

Management and Monitoring of Student Absence Policy and Procedure

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UK Graduate recognises the importance and impact of full attendance by students to all timetabled sessions to student engagement, retention and achievement. It is the policy of UK Graduate to expect 100% attendance at all timetabled sessions by all students at all College Centres.

The College will monitor and manage student attendance to maximise student achievement

- Ensuring student registers are completed accurately and in a timely fashion.
- Monitoring student attendance and punctuality at timetabled sessions and investigating un-authorised student absence in line with good student Safeguarding practices.
- Follow-up and management of non-attendance and poor punctuality by students.
- Clarifying responsibilities relating to student attendance and punctuality.
- Describing procedures for managing student attendance and punctuality to maximise student achievement and success applying to all age groups including under 16.

This policy and associated procedure apply to all students and staff at all centres of UK Graduate and all funded and non-funded courses.

UK Graduate considers Children, Young People and/or Vulnerable Adults' missing from education a key specific safeguarding issue. In relation to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), it is essential that all staff follow this procedure.

Procedure

1. Introduction

Regular attendance at scheduled teaching activities and supervisory meetings improves student performance and outcomes in their studies. This is also a key aspect of work readiness and an employability skill. The College's overall approach to recording and monitoring student attendance is one of providing support to students, through their studies, in order that they engage and achieve their qualification. The College understands that sometimes, students experience difficulties during their studies which prevent them from engaging fully with their course and reasonable adjustments may be made where this is the case.

This Policy is designed to explain how academic and support services staff will use the systems and processes in place to record, review and monitor student attendance and, where appropriate, seek to support students overcome any difficulties which are affecting their engagement with their course.

The College and its employees have legal obligations to record student attendance and monitor engagement in order to comply with various statutory reporting requirements including those for the Home Office (UKVI), Student Finance England (SLC), professional accrediting bodies and the government's funding councils. Students on relevant professional courses must also comply with all fitness to practise requirements which relate to attendance.

The College recognises and is supportive of the legal requirements to make reasonable adjustments and/or allowances under the terms of the Equality Act, 2010. Where a student has disclosed that they have verifiable circumstances which may adversely affect their attendance, the College will take account of this and will implement reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

Monitoring distance learning students' attendance should be commensurate with their study and this should be monitored through engagement with the CRM.

2. The Contents of a Register:

On each session occasion staff must record whether every student is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Attending a Work Experience Placement;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend for exceptional circumstances (marked as authorised absence **only if appropriately evidenced**)
- **Sick**

The College will always, without fail follow up absences and:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken appropriately in circumstances pertaining to any student under 18;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- Use the correct designated entry on the register as outlined in this policy.

3. Register Marks Definitions

<u>Register Mark</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Positive/Negative data</u>
/	Present	Positive
O	Unauthorised Absence	Negative
A	Authorised Absence	Positive
X	Work Experience	Positive
L	Late	Positive
W	Withdrawn	N/A
T	Transfer	N/A

N	Null (Admin mark, not for tutor use this is to record CPD events)	NULL
S	Sick	Negative
C	Covid Related Absence	Positive

'C' Register Mark

This mark is to be used for individual learners in the following circumstances:

- Learner misses class due to a local lockdown.
- Learner misses class due to illness with Covid.
- Learner misses class due to self-isolation or quarantine.

In some circumstances it may be the case that the whole class is cancelled due to a combination of the events described above. In these cases, the whole class can be marked as 'C'. It is not expected that this will be commonplace.

Online and Onsite Delivery

In order to facilitate Online delivery, Zoom and Teams have both been set up as 'rooms' in the timetabling software, and are linked to each online class in the same way a normal room is linked to an Onsite class. This allows the learner to see Online delivery on their timetable.

Therefore, if a class is moved to Online delivery, please inform the Timetabling Supervisor immediately so that he can update the timetable to reflect the change.

Registers for timetabled Online classes will be completed as normal.

The College does track learner engagement with Online learning, but the information available is limited to time spent logged-on to the platform, and not individual activities. Therefore class registers remain the primary method for recording learner attendance.

Authorised Absence

Only the following categories may be counted as authorised absence:

Educational visit organised by the College, attending a College examination, or approved self-study,
Medical or Dental/ Optician appointments that cannot be arranged outside class time must be notified in advance. Evidence such as an appointment card or letter will be required to authorise this absence (in College and external).
Sickness absence or hospitalisation when doctor's/hospital letter is provided. For students under the age of 18 a letter from their parent or guardian to explain the nature of their illness will be acceptable.
Carer's responsibilities for a family member, this should be notified in advance whenever possible
A religious holiday if notified in advance
Jury service
Attendance at a family funeral if notified in advance
University visit or career/ job interview if notified in advance
Representing the College or self at a regional/national level event if notified in advance. Proof of selection will be required.
Attendance at a probation meeting or court if notified in advance
Driving test if notified in advance (copy of the test letter will be required)
Absence that is a consequence of disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010
College suspension during a disciplinary instance
Gypsy, Roma or Traveller absence (this must only be used when a student is travelling for employment with family and has been arranged prior to the event.
Planned College site closures
Any other event or issue that prevents attendance but does not negate work remotely off site by agreement of the named Head of Area.

