

LINCOLN COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY
POLICY
for Higher Education

POLICY CQ/PO/27

SPONSOR
Director of Performance and Standards

Equality and Diversity Statement

Lincoln College strives to treat all its members and visitors fairly and aims to eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination, specifically across all protected characteristics. We will work towards a fair and just organisation and promote inclusion for all those impacted by Lincoln College and the wider community.

LINCOLN COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1 PURPOSE

This policy outlines the expectations for student attendance and engagement across all Higher Education (HE) programmes. It ensures compliance with the Student Loans Company (SLC) funding requirements and applies to all HE learners, including those studying full-time, part-time, or via blended delivery. This policy runs concurrently alongside the UK Visa and Immigration guidance for international student study visa requirements.

2 AIMS

All learners must recognise that good attendance and punctuality will maximise achievement and enhance not only their learning experience but also develop their employability skills. This policy, therefore, aims to provide clear expectations on learners' attendance and punctuality, and how the college monitors the attendance of home and international learners. In pursuit of maintaining good attendance and punctuality, the policy also gives guidance on the actions to be put in place where learners are found to be below acceptable levels of attendance.

2.1 Definition of Attendance

In line with SLC guidance, *attendance* refers to a student's **active participation in their course**, which may include:

- Physical presence at scheduled teaching sessions (lectures, seminars, clinics)
- Engagement with online learning platforms and digital content
- Attendance at placements, tutorials, or supervised practice
- Submission of assessments or participation in academic forums

Attendance is not limited to physical presence and must be evidenced through auditable engagement records.

Learners are not permitted to work from a distance 'at home' without prior agreement with the Assistant Principal Higher Education.

2.2 Policy Statement

- Lincoln College is required to confirm learner attendance to the SLC to release tuition fee and maintenance payments.
- Learners must meet attendance expectations to remain eligible for funding.
- The institution must not claim SLC funding for learners who are not actively attending or engaging with their course.
- A published, auditable attendance policy is a condition of SLC compliance.
- Lincoln College is required to monitor attendance and engagement of international students as a part of the student study sponsor regulations.

3 SUMMARY OF COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS OF ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

- 3.1 The college expects 100% attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions. This includes workshops, work experience, compulsory visits and activities, tutorials etc. The College will act on attendance levels that fall below 85%.
- 3.2 Learners will be informed of college standards of attendance and punctuality during induction. They will also be informed of how these have a direct impact on achievement and future career and earnings potential.
- 3.3 Attendance will also be monitored for HE apprentices, work-based learners and learners attending work experience. If there is any difficulty this should be communicated to both the college and the employer/placement. Learners must take the responsibility for such communication as this is an essential life skill.
- 3.4 Attendance will be regularly monitored throughout learners' time at college. Failure to maintain good attendance will be dealt with through the college's Student Conduct Procedure.
- 3.5 Learners are expected to give a good reason for all absences and provide appropriate evidence of support.
- 3.6 Learners are expected to respond to attendance monitoring communications.

Examples of legitimate reasons for authorised absence may include:

- Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of timetabled hours
- Disability-related needs
- Religious holiday
- Attendance at a funeral
- Severe disruption to the transport network
- Driving test
- Learner representatives' meetings
- Responsibilities for caring for a close family member (if this is likely to affect their learning, this should be explored with the learner and support offered)
- Unexpected childcare responsibilities

The institution will make reasonable adjustments in line with its Equality and Diversity Policy.

Examples of absence that will not be authorised include:

- Holidays
- Driving lessons

- Birthdays
 - Leisure activities
 - Shopping
 - Full or part-time work (other than work experience)
 - International students may only do work experience that is integral to the qualification
- 3.7 For unforeseen absences, such as illness, learners must contact the college as soon as they know they will be absent.
- 3.8 To ensure the college meets its safeguarding responsibilities, registers must be taken within the first five minutes of each lesson, either electronically or, in exceptional circumstances, paper-based. If using a paper-based system the electronic register must be brought up to date at the earliest opportunity and in any case by the end of the working day. If any teaching staff member has concerns about a learner absence they must report it immediately to the safeguarding team.
- 3.9 Learners should be praised for good attendance and this should be recorded in ProMonitor/SmartAssessor.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Learner responsibilities

Learners are expected to:

- Attend 100% of all scheduled classes either in person or online relating to their programme of study as confirmed on their learning agreement
 - Arrive on time for the beginning of all lessons
 - Minimise disruption to lessons if arriving late
 - Understand that unauthorised absence will affect learning, opportunities for progression, financial support and may result in action being taken via the college's Student Conduct Procedure
 - Report any absence due to illness or other reason to the college by 8:45am on the first and every subsequent day of absence
 - Do everything possible to avoid necessary absences by making medical appointments outside class time unless it is an emergency
 - Do not book holiday during term time
 - Arrange appointments with careers advisors or other support services outside of lesson time
 - Provide medical evidence for absences of more than five consecutive days
 - Tell the college in advance if they are going to miss a lesson, for example, attending a university open day
- On the first day back in learning after an absence, present evidence such as a doctor's note to the Course Coordinator to support the absence.

