

NCG Attendance Management Policy



<u>Policy Title</u>	NCG Attendance Management Policy	
<u>Policy Category</u>	Compliant	
<u>Owner</u>	Rachel Carr - Assistant Director of Quality	
<u>Group Executive Lead</u>	Steve Wallis - Executive Director of Quality	
<u>Date Written</u>	June 2020	
<u>Considered By</u>	QA/TLA Forum	
<u>Approved By</u>	Executive Board	
<u>Date Approved</u>	September 2020	
<u>Equality Impact Assessment</u>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics	
<u>Freedom of Information</u>	This document will be publically available through the Groups Publication Scheme.	
<u>Review Date</u>	July 2022	
<u>Policy Summary</u>	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that learner attendance is consistently managed across all NCG operating Colleges. It sets out the high standards and expectations that we set for all learners and staff.	
<u>Applicability of Policy</u>	<u>Consultation Undertaken</u>	<u>Applicable To</u>
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
<u>Changes to Earlier Versions</u>		
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>	
Sep 2020 (this version)	Updates to register marks to incorporate approaches for sustainable blended delivery including asynchronous and synchronous remote delivery	
March 2020	Annex B created to identify how attendance/engagement would be managed during COVID lockdown	
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.	
<u>Linked Documents</u>		
<u>Document Title</u>	<u>Relevance</u>	
<i>NCG Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy</i>	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.	
<i>NCG Apprenticeships Policy</i>	This policy sets out the requirements for NCG's apprenticeship provision in all Colleges 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 College senior leadership teams.	
<i>NCG Single Safeguarding Policy</i>	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 College procedures and strictly adhered to.	
<i>NCG Unified tutorial, Attainment and Progress</i>	Sets out the arrangements for learner progress milestone reports	
<i>NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy</i>	Sets out the desirable behaviours, including attendance, required to succeed	

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 colleges. It sets out the high standards and expectations that we set for all learners and staff.

2. Policy Requirements

Each NCG college 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 College Senior Leadership Team and be shared with the College Board.

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. 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). Professional 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 requirement (including through Keeping Children safe in Education) 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 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 expectation for **all learners** is:

NCG, in its aim seeks to establish exceptional teaching, learner outcomes and experiences and therefore expects learners to have:

- 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 (KPI) targets, which are set annually based on:

- Available national data for attendance
- An adjustment for setting realistic targets
- An adjustment for local and underpinning context

The expectation for **all staff** delivering face to face and **synchronous** online delivery is:

- Registers must be completed with the P or S mark at the beginning (within 20 minutes) of a lesson or practical session wherever the facilities exist to do so
- 100% registers are marked each day/week
- Registers must be completed electronically 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 the same day.
- Registers using synchronous lessons must use the appropriate mark to distinguish between delivery in college, and asynchronous sessions

The expectation for **all staff** delivering blended **asynchronous** online delivery is:

- Asynchronous sessions are when the blended delivery timetable provides the facility for flexible timings during the week using pre-recorded/delivered material. For example pre-reading, assessment or self-study modules or explicit instruction using media. The sessions remain teacher-facilitated, however the material may not require live interaction, instead using email and chat for flexible communication between the teacher and learners.
- Asynchronous learning must be clearly identified on both the timetable and register by using the correct mark (Y)

- 100% registers must be marked within 5 working days of the class – the lag is to allow the teacher to evidence learning has taken place – this may be through a VLE access log or a response to set exercise/questions/activity. A nominal time and day may be set on the asynchronous register for timetabling purposes, that may not always coincide with the actual learning for practical, flexibility reasons i.e. a learner may not be able to access the learning at the specific time.

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 College 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 for reasons that are out of their control. We recognise that attendance is important to learners seeking referenced for higher education and employment, hence the following constitutes 'acceptable non-attendance' and should be marked as such on the register. Management reporting will be able to distinguish between the 'in and out' present attendance rate, and an adjustment for the A mark when used as a neutral mark.

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.

- Hospital or GP appointments with a consultant or similar
- Diagnosed medical conditions that require ongoing/regular hospital treatment

- Family bereavements of an immediate relative (parent, child, spouse, sibling)
- Court attendance for jury service
- Job interview
- Designated Religious Festival
- Driving test
- Mandated appointment with Department for Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Home Office
- Shielding/ill health as a result of coronavirus high risk, or due to temporary isolation due to Public Health England/NHS 'track and trace' requirements and is unable to continue study for some reason (note if fit and able the learner would continue to study remotely and be marked using S or Y marks as appropriate)

8. Learner Attendance Management

College 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

College 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 4 weeks should be formally reviewed by the SLT and potentially withdrawn from their programme of study, unless there are clear mitigating circumstances and a clear plan for return to learning. Use of approved break in learning status may be used in some circumstances, such as maternity; staff are required to check the funding rules with college MIS teams

This policy and the accompanying college procedures must be accessible to the learners through induction, College 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.

College 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 QA and DIS will ensure that attendance reporting is a key feature of automated performance dashboards and reports.

