



**NEWBOLD  
COLLEGE**  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Policy Owner:** Academic Registrar  
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**Ratified by:** Board of Governors  
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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## ABSTRACT

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The Attendance Policy has been developed<sup>1</sup> as part of the Newbold College of Higher Education (the College)'s commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which assists all students to achieve their full potential. As a responsible institution, the College has a duty to monitor attendance, and to act on non-attendance, so that students can be supported to complete their programmes of study. The College may then offer timely assistance and guidance before the student's situation deteriorates, and/or they leave their programme of study.

Attendance is a key component in student retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who actively participate in their learning by attending academic interactions regularly are more likely to enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed; to complete their programme successfully; and to achieve better results.

To retain its UK Visa and Immigration Service (UKVI) sponsor license, which enables the College to recruit international students, the College has attendance monitoring and reporting obligations in respect of students who require a visa to study in the UK, and for whom the College has issued a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number.

However, **all students** regardless of their residency status in the UK, are required to attend all academic sessions. Disciplinary action will be taken for excessive levels of unauthorised absences which are assessed as % level of attendance and as consecutive/regular periods of absence.

### Authorised absence

Students who have a legitimate reason for unplanned absences must produce evidence to explain reason. Students must get permission to travel abroad during semester time prior to their departure. Authorised absences will not be included when a student's attendance is assessed for disciplinary action. Details of what can be permitted are contained in the Authorised Absence Policy Document (Appendix A).

### Unauthorised absence & Disciplinary action

#### *Consecutive periods of absence*

- A student's expected academic contact is defined as any one day in which there are timetabled academic sessions.
- After missing 5 consecutive academic contacts, the student will be contacted by e-mail and asked to explain why they have been absent and when they expect to return.
- After missing 8 consecutive academic contacts, the student will be contacted by e-mail and telephone and advised to return to their studies immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> The current Attendance Policy is an adaptation of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David – London Campus 's Attendance Policy 2016

- After missing 10 consecutive academic contacts, a student will be reported to their respective Programme Board, which will decide on the disciplinary action. International students, however will be immediately reported to the UKVI and the sponsorship of their TIER4 visa will be withdrawn.

### *Cumulative and Interval (%) attendance*

Attendance is also assessed as a cumulative % from the start of each semester to each of a series of monitoring points for which a minimum threshold of 80% is required.

In order to permit students who have a poor attendance record early in their studies to then show an acceptable improvement that meets the required attendance level, an 'Interval Attendance' (attendance measured as a % within each semester between monitoring points) is then also assessed.

- A student who has an attendance of less than 80% cumulatively will be issued with a first warning. If in the next monitoring point the student has an interval attendance of less than 80%, a second (and final) warning is issued.
- After receiving a second/final warning a student who has an interval attendance of less than 70% will be required to withdraw from the programme and reported to the UKVI (international students), Student Finance England (EU/Home students) as appropriate, and the Trans-European Division (TED) of Seventh-day Adventist (TED sponsored students).
- After receiving a second/final warning a student who has an interval attendance between 70% and 79% will be reported to their respective Programme Board, which will decide on the disciplinary action and may result in the withdrawal from the programme<sup>2</sup>.
- After receiving a second warning a student can be regarded as borderline if their overall (interval and accumulative) attendance is no more than 2 percentage points below the threshold (i.e. no lower than 68%). A decision of withdrawal from the programme for such students will be normally decided on a case by case basis. Factors to be taken into consideration during the decision-making process include the student's overall academic achievements and attendance during previous levels/periods of study. Should the student be allowed to continue their studies the decision will be retained in their file for any future consideration.
- Students may, regardless of attendance levels, also be excluded by the exam/progression board for lack of academic progress<sup>3</sup>.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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It is not in the interest of the students concerned, the College, nor the UKVI nor Student Finance England (SFE), nor the TED to report non-attendance for students who have ceased to attend their programme for some valid reason. Therefore, there are procedures for reporting illnesses, accidents,

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<sup>2</sup> If a student wishes to appeal the decision of withdrawal from their programme, they are referred to the Complaint and Appeals Policy

<sup>3</sup> Idem

significant domestic problems or for requesting extensions to coursework submission dates given in the Academic Registrar's office.

