

SEVERE WEATHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ADVICE FOR UK CAMPUSES

This set of FAQs supports the Policy on Severe Weather that forms part of the Leave of Absence Policy on the [HR Policy Page](#) under the Leave of Absence Section.

Please make sure that you have downloaded the Safe Zone app onto your mobile

[Apple Store](#) OR [Google Store](#)

1	What do I do if I cannot get to work? If, despite your best efforts to get into work by using, for example, different transport methods or walking if it is safe to do so, you are unable to attend work or you are likely to be significantly delayed you should telephone or email your line manager within an hour of your normal start time. Please do not contact Safeguarding unless it is an emergency. If you are unable to speak directly to your line manager, try to contact another manager or member of the team. If you are not able to contact anyone, you should leave a voice mail message or send an email or text/WhatsApp message. Advise your line manager of your expected arrival time, or the likely length of absence. If you are able to carry out your work at home, please also tell your manager when you contact them. Please make sure you know to contact your line manager via phone or Microsoft Teams. If your line manager doesn't have a direct line please ensure you have another number so you can leave a message. If, despite your best efforts, you are likely to arrive late at work due to severe weather conditions and/or transport disruption you will not be required to make up the lost time and will not suffer any loss in pay. If you are unable to attend your workplace and are unable to work from home, you must keep your line manager informed about when you expect to be able to attend. This will help your line manager assess staffing levels in order to meet the demands of our students, staff, and customers.
2	What if I start out and get stuck; or there is a power cut in my area and I don't have any way of contacting my manager or colleague? We recognise that in some situations you may not be able to contact your manager or other colleague at all, e.g., if you are stranded with no means of communication or there is a power cut where you live. However, you should report to your immediate manager as soon as possible to update them on your circumstances.
3	Can I work at home instead? If you are able to carry out your normal duties from home you should ensure your line manager is aware that you are doing so.
4	My job requires me to be on campus and/or I can't easily take my work home If it is not practical for you to work from home (for example a power cut in your

	area) and you are unable to travel or the duties you carry out mean that you need to be on campus, you should discuss and agree with your line manager whether alternative options possible; for example - Working at another location if it is safe to travel (e.g. at Riccarton if you live in Edinburgh but normally work at Galashiels and vice-versa) - Making up any lost time on a later day or days - You may opt to take annual leave (if this is agreed, you should record this on Cloud ERP with your manager approving the leave) - Taking unpaid leave (if this is agreed, you should record this on Cloud ERP with your manager approving the leave) - Considering sharing transport with colleagues if it is safe to do so - Agreeing different start and finish times with your manager - A combination of options The most appropriate alternative for you may not be an appropriate option for other members of your team or other staff in the University so there are no hard and fast rules about which option should apply at any given time; it will depend on the severity of the weather, the likely duration of the weather and the personal circumstances of each person.
5	What if I cannot get to work due to personal or domestic reasons? In all circumstances, you should contact your Line Manager within an hour of your normal starting time and advise them of the situation. If, regardless of the state of the weather or transport, you are not well enough to come to work, or to work from home where it is possible, the Sickness Absence Policy will apply. If you would normally be well enough or fit enough to attend work but the weather or transport makes it more difficult for you, you should let your Line Manager know so that they can agree that you work from home or consider whether alternative arrangements may be made in the short term. If you are unable to attend work because, for example, Schools or Nurseries are closed or you have no means of getting your children to school; or you have to care for someone dependent on you, you may agree with your manager to work from home on a flexible basis if possible, or utilise the appropriate procedures within the Supporting Family Life Policy and Procedures found on the HR Policy Web Page under the Section Family Friendly Policies.
6	Can my manager insist I take annual leave? Managers will have to make decisions based on a combination of factors, including whether it is possible to work effectively from home and how long the severe weather has lasted. Whilst we would not expect employees to have to take annual leave from the very first day that the severe weather starts, if there are no other suitable options for you (see Q4 above) or if the severe weather lasts more than a few days, asking you to take annual leave is a reasonable request to make. All annual leave should be entered on Cloud ERP. If there is no other option but to ask employees to take annual leave, managers should give notice of this to the relevant staff. This notice should be at least double the length of time they want employees to take in annual leave. For example, for one day's annual leave it would be two days' notice. Managers should consult HR prior to instructing someone to take annual leave for this reason.

