



**Human Resources**

# **On-Call Policy and Procedure for Professional Support Staff**

## **1 Introduction & Purpose**

The School currently operates core hours between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. The School recognises the importance of supporting business critical services outside of these core hours including weekends, bank holidays and School closure days.

It is clear that in some areas of the School, groups of staff have been providing an on-call service outside core hours as a goodwill gesture and the basis of these arrangements have differed across departments.

This policy provides a framework to ensure:

- Key School systems and services can be adequately supported and an effective response and resolution provided to matters requiring urgent attention outside of core business hours,
- A consistent approach to the implementation of on-call and call- out arrangements and,
- Employees who may be required to provide an essential on-call and call-out service in order to respond to service user needs and to operational service requirements are rewarded on a consistent, fair and equitable basis.

This policy is part of the emergency plan, and aims to harmonise practice across the School.

## **2 Scope**

This policy applies to Professional Services employees only, in recognition of the fact that employees in other staff categories are not required to formally adopt on-call arrangements.

At the discretion of the Dean of Faculty / Chief Operating Officer / Faculty Operating Officer, staff on the academic pay scale may be eligible to receive payment, for example, when joining the BSF or laboratory on call rotas etc.

It applies to employees paid on the single pay spine who participate in an approved on-call rota or call-out arrangements to deliver business-critical services outside core hours. It does not apply to colleagues who participate in planned events outside of core business hours, such as open days.

## **3 Definitions**

### **3.1 On-Call**

3.1.1 An employee is on-call when, as part of an established arrangement expressly approved by the line manager or designated manager, they are available outside of core service hours to work as required and to physically attend the School site if the matter cannot be dealt with remotely.

3.1.2 There is no expectation that an employee must remain at their home whilst on-call provided they comply with the employee responsibilities set out in section 5 below.

3.1.3 On-call would be defined as “non-work time, during which members of staff are required to be available to handle job-related activities and emergencies out of hours”.

3.1.4 It is recognised that, in view of the high volume of existing local arrangements and the diverse nature of activity undertaken across the School, it would be difficult to implement a “one size fits all” approach. Therefore, a three tiered approach for on-call activity is now in place:

#### Level One Support

Level One Support covers areas of the School that are deemed to hold a high Institutional Risk. This level of support requires staff to provide rostered on-call cover to respond to callouts and to attend on site if necessary.

#### Level Two Support

Level Two Support would cover areas of the School that are also deemed to have a level of risk, however, the risk would be lower than that associated with Level One Support. Level Two Support also requires staff to provide rostered on-call cover: to respond to call-out and to attend on site if necessary.

#### Level Three Support

Level Three Support allows staff to be contacted in order to provide support outside the staff member’s normal hours of work. There will be no obligation for the member of staff to be available and, therefore, this level of support will be provided on a “best endeavour” basis.

### **3.2 Call-Out**

3.2.1 Whilst on-call, an employee may be required to respond to a situation either remotely or by attending the workplace, depending on the nature of the work.

3.2.2 An employee called to work with the approval of their line manager or designated manager to address an emergency situation, irrespective of whether they are on-call or not, will also receive a call-out payment for the actual hours worked but will not receive the oncall payment. An emergency is defined as a matter that requires urgent attention before the start of the next working day or as determined by the School’s emergency or business continuity plans.

## **4. Principles**

4.1 On-call rotas will only be used where there is a demonstrable need to ensure adequate out of hours cover for essential services and where it is essential to ensure that there is a response to the failure of any critical system or service such as Biological Services Facility (BSF). It is for Heads of Department, in consultation with Human Resources, to identify where such out of hours’ services are required. Any proposals should be based on the area having a sustained and consistent business requirement to provide services out of

hours, as opposed to occasions that are covered by either overtime or regular non-standard working patterns.

4.2 On-call rotas will be managed on a voluntary or “opt-in” basis where possible. All staff members who possess the necessary levels of knowledge, skills and experience will be invited to ‘opt-in’ to the rota system so that every eligible member of staff will have the same opportunity to receive on-call and call-out payments. However, line manager or designated manager will ensure that there is parity in cover for on-call and call-out.

4.3 Staff may contractually be required to participate where it is determined that this is an essential requirement of the job. If this is the case, staff will be appropriately consulted and the requirement will be specified in the employment contract and offer letter for a new post. Such posts are normally in departments such as the press office, BSF, Estates and Information Services.

4.4 Managers will seek, wherever possible, to minimise any inconvenience of being on call.

4.5 The line manager or designated manager in each area will ensure that the relevant equipment necessary to perform the service is made available to employees on-call.

4.6 Employees participating in an on-call rota must have the relevant skills (and access permissions where appropriate) to provide the service required. The exact level of competence required will be determined by the line manager or designated manager.

4.7 On-call and call-out rates must be agreed in advance of the work to be undertaken by the Head of service and or COO with Human resources advice.

## **5. Employee responsibilities**

### **5.1 An employee who is on-call or called out must:**

5.1.1 be directly contactable by telephone and email and remain in an area of mobile phone and internet connectivity at all times;

5.1.2 respond to an agreed contact communication (e.g. telephone call, text, email, system alert) within an agreed time, typically within an hour;

5.1.3 where specified by the line manager or designated manager have access to a mobile device (or PC/laptop if required by the local on-call arrangements) that is connected to the internet within 30 minutes from being informed of a matter requiring attention in order to access systems and address the matter remotely;

5.1.4 remain capable to carry out the duties required;

5.1.5 be able to attend the School site within agreed time, if the matter cannot be dealt with remotely;

5.1.6 operate within the policies and protocols of the School at all times when on-call or called to work;

5.1.7 keep other on-call employees and the on-call Senior Manager informed and updated of progress in dealing with an issue and escalate key decision points to the on-call Senior Manager as appropriate and

5.1.8 keeps the rota organiser informed of any changes to their contact details, any booked annual leave or any other circumstances preventing them from carrying out on-call duties.

