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LEARNER PUNCTUALITY, ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION POLICY

1. POLICY

1.1 Learners enter College for a range of reasons. Their main aim however is usually the achievement of their chosen qualification. It is our duty to support learners to achieve their outcomes, ensuring that their experience at Leicester College is a positive one and will offer them progression and employment opportunities. As a result, the maintenance of up to date data, especially data captured in registers, is the responsibility of all staff who are accountable for learners.

1.2 There is also a business imperative to maximise the achievements of learners so that the College remains a viable enterprise in which investment can be made into the continuous improvement of College facilities and the experience of learners. The collection of accurate and timely data is therefore also incumbent on all staff taking registers as a requirement to maintain College business development.

1.3 The reputation of the College is dependent upon learners' achievements and the way in which they describe their learning experiences. Retaining learners and supporting them to achieve their qualifications is fundamental to the success of the College.

1.4 Close monitoring of attendance has a fundamental link to learners' retention and success. This requires every Curriculum Area to monitor, review and take action on data relating to learner attendance. Where learners are at risk of low attendance, it is an absolute requirement of the Curriculum Area to address this with use of attendance data available to support retention and success.

1.5 The College target for learner attendance is 100%. The key to good attendance is the personal involvement of the course team with individual learners. Each Curriculum Area is required to ensure that each learner has the opportunity to complete their full guided learning hours in College and that this attendance is recorded. Attendance levels, and timely completion of registers, are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team through monthly QA meetings with each Curriculum Area.

1.6 Each Course Team will be set a target for retention and be responsible for devising strategies to achieve this target. The target and associated strategies will be included in the Curriculum Area Improvement Plan. Averaged across all programmes of learning, the College target for retention is not less than 94%.

1.7 This policy and related procedures apply to all learners. It is acknowledged that for a certain categories of learners (i.e. HE), that a differentiated approach will embed stronger notions of independent learning and encourage the development of suitable attributes.

1.8 This policy provides a framework for staff to operate within. It is recommended that ways are found of rewarding good punctuality and attendance as well as having procedures in place to deal with poor punctuality and attendance. Every Curriculum Area is required to use the procedures in this document to maintain high levels of punctuality and attendance which support high levels of retention.

2. PROCEDURES

2.1 The overarching framework for this Policy is recognition that we should be treating our learners with respect. The examples that we ourselves set as staff are important in terms of modelling positive behaviour. It is therefore implicit that all staff ensure that they are prepared in advance for each timetabled class and that the classes start and finish on time.

2.2 College Safeguarding responsibilities require that learner attendance is accurately recorded and monitored on a timely basis. Refer to the College Register Policy and Procedures for details.

2.3 Reports

2.3.1 Reports on learner punctuality and attendance are available on the 'Integrated Dashboard', and should be discussed during 1:1 Meetings; refer to the Tutorial Policy for further information.

2.3.2 For further information on accessing these reports contact Curriculum Admin Support Team, Resource Utilisation or User Support and Reporting Team.

2.3.3 The expectation is that staff will use the College's Attendance Monitoring System (AMS) which monitors learners' poor and continuous non-attendance. Where it is not possible or appropriate to use AMS then alternative attendance reporting options should be used, these reports are available on the 'Dashboard'. For poor attendance use the RG0022 and for continuous non-attendance the RG0020. Note administration staff are requested to schedule these reports so Programme Leads (PLs)/Retention Officers (ROs) receive a copy of a fortnightly basis (e.g. every other Monday morning).

2.3.4 Whether AMS or RG0020 is used, Funding and Courses (FACT) must be notified immediately of any learner that has been absent for four or more consecutive weeks. Unless informed otherwise by the Curriculum Area, the learner will be withdrawn.

2.4 Appropriate support for learners can aid attendance and punctuality; PLs/ROs are responsible for identifying learners at risk or in need of additional support and/or mentoring. Where mitigating circumstances impact on learner attendance or punctuality, the PL/RO is responsible for referring the learner to the appropriate support facilities within the college. Learning Mentors can offer advice on these issues.

