



# Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

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## Purpose of the Procedure

The purpose of the procedure is to improve student attendance and timekeeping and therefore contribute to student retention and achievement. The College wants all students to achieve the qualification for which they have registered. In order for students to be successful, it is important that they engage fully with their programmes of study. This engagement includes: attending all formal teaching sessions; completing directed, group-based and independent study activities outside of scheduled teaching; and undertaking all assessments.

The College monitors student attendance, making use of attendance registers (which lecturers complete online) in a way that is appropriate for the programme and its mode of study. The College also offers support to students facing difficulties that may hinder their academic progression. Where programmes feature specific attendance requirements students will be informed at the beginning of the programme.

## Procedure

- Students will be advised about attendance requirements and the importance of attending classes, both orally and in writing, through mechanisms such as induction events, course and module handbooks.
- Procedures for student notification of absence and lateness should be made clear to all students by Heads of Department, Personal Development Coaches and Course/Programme Leads at induction and reinforced by all staff.
- The expectation is that all students will have 100% Attendance and Punctuality. The target for attendance is 90%; warning thresholds have been set at 87%.
- Attendance and Punctuality targets should be monitored weekly by staff and students.
- Attendance must be recorded accurately and registers should be submitted timely prior to the end of the lesson. Staff should avoid flood filling registers with attendance marks.
- Procedures for follow-up of absence and lateness are implemented by the Head of Department and monitored by the Director of Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare (PDBW).
- Personal Development Coaches/Programme Leads are responsible for following up attendance and punctuality, except in Foundation Learning where Group Tutors have this responsibility.
- All teaching staff are expected to positively challenge lateness.
- Methods of celebration for good attendance and punctuality to be agreed and implemented at ELT level.
- Departmental monitoring against targets will take place through the Accountability Framework process and courses with persistently poor attendance/punctuality will be put "At Risk", placed in Intensive Care and reviewed by the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality.
- Students with persistently poor attendance/punctuality will be put "At Risk" and reviewed weekly by the Head of Department under supervision of the Director of PDBW.
- Students who fall below the acceptable threshold (87%) will have an individual meeting, recorded in ProMonitor, with their Personal Development Coach/Programme Lead (or Group Tutor in Foundation Learning). Interventions to improve attendance and/or punctuality will be agreed, with SMART targets set and monitored on a weekly basis.

- Where SMART targets are not met and attendance and/or punctuality remains a concern, the Personal Development Coaches/Programme Lead will refer the student to the Head of Department who will follow the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- It is not expected that students will need to authorise an absence very often or to miss classes regularly. Personal Development Coaches/Programme Lead (or Group Tutors in Foundation Learning) can authorise absences as per the process outlined later in this document.
- **ESFA funding rules dictate that students who have not attended classes for 4 consecutive weeks must be withdrawn.** In this instance staff should have attempted contact with the student to understand the reason for non-attendance and establish whether the student will be resuming attendance within this 4 week period. If the attendance has not resumed then the student withdrawal needs to be submitted including the reason for no longer attending the College. All withdrawals must be submitted timely.

### Head of Department Responsibilities

- Ensure that their staff mark and submit their registers on time, before the end of the lesson. They should review the college Outstanding Registers Report on a weekly basis to manage this.
- Review college Attendance Report weekly to determine where interventions may be required.
- Review college Students Not Attended for 2 or More Weeks Report each week to identify students where an intervention may be needed.
- Review weekly "At Risk" students.
- Review and approve withdrawals using the college Withdrawal Monitoring Report to ensure that withdrawals are submitted timely by their staff.
- Progress disciplinary procedures with students referred by the PDC or Programme Lead relating to continuing attendance issues.

### FE Student attendance at English and/or maths

Students are required to attend their timetabled English/maths lessons, as part of their study programme.

Students who fail to attend, without an authorised/valid reason, will progress through the disciplinary stages.

1. **Non-attendance for 4 working weeks at any English and/or maths session for which the student is enrolled.**
2. **Students whose attendance falls below 80% during the academic year will be placed on stage 1.** These students are to be identified by the Head of Department for English/maths and communicated to the Head of Department for the curriculum area and their corresponding Director of Faculty.

## **Actions when referred for disciplinary**

- Head of Department for curriculum area/Personal Development Coach, conducts Stage 1 meeting with student and records this on ProMonitor under “managed meeting”, with targets set for improvement by the end of two weeks, for students not affected by a timetable clash.
- If target for improvement is not met by the end of the two-week period, the Head of Department for curriculum area holds a Stage 2 meeting with student and parents/guardian. Target set for improvement by the end of next two weeks.
- If target for improvement is not met by the end of the next two-week period, the Head of Department for curriculum area convenes a Stage 3 meeting with student and parents/guardian.

The outcome of the Stage 3 disciplinary meeting will either be:

- No case to answer
- Final written warning with conditions
- Removal of place from College.

