

# Recording Sickness Absence in Aston Staff Portal

## Managers' Guide

### Contents

Contents .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Importance of entering and updating of Sickness information .....	2
General Guidance on Sickness Absence .....	2
Process .....	3
Working Patterns.....	4
Special notes on Sickness Absences.....	6
Entering Sickness Absence .....	8
Add a Sickness Record .....	9
Updating Sickness Absences – on return to work .....	12
Who to Contact .....	14

## Introduction

### Importance of entering and updating of Sickness information

It is very important that sickness absence is recorded **promptly** and **accurately** by managers.

Sickness absence results in Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) being paid to an employee and will show on their payslip. In some cases, it may also result in a reduction in pay to an employee.

To avoid any potential issues around pay, follow these guidelines:

- Enter sickness absences onto Portal as soon as they are notified to you. You will also need to include an expected end date for the absence and update this as needed.
- As soon as possible, on your employees' return to work, you will need to:
  - Conduct a return to work meeting with them.
  - Ensure you update Portal with the employee's return to work information promptly.

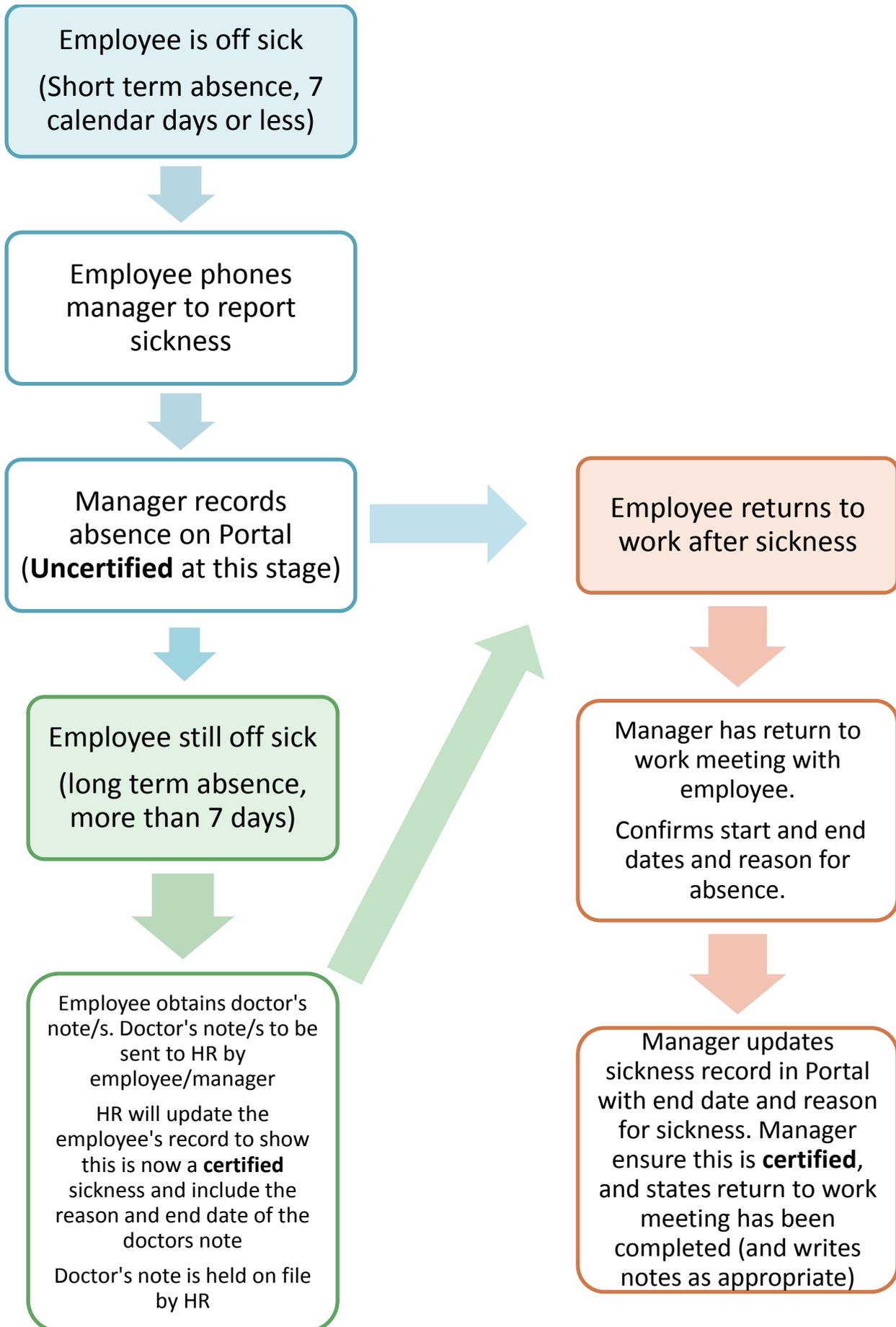
### General Guidance on Sickness Absence