Appendix A describes 'authorised absences' and students who qualify for such absences need to submit the 'Request for Authorised Absences' form with all supporting documents.

**1.1 EXPECTED CONTACTS:** Attendance is monitored according to UKVI guidelines that require Sponsors to report to them any international students who have missed ten 'expected contacts' and who have then been excluded from their programme of study.

The same policy principle is used when assessing the attendance of all students to promote equal, fair and consistent approach in the decision making process.

For this policy, 'contacts' will include some or all of the following:

1. Lecture sessions;
2. Examinations;
4. Tutorials;
5. Pre-arranged meetings;
6. Workshops;
7. Designated events (i.e. College's assemblies, Diversity Lectures, and Impact Day)

In addition, for Taught Masters students working on their dissertations 'contacts' will also include some or all of the following forms of communication:

1. Face to face meetings;
2. One-to-one 'Skype' or video-conference meetings;
3. Pre-arranged face-to-face review meetings.

(Exchanges of e-mail messages, although possibly part of a schedule of regular contact, are not acceptable as a formal contact point for these purposes.)

**1.2 REVIEW OF ATTENDANCE:** Attendance records are reviewed and assessed from the beginning of each semester at regularly spaced out intervals (four to five weeks). Attendance percentage calculations are restarted at the beginning of each semester.

## 2 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

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The disciplinary process for each programme is given below:

### 2.1 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS – LOW ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE

To ensure fairness in implementing the attendance monitoring system, it is recognised that the 80% threshold has to be applied to 'Cumulative Attendance' (attendance measured as a % from the start of each Semester to each monitoring point) and, if issues arise, to 'Interval Attendance' (attendance measured as a % within each semester between monitoring points). This approach is necessary to permit students who have a poor attendance record early in their studies to be able to show a sustained improvement leading towards the required attendance level.

The Administrative Officer (Records) is responsible for reviewing the attendance report of all students at regularly spaced out intervals (four to five weeks). The Administrative Officer (Records) will liaise with the Academic Registrar throughout the disciplinary process.

**Step 1:** The attendance disciplinary process will commence if a student's attendance falls below 80%. Students will then receive from the Administrative Officer (Records) an email (Appendix B). A copy of the message will be retained on the student file.

**Step 2:** At the next monitoring point, if the student has an 'Interval Attendance' of less than 80%, a second and final warning letter (Appendix C) will be issued and posted to the student's UK address and a copy will be retained on their file. The student will also be sent a copy of the letter by email.

**Step 3:** After receiving the final warning a student who has an 'Interval Attendance' between 70% and 79% will be reported to their respective Programme Board, which will decide on the disciplinary action and may result in the withdrawal from the programme<sup>4</sup>.

OR

Following the issue of the final warning letter, a student can be regarded as borderline if their overall (interval and accumulative) attendance is no more than 2 percentage points below the threshold (i.e. no lower than 68%). A decision of withdrawal from the programme for such students will be normally decided on a case by case basis. Factors to be taken into consideration during the decision-making process include the student's overall academic achievements and attendance during previous levels/periods of study. Should the student be allowed to continue their studies the decision will be retained in their file for any future consideration.

When a 'Notification of Withdrawal' is issued, the Academic Registrar will:

- withdraw the student from their programme of study;
- for international students, withdraw the sponsorship of the student (via the UKVI Sponsor Management System (SMS))
- for EU/Home students, liaise with the Student Finance Officer staff responsible for informing SFE to stop/withdraw funding as appropriate
- Inform the Trans-European Division (TED) of Seventh-day Adventist (TED sponsored students).
- update the student's file with copies of all documents relating to the disciplinary process

## 2.2 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS – MISSING CONSECUTIVE CONTACT POINTS

Students' expected contact is defined as any one day on which there are timetabled academic sessions.

The Administrative Officer (Records) is responsible for checking missing contact points of all students. The Administrative Officer (Records) will liaise with the Academic Registrar throughout the disciplinary process.

**Step 1:** The attendance disciplinary process will commence if a student misses 5 consecutive contact points. Such students will then receive from the Administrative Officer (Records) an email (Appendix D). A copy of the message will be retained on the student file.