2.5 Punctuality

2.5.1 Methods of dealing with lateness will vary according to the type of lateness being displayed. Any time after the starting time of the timetabled event will be treated as an instance of lateness by the learner. It may be useful when looking at punctuality to consider the following:

- Is the lateness persistent or one-off?
- Is the lateness first thing in the morning? Or, is it for sessions later in the day when the learner is already in College?
- Is there a pattern developing with the learner's attendance?

2.5.2 Lateness will always be recorded in line with the College Register Policy.

2.5.3 Learners should telephone the College before the start of class to say if they are going to be late. This should be explained to learners during the induction period, with appropriate contact details provided.

2.5.4 Learners must <u>never</u> be excluded from classes due to lateness. In situations where learners are late to practical workshop classes and have thus missed demonstrations and relevant Health and Safety information, they will need to be accommodated within the class but not allowed to perform operations which carry a potential risk.

2.5.5 In all instances, the tutor should make it clear to the late learner that the lateness has been noticed and recorded. The tutor is required to ascertain the reasons for the lateness.

2.5.6 Issues of lateness should be raised by the Learning Coach (LC) / RO / Tutor / Trainer Assessor (TA) during 1:1 Meetings and recorded using ProMonitor, SmartAssessor or on the appropriate attendance reporting documentation. If a learner is persistently late, this should be addressed in accordance with the College procedures outlined below.

2.6 Attendance

2.6.1 There is an expectation that learners should have 100% attendance, as detailed in the College 'Teacher and Learner Contract'.

2.6.2 In the event that the learner knows they will not be able to attend the learner should contact the College before the start of class. This should be explained to learners during the induction period.

2.6.3 In the event of unexplained non-attendance, the following procedures should be exercised:

- When pre-16 learners are absent from the group, the 14-16 team must be contacted immediately so that the school can be informed without delay.

- Unauthorised absence will be marked in accordance with the Register Policy.

- If a learner has not already informed the College of non-attendance, the designated member of College staff will call the learner to ascertain a reason for the absence.

- In the case of work-based learners attending College, it is the employer that should be contacted. It may be appropriate for this to be done by the Trainer/Assessor, who should be in contact with the employer on every occasion that the trainee is absent.

- Where work placement/work experience learners are due in the workplace but have not attended, the Curriculum Area will need to make arrangements with the workplace to have this reported to the appropriate staff in their area.

2.6.4 In relation to continuous '**Non Attendance'** Curriculum Areas should attempt to maintain telephone contact with the learner.

Note: A learners Non-attendance status can be obtained by running 'R0023 Student Non Attendance' report available from the integrated Dashboard, 'Timetabling and Registers' section.

2.6.5 From their monitoring, PLs should be aware if there is persistent absence on the same day of each week. Patterns such as these should be indicated to LCs, who should then raise the matter in 1:1 meetings with the learner.

2.6.6 Issues of non-attendance should, as with issues of lateness, be raised with learners in 1:1 meetings and, if necessary, addressed in accordance with the College procedures outlined below.

2.7 Punctuality and Attendance MONITORING AND ACTION

2.7.1 For the first **SIX WEEKS** of the course, **ALL LEARNERS WILL BE ON PROBATION.** Appropriate action will be at the discretion of the Curriculum Area and **MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE CURRICULUM DIRECTOR**.

2.7.2 In exceptional circumstances (to be determined by Curriculum Directors (evidence required) the probationary period and subsequent staged process may be bypassed in the best interests of the learner(s) and staff concerned.

2.7.3 This process does not affect learners who have arranged authorised leave in advance.

2.7.4 Appendix 1 sets out the 4-stage process for monitoring and dealing with poor attendance and punctuality after the 6-week probation period.

2.7.5 Appendix 2 sets out the 4-stage process for monitoring and dealing with poor attendance and punctuality relating to HE students after the 6-week probation.

2.7.6 De Montfort University maintains that the monitoring of attendance and actions implemented as a result remain a matter for resolution at local level. For this reason, this College policy supersedes DMU policy. In the situation where a HE student is being withdrawn from the College based on poor engagement and attendance normal procedures for withdrawal should be applied. Contact the HE office for further information.

