

## Higher Education Attendance Policy

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This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation, Disability.

### Alternative Format

This policy is available in alternative formats, to request this, please email [marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk](mailto:marketingcampaigns@mkcollege.ac.uk)

## Version Control

Version Number	Author	Approver	Date approved	Next review date
1	Group Director HE, Adult & IoT	Group Leadership Team	03/12/25	Nov 27

## Change log

Version Number	Summary of changes
1	New policy

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# Higher Education Attendance Policy

## Purpose

The college is committed to providing outstanding education and training to enable students to meet their full potential and to pursue their chosen career aspirations.

The College maximises students' learning opportunities by:

- Setting high expectations for students' attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions.
- Working in partnership with students and, where appropriate, their parents/carers and employers, to ensure high attendance and punctuality.
- Appropriately monitoring and accurately recording attendance.
- Providing support and taking action to improve attendance and punctuality where learners are not meeting the expected level of attendance.

Students are required to attend all classes, tutorials, assessments and examinations which form part of their course except in the event of a genuine reason for absence.

Course Managers will monitor, review, and intervene where students' attendance rates do not meet the minimum attendance requirements.

## Scope

This policy applies to all learners attending the college registered on Higher Education courses HNC/HND or Open University validated provision.

Where a learner is unable to meet the attendance expectations of their programme due to a genuine health, wellbeing, or fitness to study concern, they should discuss their concerns with their Course Manager or Progress Coach in the first instance, and refer to the Readiness to Learn Policy which

outlines the College's approach to make reasonable adjustments to support engagement with study, where appropriate.

## **Responsibility and Authority**

The Group Director Inclusion has ultimate responsibility for attendance policy.

The monitoring and implementation of the process is supported by the Group Director HE, Heads of School, Course Leaders and Progress Coaches.

Management Information Services (MIS) provide accurate attendance data for curriculum and provide a range of absence reporting tools for use by Schools. They are also responsible for data returns to the Student Loans Company for the monitoring and reporting of attendance. There are three reporting periods each academic year where satisfactory attendance is confirmed (October, February, May). If satisfactory attendance is not confirmed then the SLC may suspend tuition and maintenance funding, and learners will become liable for tuition fees according to the Fees policy.

Responsibility for taking action on concerns around learner attendance is with the Course Leader.

Responsibility for monitoring and chasing of attendance sits with the Progress Coach who record Attendance Cause for Concerns through ProMonitor which are monitored by Course Leaders.

## **Attendance Procedures**

The procedures that learners, the College, and its staff are responsible for following to maintain strong attendance, monitor ongoing attendance, and intervene where attendance falls below expected standards, are outlined below. These procedures apply to all learners studying on Higher Education courses at Milton Keynes College.

### **Students' Responsibilities**

Students are expected to attend all timetabled sessions on time.

If a student will be absent for any reason, they should inform their Course Manager with as much notice as possible.

All students' absence will be recorded as an 'absence' in the College systems, regardless of the reasons for the absence.

Students are encouraged to notify their Course Managers or Progress Coach in advance of a planned absence to provide context, and this will be noted on the student's ProMonitor file.

### **Lecturers' Responsibilities**

Complete registers for all sessions within 10 minutes of the timetabled session start time, marking the student present, absent or late.

Issue an Attendance Cause for Concern on the student's ILP via ProMonitor for all unexplained absences.

### **Course Managers' Responsibilities**

Monitor Cause for Concern notifications on ProMonitor and follow up as appropriate, ensuring they are marked as complete and follow up comments are added.

### **Head of School Responsibilities**

To monitor attendance of all learners for the whole curriculum area, to investigate issues and instigate appropriate interventions to positively impact poor attendance, manage attendance data and utilise disciplinary procedures if necessary.

To support the Course Managers in following the Disciplinary or Readiness to Learn Policies.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

Attendance levels for the Course are aggregated over all timetabled sessions up to the current point in the academic year.

