



SEVERE/ADVERSE WEATHER GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

Introduction

There will be occasions where severe or adverse weather creates difficulties in attending the University on time or at all. There are so many potential situations resulting from severe weather, all of which will have a different impact, that detailed and concise guidelines on how to manage every eventuality are not possible.

This policy is intended to provide advice and guidance of a general nature to assist Heads in preparing for such situations, and to all staff to outline potential scenarios and options in the event of difficulty in students being able to attend University. It reflects general advice given when queries are received and inevitably will not cover all circumstances in every case.

Key Principles

This policy is based on the premise that students should always make every reasonable effort to attend the University when they should be present and that non-attendance is for a genuine reason.

It is a key principle that the University does not expect any student to put themselves at risk, either at the University, or in travelling to the University.

On that basis, the University will be deemed to be open unless a specific announcement is made on the HWU Website, local radio (e.g. Radio Forth, Radio Borders, BBC Radio Scotland or Real Radio) or, if it is to close early, via a message from the University Secretary.

If a student is unable to attend work or expects to be delayed, they should report the absence/delay in line with the locally agreed reporting procedures for normal absence, and as early as possible, ideally before their scheduled start time.

General Guidelines

Travelling to and from work

In line with the key principles outlined above, whilst no-one is expected to put themselves at risk, all possible travel to work methods should be considered. For example, if public transport is still operating, then it should be considered, even if the journey to work may take slightly longer than usual.

It would also be appropriate (health, mobility and safety of roads and paths permitting) to walk a reasonable distance either to work or to the nearest public transport. As a guide, a distance of up to two miles each way would be reasonable, although individual levels of fitness and mobility and prevailing weather conditions could alter this.

Alternative methods of working

If a student is unable to attend their normal place of study, it may be appropriate to work at another location in the short-term (provided that effective study can be carried out there).

Alternatively, some students may be able to work at home for a short time. Students might wish to prepare for the possibility of being unable to attend the University for a short period by downloading or taking specific work home to work on. In these circumstances, students should discuss this with their mentor so that s/he is aware of and approves the work being undertaken off-site.

Disability or Medical Conditions

Where a student has a particular medical condition or disability that might have a greater impact in severe weather conditions, Heads of Schools (or their nominees) should consider whether any reasonable adjustments may be made to support them. Advice and guidance on specific cases is also available from Student Support & Accommodation.

Implementing the Guidelines

As a general rule, it is helpful for Heads of School to ensure that their staff are clear on how these guidelines will be implemented; for example in ensuring all staff are clear on the reporting of delayed arrival or non-attendance; and on which types of work are more suitable for students to work on at home should the occasion arise.

Heads are expected to use their discretion and judgement in deciding the most appropriate action to take. This may differ according to the type of work the student carries out; It might be appropriate, for example, to allow some students to leave early if weather conditions are deteriorating in certain areas or travel information indicates difficulties on certain routes.

Where Heads or their representatives have specific queries, the Director of Student Support & Accommodation will provide additional advice. However, they will not be able to give precise and specific advice for every given situation and it should be recognised that in some circumstances, students may be treated differently; a blanket policy applied indiscriminately may not always be appropriate.