These reports will use an open and transparent attendance calculation methodology that aligns with sector best practice. 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 colleges 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
- College assurance checks to validate that the subcontractor has a local procedure in place prior to delivery that meets that NCG policy
- College assurance checks to ensure ongoing compliance with the attendance policy
- A focus on attendance as part of the ongoing quality monitoring of subcontractors.

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11. Assuring Policy Compliance

11.1. Local Compliance

The timely marking of registers is a non-negotiable standard across the Group and college leads are accountable for implementing a consistent approach through the college 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. Assurance

In order to provide the NCG Board and 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 **principal** will have an explicit performance objective assigned around implementation of the attendance policy and the steps required to ensure ongoing local compliance.
- Colleges 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.
- **Group Business Assurance and Risk** will periodically 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.

Annex A

A.1 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 when a routine teacher/tutor is present:

- 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

When the routine teacher/tutor is not present, or when the activity is non-routine, but planned, then a learner may be marked as 'not required to attend' (N) on the register (in study, but not present in class) – and then the attendance activity should be recorded using an alternative appropriate format.

- Social action e.g. NCS – usually evidenced through evidence of attendance and/or project work provided by NCS
- 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 participation with college sports teams or skills competitions

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)

A.2 Attendance Marks

The following are the acceptable register marks: /	Present
A	Authorised Absence, used only for those activities listed in section 7 (neutral attendance)
E	Attended for the majority of session, but left early (positive attendance)
L	Arrived late, but attended majority of session (positive attendance)
P	Present (positive attendance) in the college for face to face delivery Extending to planned and supervised study sessions and accompanied educational visits
S	Synchronous (positive attendance) - live streamed/ real time remote or distance delivery where the learning is actively engaged in the session at the time (note: does not necessarily have to include video, a learner may be working and in contact via audio, chat or email)
Y	Asynchronous (positive attendance) recorded/pre-set remote or distance delivery to provide for flexibility
N	Not required to attend; in study, but not present in class or study session that is not supervised or registered (neutral attendance)
N	Short, temporary College Closure (e.g. CPD, snow, strike) (neutral attendance)
N	The student has completed and achieved the course ahead of planned end date (neutral attendance)
T	Transferred (neutral attendance)
W	Withdrawn (neutral attendance)
O	Sickness, reported by student (negative attendance)
O	Disciplinary/Suspended (negative attendance)

U	Unreported absence, no contact made (negative attendance)
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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 course aim 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 3 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 Colleges. 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 C. Each report will also make clear the source of the data and also whether it is live or based on stored 'aggregated' datasets.





Annex A - 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 – student marked absent reported (O) 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	Student marked absent unreported (U) 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 not required to attend (N) and an alternative form of attendance required.
4	Student is on a driving test and has an appointment card	An example of authorised absence (A)	Session tutor/lecturer	Student marked as authorised absence (A)
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 student marked absent unreported (U) and requests a copy of the letter, if tutor notified ahead of time then student marked absent reported (O) Tutor updates the mark to (A) authorised absence 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	Timetable/register update required on planning system 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	Student marked late (L) – follow College policy for follow-up action/support. The time late should be recorded in an appropriate field.
8	Student is on a accompanied (taught) educational visit	A planned activity	Session tutor/lecturer	Student marked present (P)
9	A student is told to self-isolate due to COVID track and trace and the rest of the class are attending as	The student would normally continue to study from home	Session tutor/lecturer	Student isolating is marked in supported learning (S or Y)

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	planned.			The rest of the class are marked as present (P)
10.	The timetable is designed around a rota some 50% of class are in college and 50% at home	The most complex scenario	Session tutor/lecturer	<p>Those in college are marked (P)</p> <p>If the teacher is streaming the session live any students viewing/participating in real time would be marked synchronous delivery (S)</p> <p>Any students reviewing the lesson work asynchronously will be marked asynchronously (Y) when evidence of learning is available within 5 working days</p>
11.	The teacher is delivering a session in real time, but is not using video	A synchronous planned activity	Session tutor/lecturer	<p>If the teacher is streaming the session live using VLE, chat, audio (but not video) any students viewing/participating in real time would be marked synchronous delivery (S)</p>



Annex B – Adjustments for Recording Attendance during enforced COVID19 lockdown measures

This adjustment note sets out how attendance records will be marked during a period of enforced college closure. It provides for staff and students engaged in remote/distance supported learning, and for learners who may still need to attend as they have education health plans, or are children of key workers.

Dormant reports will be enabled to support attendance monitoring during the period of supported remote/distance learning. These are intended to monitor and action learner engagement and therefore cover both safeguarding and progress toward planned aims.

We understand that that headline attendance rates will be impacted significantly during this time and we ask staff to diligently record, following this amended guidance, in the interim period.

This applies to all teaching and training staff who routinely use planned on-line or hard copy registers. Staff who routinely use other systems (such as apprenticeship e-portfolios) should continue to complete attendance in the usual way.

Accessing Staff Advantage

There is a link on the NCG website for staff to access Staff Advantage remotely. This link will not work inside the college.

