



**DOCUMENT DETAILS**

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Summary	The purpose of this document is to set out the college's HE attendance information.

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

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<b>Version history</b>			
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**DOCUMENT APPROVAL**

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<b>Approving person/body</b>	<b>Job Role (where applicable)</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>
HE Academic Board		November 2021
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**COMMUNICATION**

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Date sent to OLT	
Date sent to Internal Comms	
Publication required on External Website?	YES

# Attendance policy for higher education (HE) students

## Introduction

Nottingham College recognises that deciding to study a higher education course is a life-changing choice for all students, at whatever time in their lives they may choose to study. Students make a major commitment investing finance and time to achieve a qualification which will play a key part in influencing their future life choices.

Engagement includes:

- attending all scheduled teaching sessions (including lectures, seminars, tutorials, and workshops);
- completing independent and group study activities outside scheduled teaching;
- undertaking all assessments.

Poor attendance on the part of individual students may also detract from the overall learning experience of the group, in some cases preventing other students from achieving their full potential, particularly where group assessments or projects and peer learning are involved.

The college monitors student attendance making use of attendance registers (which lecturers complete online) in a way that is appropriate for the course and its mode of study.

Support is offered to students facing difficulties that may be hindering their progression. Where courses feature specific attendance requirements, these will be signposted to students at the outset.

## 1. Attendance procedure and register marks

Students will be advised about attendance requirements and the importance of attending classes, both orally and in writing through induction events, course and module handbooks and via StudentNet.

Attendance at - and in consequence - absence from - timetabled sessions will be recorded and monitored following the eRegister system.

The range of permitted marks is:

Attendance Calculation	Proposed code	Proposed Description	Comments
Present in Class	1	Present	Learner attends class in person
	2	Late	Learner arrives late for class
Present in Learning	W	Work Placement	Learner on authorised work placement where attendance can be confirmed with employer
	5	Library/Exam/Educational Visit	Working elsewhere under the care of college staff, e.g. Library, Exam, Educational visit
	V	Virtual Learning	Student Attends the class via online access
	P	Positive Learner Engagement	For use to monitor learners who are positively engaging with course work outside of the classroom only
Absent	3	Absent	College have not been notified of learners' absence
	4	Authorised Absence	Learner has notified college of reason for absence e.g. Funeral, Holiday, Medical Appointments
	C	Coronavirus - Self Isolation	Learner is self-isolating
Neutral Mark	8	Class Cancelled	This mark should not be used for individual learners if the class is still running
	X	Suspended	Mark to be used when students have been suspended
	6	Religious Holiday	Learner observing a religious holiday

## **2. Absence reporting**

If a student is unable to attend their normal timetabled classes, they should follow the contact procedure outlined in their Course Handbook as soon as they are aware that they will not be attending.

The primary point of contact for HE students should be their designated course leader, although messages can be left with the HE Office or the college's main Absence Line:

(0115) 9 100 100 - option 1

The student should give a target date by which they will be able to resume their attendance. This will enable the course delivery team to identify how best to support the student during their period of absence.

## **3. Commitments outside of college**

The college recognises that students may need to undertake part time employment to support their studies or may have other commitments such as childcare or family/religious events. However, the college does expect its students to, wherever possible, fit these commitments around their timetabled sessions in order to participate fully in the course.

## **4. Prolonged or repeated absences**

If a student misses a significant number of sessions (e.g., 3 or 4 classes in sequence for a particular module) they will be contacted by a member of staff, normally the Course Leader, Wellbeing Coach or Faculty Area Manager (FAM). The college wants to help its students to begin attending again and the staff member will explore appropriate ways to support the student moving forward.

The college will take all reasonable steps to avoid the final step of withdrawing a student. However, where it is clear that, having explored all reasonable avenues, a student is no longer engaging with their course; arrangements will be made to withdraw them from the course and from the college.

The college is obliged to report the act of withdrawal to external authorities as appropriate. This could include the Student Loan Company, local authority (for Council Tax exemption), an employer (or similar sponsor), or any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

