



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Severe Weather Policy

1. Policy Statement

The University is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff. This policy explains what will happen in the event of severe weather, such as heavy snow, flooding or high winds. It aims to ensure staff do not travel to / from work when their safety may be at risk and that essential services continue to run. It also explains what staff with caring responsibilities need to do if they are unable to attend work due, for example, to school closures.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University. This includes contract and agency workers. The principles of this policy can also be applied to those affected by severe weather:

- on a work related trip or
- when returning home from a holiday (travel delay).

3. Principles

You are expected to make reasonable and genuine efforts to attend work. However, you should not put yourself at risk by travelling to work during severe weather conditions.

If you are unable to attend work, you are expected to work from home if it would be normal for you to do so in other circumstances.

In managing such situations we will:

- 3.1 take into account weather warnings issued by the Met Office and travel advice from the Scottish Government and Police Scotland
- 3.2 treat lateness and absences fairly, sensitively and consistently
- 3.3 give reasonable notice of any workplace closure, where possible

- 3.4 ensure that the health and safety of our staff is a key priority, especially our essential staff (see Section 5) who are required to work during closure periods
- 3.5 consider all alternatives before requiring you to use your annual leave or placing you on unpaid leave.

4. Communication

Based on guidance from the Met Office, Scottish Government and Police Scotland, we will keep you informed of significant disruptions to travel. We will let you - and our students - know if we decide to close any of our sites or workplaces as a result of severe weather and when any closed sites or workplaces are due to be reopened.

Closure of the University will be determined by the chair of the University's Incident Management Team. In the event that the University stays open but certain Schools or Departments deem it appropriate to close their specific sites due to the impact of severe weather, or more localised conditions, this should be done in liaison with the Chair of the Incident Management Team.

You are expected to let your manager know if you

- will be late for work. We understand that you might arrive late for work during the first few days of severe weather and you will be paid as normal for any lost time. However, if conditions persist, you will be expected to make other arrangements to arrive at work on time, for example, by leaving home earlier than normal.
- wish to leave work early to travel home safely or deal with travel or other disrupted services, e.g. early school closures
- are unable to get to work at all, and keep in regular contact until it is possible to return.

5. Essential Staff Attending on Site

Certain areas of the University are classed as critical services (i.e. activities or tasks that must continue to an agreed minimum level during an incident).

If you are an essential worker, your manager must ensure that you understand that you are expected to attend work in such situations and you both should ensure that you take all reasonable steps to protect your own health and safety. You must therefore contact your manager to discuss the situation and assess the risks involved in travelling to work before setting off on your journey.

Schools and Departments have detailed local plans in place to deal with site closures. This policy should be read in conjunction with those arrangements.

Information on payment for essential staff who work during a closure period is detailed below (Section 6).

6. Payment and Annual Leave When the University is Closed

All employees will be paid as normal during a closure situation. If you are a contract or agency worker or on a guaranteed minimum hours contract you will be paid for hours that you were offered and accepted (or rostered to work) prior to the closure.

You won't be paid for any voluntary overtime that you didn't work. If you had any pre-booked leave during the closure period, it will not be reinstated.

If you are an essential worker (see Section 5) and attend work during a closure period, you will be paid at the rate of time and a half for the hours worked. This means your hourly rate will be increased by 50% for the hours worked. Alternatively, if practical, you can take the equivalent time off at a later date. For example, if your normal working day is 7 hours and you attend work on a closure day and work 7 hours, you will be paid as normal for 7 hours and will be entitled to 3.5 hours extra pay or 3.5 hours of time to take off at a later date. This must be discussed and agreed with your manager.

7. Actions and Responsibilities

Appendix I provides options for you to discuss with your manager when you can't travel to work safely or if you can't attend due to your caring responsibilities. It also outlines what managers are expected to do both before and during periods of severe weather.

8. Links to Other Relevant Policies and Guidance

You may find it useful to refer to other relevant University policies which you can find on the [HR web pages](#).

