**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 student engagement, 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 target support to improve the attendance of all students
* to provide the best possible learning experience and professional behaviour.

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 the attendance of all students as part of their Personal and Professional Development, and link this to Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to support awareness of studentship, self-discipline and building of skills, knowledge and understanding. Attendance monitoring is an important tool in indicating those students at risk of disengaging and not completing their chosen course.

**External references**

The College has developed this policy with consideration of the guidance set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Sector-Agreed Principles:

* Principal 2: Engaging Students as Partners
* Principle 10: Supporting Students to Achieve their Potential

The Policy also reflects the requirements of partner colleges, partner universities and relevant awarding body regulations.

**Definitions**

**Attendance** refers to the expected presence and engagement of all students with every element of their programme. This includes to all compulsory lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions, tutorials and any form of summative or formative assessment preparation. All students should refer to their course descriptors, assessment schedules and timetables for further details.

**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 placements). Attendance is expected for all sessions whether they are run by College academics, or outside professionals/trainers to a minimum of **80%** for each module, term and programme.

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

Students funded via the Student Loans Company (SLC) or by other government and local authority grants are required by the College to have a minimum attendance record of **80%** in each term or period of study. ***Failure to do meet minimum attendance requirements 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 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. All attendance will be uploaded to a central electronic record so that individual and overall attendance at programme, campus and College level can be monitored and evaluated.

Attendance is automatically uploaded on the College SMS by administrative staff to enable analysis and overview of each individual student’s attendance from the first week of the course. **Students who fail to maintain over 80% attendance in the first two weeks are warned that unless attendance improves by week 4, they will be withdrawn.**

Data will be analysed and monitored by attendance staff in the College using in-house software and shared with the Head of Higher Education, the Director of Operations and the Senior Management Team, as well as with Programme Managers, lecturers and other support staff as appropriate.

The College will regularly ensure that individuals and groups of students are aware of and adhere to the attendance policy through a variety of methods including:

* Induction – 80% minimum attendance made clear
* Email/text and word-of-mouth reminders to students after each absence and failure to meet 80% attendance.
* Informal meetings and tutorials
* Meeting with the Student Services, Course Leaders or Head of School.
* Discussions with student representatives
* Formal attendance meetings
* Official warnings
* Disciplinary Committee
* A warning about potential exclusion from the College.

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)**

If a student is unable to attend a scheduled class due to illness or other reasons, the student must inform the College as soon as possible before the class start time. Absence may be notified to the College via email to attendance@cecos.ac.uk (London), attendance.br@cecos.ac.uk (Birmingham), attendance.eb@cecos.ac.uk (Bradford), or by phone, stating the reason why they are unable to attend.

Where there are valid reasons for absence students, such as feeling unwell with a bad cold, student may let the College know that they will not be able to attend classes for the week. For any longer absences 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 Higher Education or Head of Further Education 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, pregnancy or medical/health reasons.

**Authorised absences**

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.

**Protocols for monitoring and following up on absences**

**Stage 1**

1. All registers will be completed and the start of each class, workshop, tutorial or other timetables activity, and any students arriving between 15 – 30 minutes after the scheduled start time will be marked as late. Students arriving more than 30 minutes late will be marked as absent and required to report to reception.
2. Each unauthorised absences by students will result in a warning text or email being sent by central administrators (Compliance Officer).
3. More than two consecutive absences will be followed up by a phone call to the student or a request for the student to contact the College and any possible mitigating circumstances will be identified and to remind them of the College’s attendance requirements.

**Stage 2**

1. Following the initial email/texts and telephone follow-up, if a student’s absence is still of concern, s/he will be invited to attend a meeting in the College Attendance Office or for FE, and the Academic Mentor for the programme to discuss the reasons behind such absences.
2. Students who have been called to an attendance meeting will be required to submit any and all evidence linked to heath, care or other factors which are or have affected their ability to attend classes.
3. Continued unauthorised absences will result in the students having to attend a meeting with the Programme Manager, Assistant Dean or the Director of Quality who may refer them to the Principal or the College Disciplinary Panel who will decide on what penalties may be applied.

**Stage 3**

1. Where a student persistently fails to meet the College’s minimum attendance requirements, they will not be allowed to take part in tests or submit assignments, and may be required to repeat a semester or year.
2. 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.
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 taking place.
4. In cases where students either:
	1. do not attend for the scheduled meeting
	2. no communications are received from the student
	3. no improvements take place following the attendance meeting or disciplinary panel meeting

the student may be withdrawn from the programme.

Students funded by the partner colleges or universities 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, who may enforce repayment of loan moneys already advanced.

**Role of Academic Mentor**

The Academic Mentor is responsible for handling students with attendance below 80%. They work closely with lecturers and Academic Coordinators to ensure proper intervention strategies are implemented. The key responsibilities include:

1. Maintaining a tracking sheet for all the students and students below 80% attendance.
2. Updating sick notes and medical records on Academia platform if provided by students.
3. Ensuring students submit necessary documentation (EC Form/LSS for students for all the programme) with the help of the Academic Coordinator.
4. Conduct one-on-one meetings with at-risk or high-risk students less than 60% and make an action plan.
5. Implement personalized attendance improvement plans and conduct follow-ups.
6. Categorising students as 'At Risk' based on weekly attendance meetings.
7. Providing weekly follow-ups with at-risk students.
8. Keeping detailed records of attendance discussions and outcomes and outcomes update in the Academia platform.
9. Escalating the attendance information of students with less than 60% attendance to Leads/Managers.
10. Providing early academic intervention for students struggling with attendance.

