

**Learner Attendance Policy**

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**Guidance for staff**

1. **Introduction and Purpose**

* 1. The Learner Attendance Policy and procedures has been developed as part of The College Merthyr Tydfil’s commitment to providing a supportive learning environment. This enables learners who have chosen to study at the college achieve to their full potential.
  2. The college recognises the investment that learners and their sponsors make when a learner enrols on a programme of study or training, and will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to monitor attendance and act upon absenteeism so that learners can be supported to attain their qualifications.
  3. The Learner Attendance Policy applies to all full time and part learners across the college without exception.
  4. All absences are unauthorised unless the learner has sought prior consent which has been agreed by the course/personal tutor.

**2. The policy requires:**

**2.1** Learners will attend all timetabled teaching and learning sessions associated with their programme of study. Examples of teaching and learning sessions include workshops, salons, tutorials, lectures, laboratory sessions, rehearsals, placements and field trips. [Teaching and learning sessions are not confined to the classroom]. Attendance may also be required at additional activities outside of the usual timetable, e.g. support sessions, competitions and catch up sessions. Registers for online session will be taken and attendance recorded.

**2.2** All learners to be provided with a timetable of scheduled teaching and learning sessions.

**2.3** Learners should arrive on time for classes and remain for the duration of the session. Late arrival at and early departure from teaching sessions is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other learners.

**2.4** Staff should ensure that registers are marked at the start of the class and closed by the end of the timetabled session taking place. Staff who are unable to mark the register during class contact should ensure they complete the register by the end of the day. In the event of a field trip, sporting event or any other off-site activity, registers must be completed within 24 hours.

**2.5** All learners may access their attendance record via tutorials and OnTrack.

**2.6** Course/personal tutors will discuss attendance with learners during tutorials using OnTrack. Any areas of concern will be recorded on the learner’s electronic Individual Learning Plan (e-ILP) for monitoring purposes, and targets set as and when required.

**2.7** Absences are unauthorised unless the learner submits an Authorised Absence form to the course/personal tutor prior to the planned period of absence. (Appendix 2)

**2.8** Learners must contact their course/personal tutor before 9am on the first day of absence to notify them of the reason they are unable to attend class, and when they plan to return.

**2.9** If a learner fails to contact the course/ personal tutor and is absent from college, they will be given an unauthorised absence mark.

**Implementation and Procedural guidance**

1. **Authorised Absence**

**3.1** Authorised absence is defined as unavoidable absence arising from:

* Sickness or injury which is sufficiently serious to make college attendance impossible or unsafe (Medical note is produced)
* A medical appointment which cannot reasonably be attended outside course hours
* Civil responsibilities, such as Jury Service
* A visit to a university open day or career related interview
* Attendance at a college representative meeting
* Attendance at a funeral or wedding of a close relative
* Participation in a recognised religious holiday
* Attendance at a probation or other external agency meeting
* Attendance at a national event arranged by NUSW
* Representation of the college at a sporting event
* Interview/audition for drama/music schools and or scholarship
* National or International college approved trip/visit
* Exam attendance

**3.2** Learners are required to seek consent from their course/ personal tutors for authorised absences for sporting events, educational visits and field trips.

**3.3** Authorised absences are recorded on the register as E (explained) or M (Medical). It is important to note that an authorised absence will not have a negative impact on the learners overall attendance rate. Proof will however be required for the tutor.

**4. Unauthorised absences**

**4.1** Absences are deemed unauthorised when the learner fails to inform the tutor that they will be away from a learning session, before the event.

* 1. Any unauthorised absences will be recorded by the tutor on the register as A.
  2. **The following MUST NOT be used as Authorised – these are an Absence Mark:**
* Sickness or injury (No medical note produced)
* Minor transport difficulties
* Driving lessons
* GP/Dentist/Hospital appointment ( Can be amended to authorised absence if proof of appointment is shown)
* Family/Personal holidays within term time.

1. **Punctuality**
   1. Learners should arrive on time for all classes and remain for the duration of the teaching session. Late arrival at and early departure from teaching sessions is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other learners.
   2. Learners arriving more than 10 minutes late for a class and without an appropriate reason, will be marked as being late and will be recorded in the register with an L. Learnerswill be admitted into sessions, however the tutor should discuss the late attendance at the end of the session and provide some catch up work. The same applies to joining online lessons late.
2. **Support for learners with attendance issues and cause for concern**

**6.1** Where a learner’s attendance is a cause for concern and falls below the college’s intervention trigger of 90% within one month, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

* 1. Tutors will set targets to encourage good attendance and to address any concerns on On Track Pastoral.
  2. College staff may contact the learner or the parent/legal guardians of learners under the age of 19 to seek an explanation for the unsatisfactory attendance.
  3. Medical evidence will be requested for repeated periods of illness.
  4. Course/personal tutors will issue the learner with an attendance improvement target and document via OnTrack Pastoral
  5. Learners will discuss with their course/personal tutor how the attendance could be improved and identify any additional support required.
  6. Learners facing financial hardship that is impacting on their attendance may be able to apply for additional funds via the colleges Financial Contingency Funding [FCF].
  7. Where appropriate, the learner will be referred to Learner Support and I2A to ensure any additional pastoral and welfare support is provided.

**6.9**Persistent absenteeism may lead to learners being withdrawn from their programme, if they fail to respond to warnings or are found in breach of any agreements made regarding their attendance.

1. **Attendance Responsibilities**

**Learners are responsible for:**

**7.1**Carrying and displaying ID smart cards at all times.

**7.2** Attending all timetabled classes including personalised learning support sessions.

**7.3** Arriving on time for class and not disrupting other learners by leaving early.

**7.4** Seekingconsent from their course/personal tutors for any planned absence before the event.

**7.5** Personal/course tutor on the first day of absence, for example in the case of illness. Contact by telephone or e-mail should be made before 9am on the first day of absence. On return, the learner must also provide the college with evidence of the reason for absence.

