



Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY STRATEGY

December 2015



1. Introduction

This strategy aims to ensure that a consistent approach to the management of attendance and punctuality is adopted within the Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium which comprises North Hertfordshire College, Hertford Regional College, West Hertfordshire College and Oaklands College.

The goal is to maximise student success and to assist all students to take responsibility for their full and prompt attendance at College, which will enhance their learning experience, develop their personal skills and promote high achievement, retention and successful progression into continued study or employment.

Attendance refers to scheduled learning activities which may be categorised as lectures, seminars, classroom based activities, laboratory classes, workshops, work placement, educational visits or tutorials.

The Consortium Colleges aim to:

- Encourage excellent student attendance.
- Support students who are experiencing genuine difficulties in attending their respective College.
- Publish and implement strategies to raise overall attendance and punctuality which are understood by all students, staff and key stakeholders.
- Publish and implement robust attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures which are understood by all students, staff and sponsors.
- Communicate clearly this strategy to all students and key stakeholders.

The Consortium Colleges recognise the importance of monitoring student attendance and punctuality and the need to implement consistent and robust monitoring practices to help identify those students at risk of failing due to poor attendance.

2. Statement of Intent

Learning is a shared experience and students are expected to engage fully in all scheduled learning activities. Regular and consistent attendance at College is critical to student success and achievement of their learning goals. Poor attendance can be one of the main signs of disengagement and the College will attempt as far as possible to ensure that students remain fully engaged and succeed on their programme.

Our anticipation is that students have 100% attendance and are punctual to all their scheduled learning activities. Students are therefore expected to attend all classes on time, educational activities, tutorials and examinations and to take responsibility for their own learning.



Absence is only accepted under exceptional circumstances. Absence can be indicative of academic issues, personal difficulties, physical or mental ill health and therefore attendance is to be monitored throughout the programme to identify these risks early.

3. Scope

This strategy applies to all students undertaking a higher education course in one of the Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium Colleges.

4. Responsibilities

(i) College

Each Consortium College will use its own monitoring system to record student attendance and punctuality. Where attendance problems are identified, each College will respond promptly and efficiently using its own procedures.

Colleges' Heads of Schools/Departments and Programme Managers are responsible for the timely response to student attendance and punctuality issues.

Personal/Course Tutors and Programme Managers are required to monitor student attendance (via electronic registers) and address issues of absenteeism and punctuality in line with this strategy and the individual College policies and procedures.

Course Tutors are required to:

- Make students (including those who join a course after its start date) aware of the Attendance and Punctuality Strategy during induction.
- Include this strategy in all programme handbooks.
- Keep teaching colleagues and learning support staff (if appropriate) informed of student issues and actions which may affect attendance, punctuality and code of conduct.
- Check weekly attendance reports.

All teaching staff in the Colleges are required to:

- Start and finish all scheduled learning activities on time.
- Complete the register for that session as the first activity undertaken, wherever possible.
- Mark registers accurately and facilitate timely processing. Normally, registers should be available for processing by the end of the same day. In some



circumstances in which this is not practical, processing should be completed by the end of the same week. Exceptional circumstances beyond this timescale should be agreed with the Head of School or Department.

- Support a student's return to College after a period of absence.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Report absence and punctuality concerns to the personal tutor using the College's agreed format.

(ii) Internal Policies

In addition to this strategy, each Consortium College has its own individual attendance and punctuality strategy (Appendix 1). Aspects of a particular College strategy may apply to HE programmes and will be included in the corresponding programme handbooks.

Colleges will use as their main reference the University of Hertfordshire exhaustive list of Serious Adverse Circumstances in which Absence can be authorised (Appendix 2)

(iii) Students

All students are expected to attend in a timely manner all of their timetabled sessions, unless prior agreement has been made and agreed with the Course Tutor/Programme Manager.

All students are expected to report absences either to their Course Tutor, Programme Manager or to the School administrative support staff.

If a student is unable to attend the College, where practicable he/she must inform the College Course Administrator on the first day morning before **10 am**, giving the reason for their absence, whether they intend to seek medical advice and the expected date of return to College. If this is not possible the student should appoint a responsible person to do so on their behalf.

