

ON-CALL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with changes in employment law and equality and diversity legislation. In the event that this policy or procedure is not so compliant, the relevant legislation shall prevail.

Changes to this policy will be subject to consultation and agreement with the University's recognised Trade Unions before implementation

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POLICY

1. Policy Statement

The University recognises that a structured on-call system should be in place to deal with substantial issues that can arise outside of normal working hours.

Certain roles are required to provide on-call cover and it is important that this work be recognised and rewarded consistently where appropriate.

This policy stipulates what payments will be made to employees who are placed on an on-call service or are required to provide certain types of on-call cover and supersedes all existing on-call arrangements.

2. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'on-call' is defined as time during which certain employees need to be available, for a determined period, outside of normal working hours, to respond to a telephone call from the workplace quickly and be in a state of readiness to perform work as required. This availability may not always require employees to physically attend one of the University's buildings, sites or properties but to provide sound, professional advice to remedy the situation.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- key or critical University services can be supported out of core hours in times of exceptional need.
- any outages or unavailability of critical systems or services to users are minimised
- the University can deal with the failure of any critical systems or services.
- the University can deal with any circumstances which could have a significant risk to property, health and safety or the environment or pose a significant threat to continued operations or business.

On call employees will be called out in accordance to the local Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs).

4. Scope

This policy applies to employees who either as part of their contract of employment, or, at the University's instigation during exceptional circumstances, are identified as needed to be on-call on a rota for specific periods of time.

The requirement to be on-call will be for employees who are required or requested to be on standby to deal with emergency calls and/or are required to attend a University site to deal with an incident or emergency out of normal working hours.

Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the reasonable and equitable implementation of these arrangements, particularly with regard to the impact of the policy on gender, those with caring responsibilities, and part-time staff.

4.1 Out of Scope and arrangements not covered by this Policy

The following are out of scope:

Staff who undertake routine or planned system/maintenance work that has to be undertaken out of hours. This is managed by local management and attracts overtime payments and/or TOIL.

Staff that may work ad-hoc out of hours or unsocial hours. TOIL or agreed overtime may apply in such circumstances.

Staff whose role requires them to work defined or alternating shift patterns over 7 days as part of their normal working week.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Manager's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of managers to:

- 5.1.1 develop annual on-call rotas to suit their operation and to communicate on-call arrangements and rotas at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.1.2 minimise any inconvenience of being on-call and make every effort to ensure no employees cover both Easter and Christmas closures in a single year unless they are happy to do so by exception.
- 5.1.3 ensure that the expectations of employees are clear.
- 5.1.4 monitor the frequency and length of call-outs and unplanned out of hours working on a regular basis to ensure that no member of staff is required to undertake additional work which may be detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

5.2. Employee's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of employees to:

- 5.2.1 Carry a University mobile phone, switched on and used in the appropriate manner (not while driving for example, unless handsfree).
- 5.2.2 To respond to telephone calls.
- 5.2.3 To be within an approximate 1-hour travelling time of the Uxbridge Campus. Managers are expected to be within an approximate 2-hour travelling time of the Uxbridge Campus. It is not necessary for employees to remain at their home whilst on-call but employees should remain contactable and have transport available to attend the Uxbridge Campus with the timeframes quoted.
- 5.2.3 To be in a fit condition to respond and not to consume alcohol or take medication/drugs which could impact on ability to perform the work required and/or attend the Uxbridge Campus.

6 PROCEDURE

6.1 On-Call Period

The on-call period during which the system operates is for out of normal working hours for seven (7) days at a time. This provides cover during evenings and weekends as well as 24-hour cover during all Bank Holidays and University closure periods.

For the purposes of this policy only, normal hours are defined as the relevant service's core operating hours, Monday to Friday inclusive.

6.2 On-Call Rota Structure

Each service area will develop annual on-call rotas to suit their operation.

6.3 Closure Periods

Each annual rota may include closure periods, however, every effort will be made to ensure no employee should cover both Easter and Christmas closures in a single year unless they are happy to do so by exception.

6.4 Swapping On-Call Periods

Employees are permitted to swap on-call weeks by mutual agreement but it must be for one full week (7 days) and not individual days. All swaps must be confirmed in writing to the designated On-Call Manager at least 48hrs prior to the relevant on call period commencing.

Where the On-Call Manager needs to swap, this must be agreed in writing with the Head of Service or their appointed deputy.

6.5 Compensatory Rest - Working time Regulations & Guidelines on returning to work following call-out

Heads of Department/Directors/Deans should monitor the frequency and length of call-outs and unplanned out of hours working on a regular basis to ensure that no member of staff is required to undertake additional work which may be detrimental to their health and wellbeing. In doing so Heads of Department/Directors/Deans should be aware of the requirements of the Working Time Regulations (1998), in particular in relation to the following areas of legislation:

- A limit of an average of 48 hours work a week over a 17-week period
- A limit of an average of 8 hours work in 24 hours for night workers
- A daily rest period of 11 uninterrupted hours between each working day
- A weekly rest period of one whole day a week or 2 days a fortnight
- A rest break of at least 20 minutes for a working day of more than 6 hours

The compensatory rest is arranged where appropriate to comply with the daily and weekly rest provisions set out in the Regulations.

