



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Moray College

## **Student Attendance Policy**

Date of most recent review: June 2017

Date of Next Review: June 2018

Responsibility: Assistant Principal (Support and Student Services)

**Please ask if you, or someone you know, require this document in a different format or language.**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy and procedure describe the College system for supporting and monitoring student attendance. Student Support Funds will not be paid to students who do not meet the required attendance thresholds.

### **2. Key Principles**

- Students should be encouraged and supported to attend 100% of classes
- Classes should only be cancelled in exceptional circumstances. Except during College closure, any lecturer who wishes to cancel a class must have prior approval from their Assistant Director
- Student Support Funds will be paid 2 weeks in arrears
- Students should follow the Student Absence Reporting Procedures (Appendix 1) to advise Student Services staff about any issues that affect their attendance
- Student Support Funds will not be paid where a student has not followed the Student Absence Reporting procedures and has not met the requisite attendance threshold

### **3. Responsibilities**

For student attendance reporting and monitoring to be effective, several groups of staff need to work co-operatively including individual Lecturers, Personal Academic Tutors, Student Services Centre staff and the Student Finance Team. Students must use the Student Absence Reporting system to advise Student Services staff about any issues that affect their attendance.

Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that all attendance registers are completed on the same day as the class takes place. New Scottish Funding Council regulations require tighter control on student attendance monitoring, therefore any difficulties in marking registers should be highlighted to the lecturer's Assistant Director.

Student Guidance are responsible for considering student attendance records and blocking any Student Support Fund payments as necessary.

The Student Advice Manager or Student Guidance Advisor may take a decision to award a Student Support Fund payment based on appropriate mitigating circumstances.

The Assistant Principal (Support and Student Services) is responsible for setting the attendance thresholds required for Student Support Fund payments.

### **4. Thresholds for Release of Student Support Funds**

Scottish Funding Council regulations state that students must attend 100% of classes for any Student Support Funds to be released. This policy defines this requirement as students

being permitted a maximum of 4 absences per semester. Any absence must, however, be authorised by either the Student Advice Manager or the Student Guidance Advisor. The procedure for students to follow to seek an authorised absence is in Appendix 1. The decision of the Student Advice Manager is final. There will be no release of Student Support Funds if a student's absence exceeds 4 absences per semester. However, if concerns are highlighted regarding attendance before a student reaches 4 strikes, a weekly bursary may be put in place as a supportive measure. Once on a weekly bursary, student attendance must be 100% per week for any payments to be made.

### **5. Childcare and hardship funding at both Higher and Further Education**

For those students who are in receipt of childcare and/or hardship funds, a maximum of 6 absences will be granted. Any absences must be reported in the same way as bursary/EMA, as outlined below.

### **6. Attendance Registers**

Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that all attendance registers are accurately completed on the same day as the class takes place. To support this, staff will be emailed highlighting any unmarked registers. Attendance registers must be accurate as they are formal documents which are used to meet our statutory obligations and, where required, information will be provided to other external agencies. Student attendance information may also be used in dealing with complaints.

Attendance registers are audited annually with the potential for any discrepancies in Student Support Funding payments to be paid out of the College's own funds. Any class cancellation can only be with the approval of the Assistant Director and in those circumstances an Administration Assistant will, on request, mark the students on this class register as Authorised Absent. Any requests should be emailed to [accommodation.moray@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation.moray@uhi.ac.uk).

This Authorised Absence will be taken into account when determining if a student has met the threshold for a Student Support Funds payment. There is no other acceptable use of marking students as Authorised Absent, these will not be taken into account when considering any payment to the student, i.e. will be counted as an Absence. To attempt to reduce the number of payment deductions to students, the use of Authorised Absence will be monitored and reported to the appropriate Assistant Director. Recording a student's attendance as Arrived Late or Left Early remains valid and in such cases this will be considered as the student being present for the purposes of Student Support Fund payments. At the end of term, if any students are completed early, the register should be marked as such.

## Appendix 1



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Moray College

## **Student Attendance and Absence Procedure**

**Session 2017/2018**

**If your absence is due to taking a holiday during College term time:**

If you have holidays either pre booked or during course time, you must notify Student Services by text or absence reporting on your Student portal, prior to going on the holiday. Due to Government regulations and Scottish Funding Council guidance Student Funding cannot make payments to students for holidays, so payment will be withheld for your holiday period. The remaining weeks will not be affected as long as you achieve the set level of attendance. Any holidays taken during term time will also count towards your number of absences. It is expected any holidays be arranged out with college time.

**Absence Management**

Student Services may authorise the following types of absence as shown below:

Absence	Notification	Supporting Documentation
Funeral of close relative or friend	In advance by text or email from your Student Portal, or in person	Notification of funeral
Court Appearance	In advance by text or email from your Student Portal, or in person	Court citation, letter from solicitor/lawyer or court official
Jury Duty Initial Day	In advance by text or email from Student Portal, or in person	Court Citation
Subsequent Days	During your absence by text or email from Student Portal	Court documentation confirming the dates
Hospital Appointments/Clinics	In advance by text or email through your Student Portal, or in person	Hospital letter or appointment card
<b>Emergency</b> Dental or Doctor appointments	Day of absence by text or email from your Student Portal	Confirmation that this was an emergency – Dr/Dental letter/card
Illness of Children	Day of absence by text or email through your Student Portal	This is only if there is no one else available to look after them. You must provide confirmation from school/childcare that they did not attend
University or College interview	In advance by text or email from your Student Portal, or in person	Interview letter or email confirmation