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<sup>4</sup> If a student wishes to appeal the decision of withdrawal from their programme, they are referred to the Complaint and Appeals Policy

**Step 2:** If the student misses a further 3 consecutive contact points, the student will be contacted by e-mail (Appendix E) and telephone. A copy of the message will be retained on the student file.

**Step 3:** If a student misses a further 2 consecutive contact points, will be reported to their respective Programme Board, which will decide on the disciplinary action and may result in the withdrawal from the programme<sup>5</sup>.

When a 'Notification of Withdrawal' is issued, the Academic Registrar will:

- withdraw the student from their programme of study;
- for international students, withdraw the sponsorship of the student (via the UKVI Sponsor Management System (SMS))
- for EU/Home students, liaise with the Student Finance Officer staff responsible for informing SFE to stop/withdraw funding as appropriate
- Inform the Trans-European Division (TED) of Seventh-day Adventist (TED sponsored students).
- update the student's file with copies of all documents relating to the disciplinary process

### 3 LATE ATTENDANCE

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All students more than ten minutes late for a single period will be marked as absent from that period. Students more than ten minutes late for a double period will be marked as absent from the first period but as present for the second period.

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<sup>5</sup> If a student wishes to appeal the decision of withdrawal from their programme, they are referred to the Complaint and Appeals Policy

## Appendix A: Authorised Absences for International and Home/EU Students

### International Students:

Students who have a legitimate reason for unplanned absences must produce evidence to explain reasons.

Students must get permission to travel abroad prior to their departure. Authorised absences will not be included when a student's attendance is assessed for disciplinary action.

If a student needs to apply for authorised absence he/she must have an acceptable reason which must be considered and approved IN ADVANCE.

### Acceptable authorised absence(s):

The College has an obligation under its UKVI Sponsor Licence to monitor and keep records of academic attendance of international students. If there is a need to apply for authorised absence there must be a valid reason supported by verifiable documentary evidence which is authorised in advance: The acceptable reasons for authorised absences are:

- illness;
- having to return to one's home country unexpectedly, for example as a result of a close personal bereavement or serious illness (first circle of family);
- to leave the UK for a programme-sponsored trip;

### Holiday during semester time

Student visas are granted for the primary purpose of study in the UK and attendance is critical requirement to assure the best-possible academic outcome for every student. We do not expect students to ask for approval to be absent from teaching sessions during semester time for the purposes of tourist travel outside the UK. Students, who make this type of request when teaching is occurring, should not be offended if a request is refused where it is felt that absence may significantly damage academic progress.

### Authorisation letters

If an authorised absence is approved and the student is to travel outside the UK, the College will provide a letter which should be carried in their hand luggage when leaving and returning to the UK. This can be shown to an Immigration Officer(s) should they ask for proof that a student is studying on an academic programme and has permission to travel outside the UK.

### Absences and your Visa

Under the UK Visa and Immigration regulations if a student has a visa to study at Newbold College of Higher Education, he/she must be present on the premises for the purpose of their studies during

semester time unless he/she applies for, and is granted, an 'authorised absence' from his/her studies.

The information below explains what students must do if they are unable to attend the College during semester time.

#### *Absence due to illness or accident*

If a student is unable to attend lectures or sessions on their academic programme, for example because of ill health or accident, he/she (or, in an emergency, a friend) must contact their lecturers and the Administrative Officer (Records) via phone or email before lecture sessions take place. Students are required to meet with the Administrative Officer (Records) on the first day that they return to classes, bringing acceptable supporting documents that evidence the reasons for their absence.

#### *Leaving the UK during semester time*

Students must obtain written permission for short periods of absence (maximum of one week) in semester time, for example to return home due to bereavement or an illness.

Longer absences during semester time require more detailed guidance, and may require the suspension of a student's studies to the subsequent semester. In such cases it is a requirement that students book an appointment to speak to the Academic Registrar.

#### **EU/Home Students:**

EU/Home students will be expected to follow the same leave of absence request procedures as international students to ensure equal, fair and consistent approach in the decision-making process. Students who have no legitimate reason for unplanned absences and have not produced evidence to explain reasons will be put through the attendance disciplinary process that may subsequently lead to withdrawal from their programme of study.



