

ATTENDANCE AT WORK DURING A MAJOR INCIDENT, EVENT OR SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Introduction

Brunel University London provides services to the student and research communities all year round, including the Easter and Christmas closure periods. It is therefore important that the University is able to provide support to these activities regardless of the incident, event or weather conditions. This document gives guidance on working practices that should be applied in the event of a major incident, event (e.g. transport strikes, outbreak of world wide illness etc.), or where severe weather conditions impact on the University.

The impact of a major incident, event or severe weather conditions, may result in reduced working hours, suspension of teaching or suspension of the normal operations of the University.

The authorisation to declare a reduction or suspension in services will be taken by the Chief Operating Officer or, in their absence, a named deputy, having consulted with the Vice Chancellor and President and/or Provost as appropriate.

Communication

The University will endeavour to communicate information on the impact of the incident, event or weather conditions promptly and regularly. Information will be made available on one or more of the following platforms:

- IntraBrunel staff intranet home page
- Brunel e-vision login web page
- Brightspace
- Critical Information Telephone Line on 01895 267744

Employees should check the University website and other official Brunel University London communication channels as listed above before beginning their journey to work and follow the advice that is given. However, employees and managers will be expected to act reasonably and understand that it will not always be possible for the University to provide information that is relevant to all situations and personal circumstances.

Requirement to attend work

Unless specifically stated on the website, employees should assume that the University is operating a normal service.

If normal services are deemed impossible, the University may operate a reduced service for everything except 'essential and/or on-call services'. It is the responsibility of Department/College/Institute management to define essential services in their area,) dependent on the situation and requirements on the area for that particular day/time and in line with their Business Continuity Plan.

When the University remains open, employees are asked to make every possible effort to attend work, provided it is safe to do so, and to keep their line manager informed of any delays in line with normal reporting procedures.

Failure to attend work

Provided an employee has made every reasonable effort to attend work and has kept their line manager fully informed of the situation, the line manager and employee may agree one of the following options:

- Where possible, that the employee work from home for the remainder of the day and is paid as normal.
- Where it is not possible for the employee to work from home, that the employee make up the lost hours over a reasonable period of time and is paid as normal.
- That the employee take the time lost from their annual leave entitlement.
- That the employee is given the option to take the time lost as approved unpaid leave.

Where an employee does not attend work and does not contact their line manager at the time of the absence, the University reserves the right to treat the absence in the same way as any other unauthorised absence. In these circumstances the line manager will need to speak to the individual on their return to work to establish why they did not attend or make contact. Where a reasonable explanation is provided line managers may agree that the employee takes the time as paid or unpaid annual leave.

In extreme cases, where no reasonable explanation is provided, line managers may choose to treat the leave as unauthorised and unpaid absence and inform the employee that consideration will be given to invoking the disciplinary procedure. Before using this option line managers will need to seek advice from Human Resources.

Employees who are on leave (annual, maternity, sickness etc) will not be entitled to a day off in lieu in the event that the University is closed because of a major incident, event or adverse weather conditions.

Childcare/Caring responsibilities

Employees may need to take time off work to make emergency arrangements for the care of dependents because schools or care centres are closed. In this situation where employees have informed their line manager in advance, and have taken reasonable steps to share the care of any dependants with partners, relatives, friends, other parents etc, line managers are encouraged to exercise their discretion around payment.

Manager(s) responsibilities

Managers are expected to:

- Ensure all employees in their area are aware of the requirements of this guidance
- Treat all employees fairly and consistently
- Act reasonably
- Ensure that adequate communication takes place with their employees and that important local information is provided promptly to senior managers who are responding to the incident, event or severe weather conditions
- Have regard to the health and safety of employees and students, particularly where special conditions apply such as pregnancy or disability
- Support those employees who work longer hours to maintain services
- Ensure that essential services are maintained
- Maintain an appropriate high level of productivity with their area of responsibility