

## Procedure for Sick Leave during COVID-19

### Introduction

Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) is following current public health advice in relation to COVID-19. This procedure defines the Institute's position on sick leave during the COVID-19 outbreak. This document should be read in conjunction with AIT's Sick Leave Absence Management Policy.

### Special Leave with Pay

Under the provision Circular 0051/2020 - Coronavirus (COVID-19) Special leave with pay will be granted by the employer, for those employees who have been:

- a) diagnosed with COVID-19 or
- b) medically recommended to self-isolate

An employee with COVID-19 symptoms will be medically/HSE advised to self-isolate while he/she waits for a COVID-19 test appointment and test results. Medical or HSE advice must be followed. Employees cannot personally choose to self-isolate.

The employee must provide HSE/medical certification to the employer to include estimated date of fitness to return to work. The application of special leave with pay will apply for the number of days advised by the HSE/doctor.

The employee must arrange a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and must immediately inform the employer of the COVID-19 test result.

Where the employee does not return to work immediately following a negative COVID-19 test result, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme applies.



## Human Resources Department

Dublin Rd, Athlone, Co Westmeath, Ireland. Telephone: +353 (090) 648000 Email: [hr@ait.ie](mailto:hr@ait.ie)

It is advised that in the case of a confirmed COVID-19 infection, an employee needs to be 14 days post onset of symptoms and also 5 days fever free (which may run concurrently) before returning to the workplace. It should be noted that the 14 days is from the onset of symptoms or when asymptomatic from the day of the Covid-19 test. The 14 days is not from the date of receiving a positive COVID-19 test result

The general principles applying to the management of sick leave, for example the requirement to contact managers, and for ongoing contact with employees who are on special leave with pay for this purpose will apply. If special leave with pay is granted, employees will be expected to comply with any directions given by the Institute.

Employees on special leave with pay are not permitted to claim the COVID-19 Illness Benefit payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Any special leave with pay granted for the purpose of self-isolation, restricted movement for close contacts or any diagnosis of COVID-19 will not count as part of the employee's sick leave record.

An employee is not entitled to days in lieu of bank holidays whilst in receipt of special leave with pay.

### **Application Procedures for Special Leave with Pay**

An employee who has been HSE/medically diagnosed with Covid-19 or has been recommended to self-isolate **must** complete the Application Form at Appendix 1 to apply for special leave with pay.

The completed Application Form should be forwarded by the employee to the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. The completed form must be accompanied by appropriate HSE/medical certification to include estimated date of fitness to return to work.

Please send these forms by **email only** to [hrmedical@ait.ie](mailto:hrmedical@ait.ie)



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### **Restricted Movements for Close Contacts**

An employee with no COVID-19 symptoms will be medically/HSE advised to restrict his/her movements for 14-days if he/she is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or lives with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms.

The employee who has been advised to restrict his/her movements must arrange a COVID-19 test as soon as possible.

An employee who has been advised to restrict his/her movements must complete the Declaration Form at Appendix 2 and return this form immediately to the Human Resources Department by email to [hrmedical@ait.ie](mailto:hrmedical@ait.ie) accompanied by medical certification (GP/HSE). Where medical diagnosis changes the employee must inform the employer immediately.

An employee who has been advised to restrict his/her movements and is medically fit for work, remains available for work. The employee should be assigned work for the 14 day period and the employer must therefore facilitate alternative working arrangements to the maximum extent possible e.g. working from home. If remote working in an employee's current role is not feasible, then the assignment of work may be outside of their usual core duties.

Where an employee on restricted movement tests positive for COVID-19, then special leave with pay may be granted.

### **Higher Risk Groups**

The HSE advice on Higher Risk groups is set out [HERE](#)

Employees should self-declare (Appendix 3) where they consider they are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.



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Employees deemed by the Institute's Occupational Health Service to be unfit to attend the campus should be facilitated to work from home to the maximum extent possible. Where working from home in their current role is not feasible, then they may be assigned work outside their usual core duties/given a new role.

