



# Student Engagement and Attendance Policy

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## **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** The College is committed to supporting you to achieve the award you are aiming for.

**1.2** There is a strong link between attendance, engagement and achievement; if you attend teaching sessions and engage in independent study outside these sessions, you will maximise your chances of success. If you miss teaching sessions and/or do not engage in independent study, your chances of achieving the award you are aiming for will diminish.

**1.3** We are also responsible to our funders and awarding bodies for making sure you are attending and engaging with your studies. We are obliged to withdraw students who have stopped attending and engaging.

**1.4** Therefore, we expect you to sign an attendance agreement when you enrol with us, and we will monitor your attendance and engagement throughout your programme. We will work with you to help you resolve any issues that may impact on your attendance and engagement. In the interest of equality, we monitor all students in the same way.

**1.5** This policy describes how Commonwealth College of Excellence monitors the attendance and engagement of UK students with their studies, and what the College may do if a UK student does not attend or engage.

**1.6** Throughout this document, 'we' or 'us' refers to the College and 'you' to the student

## **2.0 Our expectations of you**

**2.1** We expect you to attend all the teaching sessions for your programme according to the delivery mode you registered for<sup>1</sup>. 'Teaching sessions' include (but not are limited to) lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, work placements and field trips.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless you have an approved Support Plan with a different attendance requirement.

- 2.2** Attending according to the delivery mode means that if the module is taught face-to face, then you should attend face-to-face (on campus), and if the module is taught online then you should attend online. If you are not sure about the way you are expected to attend, please ask your tutor.
- 2.3** If you attend in a different mode (for example, if you attend online when you are expected to attend face-to-face), you will be marked as absent unless your absence is authorised (see below).
- 2.4** You are expected to arrive on time for teaching sessions (whether on campus or online) and stay for the whole session. You should have your camera on during online sessions.
- 2.5** You must bring with you the equipment you need to engage in your teaching session effectively. Normally, this means bringing a laptop computer or similar.
- 2.6** Any abuse by students of the expectation to attend (e.g., by having someone else mark a student as present) is a disciplinary offence subject to action under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.7** You are also expected to complete and submit all written assignments, practical or other coursework on time, and attend any examinations.

### **3.0 If you are unable to attend a teaching session**

- 3.1** If you are unable to attend a teaching session, you should inform an Attendance Officer ([admissions@cce.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@cce.ac.uk)) at the earliest opportunity and complete the [Absence Form](#). There are examples of what we regard as acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence in appendix A.

**3.2** You may self-certify absences from up to four teaching sessions in any one semester. Where you are absent from more than four sessions, you should submit independent, third-party evidence (e.g., a doctor's note) to explain your absence.

**3.3** If there is an acceptable reason for your absence (and, if the absence is your fifth or more, you submit evidence for it) the absence will be authorised and not counted in your attendance record.

**3.4** If there is not an acceptable reason for your absence (and/or, if the absence is your fifth or more, you do not submit evidence for it), the absence will be unauthorised and count towards your attendance record as described below.

**3.5** If you have a long-term condition or situation that is preventing you from attending, you should let us know by emailing to [admissions@cce.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@cce.ac.uk). We may refer your case to the Fitness to Study Policy or to the Inclusion Policy and Procedure.

## **4.0 Maximum duration of absence**

**4.1** The maximum duration of absence we will approve (subject to your submitting evidence, as described above) is normally four consecutive weeks. If you are absent for more than four consecutive weeks – including if you are absent from face-to-face teaching sessions for more than four consecutive weeks (if the delivery mode for your programme includes face to-face sessions) – we may refer your case to the Fitness to Study Policy or escalate it to the Attendance and Absence Panel as described below. Periods of consecutive absence can span more than one semester or level.

**4.2** You should ask for authorisation for long absences at the earliest opportunity and preferably before the absence begins. We will only approve requests made after the absence has ended if you can show us that you could not ask beforehand (for example, due to serious illness or injury).

**4.3** We will take previous absences into account, and the reasons for those absences, when considering whether we can authorise absences.

## **5.0 If you are unable to submit coursework or attend an examination**

**5.1** If you are unable to submit coursework or attend an examination, you may be able to secure an extension to a deadline or the deferral of an examination under the College's Mitigating Circumstances Procedure or the procedure specified by your awarding body. If you are not sure which procedure applies to your programme, please ask your lecturer or Programme Leader.

