



University of
St Andrews

Adverse weather

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All staff
Applicability date	10/07/2024
Review / Expiry date	28/06/2029
Approved date	20/08/2024
Approver	Director
Document owner	Human Resources Officer
School / unit	Human Resources
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Staff/Annual leave and other absence
Purpose	To provide guidance to staff in the event of a difficulty in attending work due to adverse/severe weather conditions.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.3	Minor formatting changes only.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	19/08/2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 There may be occasions when severe or adverse weather creates difficulties for University employees to safely attend the workplace either on time or at all. It is expected that every employee will make reasonable effort to attend work in all circumstances without putting their personal safety (or others) at risk. Whilst the priority is to protect the health and safety of all employees, the University must ensure that disruption caused to its services remains minimal.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure that employees should follow in the event of a difficulty in attending work due to adverse weather (e.g., severe snowfall, flooding, or other weather conditions which may make travelling to work hazardous, force roads to close, or affect public/private transport.)

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all University employees.

4. Key principles

- 4.1 The University will be deemed to be open unless a specific announcement is publicised via the University website, local radio (e.g. Radio Scotland, Kingdom FM, Tay FM) or via an email from the Office of the Principal or Director of Human Resources).
- 4.2 If the Police or other external agencies advise only to travel in emergency situations, or the University declares a closure/closes early due to severe weather conditions then employees are not expected to attend or continue working on site. In these situations, there will be no detriment to salary or annual leave entitlement.
- 4.3 If normal travel arrangements are affected by adverse weather then it is expected that the employee will explore suitable alternative travel arrangements.
- 4.4 If an employee attends work, but arrives late (less than half of the employee's normal working day), they will receive full pay and no detriment to annual leave. If the lateness amounts to more than half their normal working day, the arrangements set out in section 5.2.2 will apply.
- 4.5 Line managers are expected to use their discretion and judgement in deciding the most appropriate action to take in these circumstances. This may differ according to the type of work the employee carries out; the implications of non-attendance on the provision of services to students and the health and safety implications for employees. Line managers are advised to consider each situation on its own merits and apply consistent treatment across the School/Unit as far as possible.

5. Procedures

5.1 Travelling to and from work

- 5.1.1 Wherever possible, it is expected that employees work from home during adverse weather if the nature of the role allows for this.

5.1.2 Where it is not possible to accommodate a remote working arrangement (e.g. the nature of the role relies on the employee to work onsite), all possible travel to work methods should be considered. For example:

- If public transport is still operating, then it would be expected that the employee uses this mode of transport, even if the journey to work might take longer than usual, or this is not the employee's normal travel arrangements.
- Changing the times of travel to allow for roads to be cleared or gritted.
- Using an alternative route/transport method.
- Car sharing with another employee.

Note: Line managers should ensure a reasonable and informed approach is taken when discussing with an employee whether they can safely attend work in these scenarios, considering that it may be more challenging for employees with existing disabilities or health conditions as outlined in section 5.4.

5.1.3 It would also be appropriate (health, mobility and safety of roads and paths permitting) to walk a reasonable distance either to work or to the nearest public transport. (A reasonable distance will depend on individual mobility as well as current or future weather conditions).

5.1.4 Where the employee has exhausted all alternative travel options to attend work but cannot attend (and the University remains open/there are no Police or other external authority restrictions in place), the employee must agree with their manager how to record the absence from work in line with the available options outlined below (5.2.2).

5.2 Reporting an absence or a delay

5.2.1 An employee who is unable to attend work or expects to be delayed due to adverse weather, must notify their line manager (or designated officer) of the absence/delay as soon as possible (ideally before their scheduled start time and at least within 1 hour of their start time).

5.2.2 Where an employee is unable to attend work due to adverse weather (and has considered suitable alternative travel options), the line manager and employee should agree on how the leave will be recorded. For instance, employees can:

- Work from home (if practical)
- Take annual leave
- Time in lieu/work back the hours at another time (if the School/Unit allows this)
- Take unpaid leave or
- Apply a combination of the above options (e.g., work from home for part day and annual leave for a part day).

5.3 Absence due to responsibility of dependants

5.3.1 There may be circumstances when an employee's ability to attend work is affected by a need to provide or arrange care for a dependant (for example, school/nursery closures). These instances are covered in the "Emergency (unplanned) leave to care for a dependant" provision. Further information on entitlement can be read on the [Special Leave webpage](#).

5.4 Disability or medical conditions

- 5.4.1 If an employee has a medical condition or disability, then this may have a greater impact in severe weather conditions. Line managers should consider the impact of severe weather on employees with a disability or known debilitating illness which may affect their ability to attend work. Refer to the [Staff Disability Policy](#) for guidance on supporting employees who have a disability.
- 5.4.2 Employees are encouraged to disclose any disability/medical condition with their line manager and to openly discuss what support/adjustments would aid the employee in their role to allow the University to better accommodate disabled staff.

5.5 Early release from work

- 5.5.1 If the University is open and the weather becomes hazardous, employees are permitted to leave once approval has been sought from their line manager (or equivalent other), or an announcement has been made by the Office of the Principal or Director of Human Resources.
- 5.5.2 In the case of worsening weather, or particularly hazardous driving conditions, where an employee is clearly concerned about travelling home, line managers can make a judgement call to allow the employee to go home in advance of an announcement from the Office of the Principal or the Director of Human Resources. (Any such absence must count against annual leave, or the employee may work the time back if the School/Unit allows). If, within 2 hours of the employee leaving, the Office of the Principal or the Director of Human Resources advise that all out-of-town staff should go home, the absence will not count as annual leave nor will the employee have to work the time back.
- 5.5.3 Line managers are asked to remember that normally only staff who live outside St Andrews will be permitted to leave early in the event of severe weather. All other staff are expected to work normally and cover operations as best they can.

6. Travel restrictions

- 6.1 Employees who are away on University business and are unable to return to work as a result of travel restrictions should inform their line manager as soon as possible. In this situation employees will not suffer detriment to their salary or annual leave entitlement. This principle will only apply if the employee has explored all suitable alternative arrangements and they have notified their line manager. Employees must explore alternative means of transport to ensure that they return at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.2 Employees who are away on personal business using annual leave and are unable to return to work as a result of travel restrictions should inform their line manager as soon as possible. In this situation employees will be granted up to 3 days additional leave and dependant on the circumstances, any additional time will be deducted from their annual leave entitlement. It is expected that the employee explores suitable alternative arrangements and notifies their line manager of their estimated return as soon as possible.
- 6.3 Travel restrictions include, but not limited to, airspace restrictions; ferry and train disruptions; or strikes affecting transport.

7. Support

7.1 Any questions employees have about matters raised in this policy should be raised with their [HRBP](#). Any work-related issues should be addressed directly with their line manager.

8. Version control

8.1 This policy is non-contractual and may be amended at any time.

8.2 This document will be reviewed periodically in conjunction with the University's recognised Trade Unions. Any feedback on the policy content should be directed in the first instance to the [HRBP team](#) or via the [HR Feedback Form](#).

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Migration of all policies to the Governance Zone.	Published	Lisa Stewart, Human Resources	10/06/2019
1.1	Change of classification from internal to public.	Published	Lisa Stewart Human Resources	31/10/2019
1.2	Change to review date.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	31/08/2021
1.3	Minor formatting changes only.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	19/08/2024