7	Why can some people work from home but others are expected to come into work or have to make up time – that doesn't seem fair! Some employees have jobs that mean they are able to work effectively at home. Where employees are able to work from home it will reduce the numbers of people coming onto campus in poor weather/driving/parking conditions. Other members of staff will not be able to work at home because their job has to be done on the campus; for example, preparing and serving food, cleaning; or they
	may not have the tools to be able to work at home; for example if an employee working in an office does not have access to a computer/email at home. In these situations, managers will be expected to discuss with their teams the most appropriate solution for each individual.
8	My manager has agreed that different members of the team can be treated differently – surely that can't be right? Managers will have to make decisions based on a number of factors, some of which will be personal to each individual. They will have to consider, for example, childcare responsibilities and access to emergency childcare support; where an individual lives and how they usually travel to work; whether they are able to work effectively at home; whether they are able to change their travel method. There may be any number of factors that apply to some members of the team and not to others. It would be more unfair to insist that all members of the team are treated exactly the same as that might have more of an impact on some members of the team than others.
9	If the weather lasts for an extended period of time, at what stage can my manager tell me I must take annual leave? Again, there are no hard and fast rules to apply. It will depend on a number of factors including whether you are able to work effectively at home, or alternative options are suitable. The University does not have a formal position that states "After [so many] days of poor weather, you must take annual leave." As stated above, if there is no other option but to ask employees to take annual leave, managers should give notice of this to the relevant staff. This notice should be at least double the length of time they want employees to take in annual leave. For example, for one day's annual leave it would be two days' notice. Managers should consult HR prior to instructing someone to take annual leave for this reason.
10	What if I don't have any leave left to take? It is more likely that severe weather will occur during the winter months, towards the beginning of the holiday year (which starts in October) so most people should have plenty of leave to use if they choose to do so or there are no other options. However, if you are on a fixed term contract which is nearing the end and you have used up most or all of your leave; or if there are other reasons for not being able to attend work towards the end of the leave year, then you should discuss alternative solutions with your manager. You may be able to make up time later on; or take unpaid leave; or "borrow" leave from the next leave year (if this is applicable). Unpaid leave should be recorded on Cloud ERP. If you agree to "borrow" leave from the next leave year, your manager should contact the HR helpdesk for advice on how to log this in ERP.

11	What happens if severe weather conditions develop or continue during the working day? If severe weather conditions develop or do not improve during the course of the working day and it is likely to make your journey home difficult or very lengthy, you should discuss with your manager whether it is possible to leave campus earlier than usual. Advice regarding road conditions will be announced by the Police on local radio stations and news websites such as BBC and STV Scotland. Some useful web links to assist you can be found below: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/scotland/ http://news.stv.tv/ http://www.readyscotland.org/ http://www.lothianbuses.com/ http://www.mybustracker.co.uk/ http://trafficscotland.org/ http://www.journeycheck.com/firstscotrail https://www.firstbus.co.uk/ https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/ https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210566/roads_and_transport
	https://www.firstbus.co.uk/south-east-and-central-scotland http://www.scotrail.co.uk/content/travel-updates
12	What if I can't park in my usual car park because of snow or ice? You must not park on the roads during severe weather. It is imperative that emergency vehicles can access all areas of the University campus. Estates and Facilities Directorate will provide advice regarding the location of parking for staff, students and visitors which will be set out in the communications issued by MRAC.
13	What do I need to do if I need to travel on University business? University business travel should be kept to a minimum or avoided totally during adverse weather conditions. You should actively consider using University facilities, such as e- mail and Microsoft Teams You should amend your diary commitments to ensure that, wherever possible, only essential journeys are made. All other non-essential meetings should be postponed. If in doubt, consult your line manager. Likewise, you should consider alternative arrangements if you are hosting a meeting, especially if the weather conditions are worse around the campus than elsewhere. For example, Riccarton campus might be easy to access when the roads around Galashiels are difficult to travel on.

14	Will I be able to drive a University owned, hire or leased vehicle? University business travel should either be kept to a minimum or avoided totally during adverse weather conditions. Full use should be made of University facilities, such as e-mail and Microsoft Teams to assist with the reduction of travelling commitments. Staff should amend their diary commitments to ensure that only essential journeys are made. All other non-essential meetings should be postponed. If in doubt, staff should consult their Line Manager. Staff travelling on essential journeys, should ensure that they are experienced drivers in difficult conditions, properly equipped and, where possible, have access to a mobile phone with the SafeZone App downloaded. Please do not use your phone whilst driving. You should discuss the proposed trip with your Line Manager and details should be left with the Line Manager as to the journey(s) to be undertaken and the proposed route which will be used. Contact should be maintained with your Line Manager. Staff are required to ensure that they have the recommended emergency equipment in the vehicle as advised by the Scottish Government which can be found by visiting http://www.readyscotland.org/travel/emergency-travel-kit/. No minibuses will be available for hire during periods of severe weather conditions. Borders Campus Minibus - The minibus which operates from the Borders Campus to Riccarton may be suspended in the event of severe weather conditions. Staff responsible for the operation of the minibus service will communicate with staff at the Borders Campus in the event that the service is suspended. Students and Staff should contact their Line Manager for advice and guidance on their specific circumstances but in general the advice set out in the Severe Weather Procedure and these FAQ's would apply.
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GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE/INFORMATION: SNOWY CONDITIONS