Full guidance on sickness absence, including the policy and procedure is available on the HR website: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/policy-procedures/wellbeing/sickness-absence-policy-procedures-and-guidelines/>

Length of sickness absence	Requirements
Up to and including 7 calendar days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Record absence in Portal</li><li>• Complete the return to work meeting and record this and any notes in Portal</li></ul>
8 calendar days and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Record absence in Portal</li><li>• A doctor's/hospital note to cover the period between day 8 and the end of the absence is required. (doctors/hospital notes should be sent to HR)</li><li>• Complete the return to work meeting and record this and any notes in Portal</li><li>• For employees returning to work after long term sickness, you should contact your HR Business Partner for advice if you have any concerns.</li></ul>

## Process

This is the general process of reporting and recording sickness absence:



## Working Patterns

A working pattern describes the number of hours per day and which days of the week an employee works. For example, Monday – Friday 7.3 hours per day (a standard week) or Monday to Wednesday 5 hours per day.

All employees need their working pattern set in the Core HR system in order for absences to be recorded accurately against them. HR have undergone an exercise to capture all working patterns and, where these have been notified to us, these have been entered into the system.

If, when entering a sickness absence, you notice that the number of hours/days do not seem right, it may be that their working pattern has not been set up, or it may have changed since we last collected this information from you. Please ensure that you inform your HR Administrator if this is the case (see further down for contacts).

### Regular Working Patterns

Where employees work the same hours/days each week, or over a set number of weeks, HR describe these as 'regular' working patterns. This applies to the majority of staff at the university.

Absences for these staff should be recorded in periods. For example, if an employee is off from one Monday and returns to work the next Monday, the absence would be recorded as Monday – Sunday inclusive. The system will then work out how many days the employee was due to work based on their working pattern.

### Irregular Working Patterns

Where employees work shifts, variable or annualised hours, HR describes these as 'irregular' working patterns. This applies to some academics, researchers and support staff where any day of the week could be worked, and this is not always the same day/s each week or over a set number of weeks. This also applies to shift workers who need to swap shifts regularly with colleagues to maintain cover.

The unpredictable nature of these irregular working patterns means that it is not possible to maintain accurate work patterns in the HR system. In these circumstances they will be managed locally.

Absences should be recorded only on the days the employee was due to work. For example if an employee is off from one Monday and returns to work the next Monday but they were only scheduled to work on Tuesday – Friday for that week, you would only record the absence from Tuesday to Friday.

If you are in doubt about what type of working pattern your employees work, please contact your HR administrator. This will enable you to record sickness absences against your staff using the right method.

## What if my employee has changed their normal working pattern, or frequently does not work a regular working pattern?

If your employee changes their working pattern, or you need to move them to an irregular working pattern, you will need to notify your **HR Administrator** as soon as possible. They will make the changes on your behalf, and this ensures that the system calculates the right number of days your employee has had off sick. Please ensure that you give the administrator as much notice as possible to make the changes.

Likewise, if you add an absence for a day but notice that this shows the wrong number of hours for your employee on that day, their work pattern will need to be checked.

This is the information you will need to provide to amend/check a work pattern:

Employee Name:	
Job title:	
Effective Date of change:	
Number of hours worked Monday:	
Number of hours worked Tuesday:	
Number of hours worked Wednesday:	
Number of hours worked Thursday:	
Number of hours worked Friday:	
Number of hours worked Saturday:	
Number of hours worked Sunday:	

## What do I do when my employee does not work their normal working pattern (one off)?

It is inevitable that part time employees are likely to change their working days every now and then, depending on the University needs. At present, we are not concerned with recording these changes **unless** it has an impact on their sickness entitlement.