Unauthorised Absence

The following reasons are examples of unauthorised absence. This list is not exhaustive, further guidance is available from the Attendance Co-ordinator:

Holidays not authorised during term time
Reason not provided
Job commitments causing absence not agreed
Leisure activities in term time
Family and other celebrations such as birthdays and weddings
Babysitting
Shopping
Driving lessons
Employer's busy period in part time employment
Sickness that is not explainable and/or recurrent

Administrative Marks

The marks below are used to support clear administration and the accurate reporting of attendance.

Withdrawn

Only to be used in the interim period between a student ceasing to attend the class and the withdrawal from being processed by the Administration team. When the form has been processed, the student register marks will be hidden.

Transfer

As above, this is a short-term mark to be used in the interim period between a student leaving the class and the transfer being processed by the Administration team.

Null

To be used in the following situation only:

- Classes which will not run due to Bank Holidays.
- Classes that will not run because of cross College CPD events
- Classes which are cancelled with permission of the Academic Dean. Any cancellations must be exceptional and must be sanctioned by the Academic Dean.

4. Roles & responsibilities

Students will:

- Attend all timetabled sessions for the courses onto which they are enrolled.
- Attend all sessions of organised Work Placement activity.
- Contact the College, before 9am, for each day of absence, including whilst at Work Placement to explain an unplanned absence (see relevant contacts in the Student Handbook).
- Seek approval for planned absence from their Course Tutor (HE) or Programme Leader (FE).
- Make arrangements to catch up on any work missed during absence.

Module Tutors, General Education teachers and Instructors will:

- Start and finish sessions on time.
- Complete registers in a timely manner, defined as, when applicable this will be completed in a classroom situation at the start of the session.
- Inform the Course Tutor/Programme Leader if a student has been absent for sessions or where attendance is erratic or punctuality is an issue.
- Monitor and manage individual and group attendance and punctuality for their sessions.

Course Tutors/Programme Leaders will:

- Advise students of attendance requirements during induction.
- Regularly monitor student attendance through student records on file including the Key Performance Indicators in vocational and (where applicable) English and maths.
- Report concerns to the Academic Dean in a timely manner and take appropriate actions to support improvement to attendance where there is cause for concern by the use of interventions such as action planning and increased parental involvement and support.
- Advise students of awarding body minimum attendance requirements, where they exist.
- Clearly identify attendance and punctuality as a key employability skill
- Record cases of persistent absence on the Student ILP & Register.
- Discuss student attendance at team meetings
- Inform Head/Assistant Head of Area regarding students who require further action following poor attendance, or who are to be withdrawn in accordance with the Withdrawals Policy and Procedure.
- In the case of under 18 year old ringing in sick, the Progress Coach will contact the parent to confirm the authenticity of the reported sickness. Where there is doubt about the authenticity, the absence will be reported to student welfare team allocated to the department as a possible Safeguarding issue.

Progress Coaches will:

- Monitor absence via ILPs and make contact with the student, their employer or parent/guardian where appropriate.
- Discuss poor attendance with students, provide or signpost to support and action plan as required.
- Support the student's return to College after a period of absence.

Academic Dean will:

- Discuss student attendance at weekly team meetings and follow up poor attendance, where appropriate this includes absences from College and

specific sessions, eg missing sessions in the morning or afternoon.

- Invite student to progress and/or disciplinary meetings regarding poor attendance, where appropriate.
- Monitor the volume register timeliness of completion in classes and address any non-compliance issues in a timely manner with staff.

Support & Welfare Team (London Centre) will:

- Take telephone calls from students reporting an absence and record the reason for the absence on the student's file. This will generate an automated email to all tutors, including the Programme Leader listed on the student's individual timetable for that day and will populate a report of daily absences with the information.
- Monitor the student absence email account and record the reason for absence on the student's File.
- Monitor students with unauthorised absence daily and make contact via email.
- Meet weekly with the Student Support and Welfare Team and ensure appropriate contact with students.
- Contact in person by telephone, students that have missed six or more sessions in a week.
- Produce monthly student attendance monitoring reports to Executive teams meetings.

5. Procedure (All Students)

The College will investigate any unauthorised absence and/or poor attendance that a student incurs and will actively follow the three stages below where there is indication that a student is not engaging appropriately. The tone of correspondence and meetings with students must be supportive and clear with the aim of encouraging them to improve their attendance levels.

Stage One – Initial Indication and Preliminary Intervention

Any unauthorised absence or attendance patterns which suggest that the student is falling below the minimum threshold (as defined by less than 95% continuous attendance) for the course or a specific module will be followed up sensitively with the student by the Student Welfare Team and the student will be asked to respond immediately.

