

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURES

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Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

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 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, Progress 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
- Procedures for follow-up of absence and lateness are implemented by Head of Department and monitored by Director of PDBW
- Progress 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 SLG 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" and reviewed by Deputy Principal
- Students with persistently poor attendance/punctuality will be put "At Risk" and reviewed weekly by the Head of Department under supervision of Director of PDBW

- Students who fall below the acceptable threshold (87%) will have a 121 meeting, recorded in ProMonitor, with their Progress 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 Progress Coach/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. Progress Coaches/Programme Lead (or Group Tutors in Foundation Learning) 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 Progress Coach/Programme Leader 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.

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 3 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

If students miss a significant number of sessions (for a module, this could be between 3-4 classes in sequence) students will be contacted by a member of staff. The College wants to help students begin attending again and to ensure that they complete their course, and so the Programme Leader or head of Department will explore ways to support students.

Prolonged Absence

Students will be dealt with on a case by case basis and may be advised to defer or suspend studies until they are able to return with an improved chance of success. Prior to their returning the Head of Department/Programme Lead will get in touch to effect a

support plan for recommencing studies. This may involve infilling with existing modules/tutorials to facilitate a good transition to re-starting study.

Where it is clear that, having explored all avenues, a student is no longer engaging with their programme of study, arrangements will be made to withdraw the student from the course and from the College. The College will also report this situation to external authorities as appropriate. This could include the Student Loan Company, Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies, or Employer/Sponsors. The College takes all reasonable steps to avoid the final step of withdrawing students

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.

Where there is prolonged absence due ill health then students should refer to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy section 4 as below:

These are specific extenuating circumstances that are:

- *sudden, serious and unforeseen illness*
- *acute phases of a continuing chronic circumstances that has been previously notified to the College in writing and*
- *Bereavement related to a close family member or terminal illness related to the same*
- *relevant to an individual student and*
- *likely to seriously impair the student's performance and*
- *taking place at the same time as an assessment event or before an assignment deadline*

Absences Which Cannot Be Authorised

- Holidays
- Shopping
- Work
- Driving Lessons
- Birthday Celebrations

- Leisure Activities
- Looking after younger family members on a regular basis

Staff Procedures

If a student applies in advance to authorise a future absence the Progress Coach or Group Tutor (Foundations) 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).

For students on FE courses if a parent/guardian makes contact on the day to authorise an unexpected absence the Tutor/Progress Coach/Programme Leader 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 or loan).

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 Progress Coach/tutor. 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 Progress Coach or Group Tutor (Foundations). Progress Coaches and Group Tutors (Foundations) will also be notified weekly of their students not due to be paid and will be given until 3.30 pm the next day to inform the bursary team if a payment should be made.