### Example

An employee is scheduled to work 30 hours per week, 7.5 hours (7:30) over 4 days normally on Monday – Thursday.

They were sick one week from the Tuesday to the Friday. This would normally be 3 days absence.

However, **for this week only**, the employee actually swapped their working days so that they were due to work Tuesday – Friday that week. Their absence period should be 4 days.

In these cases you will need to contact your HR Administrator who will make changes to the working pattern for the affected week. You can then record your absence and it will show the correct number of days for the duration.

## Special notes on Sickness Absences

### Doctor's/Hospital Certificates

Managers are unable to enter a doctor's/ medical certificates into Portal. These need to be sent to HR who will record and retain these on file. Please send any doctor's/hospital notes you receive promptly to your HR Administrator. HR will then enter the medical certificate details, and change the sickness to certified.

### Disability Related Illness

It is important that if an absence period is related to a declared disability that this be recorded with the reason 'Disability Related'. You can use the narrative box for the particulars. If you are uncertain about this, please contact your HR Business Partner.

### Work related accident

If your employee's absence is a direct result of an accident at work, you and the employee will need to report this to the Health & Safety Unit.

<http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/safety/accident-reporting/>

Your employee will still need to report in sick and send in medical certificates (depending on the length of absence). You will still need to record their absence on Portal and have a return to work meeting.

The Health & Safety Unit will liaise with HR. If necessary, HR will re-code this as a 'Work Related Accident'.

### Infectious Diseases

If an employee is off with an infectious disease, you will need to report this to your HR Advisor who will advise you accordingly.

### Entering Pregnancy Related

If an employee is off work due to a pregnancy related illness (for example pre-eclampsia) within 4 weeks of their expected confinement week, then you will need to notify the relevant HR Advisor so that their maternity leave is started early.

### Employees on Visas

If someone who holds a Visa:

- Is absent for 10 days but fails to notify you of the reason for their absence
- has been off sick but fails or refuses to provide a medical certificate, or have a return to work meeting with their manager within 10 days of their absence

then this is classed as unauthorised absence and you must report this immediately to either Jo Elsmore or Claire Freeman in HR as we have a duty to report such absences to the Home Office within 10 days of their occurrence.

### No reason given for absence

If an employee does not give or refuses to give the reason for their absence, you should contact your HR Business Partner for assistance.

## Employees with Multiple Appointments at Aston University

Some employees may have more than one appointment at Aston. When entering their sickness absence, please ensure that you select the correct appointment/s to enter this against.

## Expected end dates for sickness periods

All short term sickness should have an expected return to work date, and most long term sickness should as well. For example, if an employee is off for an operation you will know approximately when they are due back even if this is only the week or month.

The **only case** where you can leave an end date blank is for those employees on long term sickness where you do not have an estimated return to work date. For example, in the case of depression/stress, this would apply. This is because open ended absences may have an effect on your employees pay.

## Part Year Staff

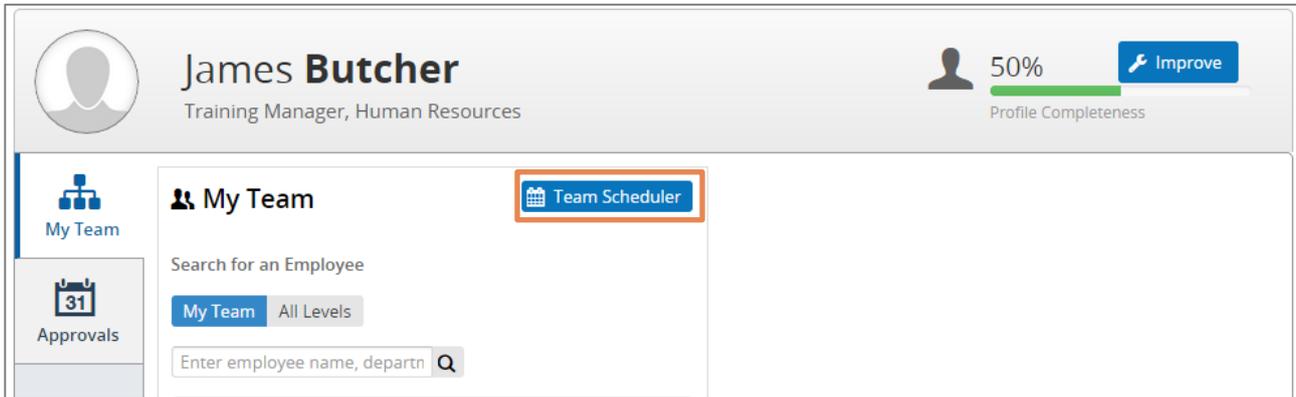
Staff who have periods of the year when they are not scheduled to work are treated as full year staff, even for the period of the year that they are here. This is because they will not normally be reporting sickness for this part of the year.

