

Higher Education Attendance Policy & Procedure

TAMESIDE COLLEGE (2023/2024)

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Purpose

- 1.1 Tameside College (We) believe that excellent attendance is vital to help a student (You) succeed on your chosen course. We therefore set high expectations regarding your attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions. We expect all our learners to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality for all timetabled sessions, this will help you prepare for your future whether that is in employment or continuing your education.
- 1.2 Where you are unable to meet the expected attendance or punctuality levels as listed in section 5.1, due to a health, wellbeing, or fitness to study concern, please refer to the [Acceptable Behaviour policy](#), [HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) and the [HE Fitness to study Policy](#) for further guidance on support available.
- 1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with the [Learning Support and SEND Policy](#), [HE College Charter](#) and the [HE Terms and Conditions](#) and is written in accordance with the College's strategic obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

Scope

- 2.1 This policy and procedure apply to students (You) completing Higher Education (HE) courses at Tameside College, including those studying Collaborative Provision courses with Chester and Huddersfield universities. This policy does not apply to students who are on pre-agreed study breaks ([deferrals](#)).

Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Below are a list of roles and responsibilities for the Higher Education Attendance policy and procedure:
 - **Course Teacher:** Monitors attendance using the online registers and chases up any non-attendees. Records details of conversations with non-attendees on ProSolution.
 - **Heads of Department:** For persistent low attendance, Heads of Department will meet with the student to discuss their attendance. This may lead to support

arrangements or disciplinary procedures depending on the circumstances for low attendance.

- **HE Quality Officer:** Monitors attendance and reports to Higher Education Quality Management Group. Responsible for managing extenuating circumstances requests and processes.
- **Assistant Principal:** The Assistant Principal will be responsible for the implementation and review of the policy. The Assistant Principal will be involved in this process when it is necessary to escalate a low attendance concern.
- **Senior Leadership Team:** Along with the Assistant Principal, responsible for the review of the policy and ensuring that the policy is fair and transparent for students.

Support

- 4.1 Those learners who are not meeting our expected levels of attendance, punctuality or engagement will receive a variety of support as deemed appropriate, including contacting the Programme Lead and Progress and Welfare Advisors for possible reasonable adjustments under the [Learning Support and SEND Policy](#) .
- 4.2 A support plan may include extra tuition sessions or help with time management.
- 4.3 If you are unable to complete the one of the support applications forms yourself, due to your circumstances, you may appoint an [advocate](#) to do this on your behalf. This can be a friend, family member or member of staff. If you wish to use an advocate you will need to inform us of who this person is and in what capacity, they are acting for you, i.e. writing the form on your behalf and/or attending support meetings with you.
- 4.4 If you require advice and guidance on any of the processes set out in this policy, you should contact your tutor in the first instance.
- 4.5 Help and support regarding mental health or other health concerns is available from our [Progress and Welfare Advisors](#).

Notifying us of an absence

Ways to Report an Absence:

- 5.1 To report an absence, you must ring the absence line – 0161 908 6601. Calls will be answered between 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday in term time. The rest of the time you are welcome to leave a message on the automated message service.
- 5.2 You will be asked to provide your name, date of birth, first line of address and reason for the absence.
- 5.3 If you are unable to phone us you can email your teacher, copying in qualityteam@tameside.ac.uk and state your reason for your absence. (Your teacher's contact details are available in your course handbook).
- 5.4 If you are unable to report and absence yourself, you can ask someone to ring the absence Line or email the qualityteam@tameside.ac.uk on your behalf. This could be a friend or relative.

Next Steps

What Happens Next:

- 5.5 Once you notify the absence line the information you provide will be logged by the Central Admin Team on ProSolution, this will mean your register will be automatically updated as status **P (authorised absence)** this will inform your teacher.
- 5.6 Upon your return to College your teacher will inform you of any steps you need to take to catch up for lost time, as well as discuss any wellbeing requirements or support you may need.

Short-Term Absence:

- 5.7 Where the absence is five-working days or less, you will be expected to catch up on missed work.

Long-Term Absence:

- 5.8 Where the absence is over five-working days, you may need to apply for an extension or a study support plan. Please see the [HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).
- 5.9 Your teacher will discuss with you, ways to help you catch up missed work.

- 5.10 If your absence is for a significant period or your absence has caused you to be significantly behind in your work that it is unlikely you will be able to catch up, you may need find it more beneficial to defer or withdraw from your course. Please see the [HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) .