**7.6** Notifying the course/personal tutor of a prolonged absence so that work can be set.

**7.7** Providing evidence of the reason for absence.

* 1. Monitoring their own attendance targets via e-ILP and OnTrack.

**7.9** Notifying the EMA/Learner Services regarding any loss of EMA/Welsh Government Learning Grant within 4 weeks. Issues relating to unmarked registers should be discussed with the course/personal tutor in the first instance.

**8 Tutor responsibility**

Tutors are responsible for their contractual duty plus adherence to the Education Workforce Code of Practice and Welsh Government Audit requirements, including:

**8.1** Raising awareness of the Learner Attendance Policy and Procedures.

**8.2** Reminding learners of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

**8.3** Recording attendance on a register before the end of every working day. In the event of an off-site activity, registers must be completed within 24 hours or as soon as practicably possible where there are exceptional circumstances.

**8.4** Authorising absence in accordance with the college Learner Attendance Policy and Procedures.

**8.5** Monitoring the attendance of learners with attendance below the intervention trigger of 90%.

**8.6** Referring and signposting learners to the appropriate welfare support services when the intervention trigger is reached.

**8.7** Discussing attendance with learners during tutorials and during OnTrack progress review meetings.

**8.8** Contacting all learners who are unauthorised absent as soon as practicably possible and recording the information on OnTrack Pastoral.

**8.9** Ensuring that attendance is marked appropriately on the registers and that evidence is provided by the learner and kept on file for all periods of authorised absence and illness, for EMA and Welsh Government Learning Grant.

**8.10** Discussing with the learners tutors any retrospective alterations made to marked registers that may impact on a learner’s eligibility to receive financial support based on attendance.

**8.11** Learners are withdrawn within four weeks of their last attendanceusing the online form. Should a learner return at a later date, then please inform Student Records and the learner can be reinstated.

**9 Heads of Division are responsible for ensuring that:**

**9.1** All full time and part time learners have access to a course/personal tutor.

**9.2** There is a register in place for **all timetabled events –** and Student Records are informed of any amendments either via e-mail [srhelpdesk@merthyr.ac.uk](mailto:srhelpdesk@merthyr.ac.uk) or contacting Sam Treweeks Timetable Administrator(Ex: 6059) to make an appointment.

**9.3** All teaching staff maintains an accurate record of learner attendance through use of the college register system.

**9.4** Course/personal tutors regularly review learner progress including the monitoring of attendance and that appropriate action is taken to ensure that the learner remains engaged.

**9.5** In the case of tutor absence, learners are informed at the earliest opportunity of alternative arrangements for the class.

**9.6** Attendance and marking of registers is monitored and reviewed during course and divisional team meetings. Heads of Division will need to ensure that registers are marked appropriately during the absence of staff.

**10. Promoting Excellent Attendance**

**10.1** All learners will sign the Learning Agreement at the start of their course agreeing to follow the Attendance procedures.

**10.2** Parents and Guardians of those learners under 18 will be given a copy of this Learner Agreement along with information on how they can support excellent attendance.

**10.3** All College staff will reinforce the importance of excellent attendance throughout the year.

**10.4** Information on weekly attendance should be discussed in Divisional meetings and linked to a programme of rewards which will be in place throughout the year to support excellent attendance. This system of rewards will be based within each department and will culminate in an overall prize for attendance.

**10.5** Anyone with 100% attendance for a term will receive a postcard home.

**10.6** Any learners whose attendance falls below 90% should receive an immediate postcard; this should also be sent to their parent/guardian.

**10.7** Attendance reports will be produced for individual course\personal tutors in each division on a weekly basis and should be reviewed in divisional meetings monthly. It is expected that course tutors and personal tutors will provide information on the reasons for course attendance in readiness for these meetings.

**10.8** Staff will develop strategies to engage learners in useful activities to enable them to achieve their potential and develop skills for employability and progression; this will be used as a tool to improve attendance.

**10.9** Each division will celebrate the learner of the group and attendance of the group at Christmas, Easter and the end of year; certificates will be made available for this.

**10.10** The College will provide a variety of support functions ie wellbeing, safeguarding, financial, careers and support for learning, to enable learners to maintain strong attendance.

**Appendix 1**

The following table outlines the marks that tutors must use to record attendance on the registers:

Register Attendance Marks

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mark** | **Mark Description** | **Attendance Type** | **Notes/Examples** |
| **/** | Present | Present    cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Attendance of session |
| **X** | College Authorised Absence | Present    cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | e.g. Snow / power cuts / strikes / fire drills / safety / tutor absent |
| **L** | Late | Present    cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Late start or early finish (>10 minutes) |
| **P** | Work Placement | Present    cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Work placement / Sport events / Visits |
| **A** | Absence | Absence  cid:image005.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Any un-planned absence from session / sick |
| **E** | Individual Explained Absence | Planned Absence  cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Planned absence notified to tutor – Requires evidence |
| **M** | Medical | Planned Absence  cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Medical absence approved - Requires evidence |
| **V** | Present | Present    cid:image003.png@01CC8502.626AD8A0 | Temporary mark used only in the first 2 weeks while Timetables are being created/amended. |

**Appendix 2**

**Name:­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Learner’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Programme/Course: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Reason for Absence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Authorised Signature**: **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

(To be signed by Course/Personal Tutor)

**Authorised Absence form:**

Date approved:

Approved by:

Review date:

Responsible Manager: