RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEWS

Guidance for Heads of Departments

Return to work interviews are a recognised form of absence management as they highlight to employees that their absence has been noted and is being monitored. In most cases, the interview need only take a few minutes to complete.

A Return to Work interview is an opportunity to investigate whether there are any work-related reasons for the absence (e.g. following an accident at work) which may have gone unreported, that the College should be aware of, or a working procedure that may need to be reviewed.

The interview will also give Heads of Departments the opportunity to explore any medical reason why the individual has had time off which they might otherwise be reluctant to discuss. Provided confidentiality is assured, issues may be discussed that the College can assist with, or allow the Head of Department to make adjustments to help the person concerned.

If the correct reporting procedure was not followed, the employee should be reminded of the procedure to be followed, and if necessary, given a copy of the College’s ‘Absence through Illness’ policy.

Notes for completion

1. Heads of Departments should conduct a Return to Work Interview with ALL members of staff who have been absent through illness, before they resume their duties.

2. The member of staff may request that the Bursar or HR Officer conduct the interview, where absences relate to personal issues, or are of a sensitive nature.

3. For absences of 7 days or less, the Head of Department should ensure that a self-certification form has been completed. For absences of 8 days or more, a doctor’s ‘Fit Note’ must be provided from the 8th day onwards.

4. Heads of Department must consult the HR Officer where GP guidance has been provided on a ‘Fit Note’ (e.g. a phased return to work or a restriction of certain duties), to discuss whether the GP advice should/can be followed. (A risk assessment may be completed to determine what action the College is able and prepared to accommodate).

5. All Return to work Interview forms should be sent to the HR Officer.

6. All self-certificates and ‘Fit Notes’ from GP’s not containing return to work advice should be sent to the Payroll Assistant.