Persistent Non-Attendance

- 5.11 If you have been absent from College without a valid reason and/or without notifying us on multiple occasions your teacher will discuss with you the reasons for these absences. If you are struggling to attend your course the Welfare Team will be able to assist on finding support to help with your attendance or explore other options with you, in some cases this could be deferral or withdrawal. ,,
- 5.12 If you do not engage with our attempts to contact you regarding your attendance and your attendance drops below 85%, this may lead to the implementation of the Breach of Acceptable Behaviour Process (HE [Acceptable Behaviour policy](#)). This could lead to you being withdrawn from the course in line with the [HE Terms and Conditions](#). You may be liable for outstanding fees as per the Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Refund Policy.

Policy Principals

- 6.1 It is expected that you will attend all your timetabled sessions and arrive promptly, unless you have a valid good reason not to as outlined in section 5.6. If your attendance drops below 85%, disciplinary action will be taken as outlined in [section 7](#).
- 6.2 Any absences you have from the college will be recorded on your attendance record which can be viewed in Student Portal.

Punctuality

- 6.3 Punctual arrival to timetabled sessions is expected of you. This is because:
- The first few minutes of every session are an important time when your teachers may want to introduce a new topic.
 - Arriving late affects your own learning and distracts others.

- Where punctuality becomes an issue, this will result in disciplinary action being taken which is outlined in [section 7](#) below.
- 6.4 If you arrive late to a session, you will be marked as present, but the lateness will be recorded on ProSolution. You will be expected to explain the reason for your lateness with your teacher at the end of the session.
- 6.5 If your punctuality causes us concern, we will take you through the [Attendance procedures](#).

Reasons for Absence

- 6.6 We understand that sometimes an absence may be unavoidable. Where an absence is confirmed by providing evidence of an appointment in the form of a letter, official NHS text message or appointment card and the reason is acceptable, your absence will be authorised.
- 6.7 If you are required to provide evidence for your absence, please see [appendix 2: Evidence Standards](#) for guidance.

Acceptable Reasons for Absences:

- 6.8 The following are examples of absences that **may** be authorised:
- Illness – for illness longer than 7 days you will need to provide a medical note for a medical professional such as a GP doctor.
 - Hospital or orthodontist appointments that cannot be made outside of College hours, confirmed with either an appointment card or letter.
 - A family bereavement.
 - Attendance to a family or close friend's funeral.
 - Unexpected caring responsibilities.
 - Visit to a university to attend an open day or interview– this must be discussed with your teacher before the absence.
 - A career related interview – appointment letter to be provided as evidence.
 - Driving test and theory test (not lessons) – evidence to be provided before the absence.
 - Religious festivals where you have notified us in advance.
 - Jury Service

- Family weddings and/or your own wedding booked prior to commencing the course.
- If you are in college and feel you must leave due to illness, you will need to discuss this with a member of staff before leaving.
- If you are going to be absent from classes due to a college-arranged activity, you will be marked as attending an educational trip. You must ensure that you attend any timetabled sessions that are outside the times of the trip.

Non-Acceptable Reasons for Absences:

6.9 All other absences from classes will be recorded as non-attendance. This is where the reason for the absence is not a satisfactory reason for missing timetabled sessions. Examples of non-attendance are:

- Illness without contacting the teacher/absence line (0161 908 6601) (Specific support arrangements can be discussed with you if you have a long-term illness or specific needs).
- Non-urgent medical appointments (e.g., routine dental appointments). Medical appointments should be made outside of your timetabled sessions wherever possible.
- Language assistance (e.g., translating for a family member) unless an institution-appointed translator is unavailable, for example a hospital appointment.
- Holidays during term time
- Part or full-time work
- Driving lessons: it is expected that you will arrange outside your timetabled sessions.
- Planned Military service (not including emergency crisis deployment).
- Expected childcare responsibilities.
- Accompanying family members to appointments, unless alternative arrangements cannot be made, and you have caring responsibilities.
- Birthdays or similar events
- Religious festivals where you have not notified us in advance.

- Any absence where supporting evidence has been requested and not provided.