There may be exceptions, where we do need to record a part year employee as absent during their non-working weeks (i.e. long-term sick). However HR will deal with these exceptions when they arise.

## Entering Sickness Absence

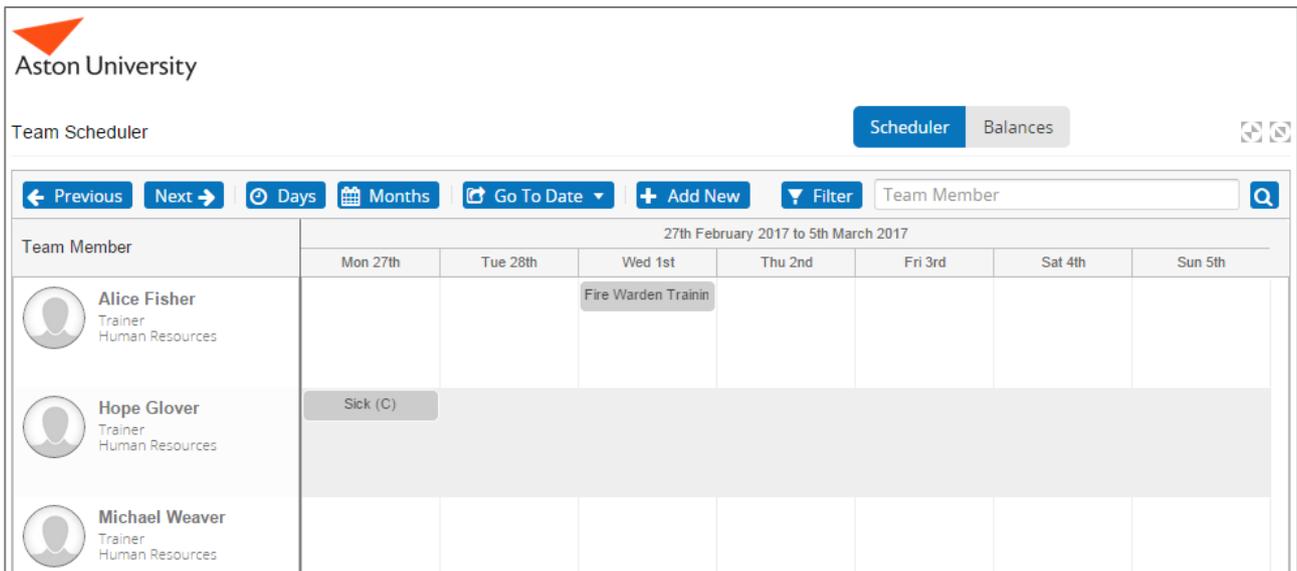
When your employee reports their sickness, you will need to record this absence on Portal. You will record this initially as 'Uncertified' as your employee has not yet returned to work and confirmed the dates and reason for their absence, or produced a Medical certificate. To do this:

- From the Manager's Dashboard, choose Team Scheduler.



The screenshot shows the Manager's Dashboard for James Butcher, Training Manager, Human Resources. The profile completion is at 50%. The 'My Team' section is active, and the 'Team Scheduler' button is highlighted with a red box. Below it is a search bar for employees with filters for 'My Team' and 'All Levels'.

Your Team Scheduler will have a list of your employees and a calendar view to record absences on. Here, you will be able to view any previously entered absences.