Ongoing medical condition	You must notify Student Services of your medical condition ASAP. They will book you an appointment with the Guidance Team who will discuss the appropriate number of absences you may require per semester, up to a maximum of 4 extra	Medical letter from your Doctor or Hospital outlining condition and stating that it may lead to periods of absence  Must be supported by a Personal Learning Support Plan through College. You will be notified if you are granted extra absences
Job Interview	In advance by text or email from your Student Portal, or in person	Interview letter or email
Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave	Must notify Learner Support Worker of pregnancy or adoption ASAP then make an appointment with Student Guidance to discuss financial implications	Ante Natal appointment cards  You will be given a letter granting you additional absence days and you must follow the guidelines on this letter  A maximum of 4 weeks will be paid for maternity and adoption leave. Paternity leave will be a maximum of 2 weeks

In order for any of these absences to be considered for authorisation, supporting documentation **MUST** be submitted. Without supporting documentation, these absences will not be authorised and will count towards your allowed number of strikes. **ALL** documentation should be handed into **STUDENT SERVICES**. It is here that it will be decided if payment will be made or not. As a matter of courtesy, you may also wish to inform your Lecturer, especially if you are on a course where you have clients, are working with the public or working as a team or if you have assessments/exams on a day you are absent.

The college sets out the following procedure and guidance below to inform all Further Education students of the requirement to receive any student funding payment they are entitled to.

## **ABSENCES**

Attendance is crucial if a student is to achieve whatever qualifications he/she is aiming for. 100% attendance is a requirement for payment of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and 100% for payment of Bursary. Students who do not achieve these percentages risk having their funding stopped. It is very important that students account for all of their absences.

### **If your absence is under seven calendar days**

If your absence is between one hour and up to 7 days you must report this by text or using the online form to the Absence line. You can do this through your Student Portal. Non-reporting means you will not be paid. On your first day of absence, please visit your Student Portal and click on Absence Reporting Tile and fill in reporting form or send a text. The text number is 07624 808709. Please note this number is for texting only, not for phoning. In order to do this you must write ABSENT followed by a "space" then your Name, Student Number, Course and Reason. It is essential you do this, as failure to put ABSENT then a space means your text will not be delivered. You will receive a text back to confirm receipt; if you do not receive a text back we have not received it. When you fill in an online form you will not receive a reply. If you do not have access to a computer or have no credit on your phone you must ask a friend or relative to do this for you. We must be notified before 9.30am on each day of absence, unless covered by a medical line. If you have been absent on 4 occasions per semester, your payment will be automatically stopped and no more payments will be made. You can appeal to Student Guidance about this and will need to make an appointment at Student Services. However, if any concerns are highlighted regarding your attendance before this, a weekly bursary may be put in place. In this instance, the attendance requirement would be 100% per week.

### **If your absence is greater than seven calendar days**

If your absence is due to ill health, you are required to comply with the following regulations, to receive a payment:

- If you are absent for more than seven consecutive calendar days you must get a medical certificate from your doctor if you consulted him/her during your absence. You must meet any costs associated with getting a private medical certificate and this can only be given at your doctor's discretion. A maximum of one support payment shall be paid and then it will stop thereafter.
- A Doctor's medical certificate must be submitted to Student Services (or by post if necessary), as soon as the doctor has issued this to you. College is open during holiday periods (not Christmas and New Year) for handing in medical certificates.
- Please note that doctors are not required to issue medical certificates for periods of sickness less than seven days and you should not ask your doctor to provide this, especially if you did not consult your doctor during your period of absence from college.

- If you have been absent on extended medical leave for a continuous period, you should contact your Learner Support Worker to discuss when you will be returning to college and to determine whether you will be able to continue with your course/programme of study. You will only receive ONE student support payment during extended medical absence and your payments will be suspended if you have not returned to full attendance before the next instalment is due.
- Please note, only 1 medical certificate per semester will be accepted, covering a maximum of one support payment. Anything over and above this will go to appeal where attainment, attendance and commitment to your course will be assessed.

## **Additional Information**

### **Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave**

You must inform your Learner Support Worker of your pregnancy as soon as you can. Your Learner Support Worker will request a risk assessment to be done to ensure you are completely safe in your surroundings. You should also make an appointment with Student Guidance to discuss the financial implications when you take your Maternity Leave if this falls within the academic year.

You will be allowed time to attend ante-natal appointments with supporting evidence. You will be paid 4 weeks Maternity Leave, where you shall receive your bursary (2 x 2 week payments.) You can claim Maternity Benefit thereafter. We allow for 2 weeks Paternity Leave but shall not make a payment beyond that if you are still absent.

Do not wait until your student funding payment has been stopped to inform us of a problem as this will be too late and your payment will not be released.

If you are not paid due to poor attendance you can appeal this decision. Please submit an email to MC Student Services ([student.services.moray@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:student.services.moray@uhi.ac.uk)) explaining the reason for your absence, late notification and any supporting evidence. This will be then reviewed by the Guidance Team.

If you find you are thinking about withdrawing from your course, please make an appointment with your Learner Support Worker and a Guidance person in order that we can discuss and support you with your decision, and if applicable also notify you of any monies that maybe needed to be repaid.

You are responsible for monitoring your own absence. No information will be routinely sent to you with regards to the number of absences you have taken.