Students expecting absenteeism beyond 5 days should contact their Personal/Course Tutor/Programme Manager to discuss the possibility of an alternative study arrangement. In addition, students can contact Student Services, if they wish to discuss reasons for prolonged absenteeism, and where pastoral support can be offered.

Absences due to ill health in excess of 5 consecutive days (7 including weekends) will require a medical certificate.



For absences that are between 5 to 20 days, students are required to consult with their Course/Programme Tutor to ascertain whether any additional work may be required to make up for the learning missed.

Where absence is prolonged, students need to be aware that their progression on the programme can be affected if they do not comply with the additional requirements of work.

All **students** are required to:

1. Sign an agreement at induction which includes a commitment towards full attendance (learning contract-code of conduct to be included as part of the programme handbook). See Appendix 3
2. Attend all lessons punctually (*attendance* comprises some or all of: workshops, enrichment activities, group and individual tutorials, key/functional skills sessions, additional support sessions and any other timetabled activity which forms part of the programme of study).
3. Adhere to the attendance and punctuality expectations as outlined in this strategy

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Strategy

The Higher Education Managers are responsible for ensuring continuous and effective implementation of this attendance strategy in their respective College.

Monitoring of attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of each individual College. Examples of College monitoring policy are included in Appendix 4.

This strategy will be subject to review on annual basis.



Appendix 1

Oaklands College Higher Education Attendance Strategy 2016/17

Higher Education attendance will be monitored on a regular basis and the reports compiled will be sent to the Programme Managers, HoD and DoF for information. Programme Managers are responsible for monitoring the attendance on their programmes.

Formal Stage 1 Behaviour/Supportive meeting (Two attendance warning letters)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Tutor to telephone/e-mail student of meeting • Advise HE Administrator for logging and inform HE Manager • Action plan to be implemented via ILP- The programme manager will review the students' progress and set targets to monitor within 2 weeks, if these targets have not been met, the student will be invited to a Stage 2 Behaviour/Supportive meeting
Formal Stage 2 Behaviour/Supportive meeting (Action plan not met)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Administrator to send formal letter/email explaining the seriousness of the situation and possible withdrawal from programme • HE Manager / HoD and DOF to be informed and in attendance
The College has the right to consider withdrawing a student from a module/programme if this procedure does not lead to attendance improvement within 2 weeks of their implementation.
Withdrawal
If a student has had five (5) consecutive weeks of non-attendance without justification, then they must be withdrawn from the course (following a concerted discussion between the Programme Manager and the Link Tutor or HE Manager). The Board of Examiners/Assessment Board will make a decision with regards to the student progress.



Appendix 2

List of Serious Adverse Circumstances in which Absence can be authorised

Main types of Serious Adverse Circumstance (SAC) reported	Evidence required	Action (levels 0,4,5)	Action (levels 6, 7) <small>(if level 6 referral is allowed, the Board can use advice for levels 0,4 and 5)</small>
<p>1 Medical (serious – not a recognised disability). Examples: broken limb, problem with eyesight, influenza, vomiting or migraine <u>at time of assessment</u>, infectious condition.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>a. Influenza ('flu') does not refer to the common cold or conditions with similar symptoms.</p> <p>b. Some conditions <u>may</u> be able to be accommodated by separate arrangements (e.g. the use of an amanuensis for those with broken arms) if they are reported before the cut-off date for adjustments published on StudyNet.</p>	<p>.Medical certificate (self-certification for the first 7 days of illness is only permitted if the student provides evidence that it is the policy of their GP practice is not to issue medical certificates), or evidence from the Invigilator's log.</p>	<p>Deferral</p>	<p>Deferral</p> <p>If, however, the student has acceptable serious adverse circumstances which prevent him/her from sitting the deferral/re-submission until the same time in the following academic session, the Programme Board/Assessment Board may have discretion to offer Final Compensatory Credit with or without penalty (for a total of 30 credits) subject to the limitations set out in UPR AS14 D.4.1 (if applicable)</p>
<p>2 Medical (minor). The following conditions are considered to be minor (unless, in the case of an examination/in class test, the symptoms are so bad on the relevant day that the student is too unwell to attend when the condition will be treated as serious as in 1 above):</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>Not an acceptable SAC</p>	



