



Attendance Procedures for Higher Education Students

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Revision history

Version	Type (e.g. replacement, revision etc...)	Date	History (reason for changes)
V1	New	Sept 2016	Specification of a separate procedure for Attendance for Higher Education Students
V2	Revision	September 2021	Revision due to changes in Organisational Structure
V3	Revision	October 2022	Change in ownership, change of contact email address
V4	Annual Review	August 2023	
V5	Annual updates	July 2024	Minor amends relating to operation, datasets, and Student Finance England

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board and SLT at least every 2 years.

1. Executive Summary

The College commits to supporting students in achieving the most they can from their course of study, investing in staff, resources and facilities to support students on their journey. The College aims to provide the very best environment for maximising student success. Attendance is a key component in ensuring students engage fully in their course of study, contributing to the life and values of the College community, progressing well, achieving a good academic qualification and gaining rewarding and fulfilling employment.

In addition to its responsibilities to individual students, the College is necessarily mindful of the needs of other students and of its external accountabilities. Poor attendance on the part of individual students may detract from the overall learning experience of the group and in some cases prevent other students from achieving their full potential, particularly where group assessments/projects are involved.

Prolonged nonattendance by students could result in the College being in receipt of a government backed tuition fee loan for a student who was, in effect, no longer attending either at a module or course level.

The following procedures document for all stakeholders the processes the College will undertake in the event of concern being raised regarding an individual student's attendance.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the College discharge their responsibilities relating to Attendance policy and procedures
- Overall accountability for the management and governance of the Attendance policy and procedures
- Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to verify a consistent approach to the way attendance procedures information is managed, monitored, reviewed and reported
- Setting threshold standards for student attendance on Higher Education programmes.

In regards to attendance while studying at Bradford College, students are responsible for:

- Organising their studies and ensuring they are aware of their timetables and the expectations for attendance and for all activities associated with their chosen course, making themselves available during the start and end dates for their courses, including dates for resits/reassessments
- Attending all learning, teaching and assessment sessions associated with the course on which they have registered
- Making regular checks for information that may include important timetabling or room changes using the process outlined by staff at course induction
- Notifying the designated course contact of any unplanned/unforeseen absence from class within 24 hours and if requested, provide a medical certificate or other relevant evidence to explain their absence
- Arriving on time for class and remaining in class for the duration of the session. Late arrival and early departure disrupts other students' learning.

In regards to the attendance of students while studying at Bradford College, staff are responsible for:

- Making sure that students are reminded of the importance of attendance and especially the clear link between attendance and examination performance. This should be emphasised during induction and at initial meetings with personal academic tutors and should be reinforced by module/course tutors.
- If a programme has PSRB accreditation then attendance requirements associated with this accreditation
Policy category: Governance (Academic) Attendance Procedures for

must be explicitly communicated to students at Induction and in their Programme Handbook. Students will be informed at induction and at initial meetings with personal tutors of the course level procedures and dedicated contact person.

- Keeping an accurate and timely record of student attendance and ensuring records are logged on the student record
- Informing students of timetabling or room changes in a timely fashion and by all available means of communication, particularly where exceptional circumstances result in a change at short notice.

2. Procedural action in the event of non-attendance:

2.1 Post-Enrolment Window: Non-Engagement

- Any student with 0% attendance in the first 2 weeks of the College Academic Year, without a formal request for leave of absence, will be informed that their contract with the College is terminated. The communication will include information about the availability of independent advice from the Student Union, as well as the student's right of appeal. If, at this stage, the student indicates a willingness to reengage and wishes to return they should contact HEattendance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk within 10 working days submitting a formal appeal against the withdrawal.

2.2 On-Programme Attendance Procedures (Informal)

- The designated contact person for each department will have an overview of the attendance of all the students on their courses. They would normally be the first person to note attendance problems usually either through the registers or through an individual member of staff alerting them in the case of a particular student.
- The HE Awards team will provide fortnightly datasets to support attendance monitoring activity. Students whose attendance falls below the expectations of the College will also be monitored and reported by the HE Awards team to the relevant academic departments, with the expectation that they shall be referred through the attendance policy. They should then ensure swift and successful action is taken up to the point where either the student is attending well or where the student is referred to the formal stage and put on a College Attendance Contract.
- The student will be invited to a meeting with their personal tutor (or equivalent) to discuss any issues they are experiencing which could be the cause of poor attendance, enforcing the understanding that good attendance is essential to student retention and success. The meeting will result in a plan of action which is proportionate to the student's situation, outlines key targets, monitoring arrangements and a date by which the targets should be achieved with a meeting to discuss the way forward.
- Departmental support for the students throughout the process should include referrals to appropriate support services linked to the student's concerns if appropriate.