Promoting Active Study

- 7.1 Tameside College is committed to helping students succeed. We monitor the engagement of students to provide support where it is needed. When students remain actively engaged with their studies, they are more likely to succeed.
- 7.2 The reasons we encourage active engagement are:
- Active engagement with study helps increase the prospects for a successful outcome for you and can help you engage and progress.
 - The college required by the [Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#) to report HESA data on attendance.
 - Students in receipt of funding through Student Finance England have specific conditions attached to their funding, including that their institution reports details of study engagement.
 - At three points in each academic year, the college is required to report to Student Finance the status of each student in receipt of funding.
 - Lack of engagement can have a negative impact on other students.
 - Progression, achieving to the best of your ability.
 - Staff being able to identify support requirements needed.
- 7.3 Tameside College defines active engagement as interaction with the services provided by the college to enable them to complete the course or module of study unless the student has been granted a deferral in study.
- 7.4 To prove active engagement students must:
- complete activities set by their teachers.
 - submit any assessments that are part of their course assessment.
 - access course material
 - attend tutorials.
 - engaging with Student Support Teams re. academic progress, formal assessments.
 - engage with Student Voice activities such as surveys.

- engage with the college's policies and procedures.
 - responding to communications
 - communicating your needs and concerns to the College so support can be put in place.
- 7.5 The college will confirm active engagement through monthly checks conducted by the HE Quality Officer. The HE Quality Officer will have meetings monthly with the Quality Team to review progress and attendance, and identifying what support has been provided.

Review of Active Engagement

- 7.6 If there is no active engagement, you will be contacted by your teacher to discuss any support you may need.
- 7.7 The HE Quality Officer will get in touch via email to your College and personal email addresses as held on your student file. You will be given 5 working days to respond to the concerns raised in the email and give any reasons why you have been unable to engage with your studies. Your teacher will then meet with you to discuss any support needs required to help you reengage with your studies.
- 7.8 If there are extenuating circumstances preventing you from engaging effectively, you will be able to discuss options with your teacher. For further information, please refer to [HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).
- 7.9 If the circumstances are due to health concerns or disability related a referral can be made by the HE Quality Officer under the Learner Support and SEND policy to ensure you are provided with the support you need to carry on with your studies.

Continued Non-Engagement

- 7.10 Where we receive no response within the 5 working days following the email from your teacher regarding your non-engagement, further actions will be considered under the procedure below.

Attendance and Active Engagement Procedure

Initial Attendance Concerns

- 8.1 Attendance will be closely monitored by the Programme Lead and recorded on ProSolution. If there is a drop in your attendance, you will be notified by your

teacher in the first instance to ensure your attendance does not fall below 85%. Your teacher will discuss with you your level of attendance and the reasons for this.

- 8.2 If your circumstances require more support to enable you to improve your attendance, your teacher will refer you to the [HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).
- 8.3 If your attendance does not improve following this discussion, your teacher will refer you to the Continued Attendance Concerns procedure below.

Continued Attendance Concerns

- 8.4 If, following the attendance discussion, your teacher still has concerns regarding your attendance and your engagement with support offered, they will refer your case to a [Notice to Improve](#).
- 8.5 A support plan will be agreed with you and a review date arranged.
- Look at review of any outstanding work and how this will be completed.
 - Check if any extensions are required for upcoming assignments/assessments.
 - A discussion of the possible consequences of not engaging with this stage of this process.
- 8.6 Your teacher will discuss with you when your Notice to Improve meeting will take place (at least 7 calendar days' notice), to ensure you have enough time to prepare.
- 8.7 You will be given one calendar month to show improvement.
- 8.8 After this one calendar month, you will be given at least 7 calendar days' notice to attend a meeting to discuss your Notice to Improve. In this meeting, your teacher will discuss with you if you have met your improvement targets.
- 8.9 If your teacher has any further concerns regarding your attendance or engagement at the Notice to Improve review meeting, consideration will be made to refer you to the HE [Acceptable Behaviour policy](#), [HE Fitness to Study Policy](#) or Fitness to Practice procedures.

Referral

- 8.10 If you are referred, then your teacher will notify you within 5 working days by email that the Head of Department are considering this. As part of the consideration, the Head of Department will review your case and decide whether to refer you to HE

[Acceptable Behaviour policy](#), [HE Fitness to Study Policy](#) or Fitness to Practice procedures.

- 8.11 Head of Department will consider your case within 5 working days and you will be informed of the outcome via your college email.
- 8.12 Referral to HE [Acceptable Behaviour policy](#), [HE Fitness to Study Policy](#) or Fitness to Practice procedures could lead to deferral or withdrawal from your course.