Main types of Serious Adverse Circumstance (SAC) reported	Evidence required	Action (levels 0,4,5)	Action (levels 6, 7) (if level 6 referral is allowed, the Board can use advice for levels 0,4 and 5)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self limiting respiratory infections, e.g. Cold, sore throat, earache, cough, sinusitis. • Other short term infections, e.g. Cystitis, gastroenteritis. • Asthma. • Mechanical pain such as low back pain, sprains and tendonitis e.g. Writer's cramp / RSI • Tension type headaches. • Period pains. • Irregular Irritable bowel syndrome. • Hay fever. • Stress or anxiety when this is exclusively related to examinations. 			



Main types of Serious Adverse Circumstance (SAC) reported	Evidence required	Action (levels 0,4,5)	Action (levels 6, 7) (if level 6 referral is allowed, the Board can use advice for levels 0,4 and 5)
<p>3 Disabled students A diagnosis of a disability (as opposed to a reason related to a diagnosed disability) is not valid grounds for a SAC.</p> <p>(i) A reasonable adjustment, agreed through a Study Needs Agreement (SNA) more than 4 weeks prior to the exam period is not an acceptable SAC.</p> <p>(ii) Late disclosure of a disability with valid reason /request for disability adjustment (after the cut-off date for agreeing adjustments published on StudyNet). Adjustments will only be made if failure to do so would disturb other candidates and/or endanger themselves if left in the main exam room. Extra time will not be given. The student has the choice of whether or not to sit/submit; but if they decide to sit/submit they cannot claim to have serious adverse circumstances.</p> <p>(iii) Unforeseen effect of a disability related occurrence e.g. (a) when the effect of a disability is not anticipated e.g. an epileptic seizure or unexpected episode of ill mental health; (b) when a reasonable adjustment agreed through a SNA has not been implemented.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>(i) Not applicable</p> <p>(ii) Confirmation in writing from a member of Disability Services that the SAC is valid.</p> <p>(iii) Confirmation in writing from a member of Disability Services that the SAC is valid.</p>	<p>Not an acceptable SAC</p> <p>(i) Not an acceptable SAC</p> <p>(ii) Deferral</p> <p>(iii) Deferral</p>	<p>Not an acceptable SAC</p> <p>(i) Not an acceptable SAC</p> <p>(ii) As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the seriousness of the condition and the extent of the student's control.</p> <p>(iii) As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the seriousness of the condition and the extent of the student's control.</p>
<p>4 Death in immediate family (grandparent, parent, sibling, child, grandchild, first cousin,</p>	<p>Death certificate, additional information</p>	<p>Deferral</p>	<p>As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the</p>



	Main types of Serious Adverse Circumstance (SAC) reported	Evidence required	Action (levels 0,4,5)	Action (levels 6, 7) (if level 6 referral is allowed, the Board can use advice for levels 0,4 and 5)
	aunt, uncle, spouse, partner, parent-in-law) or close friend within the semester (or for an extended time period in exceptional circumstances).	(location of funeral, any religious observance requirements for mourning, etc.)		timing of the death, the responsibilities of the student and the closeness of the relationship.
5	Attendance at a funeral at the time of the assessment.	Death certificate, additional information (location of funeral, any religious observance requirements for mourning, etc.)	Deferral	As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the timing of the death, the responsibilities of the student and the closeness of the relationship.
6	Death of a relative or friend outside the semester, or the funeral is not at same time of assessment.	Not applicable	Not an acceptable SAC.	
7	Serious illness in family (particularly where the student has duty of care, "family" defined as circumstance 4)	Medical certificate	Deferral	As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the timing of the illness, the responsibilities of the student and the closeness of the relationship.
8	Commitment outside of the student's control (e.g. emergencies, including unexpected loss of child care) on the date when the student is required to attend for an assessment.	As appropriate, (e.g. letter from employer or nursery).	Deferral	As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the seriousness of the event and the extent of the student's control.
9	Work commitments (part-time students only) (e.g. heavy workload at the time that an assessment is due)	As appropriate, (e.g. letter from employer).	Deferral	
10	Serious transport problem (i.e. exceptional circumstance such as a serious rail delay or road traffic accident, snow causing serious delays to traffic)	As appropriate, (e.g. copy of ticket, compensation slip from rail company)	Deferral	As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the severity of the transport incident and the extent of the student's control.