## **5. Suggested attendance level for HE students**

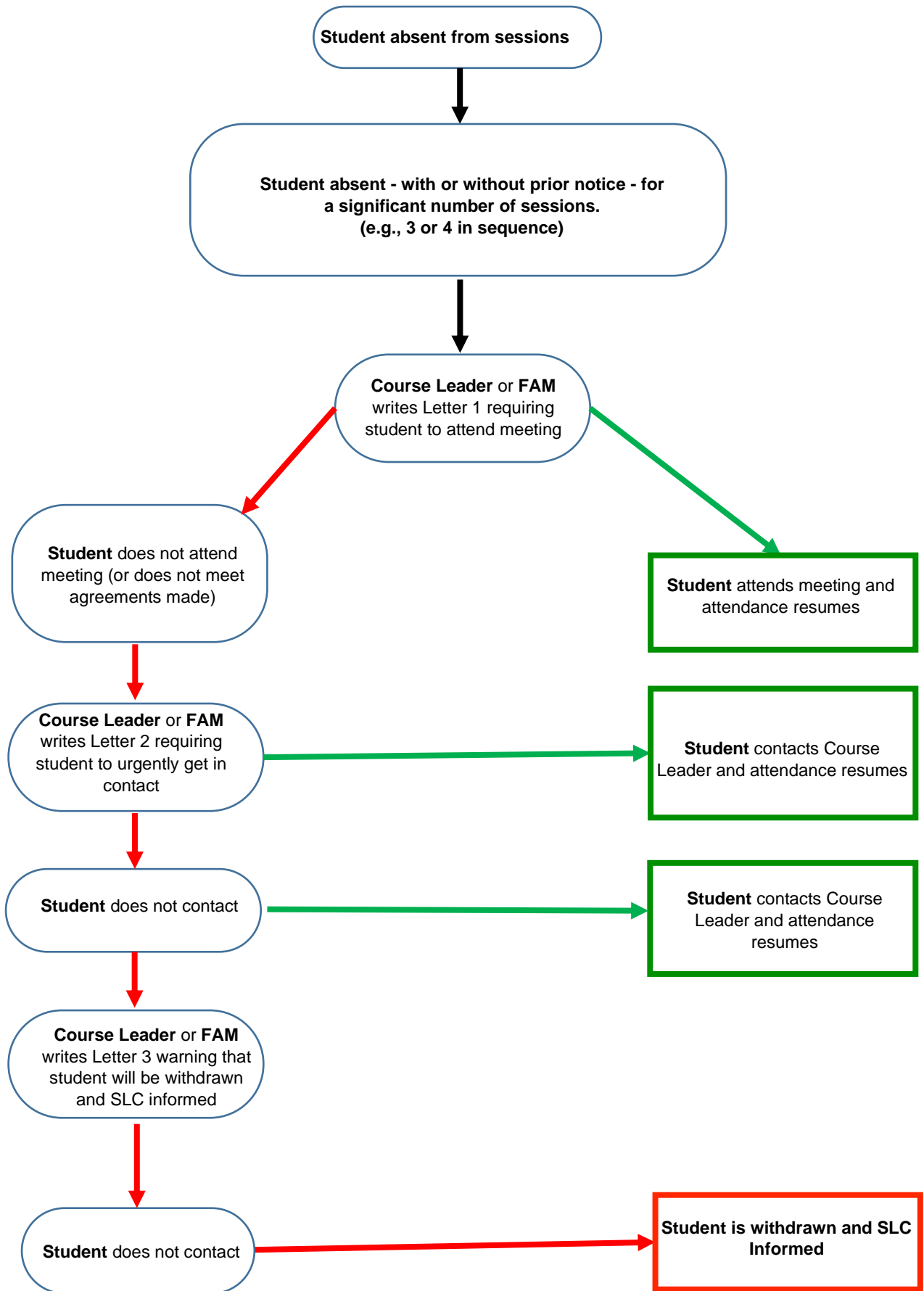
All students should strive to achieve 100% attendance. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, attendance should not drop below 85%. This is the figure advised to students on the HE Bursary Application Form as being required in order to receive their termly payment.

## **6. Prolonged or repeated absences – the process**

Members of staff should follow a step-by-step process to support students with prolonged or repeated absences.

This process is outlined in the flowchart below. The flowchart refers to three letters written to students during the prolonged or repeated absences process, and sample letters are included in Section 9 for convenience, although it is appreciated that colleagues may wish to customise these in order to suit the individual circumstances.

**8. Prolonged or repeated absence – process flowchart**



## 9. Prolonged or repeated absence – example template letters

The flowchart refers to three letters. Suggested examples are offered here.

### Letter - 1

Dear [Student Name]

Reference: Attendance for [Course Name]

It has been brought to my attention that your attendance is below the college targets. It is vitally important that you fully re-engage and demonstrate your commitment to the course. The academic team have expressed concern and would like to help.

As a consequence, I am requesting you to attend a meeting with me here at the college on [Date – Time] at [Campus - Room] to discuss your attendance and how we should proceed. Please bring along any supporting evidence for your absence.

Should you wish to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to contact me on [Contact phone number and email address].

### Letter - 2

Dear [Student Name],

Reference: Attendance for [Course Name]

It has been brought to my attention that you have not attended any sessions since our meeting on [Meeting date and time]. As discussed, we are very concerned that you are at risk of seriously falling behind with work and ultimately, of being unable to progress with your course.

Or

You have not responded to my letter requiring you to attend a meeting to discuss attendance issues.

At this point, there are a number of options available including, but not limited to, re-engaging with your course, applying for extenuating circumstances, suspending your studies or withdrawal.

It is important that you contact me without delay so that we can identify the best way forward.

Please can you contact me by [Date], to discuss the next steps. If I do not hear from you by [Date], you will be withdrawn from the programme without further notice. You should be aware that, in this event, necessary information will be shared with Student Finance England.

### Letter - 3

Dear [Student Name],

Reference: Withdrawal from [Course Name]

As your attendance has unfortunately not improved.

Or

As I have written to you on two previous occasions, the first inviting you to a meeting to discuss your attendance on [date] and the second requiring you to contact me by [date] and I have not heard from you.

I can confirm that we have now withdrawn you from the course with effect from the last day of your attendance, [date]. This information will be passed to Student Finance England in due course.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

### 10. Withdrawal - student record update

When withdrawing a student, the Faculty Area Manager (FAM) must submit an e-change request on ebs:ontrack confirming the last date of attendance and the reason for leaving (e.g., 'Personal', 'Ceased to Attend', 'No Contact', 'Employment'). MIS will confirm the withdrawal on EBS and close the student's academic record.

The HE Office will advise the Student Loans Company (SLC) and Finance will send a final invoice for any outstanding fees.

### 11. Suspension ('Intercalation') – student record update

If a student is suspending their studies (officially called 'Intercalation'), the Course Leader will have already discussed this with the student and completed an **Intercalation Request Form**.

The FAM will submit an e-change request on ebs:ontrack as a withdrawal, selecting 'student taking agreed break in learning' as the reason and adding a note stating when the student is due to return.

The HE Office will inform the Student Loans Company of the suspension and make arrangements to contact the student prior to resuming their studies.