2.3 On-Programme Attendance Procedures (Formal)

Policy category: Governance (Academic)

- In the event of the student failing to attend a meeting or to engage with their personal tutor, HE Awards will be notified. A block will then be placed on the student's card and Student Finance England will be notified that the student is no longer attending the College, pausing all tuition fee and maintenance loan payments. If after a period of 10 working days the student fails to make contact with the College they will then be informed that their contract with the College is terminated. The communication will include information about the availability of independent advice from the Student Union, as well as the right of appeal. If at this stage the student indicates a willingness to reengage they should contact HEattendance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk within 10 working days submitting a formal appeal against the withdrawal.
- If the student contacts the College during the period of time the card is blocked the Head of School will authorise the student moving to a College Attendance Contract. The contract will be drawn up by the Head of School with support and input from the Quality Department. The contract will stipulate any continued support which the student needs. The College Attendance Contract will include a date by which the targets should be achieved.
- In the event of the Contract not being successfully completed, the student will then be informed that their contract with the College is terminated with immediate effect.
- Fees will be due up to the withdrawal date and Student Finance England notified accordingly.
- The communication will include information about the availability of independent advice from the Student Union, as well as the student's right of appeal. If at this stage the student indicates a willingness to reengage and wishes to return they should contact HEattendance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk within 10 working days submitting a formal appeal against the withdrawal.
- Once a student submits a formal appeal a panel will be convened by the Head of Governance and Operations according to College procedures for appeal (Section 3).
- Please note that cases reported to HEattendance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk late in the academic year may be referred back without action being taken if there is inadequate time for the student to fulfil an appropriate Attendance Contract. Appropriate decisions regarding progression (if relevant) will be made by the Assessment Board.
- Attendance Policy usage will be reported to the Academic Board.

3. Appeal Procedures

- A student may make a written appeal against the decision to terminate their contract. They can do this within 10 working days of receiving their Termination of Contract Letter. Students should appeal through HEattendance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk. Students will be permitted to attend scheduled lectures/submit assessment on submission of an appeal pending the outcome of the Appeal Panel.

3.1 Constitution of the Formal Appeal Panel

Policy category: Governance (Academic)

- The Appeal Panel will normally consist of the following three members from Bradford College:
 - The Chair shall be a member of the College's Senior Leadership Team.
 - The Head of Department or School/Curriculum Area/Team.
 - A staff member from an independent School/Curriculum Area/Team.
- A representative of the Student Union will be invited to attend.
- The Appeal Panel may choose to conduct business if one member is unable to be present for any reason with the consent of the appellant.
- A secretary will also attend to take formal minutes of the proceedings along with an Officer who will act as Clerk to the Review Panel and provide advice and guidance on the regulations.
- Meetings of the Appeal Panel will be held as soon as it proves possible to convene a meeting of members.
- If the absence was reported by an academic colleague they will be invited to present the details of the case.

3.2 Informing the Student

The Quality Department will arrange for an Appeal Panel to be convened and formally notify the student concerned no later than 10 working days prior to the Appeal Panel Hearing. The correspondence will include:

- The date, time and venue of the Appeal Panel.
- Their right to be accompanied by a friend, who is entitled to speak or act on their behalf.
- A copy of the Absence Review Form along with supporting documentation from the reporting tutor.
- A copy of the Attendance Policy and Procedures
- Notification that the Appeal Panel Hearing will proceed in their absence should they fail to provide reasonable explanation for their non- attendance.

The student will be given the opportunity to submit any supporting evidence up to 5 days prior to the date of the meeting.

