Procedures for Leave and Working Arrangements during COVID-19 outbreak

1 Purpose
The University is following current public health advice in relation to the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). This procedure is to define the University’s approach on leave and working arrangements during the COVID–19 outbreak.

2 Scope
The procedure applies to all staff in the University, in particular, staff diagnosed with COVID-19, those that are symptom free but have been in contact with those with COVID-19 and certain high-risk groups which may include:

- are 60 years of age and over
- have a long-term medical condition – for example, heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or cancer
- pregnant women

3 Procedures for dealing with COVID-19 related absences

3.1 Staff Diagnosed with COVID-19/directed to self-isolate
Staff diagnosed with COVID–19 or directed by their GP to self-isolate must inform their Head of School/Administrative and Support Area personally by telephone, as early as possible on the first day of absence confirming the purpose of their absence.

It is accepted that due to the burden on healthcare professionals during this time, it may not be feasible for a GP to issue a medical certificate to cover the absence. In these extenuating circumstances and on an exceptional basis, the University will accept that staff may ‘self certify’ for the duration of absence indicated by their GP by completing the self-certification declaration form [https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-]
COVID19-sick-leave-self-certification.docx. This will be recorded locally as certified sick leave on the staff members sick leave record. Staff will be required to submit medical certificates from their GP retrospectively and claim any illness benefit payment that may be due to them as normal in accordance with the University’s Sick Leave Policy.

3.2 Staff with dependents self-isolating or diagnosed with COVID–19
Where an employee does not have the symptoms\(^1\) associated with the coronavirus but has been in contact with someone who recently travelled to an affected area or with an infected person, it may be necessary on risk grounds to ask such people not to attend work. Please seek advice from your GP and/or Public Health Office before making this decision, then inform your manager accordingly.

If such circumstances arise, staff may be able to avail of other forms of leave under the University policies specified below. The granting of any leave is subject to the approval of the Head of School/Administrative and Support Area;

- Annual Leave
- Parental Leave
- Special Unpaid Leave of Absence
- Force Majeure (as defined under the Parental Leave Act 1998)

Alternatively, other arrangements may be explored at the discretion of the Head of School/Administrative and Support Area such as alternative working patterns and working from home, where feasible.

Please note that circumstances may arise where staff may be declined alternative leave arrangements, if for example, there is a case of staff shortages due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

\(^1\) A cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, fever (high temperature)
3.3 Staff that are considered “at risk” (as defined at 2 above)
Staff that consider themselves at risk should seek further advice from their GP. Staff may be able to explore with their Head of School/Administrative and Support Area alternative work and/or work location.

3.4 Staff dealing with localised closures of a school/crèche
Where a school takes the decision to close/send students home and employees need to care for their young child(ren) despite them not displaying any symptoms of the virus, reasonable time off should be permitted in order for the employee to make arrangements for alternative childcare (1 – 2 days is recommended). Home working, unpaid leave or annual leave should be considered if a longer period is required and alternative childcare is not possible.

If such circumstances arise, staff may be able to avail of other forms of leave under the University policies specified below. The granting of any leave is subject to the approval of the Head of School /Administrative and Support Area.

- Annual Leave
- Parental Leave
- Special Unpaid Leave of Absence
- Force Majeure (as defined under the Parental Leave Act 1998)

Alternatively, other arrangements may be explored at the discretion of the Head of School/Administrative and Support Area such as alternative working patterns and working from home, where feasible.

Please note that circumstances may arise where staff may be declined alternative leave arrangements, if for example, there is a case of staff shortages due to the outbreak of COVID-19.
4 Procedures

4.1 Payroll Procedures for Unpaid Leave

Applications for any form of unpaid leave (i.e. Parental Leave, Special Unpaid Leave of Absence) must be approved in the first instance by the Head of School/Administrative and Support Area. Completed forms should be posted to HR Services, Human Resources, House 4 or emailed to hr@tcd.ie.

Applications for parental leave should be made using the parental leave application form which can be found on https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-parental-leave.docx. In these extenuating circumstances and on an exceptional basis, the normal notice periods for such applications will need to be waived and accepted retrospectively.

Applications for Special Unpaid Leave of Absence should be made using the attached application form https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-unpaid-leave.docx.

Force majeure leave applications should be made using the attached application form https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-force-majeure.docx

4.2 Record Keeping

The Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 requires employers to hold records of all forms of leave. It is important that records of all leave (sick leave, annual leave, unpaid leave) are kept locally in each area.

5 Closure of the University

In the event of the University closing indefinitely due to an outbreak of COVID–19 in Ireland, further information will issue.

3rd March 2020
Self-Certification Declaration Form
(COVID–19 {Novel coronavirus})

Name ___________________________ Staff Number ___________________________
(print name)
Date Diagnosed by GP: ___________________________
Name & Address of GP ___________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Duration of absence as recommended by GP:
From ___________________________ To ___________________________
Expected Return to work date ___________________________

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Please note: Staff will be required to submit medical certificates from their GP
retrospectively and claim any illness benefit payment that may be due to them as normal
in accordance with the University’s Sick Leave Policy.

Please return this form to your Head of School/Administrative and Support Area.