## **Withdrawal of English & Maths due to lack of attendance**

ESFA funding rules require us to make timely withdrawal of students if they are not attending their classes. If students do not attend 6 weeks after their first positive attendance (classed as their start date) then they fail to meet the condition of funding for English and Maths. **If there is no attendance within a 6 week period after their first attendance or the start of timetabled courses then the students must be withdrawn from the English and/or Maths qualification.** All English and Maths withdrawals must be approved by both the HoD and DoF. The College will lose all funding for students who do not meet the condition of funding for English and Maths.

Timely withdrawal must be put in place where there is continued non-attendance. The initial 6 week grace period as detailed above may be given to engage the student in attending. Following this period, if the student has commenced attending and has stopped then any students that fall below an attendance rate of **50%** should be withdrawn on the 5<sup>th</sup> week of consecutive non-attendance.

Regular communication between English & Maths staff and vocational curriculum staff must take place through the attendance management process and notification when the students are being withdrawn.

### **Head of Department Responsibilities**

- HoD to monitor E&M attendance for their department(s).
- HoD instructs PDC to conduct Stage 1 disciplinary action where a student falls below 80% attendance or where a pattern of nonattendance occurs.
- HoD & PDC monitor attendance and where no improvement occurs, conducts Stage 2 disciplinary meeting.
- HoD monitors attendance and where no improvement occurs, arranges Stage 3 disciplinary meeting.
- HoD completes withdrawal from programme.

## Authorised Absence

- Absences can only be authorised in advance.
- It is not expected that students will need to authorise an absence very often or to miss classes regularly. Personal Development Coaches can authorise absences as follows:

Absences that can be authorised in advance:

Reason	Evidence needed
Observation of a religious holiday	<i>Letter</i>
Funeral	
Occasional care for a person if a student has a caring responsibility	
Driving test (but not driving lesson)	<i>Letter from Test Centre confirming time and date</i>
Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside college hours	<i>Appointment card/letter</i>
Job/university interview	<i>Email/Letter from employer/university</i>
Court attendance or interview with probation officer	<i>Appointment card/letter</i>
Interviews with college staff (careers, counsellor, nurse, tutor)	<i>Note/email from the relevant person</i>
Severe disruption to normal means of transport, e.g. rail strike	<i>Local/national media</i>
Timetable suspended, e.g. staff development day	<i>Nescot calendar</i>

- Occasionally a student may need to miss a class suddenly. This may be authorised by the Personal Development Coach as long as the student's parent/guardian has made contact with the College either by telephone or email. If the student lives independently (and the College has evidence of this) then the student must contact the College, by phone, email or Nescomms. We will authorise absence due to Covid Self-Isolation, where we have received NHS Track and Trace evidence.
- The College will not authorise absences where there appears to be a pattern of non-attendance and does not expect to authorise absence for any of the reasons below more than three times each term:
  - Illness
  - Long Term Sickness
  - Transport problems where there is no other option at short notice (if this happens regularly the student must find another means of transport)
  - An emergency involving a family member depending on the situation.

### Sickness Whilst At College

If a student becomes ill during the day they must see the College Nurse before leaving the premises to authorise their absence.

### Absences Which Cannot Be Authorised

- Holidays
- Shopping
- Work
- Driving Lessons
- Birthday Celebrations
- Leisure Activities
- Looking after younger family members on a regular basis.

## Staff Procedure for Authorising Absence

- If a student applies in advance to authorise a future absence the Personal Development Coach must note this on ProMonitor. The message must contain the following information:
  - The date/time of the absence
  - The reason for the absence (e.g. driving test)
  - The evidence seen.
- This message must be forwarded to the teaching team and the Bursary Team, namely Sharon Greenwood and Jacqui Kavanagh (if the student is in receipt of a weekly bursary).
- If a parent/guardian makes contact on the day to authorise an unexpected absence the Tutor/Personal Development Coach must note this on ProMonitor. The message must contain the following information:
  - Who has made contact
  - The date of the absence
  - The expected return date
  - The reason for the absence (if sickness, give a description of the nature of the illness rather than just 'sick').
- This message must be forwarded to the teaching team and the Bursary Team (if the student is in receipt of a weekly bursary).
- If a student is leaving College because they are unwell, the Nurse will put a note on ProMonitor.
- If the register is to be amended to authorised absence then this must be completed by the Personal Development Coach. Unexpected absences will be recorded by the end of each week. Planned absences will be recorded on the day that they occur.

**Due to GDPR the evidence does not need to be retained as long as it is recorded as seen on ProMonitor.**

### Students in Receipt of Weekly Bursary Payments

Bursary payments are dependent on attendance and are paid weekly in arrears. Students who have 90% (80% young carers) or more attendance in the previous week will automatically receive their weekly bursary payment. Any student who does not have 90% attendance will only receive a payment if, in the previous week, they have some attendance and have authorised any absences with their Progress Coach. If the student has unauthorised absences they will not receive a payment.

The Bursary Team will keep a record of all the ProMonitor comments received and use this information to determine if a payment should be made or not. If a payment is not to be made the student will be notified and encouraged to discuss their unauthorised absence with their Personal Development Coach. Personal Development Coaches will also be notified weekly of their students not due to be paid and will be given until 3.30pm the next day to inform the Bursary Team if a payment should be made.

## Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

<b>VERSION</b>	<b>V5</b>
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