Fees Liability

- 9.1 If, following a discussion with you, you decide to either defer or withdraw from your course you may be liable for the outstanding fees of your course. For further information on the deferral and withdrawal procedures, please see the [HE Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#). For information regarding refunds of tuition fees, please see the [Tuition Fees and Refund of Tuition Fees Policy](#).
- 9.2 If, following the HE [Acceptable Behaviour Policy](#), [HE Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practice Policy](#), you are withdrawn from your course due to low attendance and/or not actively engaging in your studies, you will still be liable for any outstanding fees up to the point you left the course. For further information regarding this can be found in the [Tuition Fees and Refund of Tuition Fees Policy](#).
- 9.3 For full terms and conditions on your fee's liability, please see the [HE Terms and Conditions](#)

Reasonable Adjustments

- 10.1 In compliance with the [Equality Act 2010](#), we will ensure students who have a disability, long term health condition, mental health difficulty or specific learning difficulty that affects their studies, as well as students facing accessibility issues for other reasons, are effectively supported. If you have declared to Tameside College that you will require reasonable adjustments for your attendance, please contact the HE Quality Officer Helen.Booth@tameside.ac.uk.

Complaints

- 11.1 If you are unsatisfied with the attendance and active engagement procedures or wish to appeal a decision made, you can submit a complaint following our [HE Customer Care Policy](#)

Sharing Information

- 12.1 Your attendance information will only be shared with staff who are directly involved in HE attendance monitoring this includes:
- HE Quality Officer
 - Your Head of Department
 - Head of Quality
 - Head of HE
 - Senior Leadership Team
 - Your teacher/s
- 12.2 Your application and any material relating to your case will be managed and stored in accordance with our [Data protection Policy and Data retention policy](#).

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 13.1 This policy and procedure are inclusive of all Tameside College students, regardless of age, civil status, dependency or caring status, care experience, disability, family status, gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnerships, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, socio-economic background, sex, sexual orientation, or trades union membership status.

Glossary

Active Engagement - includes anything students do to actively participate or interact with their learning and/or materials.

Advocate - a person who speaks, writes, or acts in support or defence of another person.

Breach of Acceptable Behaviour – anything that is an infraction, violation or breaks the rules stated in the Acceptable Behaviour Policy.

Evidence is something that proves or disproves something.

Fitness to Study- ensures that a student is well enough to fully engage in all aspects of the course.

Fitness to Practice – assessing that a student on professional course has the appropriate skills, knowledge, character, and health to study their course or practice their job effectively.

HE Terms & Conditions – a document that forms a contractual relationship between the customer 'you' and the service provider 'the college.'