Appendix 1 - Attendance and Punctuality Monitoring Process			
	Lateness	**Block Attendance**	**Poor Attendance**
Stage 1 Learning Coach arranges a meeting with learner and parent (if applicable) **Verbal warning** given and recorded on Promonitor or Smart Assessor Monitor arrangements in place for up to 2 weeks	2 instances or 1 instance of 15 minutes	Learner misses a session	If overall attendance falls below 95%
Stage 2 Issues continue during monitoring period Meeting to be arranged with PL, learner and parent **Written warning** given and recorded either on Promonitor or SmartAssessor. Learner flagged 'at risk' on central system. Monitor arrangements in place for up to 2 weeks	Lateness continues	Learner misses 2 or more sessions	Further attendance issues continue
Stage 3 Issues continue during monitoring period Meeting arranged with PAM, learner and parent **FINAL written warning** to be sent out, copied to Curriculum Director, and recorded on Promonitor or SmartAssessor Monitor arrangements in place for up to 2 weeks	Issues continue	Issues continue	Issues continue with no improvement
Stage 4 Issues continue during monitoring period Withdrawal procedure activated by Director Central systems updated	Issues continue	Issues continue	Issues continue with no improvement

Appendix 2 - HE Attendance and Punctuality Monitoring Process		
	Lateness	**Poor Attendance**
Stage 1 HEPL arranges a meeting with learner. **Verbal warning** given and recorded on Promonitor or Smart Assessor Monitor arrangements in place for up to 2 weeks	Poor punctuality noted by staff as adversely impacting upon student learning or interrupting delivery of programme	Overall attendance falls below 85%
Stage 2 Issues continue during monitoring period. **Written warning** given and recorded either on Promonitor or SmartAssessor. Learner flagged 'at risk' on central system. Monitor arrangements in place for up to 2 weeks	Lateness continues	Attendance issues continue
Stage 3 Issues continue during monitoring period. Meeting arranged with PAM and learner. **FINAL written warning** to be sent out, copied to Curriculum Director, and recorded on Promonitor or SmartAssessor Monitor arrangements in place for up to 4 weeks		Issues continue with no improvement
Stage 4 Attendance issues continue during monitoring period. Notification to student that College cannot confirm attendance with Student Loans Company (SLC), withdrawal procedures activated by Director		Issues continue with no improvement

2.8 Retention

2.8.1 As the withdrawal of learners will affect the retention of the course, and the College as a whole, early intervention due to non-attendance by the relevant parties is encouraged before withdrawal takes place, as outlined above.

2.8.2 If a learner is subsequently withdrawn from a programme, the withdrawal must be actioned and recorded using the Student Leavers Form (LE0005) and authorised by the appropriate Programme Area Manager (PAM) or Director of Curriculum.

2.8.3 In the case of workplace learners, TAs / ROs should discuss withdrawal with the Business Delivery Manager (BDM) and PAM (if applicable). If withdrawal is agreed as the appropriate course of action, the TA / RO should then inform the employer. The WPL Student Leavers Form should be completed and signed by both the TA and the BDM.

2.9 Non-continuation (HE)

2.9.1 The College applies the HEFCE definition of 'non continuation' to its dataset for Higher Education. This metric is the proportion of students who start but do not continue with their studies (and is the inverse of a retention figure). Students are counted between their first and second year of study (year three also applies to applicable HE PT). Students who continue studying at HE level at the same institution are deemed to have continued, all other students are deemed non continuers.

2.9.2 In the case of HE students who have secured tuition fee/maintenance loans, the Student Loans Company make three payments across the year to the College. These payments roughly coincide with the start of each term; 25% of the annual tuition fee is paid after approximately 6 weeks of attendance in the Autumn Term. A further 25% is paid in January for the Spring Term and a final liability period payment of 50% of tuition fee is paid to the College after Easter for attendance in the summer term. If a student attends after one of these liability dates and then withdraws, the tuition fee loan payment will be triggered for that term and they will not be eligible for a tuition fee refund. A number of agencies including the awarding body have to be notified when a HE student withdraws, contact the HE office for guidance.