

# NCG Attendance Management Policy



<b><u>Policy Title</u></b>	<b>NCG Attendance Management Policy</b>	
<b><u>Policy Category</u></b>	Compliant	
<b><u>Owner</u></b>	Rachel Carr - Assistant Director of Quality	
<b><u>Group Executive Lead</u></b>	Steve Wallis - Executive Director of Quality	
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<b><u>Considered By</u></b>	Executive and QA Leads	
<b><u>Approved By</u></b>	Executive Board	
<b><u>Date Approved</u></b>	September 2019	
<b><u>Equality Impact Assessment</u></b>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics	
<b><u>Freedom of Information</u></b>	This document will be publically available through the Groups Publication Scheme.	
<b><u>Review Date</u></b>	July 2021	
<b><u>Policy Summary</u></b>	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that learner attendance is consistently managed across all NCG operating divisions. It sets out the high standards and expectations that we set for all learners and staff.	
<b><u>Applicability of Policy</u></b>	<b><u>Consultation Undertaken</u></b>	<b><u>Applicable To</u></b>
Carlisle College	Yes	Yes
Group Services	Yes	No
Kidderminster College	Yes	Yes
Lewisham College	Yes	Yes
Newcastle College	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form College	Yes	Yes
Southwark College	Yes	Yes
West Lancashire College	Yes	Yes
<b><u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u></b>		
<b><u>Previous Approval Date</u></b>	<b><u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u></b>	
20 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	Removal of Intraining and Rathbone and includes the separation of Lewisham and Southwark College in the implementation of the policy to individual colleges.	
<b><u>Linked Documents</u></b>		
<b><u>Document Title</u></b>	<b><u>Relevance</u></b>	
<b><i>NCG Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy</i></b>	This policy identifies the required characteristics of all teaching, learning and assessment at NCG. It forms a non-negotiable expectation, through which the Group sets-out what is required of a successful teacher within NCG. The policy sets out the framework for the evaluation of teaching and learning and aligns the NCG core principles with national standards for teaching and education.	
<b><i>NCG Apprenticeships Policy</i></b>	This policy sets out the requirements for NCG's apprenticeship provision in all Divisions regardless of scope and scale. It builds upon the Institute for Apprenticeships' definitions and core principles in defining a non-negotiable standard for implementation by Divisional senior leadership teams.	
<b><i>NCG Single Safeguarding Policy</i></b>	NCG, and its constituent college and training providers, is committed to the safety and well-being of its learning community. In doing so, this single policy will be adopted through divisional procedures and strictly adhered to.	

## Attendance Management Policy

### 1. Scope and Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that learner attendance is consistently managed across all NCG operating divisions. It sets out the high standards and expectations that we set for all learners and staff.

### 2. Policy Requirements

Each NCG Division is required to create a local attendance procedure each Academic Year that ensures full implementation of and compliance with this NCG policy. The attendance procedures must be approved by the Divisional Senior Leadership Team and shared with the local Board. The procedure may add in additional requirements that are additive to the policy set out below, but must deliver it in full.

### 3. Definition of Attendance Management

Attendance management is the process of ensuring that learners and apprentices attend their planned learning, regularly and on time. It is the responsibility of all staff in the Group to support this process in way or another. There is a special emphasis placed on teaching and training staff (to plan and deliver interesting lessons that encourage learners to attend) and tutors (through pastoral support and management of the learning programme). Business support staff in a variety of academic and non-academic roles support this process through mentorship, counselling, advice and guidance, data collection and management reporting.

### 4. Attendance Monitoring Requirement

It is a funding and legislative requirements to maintain an accurate and reliable record of attendance – usually, but not exclusively, through register management. Attendance and punctuality are integral and fundamental to all learning; however, the recording attendance is also required for:

- funding compliance
- an accurate and permanent record of when and where a learner was present – and by extension health, wellbeing and safeguarding
- to validate teaching hours for both permanent, sessional and learning support staff
- to underpin approaches to safeguarding, Prevent and County Lines initiatives by monitoring regular and frequent attendance patterns

### 5. The NCG Single Standard

The Group has a no tolerance policy on non-attendance and lateness.

The expectation for **all** students is:

- 100% attendance
- 100% punctuality

This applies to all parts of their programme of study – including English and maths classes.

