



Adverse Weather Policy

Including Guidelines on Attendance at Work During Adverse Weather

1. Policy Statement

The University has a responsibility to ensure business continuity during periods of bad weather. It is, therefore, necessary that plans are put in place to address situations where weather conditions affect the ability of significant numbers of staff to travel to work.

The University will not expect staff to travel to work during adverse weather conditions where they could put their own health or safety at risk. The University will therefore ensure that an appropriate level of 'duty of care' is applied to expectations of employees' attendance at work during adverse weather. It will take into account advice given by relevant external authorities such as the Scottish Government and the Police in making decisions regarding closure of all or part of the University, due to extreme adverse weather conditions.

The University will make every effort to clear access routes to University buildings of snow and ice speedily and effectively. This commitment will apply to access roads, car park surfaces, pavements and other pedestrian access routes in the proximity of University buildings and to steps and pathways which are the direct means of access to such buildings.

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all staff within the University. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the roles of managers and employees and to consider what practical steps need to be taken in order to ensure that, as far as possible, a service can continue to be provided. Although this policy primarily covers adverse weather which affects the regular commute of staff to work, the principles and guidance can also be applied to staff travelling further afield on either University business or returning from holiday who are affected by adverse weather.

3. Principles

The following principles will apply in the application of this policy:

- The University will ensure that all staff are treated in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.
- Staff should make every reasonable effort to get into work but should not attempt to travel if it is not safe to do so.
- Staff should not be placed on unpaid leave when they cannot attend work, unless full consideration has been given to alternative arrangements. However, members of staff are not automatically entitled to pay if they are unable to attend for work or to carry out work for the University.
- There is no automatic entitlement to work from home, but it is recognised as a potential solution to travel difficulties.

4. Responsibilities of those Involved:

4.1 Managers' Responsibilities

- Managers must be aware of the health and safety implications which exist in making arrangements to provide a minimum service level in adverse weather conditions and they should consider this in relation to the lone working guidelines:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/guidance/workplaces-general/looh> and also the pandemic flu guidance:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/guidance/workplaces-general/pandemic-flu>

- Managers are responsible for establishing the minimum service level that can be provided before closing the service becomes an option.
- Managers must be aware of the actions they must take in order to meet the required minimum service level.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Staff are responsible for making reasonable and genuine efforts to get into work. This may require them to make alternative travel arrangements.
- It is the member of staff's responsibility to decide, based on the best information available to them e.g. the most recent weather forecast, local knowledge of weather conditions and travel difficulties, travel bulletins, police recommendations, government advice etc, if travel to their place of work is unsafe or the time and/or the effort which

would have to be used in travelling is disproportionate to the time that would be spent at work.

- If staff decide not to travel to work, then they must advise their manager of this as soon as possible by the agreed means of communication (see below). There will be a plan in place so that the member of staff is aware of what is expected of them on such occasions (see below).
- It is the member of staff's responsibility to communicate with their manager throughout any absences during a period of adverse weather.

5. Initial Actions for Managers

Managers must, as a matter of course, regularly establish:

1. which of their staff can get to work in most weather conditions (Category 1);
2. which staff, by the nature of their work, can work from home (and who have the necessary equipment, access levels and any workplace assessment necessary in place to be able to work from home), and who cannot travel to work in adverse weather conditions (Category 2); and
3. which staff can only carry out their work onsite, i.e. who needs to be at their place of work to do their job and who cannot travel to work in adverse weather conditions (Category 3).

Categorising staff as defined above will help plan in the event of forecasted adverse weather. It will also ensure that should any unexpected adverse weather conditions arise, managers are able to quickly communicate with employees and deal with any disruption.

Category 1

Managers must assess whether staff in Category 1 have the skills necessary to ensure that frontline services can be provided and must arrange whatever training is necessary to achieve this.

Category 2

Managers must ensure that staff in Category 2 have the equipment, access levels and any workplace assessment necessary to work as effectively as possible from home. Managers must also make arrangements with staff in Category 2 to discuss work priorities and output on a

regular basis if such staff cannot attend work for more than a day or two. This will be especially important if staff cannot carry out the full range of their duties from home.

