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**How to manage absence via trigger points**

The University uses trigger points to assist with the management of attendance at work. A trigger system allows managers to identify emerging patterns or issues with the aim of supporting the member of staff to improve their attendance at work.

The University trigger points are: 3 or more periods on previous 3 months, 6 or more days in previous 3 months, 6 or more periods in previous 12 months, 4 weeks continuous absence or 15 or more days in previous 12 months (pro rata for part time staff).

Reaching an absence trigger does not mean that disciplinary proceedings should commence. Instead, it is a prompt to the manager that absence may be reaching an unacceptable level, and they should take relevant action. This could include a review of the absence record, an informal discussion with the member of staff, a referral to Occupational Health or the setting of targets for improvement.

When a trigger is reached, the manager should advise the member of staff accordingly. This can be done via the Return to Work meeting. They should enquire if there are any underlying reasons for the absence from work and agree targets for improvement. If the member of staff advises that there are relevant issues, for example, they declare a disability or work related matters, take specific advice from HR or Occupational Health.

Individual circumstances should always be taken into account. For example, it may be appropriate to disregard a trigger reached because a member of staff is absent due to treatment for an ongoing medical condition. It is still however good practice to have regular discussions with the individual concerned about their health and attendance, including any support that they require from you.

Where absence from work does not improve, or absence trigger points have been reached previously, the manager may decide that they need to commence informal discussions regarding attendance. See our additional ‘how to’ resources on managing absence.

Absence triggers do not apply to pregnancy related absence.

Advice on managing absence is also available from HR.