**Student Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

CECOS College London recognises the relationship between good attendance, punctuality and student success. Persistent lateness and lack of attendance is disruptive to the teaching and learning activities of all college students, and leads to poor submission rates and success ratios.

**The aims of this procedure are**:

* to enable all absences to be fairly and consistently dealt with across the College.
* to monitor and improve the attendance of all students.

In interpreting these procedures the decision of the College is final. The College may amend this procedure at any time and may also take into consideration additional requirements and demands of partner institutions in relation to the circumstances of individual cases.

The College seeks to actively encourage student attendance of all students, and attendance monitoring is an important tool in indicating those students at risk of not completing their chosen course.

**External references**

The College has developed this policy based on advice and guidance set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and the requirements of partner colleges and university as well as awarding body regulations.

**Definitions**

Attendance refers to the expected attendance of all students on every element of their programme. This refers to all compulsory lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions, tutorials and any form of summative or formative assessment. All students should refer to the academic calendar and timetables.

Attendance requirements are inclusive of all sessions whether completed as a large group in lectures, small group for tutorials, or individual sessions (such as dissertation supervision or work placement).

Attendance is expected for all sessions whether they are run by College academics, or outside professionals/trainers.

Monitoring refers to all recording of student attendance, whether electronic or paper based.

Students funded via the Student Loans Company (SLC) are required by the College to have a minimum attendance record of 80% in each term of study. Failure to do so may result in termination of studies.

**Attendance requirements**

As part of the terms and conditions of enrolment at the College, students agreed to comply with the CECOS College Code of Conduct, which specifies that students are expected to attend all lectures, seminars and tutorials, and where attendance falls below 80%, actions will be taken including consideration for withdrawal. Where attendance is unsatisfactory students will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Procedure, and registration on the programme may be cancelled. (See Appendix 1)

Students are required to arrive punctually for **all** classes, compulsory activities, tutorials and review sessions. This includes any work experience placements, where applicable. It is not acceptable for any part-time work or external activities to affect students’ ability to attend classes.

**Recording Attendance**

All students will have their attendance recorded for every lecture, seminar, workshop, or practical session, and registers will be centrally collated to identify absence levels. The policy does not dictate how the registers are to be taken, and this is at the discretion of the administration team, but a central electronic record must be maintained.

Attendance is automatically uploaded on the College SMS by administrative staff to enable analysis and overview of each individual student’s attendance. Data will be analysed and monitored by administrative staff in the College using in-house software.

All authorised and non-authorised absences are recorded, and action taken where necessary (further information given below). Where a student misses classes they will be contacted by phone, email and/or SMS and asked to explain the reasons for their absence. Students **are required** **to respond** to these messages.

Tutors are required **to mark attendance as late for any student arriving** **15 minutes** after the scheduled start time of the class, **and as absent if they arrive more than 30 minutes late**. Students arriving late are expected to go to reception and record the reason for their late arrival.

**Absence notification (short-term)**

Where there are valid reasons for absence students must provide proof, including doctor’s notes, evidence of an accident, or other documentation. Where a student knows in advance that they will not be able to attend their classes, they must notify the College and provide supporting evidence for their absence. The following rules will apply to absences:

* During term time students will not be given leave of absence for overseas national holidays or attendance of family functions etc.
* No student will be granted authorised leave of absence for more than 2 weeks during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances and such leave is agreed with the College Management (Programme Manager, Head of Provision and Director of Operations).
* Any absence due to illness must be notified to the course administrator as soon as possible, preferably before 10.00 am on the day of absence.
* Students who are absent from classes for more than 5 working days must provide an official doctor’s certificate.
* All students must declare any medical condition or disability which is likely to result in their missing a significant number of classes. All female students must inform the College if they are pregnant. Any false declaration, or failure to disclose a condition or pregnancy, may result in a students’ enrolment being cancelled.
* Instances of illness that affect an assessment must be reported to the College, and where relevant, with medical evidence (doctor’s or hospital note). The same is applicable for other extenuating circumstances. (See Extenuating Circumstances and Reasonable Adjustment Policy)

**Long-term or frequent absence**

If students are absent for longer than four weeks without informing their Tutor, Programme Manager, Course Administrator or other senior manager, without providing appropriate evidence to support a legitimate absence (for example major illness or operation), they may be withdrawn from the College. In this circumstance, the College’s Student Disciplinary Procedures will not apply but their withdrawal will be recorded on SMS for any future applications to the College.

All students are at risk of being withdrawn from their programme after consistent and continued periods of absence are recorded. A student whose attendance rate is below 50% at the mid-point of an academic term or is below 50% during the entire term, may be withdrawn from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol on any programme for a minimum of 12 months.

Students are permitted to apply for temporary leave, suspension of studies, or deferral of their programme of study for personal or medical reasons.

**Authorised absences**

4.1 There are some absences which can be marked as an authorised absence. These include:

* illness;
* medical appointments, which could not be made out of college hours;
* a Religious Holiday (up to 3 days);
* a visit to a university interview, a career-related interview;
* a work placement, which is an integral part of the student’s programme of study and for which the student does not receive payment;
* attendance at a probation meeting or a meeting with social worker or UK Border Agency or Embassy staff;
* severe disruption to a student’s method of transport, such as a strike or snowstorm, that leaves the student with no alternative method of travelling to College;
* a College representatives’ meeting or Student Council Meeting.