<https://www.ncgrp.co.uk/guide-to-information/coronavirus/coronavirus-colleague-fags-it/>

If I can't access the system?

Follow the FAQs and help guides and if you are still unable to access contact ServiceDesk@ncgrp.co.uk as a last resort and inform your line manager. Keep a manual record if required (some colleges are doing this in addition, so please follow local guidance in addition to this policy).



Legal Compliance of registers

Staff should be assured that during enforced lockdowns, until college reopening, NCG will not be treating Staff Advance registers as legal/contractual proof of the date, time and location of taught tuition. This is a particular important point to note as managers have delivered much training on legal compliance and accuracy in recent years.

The register system will instead be used as a comprehensive tool to record and monitor weekly levels of learner engagement in a teaching week. The attendance for this period will also be removed from any formal reporting to external agencies and we will be careful to explain the approach to any interested parties, for example the ESFA or Ofsted.

There will be some flexibility granted if the learner is not in contact at exactly the same time as the register suggests. Ideally it will be at the same time and day, although practically that may not be possible for a variety of reasons. Staff can simply mark the nearest convenient register mark within the same planned teaching week.

This is not usual practice, but it is important to note that the registers will not be used in the usual way. These registers will ultimately be segregated from all formal records completed to date.

Marking learner records

Learners should be marked in **supported remote and distance learning using the synchronous or asynchronous mark (S or Y, positive mark)** on the normal register when they are actively engaged in working from home. Actively engaged describes a learner who is in contact with the tutor/teacher via approved platforms/emails, or by working on portfolios/workbooks. Ideally it will be at the same time and day as the register suggests, although practically that may not be possible for a variety of reasons. Staff can simply mark the nearest convenient register mark within the same planned teaching week. Engagement marks can not be carried over as credit, it is essential that weekly reports track learners that are potentially disengaged for safeguarding, wellbeing and funding reasons.

Learners who are planned to work remotely but are not in contact (during the week) should be marked as **unreported absent (U, negative mark)** – this largely binary approach is to provide absolute clarity on whether the learner is engaged or not.



Learners who are still attending college (for example for assessment or practical delivery) during a planned phased closure or partial closure will be marked using the usual attendance marks.

Marking staff records

Staff should designate the mode of delivery using one of two teacher marks on the register.

The following are the most likely marks to be used during COVID lockdown	
P	Present (positive attendance) The usual mark for present and used only for face to face delivery only - will apply to learners on education health care plans, those with a social worker, children of key workers, or any other learners invited in, depending on the guidance/restrictions at the time (positive mark)
S	Supported synchronous remote/distance learning (positive attendance) This is the key mark used for learners who are working remotely, who are in contact and are actively learning in live streamed sessions. The mark must be in the same teaching week as the learner engagement has taken place and ideally the same time and day. (positive mark)
Y	Supported asynchronous remote/distance learning (positive attendance) This is the key mark used for learners who are working remotely, who are in contact and are actively learning in pre-set or recorded delivery. The mark must be in the same teaching week as the learner engagement has taken place and ideally the same time and day. (positive mark)
U	Unreported absence (negative attendance) The learner is not actively engaged/ has not made or responded to contact during the week (negative attendance)
A	Authorised absence (neutral attendance) Used in accordance with existing guidance and also where a learner has been in touch to report symptoms of COVID 19 and has been instructed by NHS 111, GP, or Track and Trace to self-isolate, or other approved circumstances as set out in the policy (neutral mark)



The following are acceptable marks that can be used.	
O	Sickness, reported by learner (negative attendance) A learner has made contact through the usual channels to report an illness.
O	Disciplinary/Suspended (negative attendance) The student is formally suspended from their studies
N	Course achieved and completed (neutral attendance) The learner has finished but is still appearing on the register
T	Transferred (neutral attendance)
W	Withdrawn (neutral attendance)
Please <u>do not</u> use the following:	
N	College Closure (e.g. CPD, snow, Strike (neutral attendance)) Even though this appears to be the most relevant mark, it was not intended for prolonged use and would not allow us to track learner engagement.



Annex C - 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:

$$\text{Attendance \%} = \frac{\text{Total positive register marks}}{\text{Total planned marks}}$$

Note – all neutral marks are excluded from the calculation

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

The calculation for punctuality is as follows

$$\text{Punctuality \%} = \frac{\text{Total present excluding late marks}}{\text{Total present including late marks}}$$

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



Annex D - 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 and is provision subject to Ofsted Inspection

- Programmes for young people (aged 14 – 18)
- Adult Education Budget
- Adult learner loans
- Apprenticeships (attending day or block release)
- Traineeships
- Subcontracted out (to other providers)

The following will also be monitored for contract and quality purposes, but will be excluded from self-assessment reports (as out of scope for Ofsted)

- Higher Education programmes
- European Social Fund Programmes
- Commercial full cost courses
- International courses
- Provision subcontracted in (from other providers)

Withdrawals and Transfers

We expect that Colleges will remove negative attendance marks for any learner that occur after their date of last attendance/learning when they withdrew from a course or transferred to a different class/course.