## Appendix B: First Warning Letter (Attendance below 80%) - email

**Student Name:**

**Student ID:**

**Date:**

**Re: Failure to meet the attendance requirements of your programme of study –FIRST WARNING**

Our records show that your attendance for your studies is \_\_\_\_\_%

You will be aware from the information provided to you by the University that this contravenes the requirements for your programme of study and places your study at the University at risk.

You must immediately ensure that you attend all your timetabled study sessions.

If you have a valid reason for the absence you must contact the Administrative Officer (Records) within 3 working days from the date of this email message with verifiable evidence for your unauthorised absences.

Be aware that the College's Attendance Policy requires you to regularly attend all your scheduled academic sessions. Also, note that absences from lecture sessions will affect your academic performance in your programme of study.

Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the Attendance Policy to avoid further disciplinary actions.

Kind Regards,

Administrative Officer (Records)  
Newbold College of Higher Education



Appendix C: Second and Final Warning letter (Attendance below 80%) – email and Letter

**Student Name:**

**Address:**

**Student ID:**

**Date:**

**Re: Failure to meet the attendance requirements of your programme of study – SECOND and FINAL WARNING**

You were notified on ... (date) ... that your attendance at your study activities did not meet the requirements of your programme of study.

Since that time, you have an attendance level of ... (%) ... that again falls below the required level of 80%...(insert relevant percentage at other campuses).

You must now immediately return to your timetabled study sessions. You should contact the Administrative Officer (Records) within 3 working days from the date of the email message.

If you continue to fail to meet the requirements as stated in the Attendance Policy you may be subject to withdrawal from your programme of study. *When you are withdrawn from your programme of studies,*  
*[your UK visa will be terminated, and you will be required to return to your home country (unless you are able to identify an alternative sponsor for your further studies)]*  
*[Student Finance England will be informed to stop/withdraw funding]*  
*[Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventist will be informed to stop/withdraw sponsorship]*  
*(delete whichever appropriate).*

Kind Regards,

Administrative Officer (Records)  
Newbold College of Higher Education

Appendix D: Missed 5 consecutive contact points – email

**Student Name:**

**Student ID:**

**Date:**

**Re: Missed 5 consecutive contact points**

Our records show that you have missed five consecutive contact points.

You will be aware from the information provided to you by the College that this contravenes the requirements for your programme of study and places your study at the College at risk.

You must immediately ensure that you attend all your timetabled study sessions.

If you have a valid reason for the absence you must contact the Administrative Officer (Records) within 3 working days from the date of this email message with verifiable evidence for your unauthorized absences.

Be aware that the College's Attendance Policy requires you to regularly attend all your scheduled academic sessions. Also, note that absences from lecture sessions will affect your academic performance in your programme of study.

Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the Attendance Policy to avoid further disciplinary actions.

Kind Regards,

Administrative Officer (Records)  
Newbold College of Higher Education

## Appendix E: Missed 8 consecutive contact points – email & telephone call

**Student Name:**

**Student ID:**

**Date:**

**Re: Missed 8 consecutive contact points**

Our records show that you have missed a further 3 consecutive contact points (total of 8 contact points).

You will be aware from the information provided to you by the College that this contravenes the requirements for your programme of study and places your study at the College at risk.

You must immediately ensure that you attend all your timetabled study sessions. You should contact the Administrative Officer (Records) within 3 working days from the date of this email message.

If you miss a further 2 consecutive contact points (total of 10 contact points), you will be referred to the Programme Board of your course of study, which will then decide on the disciplinary action and may result in the withdrawal from the programme<sup>6</sup>.

*When you are withdrawn from your programme of studies,  
[your UK visa will be terminated, and you will be required to return to your home country (unless you are able to identify an alternative sponsor for your further studies)]  
[Student Finance England will be informed to stop/withdraw funding]  
[Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventist will be informed to stop/withdraw sponsorship]  
(delete whichever appropriate).*

Kind Regards,

Administrative Officer (Records)  
Newbold College of Higher Education

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<sup>6</sup> If a student wishes to appeal the decision of withdrawal from their programme, they are referred to the Complaint and Appeals Policy