

HE



**TRAFFORD &
STOCKPORT
COLLEGE GROUP**

HIGHER EDUCATION ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This applies to all students enrolled and registered on higher education and professional programmes at Trafford and Stockport College Group. The purpose is to ensure that staff and students are aware of the College's procedure for reporting and managing attendance, including our responsibilities to external stakeholders.
- 1.2. The monitoring of attendance and absence is important in supporting student engagement and improving retention, progression, achievement and success.
- 1.3. Non-attendance and non-engagement are taken very seriously as it compromises achievement.

2. Principles and Scope

- 2.1. Higher education students will experience a variety of different learning contexts and environments. These include but are not limited to lessons, lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorials. Attendance at any or all of these is not optional unless confirmed by the Programme Leader.
- 2.2. Unsatisfactory student attendance includes failure to attend regularly for teaching and assessment sessions, without providing a satisfactory reason to tutors for absence. Unsatisfactory attendance also includes persistent late arrival at, or early departure from sessions.
- 2.3. The College confirms students' attendance to loan or grant providers, including the Student Loans Company, government sponsors and employers. Non-attendance may result in future loan or bursary payments being suspended and or having to be repaid retrospectively.

3. Expectations and responsibilities of students

- 3.1. It is expected that students will aim to achieve 100% attendance. This means regular attendance in all learning contexts, as described in paragraph 2.1.
- 3.2. It is expected that students will attend all scheduled sessions and arrive on time. Late arrival at, or early departure from sessions is disruptive and unfair to other students and staff. This also includes scheduled appointments with staff.
- 3.3. While paragraph 3.2 sets out clearly that students should arrive on time and not leave sessions early, the College accepts that there may be occasions when late arrival is unavoidable. Where practicable and safe to do so, students should inform their lecturer that they will be late to sessions. Early departure is only permitted with the prior agreement of the lecturer delivering the session.
- 3.4. Students are expected to attend all scheduled examinations, including presentations. Students that do not attend for assessment will be recorded as a fail unless there are approved mitigating circumstances that have been made via the correct processes. Students in this situation will be directed to the relevant procedure by their Programme Leader.

- 3.5. In the event of short-term illness, students should notify their Programme Leader of his/her absence. Short term is defined as no longer than 7 calendar days. Absences that exceed or are likely to exceed 7 calendar days must be supported where possible with evidence.
- 3.6. Absences from scheduled assessments, including examinations are subject to the HE Mitigating Circumstances Procedure. Absence from College still requires students to follow the procedure where the student seeks an extension or deferral.
- 3.7. The College is sympathetic to students who are ill during their studies. An extended period of absence through illness may result in the student being required to postpone or suspend their studies to give them the best opportunity of securing the necessary learning. Under all circumstances, any student who is absent through illness must remain in touch with the College.
- 3.8. Students who are receiving tuition fee funding and/or maintenance loans have a responsibility to provider of funds to inform of any changes in circumstances, including inability to attend classes and/or engage with their course.

4. Attendance recording, monitoring and reporting procedure

- 4.1. Monitoring of attendance is the responsibility of all staff, who are expected to liaise with the HE Student Engagement Officer (SEO) where concerns exist.
- 4.2. Staff will take registers at each contact point (see paragraph 2.1). Attendance at department, course and student group levels will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the HE Engagement and Enhancement Officer who will highlight any attendance issues and recommend potential interventions.
- 4.3. The Finance team confirms attendance to the Student Loan Company (SLC) based on the last date of attendance, as detailed in 4.5 and 4.7. For the purposes of SLC attendance confirmations, the following marks will be considered:

/	present
H	studying at home or remote working – where the Fitness to Study Policy and an action plan is in place, the student is engaging with this and it is being regularly reviewed
B	not expected (tutorials or personal development sessions when individual attendance every week is not expected; the student is retaking a year but is not expected to attend classes for a module that has already been achieved)
W	visit or trip or work experience

The following marks will not be used to confirm attendance to the SLC:

0	where the student is expected, is not in attendance and has not notified the College.
P	pre-authorised absence to be used where the student has notified of a short-term reason for absence such as doctor's appointment
A	authorised absence

4.4. Where a student's attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory, staff must inform the Programme Leader. One or more of the following actions may be taken:

- a) Contact the student to establish reason(s) for absence and confirm evidence requirements (i.e. self-certification).
- b) Arrange a meeting with Programme Leader (PL) or Head of Study (HoS) to discuss how the College can support the student to achieve better attendance.
- c) Students may be issued with attendance agreements setting out the conditions of not meeting the terms of the agreement, such as potential disruptions to funding and, in the worst case, suspension and eventual withdrawal from the course.
- d) The Higher Education Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure may be invoked, resulting in an action plan and scheduling of 3-weekly reviews.

4.5. After three consecutive weeks of non-attendance and engagement and where a student fails to respond to warnings about attendance or meeting requests, the Programme Leader will inform the Head of Higher Education, who may, depending upon the circumstances, write to the student informing them that a failure to respond and re-engage with the programme within a two-week period, will result in withdrawal.

After three consecutive weeks of non-attendance as indicated by register marks outlined in 4.3, the Head of Higher Education will instruct the Finance team to raise a Change of Circumstances notification and advise the Student Loan Company of suspension of the student. This will block future maintenance and fee payments until such time as the suspension is lifted. This does not prevent the student from attending classes and indeed, students are encouraged to re-engage and attend immediately.

Employers who are sponsors will be advised where a student's attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory, in accordance with the College's duty to fulfil its public task. This will be undertaken in accordance with the TSCG Privacy Notice.

4.6. Persistent non-attendance may give rise to the College using the processes described within the Higher Education Fitness to Study Policy and as outlined in 4.4.

4.8 Following notification of suspension to the Student Loan Company, a student will be required to attend for a minimum of two consecutive weeks before a Change of Circumstances is submitted to lift the suspension.

4.9 Students are advised to liaise with the SLC to understand the financial implications based on their own individual circumstances.

5. Monitoring and review of this Procedure

5.1. This procedure is reviewed annually and is subject to approval of the HE Management Committee.