- [Annual Leave Policy](#)
- [Emergency Time Off for Dependants Policy](#)

9. Policy History and Review

Approval Date: March 2019

Approved By: Combined Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee

Year of Next Review: 2026

Severe Weather Procedure – Actions & Responsibilities

Table 1. The information in the table below provides options for you to discuss with your manager when you can't travel to work safely.

Situation	Actions to be Taken
<p>The University is open but you can't travel to work</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Contact your manager as soon as possible to explain why you can't get to work. If you manage staff, make sure you let them know that you can't get to work. 2) Contact your students or the relevant teaching organisation if your absence could lead to lectures or classes having to be cancelled 3) Consider alternative work locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are you able to work from another University building which is closer to your home? - if so, discuss this with your manager - work from home if you have the equipment, access and approval to do so – i.e. it would be normal for you to do so in other circumstances. 4) If none of the above are possible, you will need to use annual leave, time off in lieu (TOIL), make up for lost time at a later date or use unpaid leave. You could also ask for a combination of these options including staggered working hours e.g. arriving later/leaving earlier and making up the time at a later date. 5) If you can't get to work due to the impact of severe weather on your dependants, you should agree with your manager if you can use the time available to you under the Emergency Time Off for Dependants policy.

<p>The University is open but you need to leave early</p>	<p>1) Ask your manager (or nominated deputy) if you can leave early. If you manage staff, make sure you let them know that you are leaving work early.</p> <p>2) If relevant, contact your students or the relevant teaching organisation if your absence could lead to lectures or classes having to be cancelled</p> <p>3) You should work from home if you have the equipment, access and approval to do so - i.e. it would be normal for you to do so in other circumstances.</p> <p>4) If you can't work from home you will need to agree with your manager how you will make up for lost time. Depending on how much working time was lost this could be through use of your annual leave, time off in lieu (TOIL), or by working additional hours at a later date, or a combination of these options.</p> <p>5) If you have to leave early due to the impact of severe weather on your dependants, you should agree with your manager if you can use the time available to you under the Emergency Time Off for Dependants policy.</p>
<p>The University is closed (all or part of the University) - for all or part of a day/days</p>	<p>1) If the University is closed due to severe weather, and you are not advised you are an essential worker, there is no expectation that you work from home. You will be paid as normal and you don't have to use leave or make up for any lost time.</p>

Table 2. The information in the tables below describes your responsibilities as a manager both before and during severe weather

2.1 Before Severe Weather
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure you have discussions with your staff regarding contingency plans for severe weather at the start of the winter season- Ensure that the safety of your staff is a key priority when planning service requirements. Especially the safety of 'essential' staff who are required to work during closure periods.- Know the minimum service level required before you shut a service- If you manage a critical service team (essential staff), liaise with Estates to determine whether snow clearance and salt spreading can be undertaken to ensure clear and safe access to your site(s). Additionally, ensure that staff are aware of how they access buildings if the University is closed e.g. keypads/pin numbers.- If you manage a critical service team (essential staff), the redeployment of staff to locations closer to home should form part of your contingency planning- Ensure that you have up to date contact numbers for your staff and that they know how and when to contact you and vice-versa- Have some awareness of where your staff live so that you can keep up to date with weather and transport news (you could sign up for Met Office weather alerts). This is particularly important if you manage a critical service team. Knowing how close your staff live to work will allow you to plan for a minimum service.- Ensure you know who in your team has the access and equipment to work from home. If severe weather is predicted, prompt staff to take papers, laptops home for the night, if appropriate.

2.2 During Severe Weather

- Treat all staff fairly, sensitively and consistently
- Keep in touch with your staff during severe weather
- Have some awareness of where your staff live so that you can keep up to date with weather and transport news (you could sign up for Met Office weather alerts). This is particularly important if you manage a critical service team.
- If someone in your team can't get to work, consider if they could work from an alternative building. You must get prior agreement with managers at that location.
- Consider extra support for someone with a disability, medical condition or a pregnant employee
- Take into account that some of your team may have to leave work early or not be able to work due to nursery or school closures. In this situation, you should refer to the [Emergency Time Off for Dependants Policy](#).
- In the rare event that the University is closed due to severe weather, be aware that there is no expectation that staff work from home.