## **6.0 What we do if you have unauthorised absences**

**6.1** The table below describes the escalation process for unauthorised absences.

<b>If you...</b>	<b>You will receive...</b>
<b>Have four</b> unauthorised absences in a term...	A <b>first</b> warning email from Administration Officer asking you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• why you have been absent</li><li>• to resume attending your scheduled sessions.</li></ul>
<b>Have eight</b> unauthorised absences in a term...	A <b>second</b> warning email inviting you to meet with Administration Officer to find out if the College can do anything to help you resume attending.
<b>Have twelve</b> unauthorised absences in a semester...	A <b>third</b> warning email inviting you to a meeting with Administration Officer, Programme Leader, Head of Academics and Quality Controls.

**6.2** Regardless of who contacts you about your attendance, you must follow the instructions provided as failure to engage in this process and to attend any meetings arranged by us may result in the escalation of your case to the Attendance and Absence Panel. If you do not improve your attendance to a sufficient standard (i.e., regular, and consistent), then your case may be escalated to the Attendance and Absence Panel.

**6.3** The Attendance and Absence Panel is chaired by the Principal, and other members of the panel include the Head of Academics and Quality Controls, the Programme Leader, and the Administration Officer.

## **7.0 Attendance Panel and withdrawals**

**7.1** If, after you receive a third warning email, you fail to engage in the meeting organised Administration Officer, or if you are absent for more than four weeks, then your case will be escalated to the Attendance and Absence Panel. Your case will also be escalated if you engage in the meeting organised by Administration Officer, but your attendance does not improve (i.e., you have more unauthorised absences).

**7.2** The Attendance and Absence Panel will consider various information about your attendance and engagement, such as your submission record, and decide on the appropriate action. The decision may be a suspension of studies, or, in cases of severe non-attendance and non-engagement (including non-submission of assessments), withdrawal from the College, or some other action. If you are suspended or withdrawn our Registry team will notify you in writing.

**7.3** Students who are reinstated after a suspension for non-engagement under this policy will; have their engagement closely monitored and be considered for further action if their attendance does not meet our expectations within the first two weeks of reinstatement.

## **8.0 Appeals**

**8.1** You may appeal a decision of the Attendance and Absence Panel to suspend or withdraw you from the College by sending your appeal to [admissions@cce.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@cce.ac.uk) within 5 working days of receiving the notification from the College.

## **Appendix A: Acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence**

### **Acceptable reasons for absence**

Every application will be considered on its merit, and this list should be seen as a guide to what amounts to mitigating circumstances for an absence to be authorised, and not an exhaustive list:

- Bereavement of a child, sibling, parent (including step-parent) or legal guardian or spouse or civil partner
- Bereavement of a close relative (e.g. grandparent) or friend, with a brief statement of the impact on the student
- Serious personal injury, medical or mental health condition preventing attendance and/or submission of a summative assessment
- Moderate personal injury, medical or mental health condition preventing attendance and/or submission of a summative assessment
- Serious worsening or acute episode of an ongoing disability, medical or mental health condition
- Mental health crisis
- Family breakdown (such as divorce)
- Financial problems (non-work related)
- Housing issues such as eviction or unforeseen sudden requirements to move
- Jury Service
- Attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or claimant
- Serious injury or illness in a child, sibling, parent (including step-parents) legal guardian, spouse, civil partner or partner
- Serious illness of a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or other close relative or close friend

- Unexpected caring responsibilities caused by worsening of ongoing medical or mental health condition in a child, sibling, parent (including step-parents), legal guardian, spouse, civil partner or partner or other close relative
- Victim of a violent crime (e.g. assault, sexual assault, domestic violence, etc.)
- Victim of theft or burglary of work or materials required for assessment.

## **Unacceptable reasons for absence**

Every application will be considered on its merit, and this list should be seen as a guide to what does not amount to extenuating circumstances and not an exhaustive list:

- Oversleeping or missing a bus/train
- General pressure of College work
- Demands of employment or personal appointments, which could have been arranged around your timetable
- Personal disruptions which could have been anticipated such as travel, family events, which could have been arranged around your timetable
- Living too far away from the College
- Booked holidays or trips to see family abroad
- Cosmetic medical treatment or surgery
- Work commitments
- Ongoing caring responsibilities (including school holidays)
- Failure of student's IT equipment or software.

**The End**