Category 3

Every effort will be made to put alternative arrangements (see below) in place for staff in Category 3. When managers are discussing alternative arrangements with staff in that category, the following options should be considered:

- Annual leave;
- Agreeing that unworked hours (as a result of adverse weather) can be worked later in the year in an agreed pattern and by an agreed date, where the nature of the work allows this;
- Banking hours earlier in the year to be used in adverse weather, where the nature of the work allows this;
- Using flexitime (e.g. where there is a local scheme);
- Staggered working hours e.g. a late start and early finish (with the unworked hours to be worked at a later date);
- A combination of the above.

However, where it has been established, after all options have been considered, that it is not possible to put any alternative arrangements in place, the position of last resort for staff who cannot attend work and who cannot work effectively from home (Category 3) is that they will be placed on unpaid leave.

6. Full or Partial Closure

If a decision is taken to close the University or any part of it, the University will continue to pay staff who are prevented from working as a result of the decision.

7. Staff Arriving Late for Work

It is to be expected that staff may arrive late for work in the first few days of travel disruption due to adverse weather and it is reasonable that staff should be paid for any lost time. However, staff will normally be required to make arrangements to arrive at work on time e.g. by leaving earlier than normal, after the initial period of difficulty. If it is not possible to make such arrangements, then consideration should be given to the options shown above.

8. Sending Staff Home Early

Where weather conditions deteriorate during the working day to such an extent that a manager believes it is necessary to send staff home early, then staff will be paid as normal until the end of the working day. However, where staff request to leave early and this is not deemed necessary by the manager but is nevertheless authorised by the manager then staff will be required to take annual or unpaid leave or cover the time lost by using the alternative arrangements detailed above. This should be made clear to staff when agreeing to such requests.

9. General Actions

Managers should agree a communication plan with each member of their staff (bearing in mind that it may be that the manager cannot travel to work). This plan should include as a minimum: means of contact, contact numbers, latest contact times; and frequency of contact.

Managers should bear in mind that conditions will vary from place to place and can change over the course of the day and therefore, staff and managers should remain in communication throughout the day in order to respond to any changes.

Where the member of staff cannot travel to their normal place of work but can travel to an identified alternative University location, managers should agree a plan with the member of staff and appropriate staff at the alternative location to provide work for the member of staff.

Where because of a disability or pregnancy, an employee would have greater difficulty travelling to work during adverse weather, managers should discuss the matter with their College/ Support Group HR team and the individual concerned, to ensure that they individual does not suffer any detriment because of their condition.

Where the member of staff can travel to work but has to provide emergency care for a dependent as a result of other closures (e.g. schools, nurseries) then the University's policy on care for dependents should be followed

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Time_Off-For_Dependants.pdf

10. Decisions and Communications in Relation to Adverse Weather

Where it is proposed to close all or part of the University due to adverse weather, the decision to close should be made by either a Vice Principal, or the Head of Support Groups or equivalent, in

consultation with the Director of Estates and Director of Human Resources, or their nominated deputies.

Once a decision is made to close all or part of the University, all efforts will be made to alert all employees to that decision as quickly as possible. This will normally include:

- website (via the Staff News pages) and social media updates via the Communications and Marketing Team; emails to all staff, to be issued by Communications and Marketing or University HR Services (if the whole University is to be closed);
- emails to all affected staff where only part of the University is to be closed, issued by, or on behalf of, the relevant Head(s) of School or Support Department;
- managers making every effort to contact other staff who have not yet arrived for work where possible.

11. Policy History and Review

This policy was approved by Combined CJCNC on 6 December 2011. It replaced the following policies/documents: Adverse Weather Guidelines which ceased to apply immediately.

In the event of any significant change to the legal position affecting absence due to adverse weather conditions, relevant statutory requirements or any other related matter this policy will be subject to immediate review in consultation with the Trade Unions. In the absence of such a change, the policy will be reviewed by December 2018.

11.1. Change control record:

No.	Approval date:	Amendment made:	Approved by:
1.	28 March 12	Minor textual amendment at Section 10 to make clearer the Decisions and Communications process in relation to adverse weather.	HR Policy Development Working Group and CJCNC.
2.	Sept 16	Minor amendments to update broken weblinks.	HRPDG
3.	June 17	Minor amendment to expand Scope to include disrupted business/holiday travel.	HRPDG

12. Alternative Format

This document can be provided in alternative formats on request by email to UHRS@ed.ac.uk or by calling 0131 650 8127.