

Adverse Weather and Disruption to Public Transport Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University recognises that employees may face difficulty from time to time attending work during periods of severe weather or when there are unplanned disruptions to public transport or air travel. Whilst the University is obviously committed to safeguarding the health and safety of employees, it must ensure that disruption to its business remains minimal.
- 1.2 Since the adoption of hybrid working arrangements many employees can work effectively remotely and hybrid working enables a greater degree of resilience to adverse weather /disruption to public transport for many types of work. It is recognised however that some roles, due to the nature of their work, need to be physically located on campus which requires employees to travel to work.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to outline the normal, minimal arrangements for employees who cannot attend work during periods of severe weather conditions or disruptions to public transport/ air travel. It also set out the responsibilities of employees for attendance in these circumstances. This Policy is designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently during times of adverse weather/ travel disruption, and to ensure sufficient flexibility to address individual circumstances and take account of the health, safety and wellbeing of employees.
- 1.4 This policy is non contractual and can be amended or updated at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees who are unable to attend work or have to work a shorter day than normal due to adverse weather or unplanned disruption to public transport or air travel.
- 2.2 It does not apply to personal emergencies, which should be addressed requesting annual leave or other forms of leave as outlined in the Special Leave Policy.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Employees have a responsibility to make every reasonable effort possible to attend their place of work during adverse weather conditions or travel disruption. Reasonable effort may include lift sharing/ car sharing, using alternative public transport, and walking (where appropriate). However, they should not put themselves at unnecessary or inordinate risk when trying to do so. Employees are responsible for their health and wellbeing and should escalate any support required at the earliest convenience.
- Employees should also re-assess the weather or travel situation during their working period, i.e., if the weather conditions improve and it is safe to do so, they should contact their manager to confirm if they should go into work, even for part of a day.
- 3.2 Managers must have regard for the Health and Safety of employees, and it is the responsibility of managers to take decisions on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the principles of this policy and advice from where required.

4 General Principles

- 4.1 The policy aims to be applicable to a broad range of disruption, including severe weather such as heavy snow, disruption to public transport due to a variety of reasons, including disruption to air travel. However, it is recognised that the policy cannot anticipate or address every potential event that might have a widespread impact on the ability of employees to attend or remain at work.
- 4.2 The policy is not intended to deal with sickness absence or unforeseen breakdowns in care arrangements, which fall within the scope of the University's Policies on [Management of Sickness Absence](#) and [Special Leave](#) respectively.
- 4.3 This policy is not intended to deal with planned disruption to public transport, e.g., scheduled train strikes, which fall within the scope of the University policy on Special Leave.

5 Absences from work

- 5.1 Where employees are prevented from attending due to adverse weather conditions or travel disruption, they must notify their line manager (or if unavailable, the nominated deputy) by either their designated start time in line with usual procedures or at the earliest opportunity.

The following information should be provided:

- Why they are unable to attend work or will be late for work;
- The attempts made by the employee to attend, and likely period of absence;

- Any issues relevant to that day's work and any potential impact on work that their absence may have

5.1 If an employee has made all reasonable efforts to attend work but has been unable to do so because of severe weather conditions or disruption to public transport or air travel, the Line Manager should discuss and agree with the employee the following options

- be allowed to work from home or remotely (where it is possible to do so effectively).
- take the time as annual leave;
- make up the lost time at a later date;
- take unpaid leave

6 Severe conditions or disruptions occurring during the course of the working day

6.1 Managers should normally decide on a case-by-case basis whether it is appropriate for employees to leave work early. In taking the decision, managers should take appropriate account of the following;

- (i) The severity of the weather conditions/what disruption has occurred
- (ii) Advice from relevant external agencies such as the Met Office or transport police
- (ii) The distance and type of journey to be travelled by the employee
- (iii) The mode of transport available to the employee
- (iv) An employees caring responsibilities
- (v) Any other Health and Safety issues
- (vi) Business needs

7 Closure of University

7.1 In extreme circumstances such as very severe weather conditions, the President & Vice-Chancellor, or their designated representative, may decide to close the University at the beginning or during the working day, or late on the preceding day. In this event, following efforts to notify managers, a message will be sent out to employees by email and placed on the home pages of the University web site and StaffNet, and distributed by official social media accounts (e.g., @OfficialUoM). In the event of closure during the course of a working day, it will specify the time at which most employees will be expected to leave the premises in order to ensure an orderly and managed closedown. Managers of employees who do not have access to email or the internet will notify them of the decision.