5.1.9 Subject to the above, it is not necessary for employees to remain at their home while on-call.

## 6. Payment arrangements

### On-call Allowance

6.1 The payments made in relation to the arrangements will form part of contractual remuneration and will be consolidated into base pay and identified separately on payslips in line with existing monthly salary arrangements. Pay awards will not be applied to these payments and they will not affect the incremental process.

6.2 Employees on the rota, as agreed with line manager or designated manager, to carry out on-call duties will receive an **on-call allowance**. The allowances are as follows:

#### On Call Level One allowance

An on-call retainer of £2,000 per annum would be paid to all staff rostered for on-call cover under level one support.

#### On Call Level Two allowance

The allowance mechanisms for Level Two would mirror that paid at Level One, however the retainer would be reflective of the lower Institutional Risk. The Level Two allowance is £1,000 per annum per employee.

#### On Call Level Three allowance

There is, no annual allowance for staff that provide support under Level Three but a call-out payment would be made if staff respond to a request.

Managers are required to complete the “**On-Call arrangements and allowance form**” in **appendix 1 of this policy** and submit it to Human Resources. In order to ensure all parties are clear on the arrangements, Human Resources will confirm such arrangements and allowance in writing.

### Call-out Payments

6.3 In addition to the on-call allowance, staff would be paid based on their hourly rate. The hourly rate would be applied to all staff and would be viewed as a **call-out payment** (as opposed to an overtime payment so that all levels of staff would be eligible to receive the payment).

6.4 Employees will receive a call-out payment for the actual hours worked including travel time. Working time, including travelling time, will be paid at time and half for weekdays and Saturdays, and double time for Sundays, Public Holidays and Director's Days irrespective of grade or contracted hours.

6.5 Call-out payments will only be paid when an employee has actually undertaken the callout duties.

6.6 On-call and call-out payments made under this policy are pensionable and subject to deductions for taxation and national insurance.

6.7 Claims for call-out payments should be made on the monthly timesheet within this policy on a monthly basis in arrears and submitted to the line manager or designated manager for authorisation prior to passing to Payroll for processing.

6.8 Employees who are called out to the School site under this policy may be eligible to claim mileage, taxi or public transport expenses in accordance with School's Expenses and Benefits Manual.

6.9 Employees should complete the **Monthly Call Out Payment Form** in **Appendix 2** of this policy in order to claim call out payments and travel expenses.

## **7. Working time Regulations & Guidelines on returning to work following call-out**

7.1 Heads of Department should monitor the frequency and length of call-outs and unplanned out of hours working on a regular basis to ensure that no member of staff is required to undertake additional work which may be detrimental to their health and wellbeing. In doing so Heads of Department should be aware of the requirements of the Working Time Regulations (1998), in particular in relation to the following areas of legislation:

- A limit of an average of 48 hours work a week over a 17-week period
- A limit of an average of 8 hours work in 24 hours for night workers
- A daily rest period of 11 uninterrupted hours between each working day
- A weekly rest period of one whole day a week or 2 days a fortnight
- A rest break of at least 20 minutes for a working day of more than 6 hours

7.2 The working arrangements of employees who are on-call or called to work comply with the Working Time Regulations and that compensatory rest is arranged where appropriate to comply with the daily and weekly rest provisions set out in the Regulations. When call-outs are completed before midnight, employees should return to work at their normal start time the next day. Otherwise, should return as follows:

Finish time	Total time worked after midnight		
	Less than 1 hour	1 to 4 hours	More than 4 hours
Before midnight	Normal start time	Normal start time	Normal start time
Midnight to 3am	11am	Lunchtime	Lunchtime
3am to 6am	Lunchtime	Lunch time	Next day
6am to 9am	Lunchtime or remain at work option*	Lunchtime or remain at work option*	Next day

The guidelines provided in this policy are indicative only and should not be considered as an entitlement. It is up to the discretion of management to determine a reasonable time to return to work following a call-out, and it is expected that employees will act responsibly in these circumstances. Management have a duty of care to ensure that employees are in an acceptable and appropriate state to work.

\* If an employee has completed an onsite call-out which finishes after 6am, they have the option to remain at work for the same number of hours they would have normally worked during the next working day.

## 8. Health and Safety

8.1 By nature of the service, callout work often takes place at night, in adverse weather, and may present challenging situations of increased risk to health and safety. There is, therefore, the need for the designated manager to act in a particularly vigilant manner with regard to the safety of those called out to site and those affected by the incident. Whenever an employee is in any doubt of their own level of competence they should seek appropriate support from fellow staff, utility providers, and emergency services.

### 8.2 Category 3 Laboratory

8.2.1 The School operates a specialist facility licenced under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. This act required the School to have call-out procedures to respond to critical alarms which may impact on animal welfare.

8.2.2 There is a strictly controlled protocol for access to the laboratories.

#### Related Policies:

Overtime & Time Off in Lieu: Policy and Procedure  
Expenses and Benefits Manual

**Document Control**

**Title:** On Call Policy and Procedure for Professional Support Staff

**Applicable to:** Professional Support Staff

**Date last reviewed:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

**Date discussed and approved by Trade Unions:** 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Date approved by Management Board:** 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016

**Date that policy will be reviewed:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 **Policy**

**and Procedure owner:** Human Resources