

# Statements of Fitness for Work (Fit Notes)

On 6 April 2010, Medical Statements (commonly referred to as sick notes or medical certificates), issued by doctors changed to Statements of Fitness for Work or Fit Notes. This guidance outlines the changes necessary to the University's processes when a member of staff is issued with a Fit Note indicating that they can return to work providing temporary adjustments are made.

## Why has the Sick Note been replaced by a Fit Note?

For many people a return to work, or being able to remain at work, can help recovery from their condition. However, under the previous Medical Certificate scheme the doctor could only advise their patients on whether their health condition meant they should or should not work. This meant many people who could benefit from returning to work with appropriate support would be advised that they could not work. The new Fit Note gives a greater flexibility in managing sickness absence and, where possible, helps members of staff make an earlier return to the workplace, or remain in the workplace, with guidance from their doctor and suitable support from their employer.

## What is the Fit Note?

The Fit Note is issued to the member of staff by their doctor who will advise whether the member of staff is:

- **Not Fit for Work.** This is just like the previous sick note where the doctor advises a member of staff to refrain from work because their health condition prevents them from working for the stated time period.
- **May be fit for work taking account of the following advice.** This means the assessment given by the doctor is that the member of staff could return to work provided they receive suitable support as indicated on the fit note. This advice represents four common ways to aid return to work: a phased return to work; amended duties; altered hours; or workplace adaptations; and may include other comments, including functional effects of the condition.

## What to do when a member of staff is issued with a Fit Note

A member of staff issued with a Fit Note should send it to Human Resources as soon as possible. The staff member should also keep the line manager informed about the details of their absence. Line managers who have a member of staff who may be fit for work should consider the doctor's advice on the fit note and how it affects the job and workplace and discuss this with their Human Resources link, taking account of the member of staff's views about returning to work. The manager may need to complete an [Occupational Health referral](#) if support and advice on return to work is required from Occupational Health.

The following action may be taken:

- If it is not possible to return to work an agreed review or return to work date will be arranged between the member of staff and their line manager.
- If it is possible to return to work, a return to work date, workplace amendments and a review date will be agreed between the member of staff and their line manager.

Whatever the action, Human Resources, the line manager and employee will monitor and review progress until the employee has fully recovered from their health problem. A referral to, or review by, Occupational Health may be necessary, for example if full recovery hasn't been made within the agreed time period for return to work or the workplace adjustments.

## **Further information**

Advice and support on return to work processes can be obtained from Human Resources. Speak to your Human Resources link (Tel 3433; e-mail staffing)

Information on sickness absence can also be found on the [Human Resources Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice](#) website.

Support and advice on the medical / health aspects of return to work is available from Occupational Health telephone extn. 2399 or email ohquery.

Sick Note to Fit Note. Statement of Fitness for Work - A guide for Employees. Department for Work and Pensions. [www.dwp.gov.uk/fitnote](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/fitnote)