### **Pregnant Employees**

Under the current HSE guidelines, a pregnant employee is not deemed to be at very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19, unless suffering from a serious heart condition.

### **Staff dealing with caring responsibilities due to COVID-19**

Special leave with pay is not available for an employee who has COVID-19 related caring or childcare responsibilities, or for an employee who is living with a high risk or very high risk individual.

However, an employee who wishes to avail of existing relevant leave entitlements is entitled to have such requests considered by his/her manager (e.g. Parental Leave/Carer's Leave). Employees who live with a very high risk individual should attend the workplace and should follow the HSE guidelines to protect themselves and to minimise risk of transmission.

### **Ordinary Sick Leave**

Under the terms and conditions of the AIT Absence Management Policy, ordinary illness should be recorded by HR as sick leave. If the staff member is subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19, the special leave with pay can be retrospectively applied in lieu of Sick Leave.



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### **Leave Arrangements on Return From Non-Essential Travel Overseas**

The current Government advice is not to travel overseas. In line with Dept of Public Expenditure & Reform ([DPER](#)) guidance for public sector employees, where there is an intention to undertake non-essential travel abroad and you are required to restrict your movements on return. Any person coming into Ireland (apart from Northern Ireland and individuals arriving in Ireland from locations with a security rating of normal precautions “Green List”), is required to restrict their movements for 14 days.

All employees must make provision by way of an annual leave or unpaid leave application for the additional 14 day period of restricted movements on return the country. Special leave with pay will **not** apply during this period, **nor** is working from home an option.

All leave is subject to the prior approval of your Manager in the context of the operational needs of the area and the role. You must discuss this with your Manager prior to travelling. The requirement that employees advise their employer of travel abroad is necessary for the protection of public health.



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### **Appendix 1: Application for Special Leave with Pay**

*The Application Form should be fully completed and submitted to the employer as soon as possible. The completed form must be accompanied by HSE/medical certification to include date of fitness to return to work.*

**Please scan completed form and return by email only to [hrmedical@ait.ie](mailto:hrmedical@ait.ie)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Details of Special Leave with Pay (based on HSE/medical certification)*

Covid-19 diagnosis  Recommendation to self-isolate:  (tick relevant box)

Start Date (DD/MM/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

End Date (DD/MM/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

*The completed application is accompanied by medical/HSE certification.*

*I wish to apply for Special Leave with Pay in accordance with Circular 0051/2020 titled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for staff employed in approved posts funded by monies provided by the Oireachtas'.*

*I confirm that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.*

Signature of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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### **Appendix 2: Declaration Form Restricted Movement Group**

*The Declaration Form must be completed by the employee who has been advised to restrict his/her movements. The completed form must be accompanied by HSE/medical certification, to include date of fitness to return to work.*

**Please scan completed form and return by email only to [hrmedical@ait.ie](mailto:hrmedical@ait.ie)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date (DD/MM/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_ End Date (DD/MM/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

I have been medically advised to restrict my movements and cannot attend the workplace.

The completed application is accompanied by medical/HSE certification.

In accordance with Circular 0051/2020 titled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for staff employed in approved posts funded by monies provided by the Oireachtas', I am available for work in accordance with the terms of this Circular.

I confirm that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.

Signature of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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### **Appendix 3: Higher Risk Groups Self Declaration**

## COVID-19 EMPLOYEE SELF DECLARATION FORM

AIT are following the advice of the HSE and Government and monitoring the COVID 19 situation very osely. We now require employees who consider themselves to be in the at risk categories to self-declare by completing the form below. Employees should complete all of the questions on the form and return to HR Department by post or email to [hrmedical@ait.ie](mailto:hrmedical@ait.ie). This information will only be shared with your line manager, and the HR staff who deal with medical certificates and our Occupational Health Physician. High Risk and Very Risk Categories are defined by the HSE.

### **1. Employee ID**

### **2. Forename and Surname**

### **3. Department**

### **4. Mobile number**

### **5. Please select the risk category that is applicable to you**

- High Risk
- Very High Risk
- Not Applicable

### **6. Please confirm why you are identifying as at risk?**