



NEW COLLEGE
OXFORD

POLICY DOCUMENT

Menopause Policy

New College – Menopause Policy

Contents

- Introduction
- Effects of Menopause
- Communication
- Making adjustments to your role
- Behaviour of others
- Employee Assistance Programme

Introduction

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually affects individuals between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier. Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on a person's life, including relationships and work. The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and honest workplace where managers and employees can discuss any issues associated with the menopause, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed.

Effects of Menopause

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include the following:

- Hot flushes
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Poor concentration
- Headaches
- Skin irritation
- Urinary problems

As a result of the above, or as an extension of the hormone imbalance, individuals going through the menopause can also experience psychological difficulties, including:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Panic Attacks
- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Problems with memory
- Loss of confidence

It is also commonly acknowledged that Hormone Replacement Therapy, medication which is often prescribed for menopause, can have side effects which cause problems at work.

These include:

- Nausea
- Headaches
- Leg cramps

Communication

Your health is important to you, both at home and in the workplace.

If you are struggling with any aspect of your role as a result of symptoms associated with the menopause, you should report any concerns you may have to your manager, who will treat the matter in complete confidence. In order to ensure we can provide you with the best support possible we encourage you to be open and honest in these conversations.

Alternatively, your manager may instigate a discussion with you if they notice a change in your behaviour or performance.

Line Managers have undertaken training in Menopause awareness in order to be able to support their team members effectively. However, we do understand that you may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with your manager. If this is the case you are encouraged to discuss your situation with another senior member of staff, or a member of the HR department.

Academic staff may choose to discuss concerns with their senior subject Fellow, Senior Tutor, the Warden, the Welfare Team or a member of HR.

During any discussions, your manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively, and confidentiality will be maintained.

Managers will also arrange follow up sessions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

Making Adjustments to your Role

In order to assist you in your daily duties, your manager will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the menopause is having on you.

Risk assessments will be consulted to identify potential issues but we acknowledge that the menopause affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

Examples of adjustments include:

- Changing your working location so you are closer to toilet facilities, away from hot and cold spots around the office or to ensure greater access to natural light
- Allowing changes to our normal rules on work wear where applicable
- Implementing further temperature control, such as access to a fan
- Assessing how work is allocated and whether you are affected at particular points of the day
- Allowing additional rest breaks
- Considering flexible working hours or allowing working from home where possible.

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect. The College is legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or working conditions if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role and we will ensure compliance with our obligations in this regard.

Behaviour of Others

There is an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and will treat any and all complaints seriously.

If you feel that you have been mistreated in any way by a colleague because of matters related to the menopause, please make your concerns known to your Line Manager or HR.

What about other health issues?

There are many other health issues which might similarly negatively affect individuals in the workplace. These include painful and/or heavy periods, other effects of hormonal fluctuations associated with the menstrual cycle, endometriosis, and many others. Many of the suggested approaches and supportive interventions outlined in this guidance would be equally appropriate where other health-related issues are impacting on an individual in the workplace.

If a health issue is affecting your role, we would encourage you to discuss this with your Line Manager or HR

Academic staff may choose to discuss concerns with their senior subject Fellow, Senior Tutor, the Warden, the Welfare Team or a member of HR.

Other help available

Employee Assistance Programme

Our employees have access to a confidential counselling and helpline telephone service who can provide advice and guidance for employees who would like support during the menopause. You can contact them on freephone No. 0800 028 0199

Counselling services

We now offer our staff free, confidential, therapeutic counselling services with our experienced in-house Counsellor.

To arrange a session call, text, or e-mail Milly on:

07935-346546 - mobile

01865-279241 - landline

milly.gray@new.ox.ac.uk - e-mail

Menopause Policy: Version 3

Next review: January 2027