University Buildings, Grounds and Car Parks:

Every effort will be made to ensure that buildings are operational (heat, light and power). If staff have concerns about the temperature of their working space they should refer to their line manager in the first instance.

Riccarton Campus

The Estates and Facilities Directorate is responsible for ensuring appropriate gritting and clearing of the Riccarton Campus. However, should staff encounter any problems they should report these to Safeguarding on extension 3500. Please be mindful, though, that the Estates staff will be working to a plan that ensures most popular routes or higher-risk areas such as around the nursery are cleared first and that it is not possible to clear every road, path, or carpark at the same time!

Public roads and footpaths remain the responsibility of the local authority and may present a greater hazard so care should be taken.

Borders College

The Borders College is responsible for the clearance of the grounds and car parks at Galashiels. The contingency plan provided by Borders College will be advised to local staff as and when required.

Car Parking

Staff must only park in designated car parks. The University will advise staff of the location of safe car parking areas during severe weather. The University must ensure that emergency vehicles can access and egress all areas of the University safely.

Staff at the Borders Campus must comply with the parking arrangements issued by the Facilities Manager, Borders College.

The University does not accept responsibility or liability for any vehicle which is damaged as a result of being parked on the roadway.

We ask that you take special precautions when driving to and from work and moving around campus. These include:

Be prepared - follow our top tips and advice

- Wear the best shoes you have that have good grip and are waterproof.
- Make sure you have multiple layers of clothing in the car in case you get stuck - the temperature can drop very quickly in a car.
- Gloves are important - they won't just keep your hands warm as if you do fall over, they will offer some protection.
- Keep your mobile phone charged, download the Safe Zone App, and bring food and preferably a hot drink.

If you are unsure about what to do, please speak to your line manager. Above all take care and stay safe.

Driving

Before starting your journey listen to local travel news and assess whether it is safe to travel by car. Continue to listen to travel bulletins during your journey. Please refer to the following web link for guidance <http://www.readyscotland.org/travel/emergency-travel-kit/>

We recommend you give consideration to the points below and take the following actions:

- Is it essential you travel by car?
- Is public transport available?
- Assess the road conditions. If necessary delay your journey, take a different route which you know is salted or kept clear
- Allow extra travelling time
- Take extra care when driving
- Use your local knowledge to anticipate where there might be hold ups or ice on the roads
- Ensure your fuel tank is at least half full
- Make sure the car/vehicle is in good condition for the journey (tyres, oil, coolant, windscreen washer etc)
- Reduce your travelling speed
- Take warm clothes with you
- Take something to drink (hot if possible) and something to eat
- Keep your mobile telephone charged in case you need it
- Download the SafeZone app
- Take Wellingtons (or other sensible shoes)
- Take something to move snow away from your tyres
- Take a torch
- Put a spade in your boot
- Consider fitting winter snow tyres to your car

If possible, consider waiting until roads have been gritted before travelling. Listen to the news and the advice issued by the Police.

Avoid driving, if possible – consider using public transport to get to work.

Walking

- Don't walk to work if the conditions are dangerous or hazardous. Please consider any existing medical conditions or disability when making your assessment.
- Take your time and be careful when walking on footpaths, particularly if untreated or partly treated and remember to wear sensible warm footwear
- Be careful when moving from one surface to another, e.g. alighting from a bus or road onto a pavement or on a sloping surface
- Use gritted/salted walkways where possible
- Keep warm, wear warm clothes, gloves, scarves, and hats
- Make sure you have a charged mobile phone so you can contact someone if you have difficulties.
- Wear warm clothes and suitable footwear

Additional Information and useful resources

The City Of Edinburgh Council have reviewed their severe weather arrangements and have made several significant changes to their path and road clearance programme around the City of Edinburgh which includes improved clearance of the areas surrounding the University. Further information can be found by visiting their web page

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/severe-weather>