4.2 Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring the good attendance and punctuality of their learners and for dealing with attendance and punctuality issues whenever they occur. Specific responsibilities include:

4.2.1 Delivery staff or those taking class registers are responsible for:

- Promoting good punctuality and attendance through their own behaviour and teaching standards by arriving on time to each lesson
- Accurately completing the register on the day of attendance with the correct mark within the first 5 minutes of the start of the session
- Noting in the register any absences and lateness
- Challenge any learner lateness
- Following up absence with the learner when they next meet
- Reporting any persistent issues with learners to the Curriculum Lead
- Update ProMonitor/SmartAssessor with notes and actions
- Implementing the Student Conduct Procedure with learners who fail to meet attendance or punctuality expectations, if the learner is an international student inform the International Department.

Notes: Teaching staff must give administrators the information they need to manage student finance in line with SLC service standards. This includes register marks and any changes to a student's enrolment status. SLC track performance on attendance confirmations and notifications of suspensions and withdrawals. If we consistently fail to meet the service standards, this can jeopardise the funding available to students.

4.2.2 Administrative support staff are responsible for:

- Receiving and recording absences reported by learners (curriculum admin)
- Alerting the Course Coordinator to learner absence (curriculum admin)
- Providing a 14-day non-attendance report to the Course Coordinator (HE admin)
- Maintaining a local log of learner absence (curriculum admin)
- Updating learner records on ProSolution to reflect absences (curriculum admin)
- Withdraw learners promptly when a withdrawal form is received (HE admin)
- Notify the relevant university partner of withdrawn learners promptly (HE admin)
- Confirm attendance accurately to the SLC (HE admin)
- Retain sufficient records to demonstrate compliance (HE admin & curriculum admin)
- International administration will provide support on UK Visa & Immigration requirements and compliance

4.2.3 Student Services staff are responsible for:

- Supporting the curriculum team with unauthorised absence associated with welfare or safeguarding concerns.

4.2.4 **Course Coordinators** are responsible for:

- Addressing attendance and punctuality issues with learners.
- Directly support learners to improve attendance and punctuality, and where possible, signpost to other support which will enable attendance and good punctuality.
- Work with delivery staff to monitor attendance and punctuality.
- Implementing the Student Conduct Procedure with learners who fail to meet attendance or punctuality expectations and for all learners that fall below 85%.
- International students failing the attendance policy should be notified to the International Department.
- Process learner withdrawals promptly when engagement ceases, following full completion of the Student Conduct Procedure.
- Relevant HE withdrawal form must be completed accurately ensuring last date of attendance as marked on registers matches that noted on the withdrawal form. Note: The Student Conduct Procedure must be started and completed within a 60-day window to ensure SLC compliance.

Notes: Teaching staff must give administrators the information they need to manage student finance in line with SLC service standards. This includes register marks and any changes to a student's enrolment status. SLC track performance on attendance confirmations and notifications of suspensions and withdrawals. If we consistently fail to meet the service standards, this can jeopardise the funding available to students.

- **Monitoring and Intervention**

- Attendance is monitored weekly via registers. Digital engagement logs may also be used to determine engagement but they are not the main reference point for attendance.
- Learners identified as at risk due to low attendance will be contacted and supported through an intervention process.
- Persistent non-attendance may result in withdrawal from the course and notification to the SLC, which may affect funding and student study visa status (where applicable).

4.2.5 **Curriculum Leads** are responsible for:

- Setting and maintaining clear expectations of attendance and punctuality in their area.
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality of the learners in their area and take action where levels do not meet expectations.
- Design local initiatives to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Design local approaches to reward and recognise excellent attendance and punctuality.

- Implementing the Student Conduct Procedure with learners who fail to meet attendance or punctuality expectations, if an international student, liaise with the International Coordinator too. Note: The Student Conduct Procedure must be started and completed within a 60-day window to ensure SLC compliance.

4.2.6 **Senior Managers** are responsible for:

- Setting and maintaining clear expectations of attendance and punctuality at the college.
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality trends across the college and instigate action where levels do not meet expectations.
- Design college initiatives to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Design college approaches to reward and recognise excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Implementing the Student Conduct Procedure with learners who fail to meet attendance or punctuality expectations. Note: The Student Conduct Procedure must be started and completed within a 60-day window to ensure SLC compliance.
- Ensuring compliance with UKVI responsibilities.

5 **ACTION IN CASES OF CONTINUED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

5.1 All staff have a responsibility to identify and address periods of continued unauthorised learner absence.

5.2 Where a learner does not respond to communication from the college regarding their absence, the Student Conduct Procedure will be triggered.

6 **PROLONGED PERIODS OF AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

6.1 Where a learner experiences prolonged absence from classes for authorised reasons, for example, due to a medical issue or disability, student services will support that learner to return to college.

6.2 Where a learner knows they will be absent from college, for example in hospital, learners should engage with their curriculum team to request notes and assignments from staff and agree revised deadlines if appropriate through the mitigation/extension process.

6.3 Where a learner has been suspended as part of the Student Conduct Procedure, work will be sent to them to facilitate the learner staying on track and progressing wherever possible. In such circumstances, where an investigation results in a learner returning to college, curriculum areas will assist the learner in making up lost time and missed work.

6.4 If an international student is expected to have a prolonged period of authorised absence, the International Department should be consulted on the UKVI regulations prior to authorising the absence.

7 REWARD AND RECOGNITION FOR LEARNERS

The college recognises that good attendance is a valuable life skill that will enable learners to gain and sustain employment. As such, curriculum areas should recognise and praise excellent attendance and punctuality, for example, nominations for learner spotlight awards.

8 REVIEW OF THE ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

The Academic Affairs Committee will review the Attendance and Punctuality Policy for Higher Education students on an annual basis and make recommendations for its development.