

Adverse weather guidance for employees

Introduction

- 1 It is the policy of Southampton Solent University to maintain normal day to day operations through periods of difficult weather conditions.
- 2 From time to time severe adverse weather conditions and associated problems can disrupt the University's normal day to day operations. In these circumstances the University will respond to the prevailing circumstances with the aim of maintaining day to day operations as far as is possible consistent with considerations of personal safety and sensible and responsible actions.

Communication from the University

- 3 During periods of severe adverse weather conditions the University website www.solent.ac.uk will be the main official source of information. Subject to the particular circumstances the University will post periodic updates on the website throughout the period of disruption. The all-staff email facility will also be used to distribute important information.

The working assumption should be that the University is open and that employees are expected to attend work.

Subject to the prevailing operational circumstances the University will aim to post website updates for the day ahead by 0730.

Social networks operated by the University will also be used to distribute information contained on the website. The University's official Facebook link is [Southampton Solent University - Official](#) and Twitter at [follow@solentofficial](#)

Calls to the University's general switchboard should be kept to a minimum during the period of disruption. This is because the switchboard will be dealing with other urgent operational issues.

- 4 Dependent upon the particular circumstances your manager may also contact you (eg email, or, if previously agreed with you by text or telephone) to either supplement the information on the website or to discuss particular operational issues and contingency arrangements.

It is also recognised that many work teams within the University choose to have effective team contact arrangements in place (by free consent and wish of the participants). In conjunction with official information on the website and any contact from your manager these team network arrangements can be very helpful in communicating quickly with all team members and organising appropriate contingency plans including alternate travel arrangements to work etc.

Communicating with the University

- 5 Paragraphs 3 and 4 set out the official communication channels and employees should check these on a regular basis during the period of disruption.
- 6 If you are unable to attend work due to the adverse conditions you should notify your manager as soon as possible and within one hour of your normal start time.

Early notification is especially important if urgent contingency arrangements will be needed to cover student teaching commitments or diary appointments etc.

Sensible planning

- 7 Where severe adverse weather conditions are forecast the University will make arrangements to monitor the position including reference to the Meteorological Office website and local authority and BBC travel news services.

Dependent on the particular circumstances the University may establish an operational control group to co-ordinate on-going management of the overall situation. Decisions about the operational status of the University, including whether it is operating fully, whether normal services are restricted, or whether the University is closed, will be vested with this group.

- 8 The arrangements described in paragraph 7 will be used to determine the official information posted on the University's website and elsewhere (paragraphs 3 and 4 refer).

- 9 Where severe adverse weather conditions are forecast this also provides opportunities for fair and sensible work and contingency planning in conjunction with your manager.

For some people it will be possible to plan for working from home. For some people working from home will not be possible. For some people the adverse conditions may require adjusting shift times to support the University's policy to seek to maintain normal operations, including very early start times for those people who work very hard in these conditions to open campuses, and other people who work into the evenings to maintain key services to students. For some it will involve contingency planning to make appropriate arrangements to cover student teaching commitments, services for students, and the University's normal range of day to day operations. For some people it will be making sure that work is available on myCourse etc.

It is also recognised that different conditions and operational requirements may apply at different University locations, and that different contingency arrangements are in-place and well-established to suit the local and prevailing circumstances.

Sensible preparations also include making sure that your manager has the correct preferred employee contact details, be they, for example, by telephone, text, email. This can also be very useful as part of the team network arrangements referred to in paragraph 4.

- 10 Unless there is an official decision to restrict normal services or to close the University every employee should work on the basis that the University is open for the full range of its normal operations and that they are expected to attend work.

- 11 Circumstances of this nature can raise questions about the extent to which different people have made sufficient effort to attend work. From time to time these questions can be damaging to working relationships between colleagues and between different teams responding to different challenges and priorities.

The circumstances where an employee is unable to attend work due to the adverse conditions will be assessed by the relevant manager. Dependent on the particular circumstances it may be appropriate for the employee to be granted holiday for the absent time, or to make up time in an authorised way, or to take a period of unpaid leave, or a combination of approaches. Fairness and equity are key tests.

Note - particular legislative requirements apply to, for example, substituting annual holiday and dependent care leave etc. If sensible and reasonable local level agreement between the employee and the manager is problematic additional guidance is available from the relevant HR Manager.

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