**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.

**A summary document below sets out the key points for all students and staff.**

**Disciplinary actions for students failing to meet 80% attendance requirements.**

Where a student contravenes the CECOS Student Attendance requirements they will be subject to the Student Attendance Disciplinary Procedures as outlined below:

**Stage One:**

1. Students will be spoken to by the College Attendance Officer or the Academic Mentor.
2. Students will be expected to explain absences and provide/agree an action plan for improvement which will be closely monitored.
3. **Within the first two weeks of starting a course** or a new term/semester students must have at least 80% attendance and will be given a formal warning that should their attendance not meet the 80% requirement by week 4 they will be at risk of being withdrawn and maintenance allowances stopped.

**Stage Two:**

1. If a student’s attendance fails to improve following Stage 1 by week 6, they will be invited to a meeting with a senior academic manager or with the Director of Quality. A final written warning will be provided confirming that continued poor attendance will result in their withdrawal 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:**

1. Where the attendance of a student continues to be of concern, they will be referred to the Principal or the College Disciplinary Committee who will decide whether to withdraw the student.
2. A letter explaining this decision (Appendix 2) will be sent to the student on behalf of the Principal. 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 Principal within **5 days of the letter of withdrawal**. They must state why they are appealing the decision. The letter of appeal will be reviewed by the Principal, Head of Higher Education or Head of Further Education and an independent senior manager.

Where there are no clear grounds for the appeal and the College has followed its’ procedures correctly the appeal may be rejected. Where grounds for appeal are clear, the Appeals Panel and the concern 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* *for Higher Education: Engaging Students as partners.*

**Student Absence Procedure**

A student may be excluded from the College if his/her attendance remains below 80% without appropriate information and supporting evidence. After his/her case has been properly considered, according to the Attendance Policy requirements, procedures will result in written warnings and ultimately exclusion.

**Student absent with explanation or prior agreement**

**Timeline**

**Week 2** (Term)

**Week 4**

 Not met 80% target

**Week 6** when below 80%

**Within 5 days** of receipt of exclusion letter

**Stage 1**

Written message sent following absence. Two consecutive absences – meeting with Attendance Officer or Course tutor for FE

**Verbal and/or written warning**

**Failure to meet the agreed conditions for attendance**

**Stage 2**

Meeting with Programme Manager or other senior manager.

**Final written warning and conditions**

 **Failure to meet agreed conditions or show improved attendance**

**Letter of withdrawal/ & funding stopped**

**Stage 3**

Meeting with the Head of Teaching & Learning or Disciplinary Panel leading to withdrawal if no mitigating circumstances found.

**Appeal Successful & student re-admitted**

**Appeals**

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

 Yes

 No

**Written final confirmation of exclusion**

 No

**Repeated Absence Flowchart**

**Appendix 1 – Higher Education Protocol**

Student absent from timetabled session – logged on register by teacher

**Student**

Contact Attendance Staff or email before start of the session to advise of absence, reasons and duration

**Staff/Tutor**

Complete Register noting absence – showing agreed or unforeseen absence

Student is withdrawn & letter sent to Partner to notify Student Loans Company

Student sent second meeting notification

Withdrawal letter sent

Student does not attend meeting

Student does not attend meeting & continues to miss classes

Student attends meeting and all classes

Attendance Officer sends warning notification to student regarding 80% attendance requirements.

Attendance Officer sets up meeting with tutor to discuss absences

Student attends meeting & resumes attendance

Student meets with Director of Quality or the Principal where no improvement in attendance shown.

**Appendix 2 – Further Education Attendance Protocol**

Students absent from timetabled session – logged on register by teacher.

**Student**

Contact tutor or email before start of the session to advise of absence, reasons and duration.

**Staff/Tutor**

Complete Register by 10.30am noting absence – showing agreed or unforeseen absence.

Attendance Officer contacts the student to agree return date & reminder of 80% attendance requirements.

Student does not attend on agreed return date continues to miss classes

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Student attends on agreed date and all classes

Student contacted agree second return date second meeting notification

Student attends returns & resumes attendance.

Student does not attend next class

Student is withdrawn referral agent informed.

Withdrawal letter/email sent

**Appendix 3**

Date:

***Private and Confidential***

**First Name Surname (Student)
Address 1
Address 2
County
Postcode**

Re: Notification of withdrawal from programme of study

Dear xxx,

After a review of attendance and evidence of academic progress and conduct matters, as outlined in the College Student Code of Conduct, and a recent meeting with you, the Course Manager’s feedback, the College has reached a decision that you should be formally withdrawn from your current course. Where appropriate, we have tried to contact you to arrange progress reviews and warnings have been sent in connection with non-attendance.

Kindly note the action of formally withdrawing you from your course of study will impact your life as a student as follows:

* You will not be able to resume or transfer your course to any other academic programme within the College and/or will not be able to complete your first year due to the above-mentioned reasons. This *could leave you liable to pay back any tuition fees to The Student Loans Company that were received for your studies. The right is reserved to communicate your enrolment and attendance history with The Student Loans Company so a fair assessment can be made.*

If you believe that the College has not been made aware of vital information regarding your attendance or academic progress, you may appeal this decision within 5 working days of receipt of this letter. Any appeal must be directed to myself in the first instance, and the grounds along with supporting evidence in relation to your appeal must be set out in full. You may wish to contact us on *<telephone number> or email <email ID>*to discuss the appeal procedures.

Please allow further 10 working days for appeals to be processed.

Yours Sincerely

Principal of CECOS College