This aim should not be confused with Key Performance Indicator targets, which are set annually based on:

- Available national data for attendance
- An adjustment for stretch and challenge
- An adjustment for local and underpinning context

The expectation for **all** staff is:

- Registers must be completed at the beginning (within 20 minutes) of a lesson or practical session wherever the facilities exist to do so
- 100% registers are marked
- Registers must be completed electronically to the MIS, where this facility exists
- Where the facility does not exist, then registers will still be marked within 20 minutes and uploaded electronically to the MIS within 24 hours

### 6. Planned Learning

Reliable attendance measurement requires accurate planning and register management. Problems arise when this fails to reflect the expectations of the study programme or apprenticeship. For example

- Inaccurate start and end dates;
- Elements that are not taught by a teacher or trainer;
- Inaccurate recording due to work experience, enrichment, higher education visits, industry visits or sporting activity;
- Inaccurate planning of day/block/semester release;
- Producing group registers for 1:2:1 tutor or learning support sessions, whereby the majority of the group would not be expected to attend.

It is the responsibility of the teacher, tutor and course leaders to ensure that planning is accurate and that timetables/registers are not produced that exceed the requirements of this policy

Each NCG Division must have a local procedure for register management that ensures accuracy and adequacy of coverage.

### **7. Authorised Absences (A)**

It is accepted that there are occasions when it is not possible for a student or apprentice to attend; the following constitutes 'acceptable' non-attendance and should be marked as such on the register. Use of this marks requires a mandatory form of evidence, for example a hospital appointment card. It is a neutral mark on the register and does not constitute or contribute to cumulative attendance.

- Known religious Holidays not covered by UK Bank Holidays
- Hospital appointments with a consultant or similar (not GP appointments)
- Diagnosed medical conditions that require ongoing/regular hospital treatment
- Family bereavements of a close relative
- Court attendance/judicial/jury service
- Job interview
- Designated Religious Festival
- Driving test
- Mandated appointment with Department for Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Home Office

### **8. Learner Attendance Management**

Divisional procedures must set-out how attendance issues will be fairly investigated, the consequences of persistent and intentional non-attendance (disciplinary or sanctions) and the measures taken to ensure that learners can access missed work and/or training. It should concurrently set-out how good, persistent attendance will be recognised, and where applicable, rewarded.

Non-attendance (O) can occur for a number of reasons and it is essential that tutors, teachers, support staff and managers work together to determine whether or not there is:

- A genuine reason for non-attendance in the short, medium or long term;

- Whether the attendance is related to specific issues at the place of learning (inappropriate course choice, financial constraints, transport or access to the provision, bullying)
- Whether the attendance issue can be resolved with the assistance of parents, carers, employers or other parties
- Whether the attendance is likely to result in unintended consequences for the learner e.g. removal of financial support, benefit or disciplinary action
- Whether the learner can make up missed work
- Whether system or staff error has resulted in untimely and/or inaccurate attendance

Divisional attendance procedures must ensure that repetitive absence – i.e. over a 2-3 week period – is tackled robustly and promptly to ensure a rapid and supported return to learning. Learners absent for longer than 3 weeks should be withdrawn from their programme of study immediately unless there are clear mitigating circumstances and a clear plan for return to learning. Use of the 'Approved Break in Learning' status could also be used, particularly for programmes that can be readily paused and restarted.

This policy and the accompanying divisional procedures must be accessible to the learners through induction, divisional managers must implement a method to ensure that the learner understands and formally agrees to the policy, prior to starting their academic, vocational or applied studies.

Divisional procedures must set-out through pastoral and/or behavioural management policies what happens when a learner fails to attend regularly, the timeframes and how this will be communicated to the learners through induction and through ongoing reminders.

### **9. Attendance Reporting**

Group IS, in partnership with Group QA, will ensure that attendance reporting is a key feature of automated performance reports.

These reports will use an open and transparent attendance calculation methodology that has been consulted on with the Divisions. The minimum requirements and current methodology for the calculation of attendance are set out in the annex to this policy.

### **10. Subcontracted Provision**

All NCG Divisions must ensure that any provision delivered through subcontractors meets the same standards with respect to attendance. This will be achieved by:

- Inclusion of adherence to the Quality Framework policies in the NCG Subcontract Management Framework
- Specific contract clauses with each subcontractor to stipulate compliance with the policies within the framework
- Divisional assurance checks to validate that the subcontractor has a local procedure in place prior to delivery that meets that NCG policy
- Divisional assurance checks to ensure ongoing compliance with the attendance policy
- A focus on attendance as part of the ongoing quality monitoring of subcontractors.

