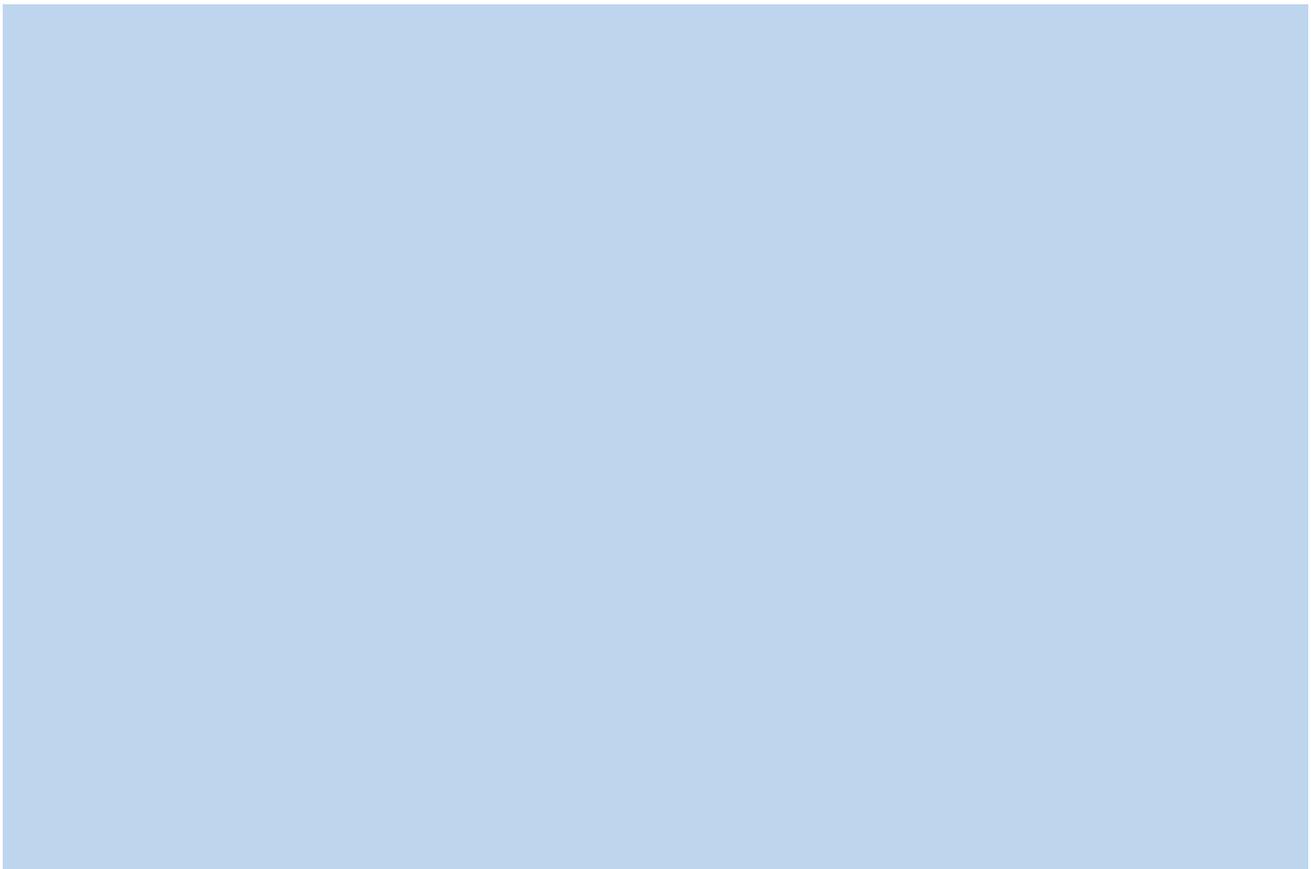




# Attendance Procedures for Higher Education Students



## Document change control

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## Revision history

<b>Version</b>	<b>Type (e.g. replacement, revision etc...)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>History (reason for changes)</b>
V1	New	Sept 2016	Specification of a separate procedure for Attendance for Higher Education Students

## Monitoring and review

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

## Related Polices/Procedures/Regulations

- Attendance Policy for Higher Education Students

## Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Action in the Event of Non-Attendance Procedures
3. Appeal Procedures
4. Procedures following Appeal
5. Confidentiality/Disclosure of Information

### 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 College confirms student attendance to loan or grant providers including the Student Loans Company, government sponsors, banks, employers and the local council. Non-attendance without approval or unauthorised absence may result in loans or grants having to be repaid immediately. The College reserves the right to terminate the studies of any student who persistently fails to attend and/or submit the required work for the course on which they are registered. In that circumstance the student remains responsible for any monies borrowed and outstanding debt. The College will fulfil its obligation to inform the relevant bodies of the student's termination of study.

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.

### 2. 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 Services Department, 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 HE Awards ([HEawards@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:HEawards@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. They should then ensure successful action is taken up to the point where either the student is attending well or where the student is 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)**

- In the event of the student failing to attend the meeting, HE Awards will be notified. A block will then be placed on the student's card for a period of 10 working days. If the student fails to make contact during this period of time 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 Student Services, 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 HE Awards 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 Academic Regulations and Compliance with support and input from the Head of School who will ensure the continued involvement of any support which the student needs. The College Attendance Contract will include a date by which the targets should be achieved.
- If the student fails to engage with the plan of action agreed the Head of School/Curriculum Area Manager/Team Leader will authorise the student moving to a College Attendance Contract. The contract will be drawn up by HE Awards with support and input from the Head of School/Curriculum Area Manager/Team Leader who will ensure the continued involvement of any 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 Student Services, 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 HE Awards within 10 working days submitting a formal appeal against the withdrawal.
- Once a student submits a formal appeal a panel will be convened by HE Awards according to College procedures for appeal (Section 3).
- Please note that cases reported to HE Awards 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.

### **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 HE Awards ([HEAwards@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:HEAwards@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**

- The Appeal Panel will normally consist of the following three members from Bradford College:
  - The Chair shall be the Assistant Principal (Higher Education).
  - The Head of Department or School/Curriculum Area/Team.
  - A staff member from an independent school/Curriculum Area/Team.
- A representative of Student Services will be invited to attend.
- The Appeal Panel may choose to conduct business if one member is unable to be present for any reason.
- 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 HE Awards team 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 must 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
  - 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 HE Awards 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 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 HE Awards team, 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 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 Fees 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 HE Awards team, in writing, of the decision of the Appeal Panel normally within 5 working days of the Appeal Panel.
- 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 and reports issued on a regular basis by the MIS/Student Records Department. Records of programme attendance rates will be utilised by Quality Officers and Academic staff as a core metric to gauge the quality of a department and their adherence to the 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 is 95%. Areas with an overall attendance of less than 90% will be subject to an action plan to improve performance.

## **7. Further Information**

If you require further information on these procedures, please contact the HE Awards team at: [HEAwards@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:HEAwards@bradfordcollege.ac.uk)

