

Sick leave?

What to know and do

INFORMATION ABOUT SICK LEAVE
FOR EMPLOYEES



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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Sick leave?

What to know and do

If you are unable to come to work due to illness, you will get to know Leiden University's sick leave policy and the Dutch Eligibility for Permanent Incapacity Benefit (Restrictions) Act. The goal is for you to come back to work as soon and as well as possible, be it temporarily in a different role or with adjusted responsibilities. You and your supervisor are both responsible for this. Through conversations, you establish a plan of action together that will keep your absence to a minimum and prevent long-term sick leave.

This leaflet provides concise answers to the following questions:

- ▷ What do you need to know and to do if you are absent from work?
- ▷ What does the university expect of you, and what can you expect in return?

Want to know more?

Consult the **staff website** or contact your supervisor, HR adviser, or the PSSC.

Short-term absenteeism

from day 1

The first weeks

▶ day 1

Are you ill? Notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

▶ week 1

Conversation with your supervisor. Discuss answers to the following questions:

- How long do you anticipate you will be absent?
- Are there any meetings to cancel or find a replacement for?
- Are there tasks you can still perform?
- How can you be reached, and when is the next check-in?

▶ from day 1

Actively work on your recovery and reintegration (returning to work). You may ask the company doctor for advice (through the online form, *Advice from the company doctor* on the **staff website**).

Good to know:

- By law, your employer is not permitted to ask you about the nature or cause of your illness.

Medium-term absenteeism

from week 4

Visiting the company doctor

In week 4, you will receive a letter about visiting the company doctor. Schedule an appointment if you do not expect to return to work shortly. Ahead of time, discuss with your supervisor what to focus on during the visit. Also, fill in the online form, *Advice from the company doctor*, preferably together with your supervisor. The company doctor assesses your abilities and gives reintegration advice. That is why it is important to thoroughly discuss with the company doctor what is going on, what has been done to recover, and what you need help with. If you will be absent for a longer period of time, the company doctor will also draft a *problem analysis*.

Good to know:

- Due to doctor-patient confidentiality, the company doctor may never pass on medical information to your supervisor. You may consult your medical record at any time.

after 30 days

Your commuting allowance stops

After 30 fully absent calendar days, your commuting allowance is automatically suspended. You will find more information about this regulation on the **staff website**.



Plan of action

In week 8, you will create a *plan of action* for your reintegration with your supervisor. The plan of action is based on the company doctor's *problem analysis*.

The *plan of action* states, for example:

- ▷ when you will (fully or partly) go back to work
- ▷ what tasks you will perform (your usual tasks or different ones temporarily, which are, for instance, less physically demanding)
- ▷ what, if any, adjustments are needed
- ▷ the increase in hours and your tasks and responsibilities up until the date upon which you will be fully back at work.

Regular check-ins

Evaluate the *plan of action* regularly with your supervisor, to check if it works for you. Make agreements about this. You can always adjust the plan.

‘Shake-up’ and vocational expert assessment

After approximately 40 weeks of absence, there will be a ‘shake-up’. Your supervisor may decide to appoint a *vocational expert* for advice. For this purpose, the company doctor will create an *employability profile*. The *vocational expert* determines your reintegration options and provides a fresh perspective – hence the phrase ‘shake-up’. During the ‘shake-up’, key questions are: is your current role still appropriate; can it be adjusted to fit, or is it time to look for a different role?



‘42-week notification’

If you have not fully returned to work after 42 weeks, your employer is required to notify the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV). This is called the ‘42-week notification’. The PSSC submits the notification online through the UWV employer’s portal. UWV confirms the notification and sends you a confirmation letter.



from week 46 to 52

First-year evaluation

Between week 46 and 52, it is time for the *first-year evaluation*. UWV will inform you about this. You will fill in this form together. You will review what has been done so far, the results, and your further reintegration. If full reintegration into your current role is no longer possible, you may have to find a different but suitable role, either within the university or externally. If this is the case, you can count on support.

After 52 weeks of sick leave: salary reductions

If you have not fully returned to work after 52 weeks, your salary is reduced for the hours not worked. You will receive a letter from Leiden University informing you about this. You can find more information on the **staff website**.

1st- and/or 2nd-track reintegration

After week 52, you determine together with your supervisor whether you will continue with *1st-track reintegration* (remaining employed by Leiden University), or *2nd-track reintegration* (finding employment elsewhere). The advice from both the company doctor and the vocational expert play a role in this decision. For *2nd-track reintegration*, you will receive help from the careers adviser and/or an external reintegration agency. You are obliged to accept another suitable role.



Close to 2 years of absence. Now what?

Between week 88 and 91, you will fill in the *final evaluation* together with your supervisor. You will also determine whether or not you will apply for WIA (Work and Income according to Labour Capacity Act) benefits. There are two types of WIA benefits: WGA, if you are or will be able to work again, and IVA, if you will not be able to work again and there is no chance of recovery. You will find more information on www.uvw.nl.

Applying for WIA (WGA): see next page.

Applying for early WIA (IVA): Full Invalidity Benefit Regulations

Has it become clear before week 88 that you will never be able to work again? In that case, you may apply for early WIA: IVA. You may do so from week 4. You do not need to wait until you have reached 2 years of absence.

Early WIA requirements

- ▶ the company doctor expects you will never be able to work again
- ▶ apply between week 4 and week 68 at the latest
- ▶ you will only be able to apply for early WIA once. The HR adviser can help you with your application.

Close to 2 years of absence: WIA benefit application

In week 88, you will receive a letter from UWV about applying for WIA benefits. You may apply from week 88, up to and including week 93. The company doctor will supply the *current opinion* and *medical information* documents. You gather all necessary documentation for the WIA application with your supervisor. The HR adviser can help you. UWV evaluates your application. The most important criteria are:

- ▶ Is the file complete?
- ▶ Did both the employer and employee make enough effort to achieve reintegration?

