

# Bury College Policy and Procedures

## Higher Education Attendance Policy

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## **1. Introduction & Purpose**

- 1.1** Bury College University Centre (BCUC) acknowledges that student engagement is multi-faceted: the college seeks to promote the importance of face-to-face learning opportunities to encourage students, from an early stage in their qualification, to develop strong working relationships with peers studying on their programme. In ensuring that its students are presented with the best opportunities to succeed in their studies, BCUC expects full attendance. Non-attendance may lead to poor academic performance, warnings, and eventually withdrawal from the programme of study. Attendance is also taken into account at Assessment Boards, particularly when determining module and progression outcomes, and when staff are asked to write job references for students. Nevertheless, BCUC does recognise that there are circumstances where a student may legitimately be unable to attend timetables sessions and in these cases effective communication with the tutor/s concerned is essential.
- 1.2** Punctual attendance at a place of work is a fundamental expectation of employers and, in order to prepare students for employment, it is an expectation that students will treat attendance at scheduled classes as they would attendance at a place of work, that is to say, that attendance is compulsory and efforts should be made to be punctual.
- 1.3** This document sets out Bury College University Centre's expectations in relation to the recording and monitoring of student attendance and absence, and the actions to be followed when attendance drops below a set threshold.

## **2. Recording attendance**

- 2.1** All students will have their attendance monitored through the use of registers entered into the college Management Information System (MIS) to enable an analysis and overview of each individual student's attendance.
- 2.2** All authorised and non-authorised absences are recorded and action taken where necessary.
- 2.3** Short-term absences (up to one week) due to illness may be authorised without any documentary evidence but the student must contact the Programme Leader to let them know of their absence. Absences of over one week full time) or more than 3 consecutive lessons (part time), such as non-attendance due to undocumented medical, personal or other extenuating circumstances are not authorised if no evidence is presented, or the absence is not agreed in advance.
- 2.4** Unless otherwise agreed with the tutor, students are expected to attend every scheduled session, whether a group, or individual meeting.
- 2.5** All examinations and assessments must be attended and completed on time (and within any pre-agreed extensions already granted) unless approved by the Programme Manager/Lead.
- 2.6** Unauthorised, prolonged absences by students will result in a (stage 1) letter being sent by Programme Leaders.
- 2.7** Following the initial (stage 1) letter, if a student's absence is still of concern, they may be invited to attend a meeting in College to discuss the reasons behind the absence.
- 2.8** All students are at risk of removal from their programme after consistent and continued periods of absence are recorded. A student whose attendance rate is below 85% may result in the removal of the student from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol on any programme.
- 2.9** No extended period of absence is permitted unless authorised through application for temporary leave, suspension of study or deferral.

## **3. Prolonged or Repeated Absence (see appendix A)**

- 3.1** Students demonstrating non-attendance on a programme of study, that have not responded to the Programme Leader's initial (stage 1) letter, will be asked to attend a meeting in the college with the Head of Curriculum or Pastoral Manager. An Action Plan to address the attendance issues will be agreed and a copy provided for the student. Should a student choose at that point to suspend or defer their studies, documentation must be completed to confirm this, and this would become effective as soon as the information is received

- centrally.
- 3.2 In instances where a student does not attend the scheduled meeting in the college and no viable reason is given for non-attendance, the College may withdraw the student from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol on any programme.
  - 3.3 Should the decision be to withdraw a student from a course, the reasons for the decision must be sent in writing, prior to withdrawal.
  - 3.4 Subsequent instances of non-attendance will prompt the Programme Manager/Lead to send a Stage 2 letter to the student requiring them to attend a meeting in the College where their attendance, academic progression and any other personal circumstances can be discussed. The initial Action Plan will also be reviewed.
  - 3.5 In cases where students do not attend the meeting or no communications are received from the student or in cases where students attended the preliminary attendance meeting but no improvements in attendance are seen, the student could then be exited from the programme.
  - 3.6 A stage 2 action plan may be issued during the second meeting, or a collective decision be taken to withdraw the student from the programme. A final withdrawal letter is sent to the learner.
  - 3.7 Students funded by the Student Loans Company whose attendance is below the 85% attendance threshold set and have not complied with the process will be required to leave the college and may be reported to the SLC, which may enforce repayment of loan moneys already advanced.
  - 3.8 Students in receipt of a Bury College HE Bursary whose attendance is below 90% will have payment of their bursary withheld.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

##### **4.1 Students are responsible for:**

- Attending all learning and teaching sessions associated with their programme of study.
- Notifying their module tutors/Programme Manager/Leader in advance if they expect to be absent from timetabled classes or meetings.
- Obtaining prior permission from their module tutor/Programme Lead for planned absences during term time.
- Notifying the module tutor/Programme Leader of unplanned or unforeseen absences from classes and if requested providing a medical certificate or other evidence, to explain their absence.
- Obtaining learning material from missed classes.
- Undertaking any formative assessments from missed classes.

##### **4.2 Unit/Module tutors are responsible for:**

- Reminding students of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions.
- Recording student attendance through the register system.
- Make available learning materials from missed classes.
- Make available assessments from missed classes.

##### **4.3 Programme Leaders are responsible for:**

- Checking attendance record once attendance issues have been identified.
- Referring student to other sources of support that may be available to them. E.g. Pastoral Managers, Student Learning Mentors, Student Services.
- Refer student to the Head of Curriculum if attendance does not improve.

##### **4.4 Heads of Curriculum are responsible for:**

- Following up on attendance concerns identified by Programme Leads
- Inviting student to a meeting to discuss their attendance and agree action plans.
- Monitoring compliance with attendance plan and checking attendance.
- Issuing attendance warnings.

- Advising Curriculum Directors which student(s) need to be withdrawn.
- Ensuring teaching staff are aware of the attendance policy and are implementing it.

**4.5 Curriculum Directors are responsible for:**

- Authorising the withdrawal of students who fail to attend.
- Ensuring appropriate forms are completed.

**5. Associated Documents**

- **Student Behaviour Policy**

**6. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

- Compliance with this policy/procedure will be monitored by the Quality & Standards Office.
- The policy will be reviewed at three year intervals.
- Attendance and retention data will be reported to leadership and the governing body.

**Prolonged or Repeated Absence – Process Flowchart**

