



Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta/Policies and Procedures

Code	QA105 (B)
Title	Sick Leave – COVID-19
Date	June 2023, revised 28 August 2025
Approved By	University Management Team

1.0 Purpose

The University QA105 Sick Leave policy sets out the procedure and practice for taking sick leave during normal circumstances. This policy sets out the procedure and practice for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay, in accordance with the provisions set out on the www.Gov.ie from the Government of Ireland. The arrangement relating to the application of COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay is temporary. This arrangement will be kept under regular review and may change at short notice.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University, including full-time, part-time, temporary or those on fixed-term contracts of employment. It also applies to workers such as agency staff, and casual staff.

3.0 COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay

COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay will be applicable in line with the current provisions set out on gov.ie and the HSE Guidelines.

- 3.1** Any Special Leave with Pay granted for the purpose of diagnosis of COVID-19, applies to individuals advised to self-isolate because they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 and/or have received a positive COVID-19 result, as outlined on the [HSE website](https://www.hse.ie). If an employee is unable to return to work after 5 consecutive calendar days, they will move to ordinary sick leave arrangements.
- 3.2** At any stage if an employee states that they feel well enough to work but have tested positive for COVID-19 or are self-isolating because they were symptomatic, the employer may facilitate working from home instead of special leave with pay if this is feasible and agreeable to both parties.
- 3.3** Submit a Medical Certificate confirming your positive Covid-19 diagnosis as per government guidelines. This should be sent by email to the employee's Line Manager, copying hursickleave@universityofgalway.ie at the earliest possible opportunity on the first day of the absence. Please note that medical certificates should not be posted to the University.
- 3.4** If the employee has an ordinary illness which is subsequently diagnosed as COVID-19, this can be retrospectively recorded as Special Leave with Pay subject to medical certification confirming same being provided to the employer as per 3.3 above.
- 3.5** The general principles applying to the management of sick leave, the requirement of employees to contact managers, and for ongoing contact with employees who are on special leave for this purpose, will apply.



4.0 COVID-19 vaccination

- 4.1 Time off to attend COVID-19 vaccination appointments is to be discussed at a local level as per [Flexible Working Hours Scheme](#).
- 4.2 Employees who remain sick/unwell in the days after vaccination, normal arrangements will apply as per Sick Leave Policy.

5.0 Department of Social Protection (DSP) – Social Welfare Illness Benefit

- 5.1 University of Galway employees eligible to avail of the COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay and therefore are NOT required to claim DSP COVID-19 Illness Benefit for the first 5 calendar days.
- 5.2 Should you continue to be unwell after 5 consecutive calendar days due to COVID-19 you will be moved to ordinary sick leave arrangements. You are required to forward a medical cert to your Line Manager copying in hrsickleave@universityofgalway.ie. All employees, except those on Class D PRSI, are required to apply for [DSP - Illness Benefit](#).
- 5.3 A Social Welfare Illness Benefit application form, or IB1 (obtainable from your GP) should be submitted directly to the [Department of Social Protection \(DSP\)](#), quoting the employee's own bank account number in order to receive payment directly from the DSP.

6.0 Ordinary Illness

- 6.1 Once an employee has been in receipt of COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay for a maximum of 5 consecutive calendar days or is unwell due to any non-COVID-19 related illness will be recorded as ordinary sick leave and the rules governing the University [Sick Leave Policy](#) will apply. You should forward a clear legible photo/scan of your medical cert to your Line Manager, copying in hrsickleave@universityofgalway.ie. Medical certs should not be posted to the University.

7.0 Return to work from sick leave

- 7.1 The return to duty [SL1 form](#) should be completed by the employee and then signed and submitted by the line manager to the Human Resources Office at hrsickleave@universityofgalway.ie on the first day of return to duty following any sick leave absence. (N.B. Certified/uncertified sick leave, even if only for one day an SL1 form must be returned)

8.0 Returning to work on campus

- 8.1 The COVID-19 [Return to Campus Self Declaration Form](#) should be completed and submitted to your line manager no earlier than 3 days prior to returning to work.
- 8.2 You must complete the following training:
 - 8.2.1 [Central COVID-19 Induction Training](#)
 - 8.2.2 [Training prior to returning to work](#)



9.0 Responsibilities for Implementation

9.1 Employees, Line Management, the Human Resources Office and the University share the responsibility to implement this policy.

10.0 Further information is available at:

- [Sick Leave Policy](#)
- [Employee Assistance Service](#) - Professional Counselling and Information Services. This service is free and confidential
- [Alerts website for University of Ireland Galway](#)

Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Director of Human Resources	Policy Owner
All Staff	Notify Line Manager on the first day of Covid-19 sick leave absence, email medical cert to Line Manager copying HR Sick Leave, apply for Illness Benefit if the sick leave absence exceeds 5 days, complete SL1 form upon return to work and email to HR Sick Leave
Line Manager	Notify HR Sick Leave on the first day of employee Covid-19 sick leave absence, request medical cert from employee and email to HR Sick Leave, maintain reasonable regular contact with employee, meet with employee upon return to work and email SL1 form to HR Sick Leave. Ensure that employee has completed COVID-19 Return to Campus Self Declaration Form , Central COVID-19 Induction Training , and COVID-19 Access to Campus Protocol
Human Resources Office	Record, monitor and report on Covid-19 Sick Leave, advise Line Managers and employees on Covid-19 Special Leave with Pay, review this policy on a regular basis in light of any changes in legislation