3.3 Advising the Chair of the Appeal Panel

The Quality team will inform the Chair of the Appeal Panel that a panel is convened to proceed, in writing, giving a minimum of 5 working days prior to the Appeal Panel. The correspondence will include:

- The date, time and venue of the Appeal Panel.
- A copy of the Absence Review Form along with supporting documentation from the reporting tutor.
- A copy of the Attendance Policy
- The constitution of the Appeal Panel.
- Any supporting evidence submitted by the student

3.4 Procedure for an Appeal Panel

- It will not normally be possible for the date of the Appeal Panel to be changed, and this will only be done
Policy category: Governance (Academic)

in respect of extenuating circumstances, for example medical treatment. Holiday arrangements do not normally constitute a valid reason. Any requests for a change in the date of an Appeal Panel must be submitted in writing to the Head of Governance and Operations, and the decision to change agreed arrangements will be taken by the Chair. Where a decision to re-arrange an Appeal Panel has been refused the student will be informed, in writing, of the refusal, and the case will be considered in the absence of the student.

- Prior to the meeting the Appeal Panel will review the Absence Review Form to establish the student's attendance history along with supporting documentation from the reporting tutor and any evidence submitted by the student.
- The presentation of any new documentation, on the day of the Appeal Panel, will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances with agreement of the Chair of the Appeal Panel. This may result in a suspension of proceedings to provide all parties with the opportunity to consider the new documentation.
- Information given orally to the Secretary may not be communicated to the Appeal Panel.
- All participants will be expected to behave in an orderly and non-confrontational manner. If the Chair deems it necessary they may adjourn proceedings if, in their opinion, progress of the Appeal Panel is being impeded.

During the Appeal Panel:

- The Chair will outline the procedure of the Appeal Panel to all parties.
- The Chair will ask the student to present their case in support of their appeal.
- Members of the Appeal Panel may ask questions of the student.
- The Chair will ask the academic colleague (where present) to present the details of the absence history.
- Members of the Appeal Panel may ask questions of the academic colleague.
- The Panel will consider the evidence in private and reach a decision.
- The Appeal Panel has the authority to adjourn the Appeal Panel if it requires further information or evidence as it deems appropriate to assist in making its decision.

3.5 Appeal Panel Decision

After consideration of the available evidence relating to an appeal, the Appeal Panel may:

- Reject the appeal; or
- Refer the student back to the Absence Review process or
- Refer the student back to the Absence Review process with recommendations

The Appeal Panel shall keep a record of its proceedings. The decision shall be circulated to the student, the School and the HE Student Finance Team. The record shall also be available to the Exam Board in extenuating circumstances.

4. Procedures Following Appeal

- The student and the Chair of the Appeal Panel will be informed by the Quality Department, in writing, of the decision of the Appeal Panel normally within 5 working days of the Appeal Panel.
Policy category: Governance (Academic)

- Where an appeal is not upheld, the decision of the Appeal Panel shall be effective immediately.
- Where an application is not upheld, the student shall be issued, normally within 5 working days of the Appeal Panel, with a 'Letter of Completion' of internal proceedings in the manner prescribed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education [OIA]. A student who is of the opinion that their case is unresolved may apply to the OIA for reconsideration of their case under the rules of its scheme within three months of the issue of the 'Letter of Completion'. Information of the process may be obtained directly from the OIA at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.
- When it is decided that a case shall be referred back to the Absence Review Process the HE Awards team will advise the student that their tutor will contact them in due course to arrange a meeting to discuss their attendance and formulate an action plan which will be reviewed in line with the Attendance Policy.

5. Confidentiality/Disclosure of information

A copy of all documentation and decisions relating to a the Attendance Policy will be retained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation Act (2018) and the College's "Information and Records Management Policy"

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance figures will be monitored by the Quality Department. Records of programme attendance rates will be utilised by Quality Improvement Analysts and Academic staff as a core metric to gauge the quality of a department and their adherence to College targets.

Formal reporting against agreed targets will be included in the annual report to Academic Board regarding Attendance and the Performance Review process occurring each quarter.

The overall attendance target for the College's Higher Education Provision is 90%. It is expected that students failing below this attendance rate will be closely monitored by Departments – referring to the provision and scope of these procedures as appropriate.

7. Further Information

If you require further information on these procedures, please contact: HEattendance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk

Related Polices/Procedures/Regulations

- Attendance Policy for Higher Education Students