	Main types of Serious Adverse Circumstance (SAC) reported	Evidence required	Action (levels 0,4,5)	Action (levels 6, 7) (if level 6 referral is allowed, the Board can use advice for levels 0,4 and 5)
1 1	Routine type, predictable or partly predictable transport problem (e.g. traffic jams, a late train or bus, tyre puncture etc)	Not applicable	Not an acceptable SAC	
1 2	Misunderstood examination timetable	Not applicable	Not an acceptable SAC	
1 3	Overslept	Not applicable	Not an acceptable SAC	
1 4	Religious reasons, where not working is a requirement (UPR GEN/A/5)	Requests must be notified to the University at least 2 weeks in advance, with appropriate evidence, or by the deadline published by the Examinations Office in the case of examinations.	The University/College will make reasonable attempts to make adjustments to the assessment timetable. Deferral is an option where work is proscribed on a particular day for a particular Faith Group. If there is doubt as to whether work is proscribed then the University will be guided by information given by the East of England Faiths Council and the current Festivals appendix to Multicultural Matters.	
1 5	Serious personal problems not medical (e.g. separation from spouse/partner, victims of crime) within the semester.	As appropriate (letter from counsellor, landlord, crime reference number, etc.)	Deferral	Deferral. If, however, the student has further acceptable serious adverse circumstances which prevent him/her from sitting the deferral until the same time in the following academic session, the Programme Board/Assessment Board has discretion to offer Final Compensatory Credit without or without penalty (for a total of 30 credits).
1 6	Financial	Not applicable	Not an acceptable SAC	
1 7	International, National (and <i>exceptionally</i> regional or University*) sports events* scheduled on the date(s) of an examination,	Letter from the University's Director of Sport (Nick Brooking)	Deferral	



Main types of Serious Adverse Circumstance (SAC) reported		Evidence required	Action (levels 0,4,5)	Action (levels 6, 7) (if level 6 referral is allowed, the Board can use advice for levels 0,4 and 5)
	in-class test or a coursework to be completed within a 3 - 48 hour time period.			
1 8	Holidays	Booking information	Deferral. Only acceptable if the booking is made prior to acceptance of the UH/College offer	
1 9	Computer problems	As appropriate (e.g. memo from IH explaining the nature of the problem)	Not acceptable, unless experienced by a sufficiently large group of students	As circumstance 1; the Module/Programme Board/Assessment Board will consider the seriousness of the event and the extent of the student's control.
2 0	Complaints about UH/College staff (e.g. supervision)	Various (diary of missed meetings or classes etc)	Dealt with through Module Board/Assessment Board	

**Serious Adverse Circumstances will not normally be accepted for regional, College or University sports events but it lies within the sole discretion of the Director of Sport to decide whether the circumstances are exceptional in the case of a regional or University sports event. The term 'sports event' includes the fixture and attendance at any compulsory training session.*



