



Attendance Policy for Higher Education Courses

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1. Rationale

This policy is a response to the quality agendas and requirements presented by the Education Inspection Framework (OfSTED) and Review of College Higher Education (QAA). Its formulation is designed to enhance consistency in approach to attendance across the different programmes in College. Ruskin College is committed to offering opportunities for the development of all students in ways that meet individual needs. One aspect of this is a commitment to improving retention and achievement through raising standards of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance is necessary to help enhance educational development within the area of study, receive information about the programme, prepare for all assessments and undertake any practical work or group work (including working with others in seminars).

2. Aim

This policy aims to assist all students to take responsibility for their full and prompt attendance which will enhance their learning experience, develop their personal skills and promote retention, achievement and progression.

3. Principles on which the policy is based

The principles underpinning the College's approach to student attendance are:

- a. Good punctuality and attendance help students to learn and succeed,
- b. Student attendance should be managed across the College,
- c. Targets for student attendance rates should be set and monitored across all College provision,
- d. Punctuality and attendance should contribute to judgements made on the quality of provision and will be considered when deciding if a student has met the attendance requirements.
- d. Every effort should be made to maximise punctuality and attendance.

4. Student's entitlements

Students are entitled to the best opportunities to be successful in their studies, including:

- a) Lessons starting and ending promptly,
- b) Staff cover, or appropriate work, in cases of staff absence (wherever possible) ,
- c) Advance warning of unavoidable changes or cancellations of classes (wherever possible)
- d) Contact from the College where there is concern that progress is being affected by attendance and/or punctuality issues
- e) Guidance and/or support from the College, where possible, when a need is identified in order to assist overcoming attendance and /or punctuality issues.

5. Students' responsibilities

Ruskin College requires students to attend every element of their course (i.e. with 100% attendance). This refers to: lectures; seminars; workshops; practical sessions - including placements/fieldwork; and any form of formative or summative assessment. The College expects students to attend a minimum of 80% of all classes, seminars and tutorials per semester. They are expected to arrive at classes punctually, to complete required tutorial work according to their signed learning agreement (Student and College Contract). Students should not knowingly miss a class for anything other than illness or exceptional circumstances. It is not permissible to take holiday in term-time. Individual programmes may have published requirements in excess of this and these are to be found in the Student Handbook, which is located on the website.

If students need to miss a class they should:

Either:

- a. Inform the tutor who takes the class in advance, of any planned absence (e.g. for a doctor's or dentist's appointment) so that an authorised absence can be noted,

Or

- b. Email the tutor or HE administrator, as soon as possible, to explain an unplanned absence. Students will be asked for personal details and for how long they expect to be absent.

And

- c. On return to College meet with their personal tutor and/or member of staff talking the class to discuss arrangements to catch up on any work missed during absence.

If a student is likely to miss an assessment and/or an examination then the Mitigating Circumstances Policy is intended to cover circumstances affecting a student's performance in an assessment/exam or in mitigation of a late unauthorised submission. This can be accessed at: <https://www.ruskin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Mitigating-Circumstances-Policy.pdf>

Students will submit their evidence to the Academic Registrar within 7 calendar days of the assessment deadline. If unable to submit the application within this time period, the applicant can apply beyond this time period if reasonable cause can be shown and documentary evidence supports this. All evidence will be considered within the Mitigating Circumstances Policy.

6. Ruskin College staff responsibilities

All College teaching staff are required to:

- a. Advise students of the College Attendance Policy during induction
- b. Start and finish classes on time
- c. Mark attendance, absence and lateness on the module/course register at each session
- d. Discuss with the student why they have been absent from classes/tutorials
- e. Help to support students' return to College, as appropriate

Course administration staff are required to:

- a. Contact the student within 24 hours of the student having missed class/tutorial asking for an explanation as to why they have missed class/tutorial/weekend and when they expect to return to college
- b. Inform the module tutor of the reasons why the student was absent and when they are due to return to the college
- c. Keep other relevant teaching staff informed of issues and actions relating to a student's attendance and punctuality on other modules
- d. Refer unresolved issues concerning attendance and punctuality to the Programme Manager and the Academic Registrar
- e. Ensure paperwork regarding student attendance is up to date.

If a student is absent without authorisation for two consecutive weeks, or if they have a marked pattern of inconsistent attendance that amounts to the same level of absence as two weeks and there has not been a response to contact from the Course Tutor at the College, the next stage would involve contact from Student Support and the Student Services Manager. If, after the intervention of Student Services, there is still no response, the Academic Registrar will be informed by the Student Services Manager and will send a 'presumed to have withdrawn letter' to the student's Ruskin College email address and to the postal address held on the College system. This letter will give the student ten working days to respond from the date of the letter. If the student does not respond, they will be withdrawn from their programme of study and will no longer be a Ruskin College student.

7. College management's responsibilities

The Assistant-Principal, working with the Programme Manager, is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy and that students have been inducted into it.

Drawing on management information from the register system, the MIS Manager will produce termly attendance data and reports.

8. Standards by which the success of this policy can be evaluated

- a. Annual targets for attendance are met
- b. Continual improvement in attendance and punctuality (or maintenance of high standards where rates are already outstanding)
- c. High levels of attendance and punctuality when measured against relevant benchmarks
- d. Swift action to support students who fall below acceptable benchmarks for attendance and punctuality
- e. Improved student success
- f. Staff compliance with the policy as measured by audits;
- g. Positive feedback in self-assessment reports.

9. Responsibility for implementing this policy

The Assistant Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy across the College.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for overseeing the operation of this policy at course level.

The Programme Manager is responsible for ensuring that course teams collaboratively address the requirements of this policy.

The teaching staff, together with appropriate support staff, is responsible for meeting Student Entitlements.

10. Review of this policy

The periodic review of this policy will take place within three years of this revision, in accordance with review procedure.

Date Amended	Amendments	Responsibility	Reviewed
September 2013	Created	Quality Officer	AQSC 2013
September 2015	Reviewed. No change	Quality Officer	AQSC 2015
October 2020	Amended for OU approval Updated links, updated personnel changes , timescales amended	Academic Registrar	AQSC 2020