You will consequently receive the *WIA ruling* from UWV. You will discuss this ruling with your supervisor and determine the next steps together. The Dutch Universities' collective labour agreement (cao NU) states that after two years of absence, termination of employment may occur.

To apply for WIA, visit www.uwv.nl.

Different roles on sick leave

Sick leave: joint responsibility

Leiden University has laid out its policy on sick leave (see [staff website](#)). In this document, everyone has a role to play, and responsibilities to go with it.

Role of the employee



As an employee on sick leave,
the following is expected of you:

- ▶ talk to your supervisor and make agreements about your work
- ▶ consult the company doctor for advice through the online form, *Advice from the company doctor* and schedule an appointment by calling the HSE front desk at 071 526 80 15
- ▶ actively think about ways for you to return to work as soon and as well as possible
- ▶ actively work on your recovery
- ▶ follow the rules and honour agreements
- ▶ be open to another suitable position if you cannot return to your current role.

Role of the supervisor



If you are on sick leave, your supervisor is your case manager and takes up an active, guiding role. Leiden University expects supervisors to:

- ▷ show genuine interest in the employee
- ▷ be well-informed
- ▷ regularly check in with the employee
- ▷ make clear agreements with specified timelines
- ▷ remain open, clear, and respectful during your meetings
- ▷ focus on what you can do
- ▷ enable you to perform these tasks or that role well
- ▷ keep an up-to-date record of your agreements and evaluations
- ▷ ensure all legal requirements regarding sick leave are complied with
- ▷ never report or pass on medical information.

Role of the **HR adviser**



The HR adviser takes a counseling, supporting, and monitoring position. Duties include:

- ▶ providing information and advice about regulations, the reintegration process, employment conditions, career, role, what to do in case of conflicts, etc.
- ▶ monitoring the (long-term) sick leave procedure
- ▶ facilitating communication between you, your supervisor, and the company doctor, if needed
- ▶ coaching in meetings between you and your supervisor, if needed
- ▶ advising you in finding a different role, with Leiden University or another employer, if you can no longer fulfil your current role.

Role of the **company doctor**



The company doctor is a specialist and advises employees and supervisors during sick leave and reintegration. Predominantly, he or she:

- ▶ helps determine your abilities
- ▶ gives referrals to other practitioners, such as the company social worker or psychologist
- ▶ composes the *problem analysis*, *employability profile*, and *current opinion*
- ▶ gives advice, for example if reintegration is stagnating
- ▶ keeps a medical record and retrieves medical information, if necessary.

Tips

- ▶ **Actively work on your recovery** insofar as this is possible; for example, by eating healthy, taking a walk every day, or doing something that gives you positive energy.
- ▶ **Take notes:** write down anything important. How your illness develops, for example. This information could be important to mention during company doctor visits.
- ▶ **Do you have any questions?** Write these down as well. This helps you remember to ask when next you see your supervisor, HR adviser, or company doctor.



Sick leave steps

day 1	notice of absence (report sick)
week 1-2	make agreements on your availability
week 2-5	if needed: seek advice from company doctor (with supervisor)
after 4 weeks	you receive a letter: schedule appointment with company doctor
from week 4	will you never be able to work again? ➤ early WIA application
day 30	suspension of commuting allowance
week 6	visit company doctor for <i>problem analysis</i>
week 8	devise <i>plan of action</i>
from week 9	regular evaluations with respect to <i>plan of action</i> ; if necessary, adjust plan; optional: consult company doctor for advice if reintegration is stagnating.

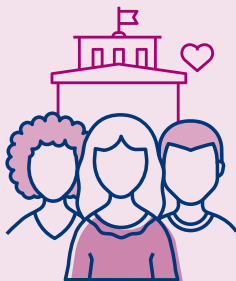
week 42	42-week notification to UWV (by PSSC)
week 46-52	fill in <i>first-year evaluation</i>
week 52	wage reduction of hours not worked (cao NU) optional: <i>vocational expert assessment</i>
week 53-104	optional: start <i>1st- and/or 2nd-track reintegration</i> (external employer)
week 68	application deadline early WIA
week 88-91	fill in <i>final evaluation</i> WIA application
week 98-104	dismissal or not, based on UWV's WIA ruling (cao NU).

Additional information

Keep a healthy mind in mind

Being healthy and feeling fit is about more than physical fitness. A healthy mind is as important. When you are mentally fit, you are confident and energetic, and you enjoy your work. That is why Leiden University strives to offer a positive and safe learning environment and organisational culture, which enhance the health and well-being of both students and employees.

You can find more information about Leiden Healthy University on the staff website.



What if you are having problems?

Sometimes, mental fitness is hard to achieve.

Do you feel overworked or strained at times?

Are you experiencing unwanted behaviour from co-workers?

Are you experiencing an issue with your supervisor?

Contact the company doctor or confidential counsellor,

where you can speak in the strictest confidence. The company doctor and confidential counsellor can also help you with the next steps.

If you prefer to lodge a complaint immediately,

a complaints committee can help you.

You can find contact details on the staff website.

About this leaflet

The outline of this leaflet roughly follows the steps of the absenteeism procedure according to the Eligibility for Permanent Incapacity Benefit (Restrictions) Act. Its contents are a practical translation of the *Views on absenteeism* document, see **staff website**.

Colofon

publication: Leiden University | Administration and
Central Services Department | HR

circulation: 500

copy: www.tekstvanbets.nl

design: www.inpetto-ontwerp.nl

September 2020, corrected in pdf January 2024



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