### **11. Assuring Policy Compliance**

#### **11.1. Local Compliance**

The timely marking of registers is a non-negotiable standard across the Group and divisional leads are accountable for implementing a consistent approach through divisional procedure. Where staff persistently fail to mark registers promptly, will require initial discussion to determine:

- Whether the staff member requires further training (developmental)
- Whether the non-timely marking is due to technical issues (requires urgent investigation and resolution)
- Whether the non-timely marking is due to occasional carelessness (censure), persistent carelessness (competency) or malevolence (disciplinary)

#### **11.2. Group Assurance**

In order to provide the NCG Board and NCG Executive with assurance that the attendance policy is implemented correctly across all areas of the Group, the following steps will be taken to demonstrate compliance.

- Each divisional lead will have an explicit performance objective assigned around implementation of the attendance policy and the steps required to ensure ongoing local compliance.
- Divisions will monitor and act on local compliance, particularly to ensure 100% marking of registers, 100% conversion to electronic and to ensure there is no abuse of the authorised absence marks.

- The Group Director of Quality will review each local procedure to assure that it aligns with the main NCG attendance policy and is sufficient to drive up attendance rates locally. This review will result in a report to the Group Executive Board within two months of the start of a new academic year.
- NCG business assurance team will undertake annual checks to ensure effective compliance at all levels in relation to this policy and local procedures.

### **12. Linked Policies**

- NCG Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- NCG Apprenticeships Policy
- NCG Single Safeguarding Policy

### **13. Linked Procedures**

- Divisional Attendance Procedures

### **14. Equal Opportunities Statement**

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed by each Division. This policy may be subject to review following Equality Impact Assessment by the Divisions.

### **15. Location and Access to the Policy**

The Attendance Management Policy is located as follows:

- NCG Intranet: Group Services: Group Policies and Procedures
- NCG Website: Media Centre: Guide to Information: Our policies & procedures

### **16. Person Responsible for the Policy**

- NCG – Executive Director of Quality

### **Annex A**

#### **Recording Attendance**

##### **Programme of Study / Adult / High Needs Learning**

Students should be marked Present (P) on a formal register when they are attending the following activities:

- Core programme aim
- English & maths
- Taught tutorials
- Employability training
- Planned, timetabled and taught enrichment activity such as study or vocational skills
- Taught (teacher-led) revision sessions
- Examinations
- Additional learning support

Other activities include, but are not limited to, the following and should be marked as 'not required to attend' (N) on the register (in study, but not present in class) – and then the activity should be recorded using an appropriate format.

- Social action e.g. NCS – usually through evidence of attendance and/or project
- Volunteering – usually through a journal or log-sheet
- Work Experience/placements – usually through a journal or booklet
- Trips & visits – usually recorded through an ad-hoc register
- Planned personal study – recorded as learning journal or e-record if using an on-line learning tool
- Non-taught enrichment – for example gaming, reading, sport clubs;

#### **Apprenticeships**

Apprentices should be marked Present (P) on a formal register when they are attending the following activities:

- Skills or knowledge training (forming part of the 20% off the job)
- English & maths (although not included in the 20% off the job entitlement)
- Taught tutorials (although not included in the 20% off the job entitlement)

- Taught (teacher-led) revision/skills consolidation sessions (forming part of the 20% off the job entitlement)
- Examinations (although not included in the 20% off the job entitlement)
- Additional learning support (although not included in the 20% off the job entitlement)

### Attendance Marks

The following are the acceptable register marks: /	Present
P	Present (positive attendance) Extending to planned and supervised study sessions and accompanied educational visits
N	Not required to attend; in study, but not present in class or study session that is not supervised or registered (neutral attendance)
A	Authorised Absence (neutral attendance)
L	Arrived Late (positive attendance)
E	Left Early (positive attendance)
O	Sickness, reported by student (negative attendance)
U	Unreported absence, no contact made (negative attendance)
O	Disciplinary/Suspended (negative attendance)
N	College Closure (e.g. CPD, snow, Strike (neutral attendance)
N	Course achieved and completed (neutral attendance)
T	Transferred (neutral attendance)
W	Withdrawn (neutral attendance)

### Attendance Reporting

Group MIS, in partnership with Group QA, will ensure that attendance reporting is a key feature of automated performance reports – this will include as a minimum:

- Individual learner attendance and punctuality
- Group and Tutor Group attendance
- Specific component attendance such as main aim, tutorial, maths and English
- Attendance by key demographic or segmentation (such as gender, ethnicity, disability and difficulty and social disadvantage)
- Persistent non-attendance (as required)
- Unmarked registers
- Untimely marked registers
- Ability to filter for attendance on FE as opposed to HE, full cost or other funded programmes
- Access to different ‘snapshots’ of data to support quality improvement, for example a 4 week rolling average, weekly snapshot or the ability to exclude the first 42-day period.