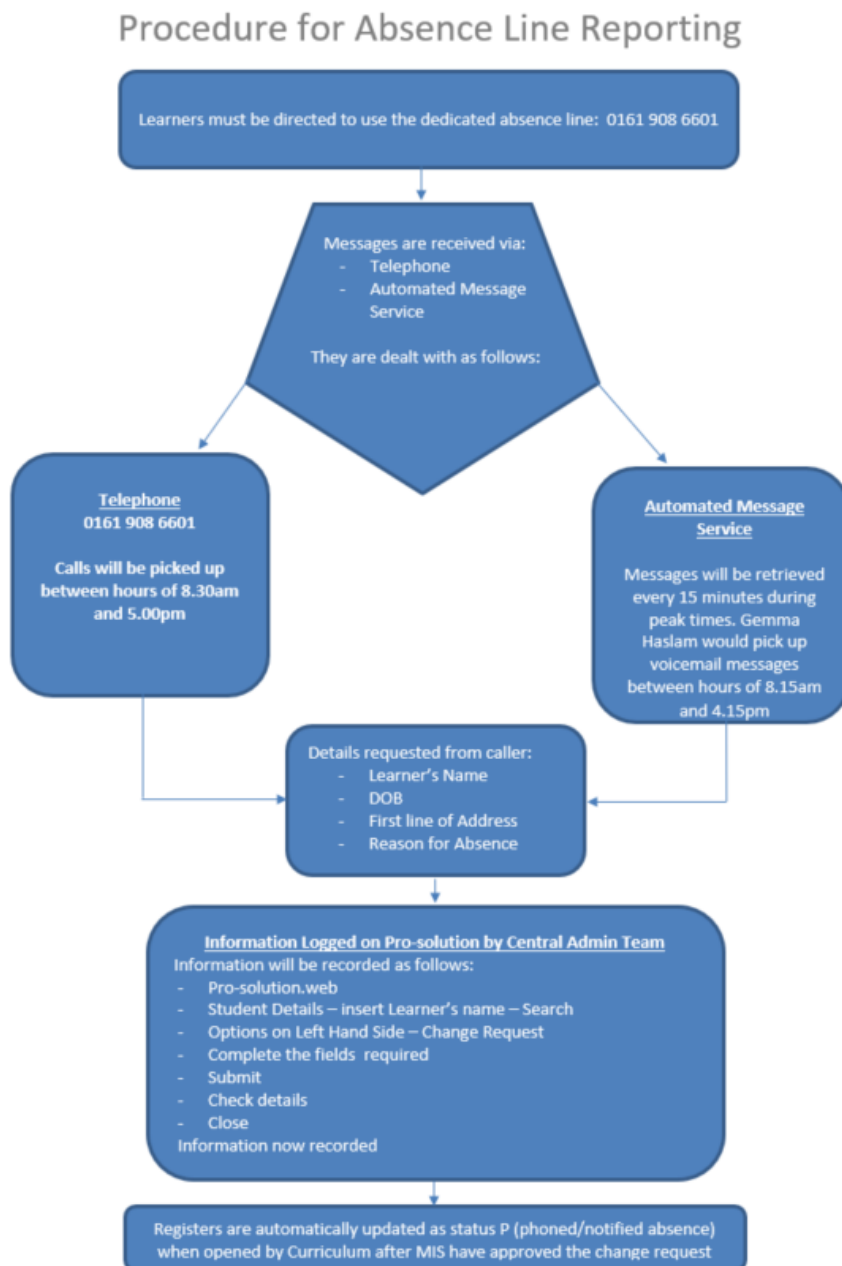
Low Attendance- attendance that falls below 85%

Notice to Improve – a teacher will issue an informal warning to a student outlining what the issue is, what the expectations are to improve and the timescale when a review will take place.

Related documents

- Acceptable Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention Policy
- Equality Act 2010
- Exams Policy
- Extension and Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Withdraws and Deferrals included)
- Fitness to Practice Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- HE Customer Care Policy
- HE Terms & Conditions
- Learner Support SEND Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Tuition Fees & Tuition Fees Refund Policy

Appendix 1 – Staff Procedure for Absence Reporting



Appendix 2: Evidence Standards

The below guidance applies to evidence being submitted to support an absence. Any evidence submitted must give a clear indication of the time period during which you were impacted by the circumstances, be dated, and provided in English.

Acute illness or injury

Acute illness is a term that can cover a very wide range of severity of situations, including what might be considered a minor illness for example a debilitating illness that would reasonably be considered an absence from work for an employed person.

Medical evidence

It is expected that medical certificates are provided by a doctor, but hospital letters are also considered as acceptable evidence. Letters for appointments and other health care professionals may be accepted if it can be shown that it would be possible or reasonable to rearrange the appointment.

Exacerbation of a chronic condition

For students with disabilities or chronic illnesses that fluctuate, may use their support plan as evidence to request a short extension up to 14 days. However, if more time is needed a discussion will need to take place with your teacher about how you can be supported further.

Urgent cause (other than illness)

Bereavement

If you have suffered a bereavement an order of service, obituary, news report or supporting letter from your teacher or family member will be accepted as evidence for an extension. The date of the bereavement and/or funeral will need to be stated on the supporting evidence.

Victim of a crime

If you are a victim of a crime, you can support your request with a police report, incident number, insurance letter and a statement of how the crime impacted your ability to work on your assessments. The date of the crime will need to be stated on the supporting evidence.

Jury Service or requirement to participate in legal proceedings

Requests regarding this should be supported by a jury service letter, a letter from the court or a letter from your solicitor. All the evidence should include the dates of the relevant legal proceedings.

Significant adverse personal or family circumstances

If you are impacted by significant adverse personal or family circumstances you may be able to request an extension if the impact of the circumstances are exceptional, unexpected, and time-limited. Requests can be supported by a statement from you and an independent person describing the impact of the circumstances has had on your ability to complete your work. The independent person could include a solicitor, chaplain or similar, therapist or counsellor, family member's doctor, teacher, or welfare support officer.