7.2 Updates about the planned re-opening of the University will also be placed on the home page of its web site and StaffNet. The University would also aim to use local media such as BBC Radio Manchester as well as official social media accounts to update employees on developments.

7.3 Employees that can work in a hybrid manner should work remotely during the closure period. Employees that are unable to work remotely will be paid as normal for the period of closure. Some employees engaged in what are deemed to be essential services (e.g., security, areas of catering, some laboratory areas) may be asked or required to work during the closure. In the event of closure, special arrangements will apply to their remuneration.

8. **School/Nursery Closures**

8.1 In the event of schools or nurseries being closed, it is accepted that alternative childcare may not be immediately available and where this is the case employees should refer to the Special Leave Policy. It is expected that employees will make alternative childcare arrangements during periods of prolonged adverse weather conditions.

8.2 The principles above will also apply to employees with other dependent responsibilities.

9 **Employees stranded overseas due to air travel disruption**

9.1 Employees stranded following a holiday

Employees stranded overseas due to air travel disruption who cannot return to work on the expected date should make every effort to notify their manager at the earliest opportunity and as soon as they are aware that the disruption will impact their ability to attend work. They should also make every reasonable effort to return to the UK at the earliest opportunity. The normal arrangements for dealing with an additional period of absence in such circumstances will be for the employee to:

- take the time as annual leave;
- make up the lost time at a later date;
- take unpaid leave;

there may be an opportunity depending on the country the employee is returning from and duties undertaken for the employee to work remotely for a short period of time¹. This option should be discussed with the Global Mobility team to ensure advice can be provided before it is confirmed with the employee. This can be done by completing the [online form on StaffNet](#) to notify them for advice or can be addressed to People.globalmobility@manchester.ac.uk. You will receive a prompt response to urgent enquiries of this nature.

The precise arrangements will be decided by the individual's manager after consultation with the employee (and seeking any necessary advice from Global Mobility team), considering their views and preferences. It may be possible to offer a combination of options.

9.2 Employees stranded following a business trip

The University will attempt to advise and/or assist employees who are unable to return to the UK after a visit overseas on University business. This may include advice on and/or assistance with accommodation and alternative transport. Such employees will be able to claim reasonable expenses associated with their late departure. This covers reasonable expenditure on accommodation and/or alternative means of travel. Employees should seek and exhaust all third party compensation claims for delayed or cancelled travel via the travel provider. Employees will not be expected to take the time as leave.

There may be opportunity depending on the country the employee is returning from, and duties undertaken for the employee to continue to work remotely for a short period of time.² The Global Mobility team should be informed of the extension to the visit and will confirm if it will create any issues. Global Mobility should be contacted by completing the [online form on StaffNet](#) to notify them for advice or can be addressed to People.globalmobility@manchester.ac.uk. You will receive a prompt response to urgent enquiries of this nature.

¹ The period will be dependent on the country and work undertaken. In most circumstances if employees are responding to emails from most European countries for less than 3 days whilst alternative travel arrangements are made there will be no requirement to contact Global Mobility. However if an employee is in a non EU country or going to be working for more than 3 days, Global Mobility should be contacted by completing the online form on StaffNet to notify them for advice prior to any work being completed.

² As per footnote 1.

10 Review

- 10.1 The policy will be the subject of review after any major incident which affects employees attendance in order to consider its effectiveness. Such reviews will be conducted by the Major Incident Planning Group and the P&OD Sub Committee. Final decisions on changes will be made by the P&OD Sub-Committee.

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