

Menstruation (Periods) Policy

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1. Introduction

At Strathclyde we recognise the impact of menstruation (periods) on staff health, wellbeing and productivity and are committed to supporting menstruating people at work.

We are committed to ensuring that, if you experience symptoms of menstruation, you are supported as early and as effectively as possible. We will always aim to treat matters as confidentially as possible.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we:

- Support our colleagues experiencing menstrual symptoms and empower them to be open about any symptoms they are experiencing.
- Support and empower line managers, together with relevant support services, to respond appropriately, sensitively, and confidentially to the needs of staff experiencing menstrual symptoms.
- Encourage staff to consider how they can support their colleagues who are menstruating.
- Raise awareness of support available, including reasonable adjustments if appropriate.
- Foster and promote a supportive and well-informed working environment.
- Tackle inappropriate behaviours and attitudes that minimise the dignity, respect, safety and wellbeing of menstruating staff of all genders.

In this policy you will find information on what menstruation is, the related symptoms, the impact that it can have on health and work and more. You may find this policy helpful if you are affected by menstruation or are supporting a colleague who is experiencing menstrual symptoms.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. Who is Covered by this Policy?

This policy applies to all employees, and specifically menstruating staff, together with carers or partners who may be seeking support.

It is not only women who experience menstruation, and related symptoms. Some trans men, non-binary people and intersex people can also be affected.

3. What is Menstruation?

[Menstruation \(periods\)](#) is the process of discharging blood and other material from the lining of your uterus, typically on a monthly cycle, from puberty until the menopause, except during pregnancy. Of note, the time of your monthly cycle can vary.

4. What are the Impacts of Menstruation at Work?

People experience menstrual symptoms differently, in both the variety and severity of symptoms. You will not necessarily experience the same symptoms as another colleague.

Common symptoms include, but are not limited to, acne; abdominal pains/cramps; abdominal swelling; bloating; changes in mood and irritability; constipation; dehydration, diarrhoea; dizziness; fainting; fluid retention; food cravings; headaches; increased urination; low energy or fatigue; lower back pain; joint pain; nausea; sore breasts; and trouble sleeping.

If you do experience any of these symptoms it could, potentially, impact your work in different ways. Challenges might include:

- Affecting your work performance.
- Pain that can impact your movement and physical capability.
- Fear of stigma and embarrassment which mean that you may be more reluctant to discuss your experience with colleagues or your manager due to negative past experiences or a perceived unsupportive response.
- Psychological symptoms, such as low mood, anxiety, and stress and sometimes the overall emotional impact of menstruation.
- Needing time off from work to manage symptoms. In the past you might have felt that you couldn't declare the real reason for your absence.

5. What Support is Available for Colleagues?

Given that staff can experience menstruation symptoms differently, we recognise that support will need to meet the specific needs of you as an individual. However, possible colleague related support may include:

- Referral to our staff [Occupational Health Service](#).
- Review of allocation of work and responsibilities if symptoms are negatively affecting performance.
- Reasonable adjustments and flexibility in working arrangements, including working environment, start/breaks/finishing times and time off to attend relevant medical appointments are detailed in our [Time Off for Medical and Dental Appointments Policy](#) as appropriate.
- Adoption of agile working, role permitting, including flexibility around working hours and breaks.
- Creating a supportive and inclusive working environment for colleagues and challenging inappropriate behaviours and attitudes.

6. What Should I Do?

If you're a member of staff, you're expected to:

- Familiarise yourself with this policy and supporting [Menstruation Guidance for Employees](#) (staff login required) and contribute to a supportive, inclusive and well-informed working environment.
- Speak to your manager if you experience menstrual symptoms – and your health, wellbeing and productivity are negatively impacted – if you feel comfortable to do so.
- Alternatively, if you feel you are unable to speak with your manager, or feel that discussions have not been handled appropriately, then you are encouraged to contact [Human Resources](#), the [Staff Disability Adviser](#), [Occupational Health](#) or our [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) provider. Any discussions will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

- We recognise that colleagues who are carers, and partners, as well as other family members of those affected by menstruation, may also benefit from help. If this applies to you, you might find the support resources in our Menstruation Guidance for Employees helpful.

If you're a manager, you're expected to:

- Familiarise yourself with this policy and supporting [Menstruation Guidance for Managers](#) (staff login required). Although line managers are not expected to be experts on menstruation, you should have a basic understanding to support your colleagues.
- Sensitively listen to - and empathise with - the experiences and needs of those experiencing menstruation.
- Consider the adjustments that can be made to accommodate the symptoms being experienced. Remember each situation will be different.
- It's important to recognise that the experience of some menstruating staff can be viewed as being a disability. For more details, please refer to Section 2.3 of the supporting Menstruation Guidance for Managers and the [Disability Policy](#).

7. Further Information and Support

If you've any queries about this policy, please talk to your manager or contact Human Resources. Further information and guidance, for both staff and managers, can also be found on our People Hub and [Wellbeing Hub](#).

And remember, our free and independent Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider, can also offer confidential support. Visit our [Wellbeing Hub](#) for more information.

8. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please see our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.