The guidelines provided below are indicative only and should not be considered as an entitlement. It is up to the discretion of management to determine a reasonable time to return to work following a call-out, and it is expected that employees will act responsibly in these circumstances. Management have a duty of care to ensure that employees are in an acceptable and appropriate state to work.

Finish time	Total time worked after midnight		
	Less than 1 hour	1 to 4 hours	More than 4 hours
Before midnight	Normal start time	Normal start time	Normal start time
Midnight to 3am	11am	Lunchtime	Lunchtime
3am to 6am	Lunchtime	Lunchtime	Next day
6am to 9am	Lunchtime or remain at work option	Lunchtime or remain at work option	Next day

6.6 Health and Safety

By nature of the service, callout work often takes place at night, in adverse weather, and may present challenging situations of increased risk to health and safety. There is, therefore, the need for the designated manager to act in a particularly vigilant manner with regard to the safety of those called out to site and those affected by the incident. Whenever an employee is in any doubt of their own level of competence they should seek appropriate support from fellow staff, utility providers, and emergency services.

7 Payment Arrangements

7.1 Inconvenience Allowance

An inconvenience allowance is payable to all staff participating in the on-call service regardless of their pay grade or salary. The payment covers a full seven (7) days of on-call provision and is set at a flat-rate irrespective of the role being undertaken.

7.1.1. Payment

The inconvenience allowance is aligned to Spine Point 22 of the University's salary scale and will increase annually in line with any annual Cost of Living increase. In order to determine the value of the inconvenience allowance, the rate equates to half (0.5x) the weekly salary. This is calculated as 'basic rate' / 52.143 / 2.

Where an individual is unable to complete a full seven (7) days service, then payment will be pro-rata paid based on a figure of one-seventh (1/7) for each day.

The payment will be paid monthly in arrears through payroll.

7.2 Attendance Allowance

If individuals are called out to attend the University as part of being on-call, they will be remunerated with a fixed-rate lump-sum for the first two (2) hours or part thereof with subsequent hours also paid on a fixed rate basis.

All payments will be paid monthly in arrears through payroll.

7.2.2 Payment

The attendance allowance is aligned to Spine Point 22 of the University's salary scale and will increase annually in line with any annual Cost of Living increase. In order to determine the value of the attendance allowance, the rate equates to; basic rate / 365 x 7 / 35.

7.3 How to Claim Payments

Both allowances will be claimable via CHIME.

8 Conditions and Exclusions

8.1 Pre-Arranged Out of Hours Working

Employees on-call will not be allowed to undertake overtime during the period they are on-call to ensure they are suitably rested in case they need to be called in.

In emergencies only, where employees already on site undertaking pre-arranged out of hours work and are required to provide assistance they will not be entitled to the initial attendance allowance payment.

8.2 Recall to Site

Should employees be recalled to the University within two (2) hours from the time of the initial call out, then no additional attendance allowance payment will be made. Subsequent hours remain payable as per Section 7.

8.3 Telephone Advice

The provision of advice or information via telephone is deemed to be included in the inconvenience payment and no further remuneration will be made.

8.4 Abortive Callouts

The payment of an attendance allowance shall not be made where an attendance request is cancelled before the employee has left to attend site.

8.5 Travel Allowance

There will be no payment of mileage or other travel expenses.

8.6 Time Off in Lieu

There will be no time off in lieu, except in line with closure days and bank holidays.

8.7 Closure Days and Bank Holidays

Where a standard University closure day at Christmas, Easter or a national bank holiday falls within the period of an employee's on-call, a lieu day for each will be given. All lieu days accrued as part of the on-call process are to be taken within six (6) months.

8.8 Annual Leave

Wherever possible, annual leave should be arranged so as not to conflict with an employee's on-call duties. Pre-approved annual leave, recorded in CHIME at the time of setting the rota, will be taken in to account.

If this is not possible then the employee is required to arrange a satisfactory substitute. The inconvenience allowance will transfer to the substitute employee.

Where no substitute can be found, the employee will be required to undertake their on-call duties, so are strongly encouraged to avoid booking flights or commit to other holiday related costs until they have confirmation that they are either not on-call or have a swap in place.

8.9 Sickiness and Unforeseen Circumstances

If an employee is unable to undertake their on-call duties due to sickness or unforeseen circumstances the employee is required to alert their line manager at the earliest opportunity so a suitable substitute can be arranged. The inconvenience allowance will transfer to the substitute employee.

9. Monitoring

Regular monitoring will be performed by the HR team to ensure equality and adherence to the policy.