These reports will use an open and transparent attendance calculation methodology that has been consulted on with the Divisions. The current methodology for the calculation, along with detail of any registers that are excluded from the main ‘FE’ dataset calculation, is set out in Appendix B. Each report will also make clear the source of the data and also whether it is live or based on stored ‘aggregated’ datasets.



**Attendance Scenarios – not intended to be an exhaustive list**

Reporting and Monitoring Student Absence				
Ref	Scenario	Action		Attendance Management
1	Student/parent calls the campus to report an absence	Call received and information logged – student is marked absent (O)	Admin team	Campus attendance phone number/email address as advertised – <b>student marked absent reported (O)</b> unless mitigation can be evidenced for authorised absence. Action/support will be proportional to circumstances and time absent. Student will be reminded of expectations.
2	A student is absent, no contact	Student is marked absent – unreported (U)	Session tutor/lecturer	<b>student marked absent unreported (U)</b> Nominated tutor to follow up absence through pastoral procedures. Action/support will be proportional to circumstances and time absent. Student will be reminded of expectations and process in reporting their absence.
3	Student is on work experience	A planned activity – student is marked not required to attend (N)	Session tutor/lecturer	Tutor must communicate with sessional teacher; student marked <b>not required to attend (N)</b>
4	Student is on a driving test and has an appointment card	An example of authorised absence (A)	Session tutor/ lecturer	Student marked as <b>authorised absence (A)</b>
5	Student has been to see a consultant, but can't produce an appointment letter	Student is marked absent – mark depends on whether the tutor/team were notified	Session tutor/lecturer	Tutor marks <b>student marked absent unreported (U)</b> and requests a copy of the letter, if tutor notified ahead of time then <b>student marked absent reported (O)</b> Tutor updates the mark to <b>(A) authorised absence</b> if applicable and evidence provided.
6	A group of students are marked absent for a bespoke tutorial when they are not required to be attend	Timetable should be amended or only those students required and registered	Session tutor/lecturer	<b>Timetable/register update required on planning system</b> Tutor should update the planning system and ensure accurate recording of their group against planned hours
7	A learner turns in 30 minutes late for a 90 minute sessions	Student is marked late and the minute slate recorded	Session tutor/lecturer	<b>Student marked late (L)</b> – follow divisional policy for follow-up action/support. The time late should be recorded in an appropriate field.



<b>8</b>	Student is on a accompanied (taught) educational visit	A planned activity	Session tutor/lecturer	<b>Student marked present (P)</b>
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**Calculation of attendance rates**

Attendance rates across NCG will be calculated using the same underlying methodology regardless of the local MI System being used. This will ensure that like for like comparisons across the group are available and that consistent information is shared, for example during any external inspection.

**Attendance calculation formula**

The basic attendance calculation is as follows:

$$\text{Attendance \%} = \frac{[\text{Total positive register marks}] \times 100}{([\text{Total positive register marks}] + [\text{Total negative register marks}])}$$

*Note – all neutral marks are excluded from the calculation*

In terms of the individual marks this can also be expressed as:

$$\text{Attendance \%} = \frac{(P + L + E) \times 100}{(P + L + E + O)}$$

The calculation for punctuality is as follows

$$\text{Punctuality \%} = \frac{[\text{Total present or left early register marks}] \times 100}{[\text{Total present or left early register marks}] + [\text{Total late register marks}]}$$

In terms of the individual marks this can also be expressed as:



$$\text{Punctuality \%} = \frac{(P + E) \times 100}{(P + E + L)}$$

### Provision in scope

For calculation of the core Further Education (FE) dataset the provision where the majority of learners attending are funded from the following sources will be included:

- 16-18 study programmes
- Adult learner loans
- Adult Education Budget
- Apprenticeships (attending day or block release)

i.e. that provision subject to Ofsted Inspection

The following will be excluded from the data set

- Higher Education programmes
- European Social Fund Programmes
- Full cost recovery provision
- International provision
- Provision subcontracted in from other providers

### Registers in scope

The following registers will also be excluded from the core FE calculation

- Those associated with open or distance learning, i.e. attendance is by 'drop in'
- Work experience registers

All other registers will be included in the calculation



**Withdrawals and Transfers**

We expect that divisions will remove negative attendance marks for any learner that occur after their date of last attendance when they withdraw from a course or transfer to a different class/course. This will prevent attendance rates from being suppressed by repetitive absence marks.