The screenshot shows the Aston University Team Scheduler interface. It displays a calendar view for the period from 27th February 2017 to 5th March 2017. The interface includes navigation buttons for 'Previous', 'Next', 'Days', 'Months', 'Go To Date', 'Add New', and 'Filter'. A search bar is set to 'Team Member'. The calendar shows absences for three employees: Alice Fisher (Fire Warden Trainin on Wed 1st), Hope Glover (Sick (C) on Mon 27th), and Michael Weaver.

Team Member	Mon 27th	Tue 28th	Wed 1st	Thu 2nd	Fri 3rd	Sat 4th	Sun 5th
Alice Fisher Trainer Human Resources			Fire Warden Trainin				
Hope Glover Trainer Human Resources	Sick (C)						
Michael Weaver Trainer Human Resources							

## Add a Sickness Record

- a) Click on 'Add New' **or**
- b) Double click on the day you wish to record the absence against **or**
- c) Right click on the day you wish to record the absence

The screenshot shows the Aston University Team Scheduler interface. At the top left is the Aston University logo. Below it, the text 'Team Scheduler' is displayed. On the right side, there are two tabs: 'Scheduler' (active) and 'Balances'. Below the tabs, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Previous', 'Next', 'Days', 'Months', 'Go To Date', and '+ Add New' (highlighted with an orange box). To the right of the navigation bar is a 'Filter' button and a search box containing 'Team Member'. Below the navigation bar, there is a table with columns for dates from 'Mon 27th' to 'Sun 5th'. The table has three rows for team members: Alice Fisher, Hope Glover, and Michael Weaver. Alice Fisher has a 'Fire Warden Trainin' record on 'Wed 1st'. Hope Glover has a 'Sick (C)' record on 'Tue 28th'. Michael Weaver has an empty cell on 'Tue 28th' which is highlighted with an orange box.

- In the New Absence Record screen, enter the following details:

### Absence Detail

- Your employee
- The Leave type – Use **Uncertified Sick Leave**. When the employee returns to work or produces a doctor's note this can be updated to Certified Sickness.
- Start Date of absence
- End Date - Use the expected end date of the absence. You can always update this if the employee is off longer than expected.

### Additional Information

- Reason
  - Narrative – You can use this to record any notes on the absence. You should complete this if the sickness absence falls into the 'Other/Not Given' or 'Multiple Reasons' categories. Please note, under Data Protection the employee may request to see the data that the University holds so please keep this factual.
- When you have finished, click on Save.

In this example, the employee has called in sick with a cold on Tuesday 2 February. He is hopeful that he will be recovered enough to be back at work the next day. This is how you would record the sickness absence on Portal:

**New Absence Record**

▲ Absence Detail

Employee: Michael Weaver  
Start Date: 28/02/2017  
Part Day Leave:  Yes  No  
End Date: 28/02/2017 Or

Leave Type: Uncertified Sick Leave  
Appointment: Trainer  
Open Ended:  Yes  No

▲ Additional Information

Reason: Cold/Cough/Influenza  
Narrative: Enter Narrative  
1000 Characters Remaining

▼ Return to Work Interview

▼ Medical Certificate (To be completed by HR)

▲ Balances

To add a Half Day Sickness Record (one off occurrence)

There will be instances where your employee is sick for half a day in the morning or afternoon.

To enter this on Portal, enter your absence initially and then

- Check the Part Day Leave box for 'Yes'
- Enter whether this the employee was off in the morning or afternoon in the Time of Day field
- Save the record

*Do not use the 'Enter Duration' button or the ¼ or ¾ segment buttons – sickness can only be recorded in full or half day segments at Aston.*

After you have clicked Save, you will be able to view this entry on the Team Scheduler. If you hover your cursor over it you will see the details:

**Aston University**

Team Scheduler Scheduler Balances

← Previous Next → Days Months Go To Date + Add New Filter  Q

Team Member	27th February 2017 to 5th March 2017						
	Mon 27th	Tue 28th	Wed 1st	Thu 2nd	Fri 3rd	Sat 4th	Sun 5th
<b>Alice Fisher</b> Trainer Human Resources			Fire Warden Trainin				
<b>Hope Glover</b> Trainer Human Resources		Sick (C)					
<b>Michael Weaver</b> Trainer Human Resources		Sick (U)					

**Description** → Uncertified Sick Leave  
**Starting** → Tuesday 28th February 2017  
**Ending** → Tuesday 28th February 2017  
**Duration** → 3.39

## Updating Sickness Absences – on return to work

The last day of your employee's absence is the day before they returned to work, regardless of whether this is a day the employee would normally work. For example, an employee returns to work after a week off sick on a Monday – their last day of sickness is the Sunday before.