Attendance thresholds are as follows:

- Excellent 95% and above
- High 90 % – 94%
- Low (Amber) 80 % -89%
- Very low (Red) 79% and below

Course Managers and/or the HE Progress Coach should liaise with the student as soon as attendance becomes a concern, using the Causes for Concern comments and attendance thresholds as an indicator.

Attendance would become a concern in circumstances such as those outlined below:

- If a student had any unexplained absences
- If a student's attendance was 'low' or 'very low' in line with thresholds outlined above (unless a Readiness to Learn Plan was in place to modify expected attendance thresholds accordingly)
- If a student had missed two or more consecutive weeks of study
- If a student had frequent intermittent absence or lateness, even if it was not 'low' or 'very low' in line with the thresholds above (for example, a student was frequently absent for one particular lesson or timetabled session during the week, even if their attendance elsewhere on the programme was good).

Course Managers should inform the Head of School if a student has 'very low' attendance, has not attended for a period of two consecutive weeks, or has a clear trend of frequent intermittent absence or lateness (even if this does not trigger the 'very low' threshold), and indicate that an Attendance Warning notification is to be sent to the learner.

For clarity, Attendance Warning notifications can be issued in response to both prolonged absence and frequent intermittent absence, whether explained or otherwise.

## Attendance Warning Notifications

A three-notification rule is operated for learners whose attendance is not satisfactory.

Attendance Warning notifications are issued by the Progress Coach when a Course Leader notifies that attendance is a concern.

**Notification 1** – Is issued when a student's attendance is 'very low', where a student has not attended for a period of two consecutive weeks, or where a student has a clear trend of frequent intermittent absence or lateness (even if this does not trigger the 'low' threshold). This is an initial warning, and reminds

the student to discuss with their Course Manager or Progress Coach if there is an underlying issue causing the low attendance which the College can support with referral to additional support services or through the Readiness to Learn process. The student will be required to meet with the Progress Coach and agree an appropriate target period of review.

**Notification 2** – Is issued if after the appropriate period of review agreed at stage 1, a student's attendance does not sufficiently improve. It makes clear that a student must meet with their Course Leader to discuss their attendance and put in place an action plan in order to improve their attendance, which would include any supportive measures a student might be able to access to improve their attendance.

**Notification 3** – Is issued if a student attendance fails to sufficiently improve, and does not meet the action plan set at stage 2, and notifies the student that they will be at-risk of being withdrawn from their course owing to unsatisfactory attendance, and that the college is required to notify the SLC, which will impact the student's access to tuition and maintenance loans.

## Absence Due To Ill Health

Where a student's low attendance is poor owing to ill health (whether physical or mental), it may be more appropriate to use the College's Readiness to Learn Policy. In these cases, the Course Leader should inform the Head of School that they have a case of low attendance which is being managed through the Readiness to Learn process.

If, whilst the Attendance Warning Notification process is being undertaken, it emerges that absence is related to ill health, it may be most appropriate to pause the issuing of notifications, and instead move to Readiness to Learn Policy.

## Persistent Non-Attendance and Expedited Withdrawal

Where a student is persistently absent and fails to engage with their programme of study, and is unresponsive to notifications, the institution will make multiple reasonable attempts to contact the student using the details provided at enrolment. If the student remains unresponsive, the institution

reserves the right to expedite the withdrawal process and cancelling the student's registration.

This action is taken to ensure compliance with SLC regulations, which require institutions to report the last date of active and ongoing engagement. Withdrawal will result in the termination of student finance eligibility, including maintenance loan payments.

The institution will submit a Change of Circumstance (CoC) notification to the SLC to prevent inappropriate drawdown of public funds. Students will be informed of the intention to withdraw them and given an opportunity to respond or appeal.

## Appeal

A student who wishes to appeal a withdrawal decision taken through the implementation of this policy, can do so by following the "Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy (Higher Education)".

## Related Policies and Legislation

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this policy:

HE Terms and Conditions

Readiness to Learn Policy

Fees Policy

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy (Higher Education)