

# Guide for line managers and professors concerning the management of illness/ accident absences

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this guide is to clarify certain aspects of the absence management process, define your role as line manager, and provide you with concrete tools to assist you in this type of situation.

## 2. Your role

You deal with the administrative, organisational and interpersonal follow-up in cases of absence and coordinate the actions to be taken with the HR manager. You ensure, with possible delegation, that medical certificates are updated in the "Working time and absence management (GTA)" system.

We recommend that you should be active in the three phases of the illness / accident, namely:

- **Before the illness:** notice any warning signs and take preventative measures wherever possible.
- **During the illness:** support and assist your employee.
- **On their return:** ensure that your employee recommences work under the best possible conditions.

Remember your HR manager is always available if you need advice.

### Before the absence

- Anticipate and monitor symptoms of probable absence (chronic fatigue, lack of attention, aggressiveness, repeatedly making mistakes, overinvestment, etc.).
- Adjust the workload if necessary and set priorities.
- Review the allocation of tasks within the team.
- Avoid overtime, plan holidays, encourage the compensation of extra hours.
- Give recognition to all your employees.

### During the absence

- Stay in regular contact with your employee.
- Define with them the frequency and means of contact (mail, telephone, sms, etc.).
- Don't be afraid of asking how they are. Those who are absent generally appreciate it. If not, they will let you know.
- Ensure that you receive a medical certificate as from the 4<sup>th</sup> day of absence or 8<sup>th</sup> day for professors.
- If the unit administrator is absent/ill, contact your HR manager who will monitor this absence with you.
- Contact your HR manager if your employee fails to return when their medical certificate expires and they do not provide a new one.
- If you have any doubt regarding the authenticity of the medical certificate, discuss it with your HR manager.
- If a replacement must be organised, contact your HR manager. Please note that the replacement will only be made on the basis of a fixed-term contract.

**After the absence**

- Take time to talk to your employee to help them start work again in good conditions.
- Plan a return interview to bring them up to date with work in progress, or changes within the unit or Institution.
- Reintroduce the employee within the team, explaining how their return will be managed.
- In the event of long-term absence, make sure they start work again gradually in order to avoid a relapse.
- Keep a close watch on your employee's state of health to ensure a sustainable return to work (are they really fit, is their return going well?).

**In cases of repeated absence**

- Plan a first informal discussion focusing on the quality of the relationship and listening.
- If you don't see any improvement, organise a second interview in which you will review the different factors that might cause the absences and define concrete improvement measures. You can use the "Repeated absence management" template for this.
- If you still don't see any improvement after three months, please contact your HR manager and organise a meeting with them and the employee.