When your employee returns from sickness, you will need to have a return to work meeting where you confirm the dates and reason for their absence. You can now record this absence period as **certified** in Portal and check that the end date you had originally put in is correct.

To do this:

- From Manager's Dashboard, choose Team Scheduler

Your Team Scheduler will have a list of your employees and a calendar view to record absences on, and view any previously entered absences.

- Use the 'Previous/Next' buttons to navigate to the original sickness entry for your employee or use the 'Go To Date' Button.
- Double click on the sickness entry to open it.

The screenshot displays the Aston University Team Scheduler interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Scheduler' and 'Balances' tabs. Below this is a control bar with buttons for 'Previous', 'Next', 'Days', 'Months', 'Go To Date', 'Add New', and 'Filter'. A search bar for 'Team Member' is also present. The main area is a calendar grid for the period from 27th February 2017 to 5th March 2017. The grid is organized by employee (Alice Fisher, Hope Glover, Michael Weaver) and by day of the week (Mon 27th, Tue 28th, Wed 1st, Thu 2nd, Fri 3rd, Sat 4th, Sun 5th). Alice Fisher has a 'Fire Warden Trainin' entry on Wednesday 1st. Hope Glover has a 'Sick (C)' entry on Monday 27th. Michael Weaver has a 'Sick (U)' entry on Tuesday 28th. The 'Go To Date' button is highlighted with a red box.

- You can now update your employee's sickness absence. Please ensure that you check and complete the following fields:

### Absence Detail

- Leave Type – this now needs to be changed to **Certified** as the return to work meeting has been conducted.
- End Date

### Additional Information

- Reason
- Narrative – You can use this to record any notes on the absence. You should complete this if the sickness absence falls into the 'Other/Not Given' or 'Multiple

Reasons' categories. Please note that under Data Protection the employee may request to see the data the University holds so please keep this factual.

### Return to Work Interview

When your employee returns from a period of sickness, you should have a return to work meeting with them. For guidance on return to work meetings, please contact your HR Advisor. You can use Portal to make notes of this meeting.

- Check the interview box to confirm you have had the meeting.
  - Use the interview notes space to record any notes. Please note, under Data Protection the employee may request to see the data we hold so please keep this factual.
  - Do not use the 'work related' box
- When you have finished, click on Save.

In this example, the employee was off for 2 days with a cold, not one as initially expected. This is how you would update their sickness absence on Portal:

**Edit Absence Record**

▲ Absence Detail

Employee: Michael Weaver  
Start Date: 28/02/2017  
Part Day Leave:  Yes  No  
End Date: 01/03/2017 Or   
Leave Type: Certified Sick Leave  
Appointment: Trainer  
Open Ended:  Yes  No

▲ Additional Information

Reason: Cold/Cough/Influenza  
Narrative: Enter Narrative  
1000 Characters Remaining

▲ Return to Work Interview

Work Related:   
Interview Completed:   
Interview Notes: Discussed absence with employee

## Who to Contact

If you have **general queries** concerning sickness absence, or your employees work patterns, please contact your HR Administrator.

If you have a **specific query or concerns** over an employees' sickness record, or the reason for their sickness, please contact your HR Business Partner.

If you have queries around **employees on visas**, contact Jo Elsmore or Claire Freeman.

All current HR contacts are available on the HR website.

<http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/hr-contacts/>

If you are having difficulty **accessing or using Aston Staff Portal**, please email

[astonstaffportal@aston.ac.uk](mailto:astonstaffportal@aston.ac.uk).

If you have forgotten your **Aston network username or password**, contact the IT Services Helpdesk [its\\_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk](mailto:its_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk).