **please do not enter on ESS as it cannot be approved**. Absence on sick leave for 3 days or greater require the submission of a medical cert to the People & Culture Leave Advisor.

5.3 Medical Certification

- The employee should submit a *medical certificate* for period of sick leave of over three (3) days duration or if they have exceeded the entitlements to uncertified leave as outlined. Medical certificates may not be accepted post factum and if excess casual leave has been taken, the University may not allow sick pay for such uncertified absences.
- *Medical certificates* must be forwarded to the People & Culture Department for each week of absence during the first month of illness. The employee should submit a report at the end of the first month of absence if the illness continues and monthly thereafter.
- The University may request that the employee submit a **medical certificate**, at their own expense, for any absence on sick leave, no matter how short. Normally, further payment for sick leave will not be allowed until such medical certificate is received.
- Where sick pay ends, but the employee retains their post, medical certificates must continue to be provided.
- A **certificate of medical fitness** is required by the university before an employee returns to work.
- Medical certificates must be issued by a qualified and registered medical practitioner. The certificate should be written on the official letter paper of the medical practitioner, displaying their address and signature and date of issue. It should also state the nature of illness and indicate the probable

period of absence or alternatively a minimum period of unfitness and probable date of return to duty.

5.4 **Sick Leave before, after and during Annual or Other Leave**

- Sick Leave taken immediately after *Annual Leave* must be covered by medical certificate.
- Sick Leave occurring during *Annual Leave* and covered by medical certificate will be deducted from *Annual Leave* taken and recorded as Sick Leave.
- An employee must resume work after a period of Sick Leave before they can take annual leave.
- Sundays, University Christmas Holidays and Public Holidays, if occurring at the commencement or termination of certified sick leave, should not be included as sick leave. Otherwise they are counted as sick leave.

5.5 **Social Welfare Benefits**

Social Welfare Benefits Staff who pay Class A1 PRSI may be entitled to payment from the Department of Social & Family Affairs (DFSFA). For the first 5 days of illness there is no change to your pay. The Single Person's Allowance is deducted from pay from day 8 (currently €244.00 per week) without being subject to PRSI. Illness benefit is paid weekly into the employee's bank account.

The Social Welfare days are from Monday to Saturday. If a staff member has additional illnesses in the year, then a claim for illness benefit must be made after 3 waiting days. If a staff member is not entitled to illness benefit, social welfare will send notification to the staff member who in turn should forward copy to the People & Culture Leave Advisor. Staff may apply for Illness Benefit online through MyWelfare. If you are unable to apply online, please ask your GP for an IB1 form or contact Tel +353 1 704 3300 or 0818 928 400 or email illnessbenefit@welfare.ie. Include Application Request in the subject line. All completed forms must be sent to Illness Benefit Section, Social Welfare Services, PO Box 1650, Dublin 1. To close your claim you can do it from your MyWelfare account or Email closemyibclaim@welfare.ie.

5.6 **Medical Examination by the College's Medical Advisor**

- The University may request an employee to attend the *University's Medical Advisor* for medical examination or for a medical referee to call to an employee's home to examine them before they are granted sick leave with or without pay. This may be requested at any time during or after their sick leave.
- For continuing sick leave, the University may require monthly or more frequent medical examinations by the *University's Medical Advisor*.

DOCUMENTATION

SL1 - SICK LEAVE NOTIFICATION

SL2 - RETURN TO WORK NOTIFICATION

FORM OF INDEMNITY

Version history (implemented January 2025)

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Author</i>
<i>1</i>		<i>Policy created</i>	<i>UCC HR</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>30/01/2025</i>	<i>Update to include recording sick leave (uncertified max. 2 days) on the ESS system</i>	
<i>3</i>	<i>24/2/25</i>	<i>Added in information on SIC & EAP service</i>	<i>UCC HR</i>