Stage Two – Informal and Supportive Intervention with Personal Tutor/Programme Leader

If the student fails to respond or their attendance remains unsatisfactory, the student will be referred to the student's Progress Coach who will attempt to make contact with the student and invite them to a tutorial meeting. This intervention will contain strengthened advice to the student that if they fail to respond/or do not make an improvement in their attendance, continuation in their studies is at risk. A formal targeted action plan to improve attendance and/or punctuality will be agreed.

Stage Three – Formal and Supportive Intervention

If the student continues not to respond, or their attendance levels do not improve, the Head of Area will invite the student to a progress meeting. This intervention will contain a warning to the student that if they fail to respond/or do not make an improvement in their attendance, continuation in their studies is at risk. A formal targeted action plan to improve attendance and/or punctuality will be agreed.

Higher Education (Additional Information)

For Higher Education students, it is accepted that different subject disciplines may require different attendance levels for learning activities. However, in line with University Policies, all courses should expect at least 80% overall attendance levels by higher education students to give them the best opportunity of succeeding in their degree.

This indicative threshold will be referenced during monitoring of a student's overall engagement on their course, either in determining any supporting interventions that are appropriate, or in evaluating how far the student is meeting the academic requirements of the course. Failure to fulfil module/course attendance requirements may result in the student's academic progress being deemed unsatisfactory by the relevant Assessment Board.

Attendance requirements at module level for part time students are the same as for full time students studying the same modules. Monitoring of engagement of distance learning students should follow the same principles and be undertaken through monitoring of engagement along with engagement and responses to other forms of communication.

In some instances, professional bodies may require specific attendance requirements as part of the professional body accreditation for the course. Any specific attendance requirements of this nature must be drawn to the attention of students by the relevant Curriculum Area through Course Handbooks and other student-facing course materials and in introductory talks and induction communications. Only where formally approved, will it be acceptable to introduce specific attendance requirements as part of formal module assessment criteria.

Where a student's attendance falls below the levels deemed acceptable for them to make satisfactory academic progress on their course, UK Graduate may terminate studies. No other body may terminate a student's studies on the grounds of failing to make satisfactory academic progress on account of poor attendance. Any appeal by the student against such a decision by the Executive Team may be submitted under the appeals policy and procedures.

6. Centre Arrangements

All informal meetings or phone calls with students concerning absence must be recorded in UUAG using either the performance action plan or record of contact. Where tutors have concerns regarding a student's absence they should be

recorded on the UUAG record and/or the Student ILP & Register.

London Centre

- The daily Sickness will be recorded on UUAG will identify all absences reported by the parent portal, student absence telephone line or student absence email account.
- The weekly absence be recorded on UUAG and will identify all the students with unauthorised absence.
- Students with six or more missed sessions in a week will be reviewed jointly by the Student Support and Welfare Team
- After reference to the UUAG record and in consultation with Tutors, students (over 18) or the parent/guardian (under 18) will be contacted.
- The preferred method of contact is telephone but emails, text messages and letters can be issued to the students/parents/guardians where appropriate to determine and address the reason(s) for absence.

Sylhet Centre

- The daily Sickness absence will be recorded on File and will identify all absences reported by the parent portal, student absence telephone line or student absence email account.
- The Quality & Standards Manager must be informed, by the Module Tutors of students who are absent for a timetabled session but are not identified on the Sickness Today Report.
- The Programme Leader or Tutors will then attempt to contact the student by telephone on the same day to establish the reason for the absence.
- The Student Welfare Team will check absences on UUAG on a daily basis to ensure all unauthorised students have been reported by the module tutors and followed up with recorded actions. Concerns must be entered on the File
- Short term absences should be monitored by way of informal meetings or phone calls.
- In cases of repeated absences/no prior notification upon the student's return to college then formal meetings/tutorials are arranged with parental contact if absences are repetitive.

- Meetings with parents/guardians are arranged for under 18 students, if student absence is repetitive or where there are concerns.
- UUAG must be updated following any actions.

Punctuality

- Students who arrive to session more than ten minutes after the timetabled start time (without extenuating circumstances) will be recorded as 'late'.
- Tutors must set an example by ensuring they arrive five minutes early and must be prepared and ready to commence the session at the timetabled start time.

7. Attendance Reporting and Quality Assurance

Attendance is a key function of student achievement. Student attendance must be considered at:

- Personal Tutorials
- Course Team meetings
- Further education Performance Boards
- PMM's (Performance Monitoring Meetings)
- Curriculum Team / Centre meetings

Performance statistics relating to retention, progress and achievement are generated from ILP data, which must be supported by acceptable evidence of delivery through accurate completion of registers.

Attendance must be a consideration in course, curriculum, and Centre/Team Course Reports and Self- Assessment Reports (SARs).

Reported attendance by curriculum team/centre/course will be considered within the PMM cycle. Reviews will also take place at assessment/performance

boards. Attendance reports will be submitted to the Quality & Standards Manager.