Appendix 3

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1 Our College is a student-focussed, multi-ethnic community of students and staff who work and study together closely and it is important that they are able to do so without disruption. The higher education student community includes those enrolled on Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), Extended and Foundation Degrees (FDs).
- 2 The College has a fair admissions policy and aims to be responsive to all applicants and to provide pre-entry information that is appropriate. All students are able to use the high quality learning, teaching and support services and facilities that we provide and are encouraged to participate actively in the work of the College through committee and/or student representation membership. There are well-established processes through which students may raise queries and complaints.
- 3 This Code of Conduct is intended to clarify the standard of behaviour expected from students when they are at the College and/or University and when they go out into the wider community.
- 4 As a student we expect you to:
 - i commit to all elements of your programme of study
 - ii attend, be punctual in your attendance and meet deadlines (*Persistent, unexplained, late arrival at, or early departure from, lectures seminars and practicals is not acceptable*);
 - iii Attend all scheduled learning activities unless exceptional circumstances exist in which case the programme manager must be consulted
 - iv be attentive in class (*electronic devices other than those necessary for the session must be switched off for the entire period of the lecture, seminar or practical – in particular, using your mobile telephone or texting is not acceptable; any other form of behaviour which could reasonably be regarded as disruptive or offensive is not acceptable*);
 - iv ensure that you do not behave in a disruptive manner either on or off campus (*the College and University considers disruptive, inconsiderate or offensive behaviour to be a breach of discipline*);
 - v be responsible for the good behaviour of any guests that you invite to the College/University (*children are not permitted to attend timetabled learning and teaching activities, including lectures, seminars and other*



teaching activities; unless you have obtained permission beforehand, you are not allowed to bring visitors to timetabled learning and teaching activities, including lectures, seminars and other teaching activities);

- vi be respectful and polite to fellow students, staff and others visiting or working on campus;
- vii recognise the cultural diversity of the College/University and take no action that might undermine the principles of cultural tolerance within our community;
- viii uphold the good name of the College/University in your off-campus activities, exercising respect and tolerance in the wider community;
- ix carry your College (and University Identity Cards at all times when you are on campus (individuals without cards will be asked to leave campus);
- x comply with all College and/or University Regulations, including this Code of Conduct (the College/University may take disciplinary action should you fail to do so);
- xi comply with the law at all times and report to the relevant authorities any incidents that you may witness.

In return you become a welcome member of our community, entitled to all of the rights and privileges associated with that membership.

College	Student
Name:	Name
College details:	Course
Signature:	Signature
Date:	Date:



Appendix 4 - Monitoring Attendance-

Oaklands College

Course Tutors will typically complete the session's online electronic register in which the session's attendance status of each student registered on that particular module/unit the tutor delivers is recorded (Present, Authorised or Unauthorised absence).

The Course Tutor will also incorporate any authorised absences. He/she will input the attendance record for each class into the College electronic Management System prior to the end of the session.

All arrivals within the first 5 minutes of the session are marked as 'present' and anybody arriving after 5 minutes is marked as 'late'. All arrivals after 30 min of the class starting will not be allowed to enter class and will be directed to the Programme Manager.

If a student has two consecutive absences (2 different days) in one particular unit/module the tutor will notify the programme manager who will then instruct the College programme administrator to issue an **attendance warning letter**.

If a student has 3 absences (3 different days, consecutive or not) in one particular unit/module the tutor will notify the programme manager who will contact the student but also instruct the College programme administrator to issue **an attendance warning letter**.

The Programme Manager is able to consult the College system and assess the number of classes missed by a particular student on daily/weekly/monthly basis.

If **2 warning letters** to the same student have been issued, the College will then follow the case and implement its own disciplinary procedures (Stage 1 Behaviour Procedure)

The College has the right to consider withdrawing a student from a module/programme if this procedure does not lead to attendance improvement within 2 weeks of their implementation.

If a student has had **five** (5) consecutive weeks of non-attendance without justification then they must be withdrawn from the course (following a concerted discussion between the Programme Manager and the Link Tutor or HE Manager) and in line with the University of Hertfordshire P&Rs regulations. UPR SA06 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12 to apply in this case. The Board of Examiners/Assessment Board will make decision with regards to the student progress.

This ruling applies, unless, for example there are specific individual student problems and the **Extenuating Circumstances** policy is considered (see Appendix 2).



It is the responsibility of the Programme Manager to fill in withdrawal forms as soon as a learner is known to have withdrawn from their programme and submit it to UH administrator responsible for that particular programme.

It is also the responsibility of the Programme Manager to inform the HE Manager and Administer of the withdrawal.

It is also the responsibility of the Programme Manager to liaise with the administrator responsible for that particular course so the student can be withdrawn from the College system.

It is the responsibility of the College's MIS office to remove students from their system on receipt of withdrawal forms or when identified by teaching staff during the data verification process.