**Unauthorised/unexplained absences**

The following reasons for absence are **not** acceptable and **cannot** be marked as authorised or explained absences. They include:

* holidays
* part or full time work which is not part of your programme of study
* leisure activities
* birthdays or similar celebrations
* shopping
* driving lessons

Students should be aware that if they take holidays during term time, unless agreed due to exceptional circumstances, their coursework may not be eligible for submission, marking and verification. They will also be called to a meeting in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

**Following up on absences**

1. Unauthorised absences by students will result in a warning letter being sent by central administrators.
2. Following the initial letter, if a student’s absence is still of concern, s/he may be invited to improve the attendance rate and/or is invited to attend a meeting in the College to discuss the reasons behind such absence.
3. Students will not be allowed to take part in tests or submit assignments where their attendance is below that specified for their course.
4. In instances where a student does not attend a scheduled meeting in the College and no viable reason is given for non-attendance at the meeting, the College may withdraw the student from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol on any programme.
5. Should the decision be to withdraw a student from a course, the reasons for the decision must be sent in writing, prior to withdrawal.
6. In cases where students do not attend for the meeting or no communications are received from the student or indeed in cases where students attended the preliminary attendance meeting but no improvements in attendance are seen, the student may be withdrawn from the programme.
7. Students funded by the partner colleges or university whose attendance is below the attendance threshold set by the partner will be required to leave the College and may be reported to the Student Loans Company which may enforce repayment of loan moneys already advanced.

**Deferring units or courses**

Any student who expects to be absent from classes for more than one week for any reason (for example, their own illness, or the illness or death of a close family member) must inform the College as soon as possible.

Any student who becomes pregnant is advised not to continue with their studies at least 5 weeks before the expected date for the birth of the child. CECOS College advises all students who are pregnant to notify the College so that suitable arrangement to interrupt studies can be made, and students enabled to resume studies, having made all the necessary arrangements for the welfare of their child. The student will be responsible for any associated expenses.

UK students and students with rights of residency who may be pregnant are expected to attend all classes until the 35th week of pregnancy. Normal attendance rules will apply. Students will normally be granted an authorised absence for a maximum of 3 months, from the 35th week of pregnancy, and to resume 8 weeks after the child is born, unless they apply to defer their studies for a longer period.

**Appendix 1**

**Disciplinary actions for breaking the student attendance requirements**

Where student contravene the Student Attendance Procedures they will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Procedures as outlined below:

**Stage One:** Students will be spoken to by a member of the academic team e.g., Course Administrator, Tutor, Programme Manager, Student Services Manager or other appropriate senior manager. Students will be expected to explain absences and provide/agree an action plan for improvement (Stage One) Student attendance will be monitored.

**Stage Two:** If a students’ attendance fails to improve a further meeting will be held with the students and, if appropriate, a final written warning will be provided (Stage Two) indicating that if they continue to not attend you may be suspended from their course. Warnings may also include conditions. The College may decide to:

* Not to enter a student for examinations/external assessment
* Not to submit their coursework for verification
* Not to allow them to progress to the next year/level of their course

**Stage Three:** Where the attendance of a student continues to be of concern they will be excluded from the College (Stage Three), either temporarily or as a permanent measure. A letter explaining this decision will be sent to the student by a senior manager. Students may also be suspended or excluded from the College for the non-payment of fees, the non-submission of assignments and failure to progress academically, failure to abide by the rules of the College.

Where students are excluded, they have the right to appeal against the decision.

**Appeals**

Students wishing to appeal the decision to exclude them must do so in writing to the Head of Provision within 5 days of the exclusion. They must state why they are appealing the decision. If there are no clear grounds for the appeal and the College has followed its’ procedures correctly an Appeals Panel will not be called. If the Appeal Panel goes ahead it will be dealt with in line with the College’s Appeals Procedure. The Appeal Panel’s decision is final.

**Other related documents**

1. Student Code of Conduct
2. Student Disciplinary Procedure
3. *UK Quality Code* references: in particular Chapter B2 Indicator 6; Chapter B9 Indicators 2-3

**Appendix 2: Student Disciplinary Procedure**

A student may be excluded from the College if his/her behaviour is not satisfactory or his/her attendance falls below that required. After his/her case has been properly considered, according to the disciplinary procedures specifically related attendance as set out in this document, procedures will result in written warnings and ultimately exclusion.

**Student act of misconduct**

**(non attendance)**

**Stage 1**

Meeting with Course Administrator or Tutor

**Verbal and/or written warning**

**Failure to meet the agreed conditions or**

**2nd act of misconduct**

**Final written warning and conditions**

**Stage 2**

Meeting with Programme Manager or Student Services Manager

**Failure to meet agreed conditions or**

**3rd act of misconduct**

**Letter of exclusion**

**Stage 3**

Letter of exclusion or final warning

**Appeals**

The student can appeal the decision in writing to the Principal within 5 days with clear grounds for the appeal.