

Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures

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Student Attendance and Punctuality

Objectives

University College Birmingham is committed to providing high quality education and training leading to student success. To achieve this, we will maximise students' learning opportunities by:

- Setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions
- Working in partnership with students and, where applicable, their parents, guardians, carers and employers, to ensure good attendance and punctuality, embedding a culture of reliability and commitment
- Monitoring and taking action to improve attendance and punctuality where necessary.

Scope

This document sets out the principles and practice for managing attendance and punctuality for all Further Education students, apprentices, and those on Higher Education and Professional qualifications. This includes both onsite and online delivery.

Summary of college expectations of punctuality and attendance

The College expects 100% attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions. This includes online sessions, workshops, work placements, compulsory visits and activities, and tutorials.

Attendance of all students will be reviewed throughout the course of the academic year / from apprenticeship start date. Any student who has not achieved at least 95% attendance, and who is unable to provide a full justification, may be withdrawn from their programme of study as outlined within the [General Student Regulations](#).

Students are expected to give a good reason, backed up with evidence, for all absences.

Students are expected to provide a reasonable justification for any lateness to lessons. Teaching staff will not normally refuse admission to the class or online session to late students. However, students may be expected to 'make up' for time lost due to lateness throughout the course of the academic year.

Where absences/lateness can be foreseen in advance, the student should notify their tutors and the Attendance team by logging the reason for their absence on ProPortal. Appropriate evidence must be provided to the Attendance Team for the absence to be classed as authorised, as per the FE and Sixth Form Absence Guidelines document.

For unforeseen absences, such as illness, the student must make contact with the Attendance Team to notify the college of their absence by 09.00am on the first day of absence and every subsequent day unless they state a return date or are signed off by a doctor for a given period.

A legitimate reason for reporting absence retrospectively could include an accident, or a late hospital appointment or a domestic crisis. The student should then inform their Tutor and the Attendance Team as soon as is possible or upon their return to college.

The Attendance Team are based within Baskerville House. Students can contact the attendance team on attendance@ucb.ac.uk or 0121 232 4061.

Non-attendance may be dealt with as part of the Student Disciplinary Policy and may result in sanctions, a written warning or withdrawal.

Timetabling

The timetabling system relies on up-to-date information from the Head of Department for each programme area. Year planners for each programme should be sent to the Timetabling team as soon as they are finalised. Timetables should be checked for accuracy and any changes to staff or rooms must be communicated to the Timetabling team as soon as it is known.

The timetabling staff should also be informed of any planned off-site visits, residential trips, functions, competitions, block placements, individual timetable requests or ad hoc work experience as soon as they are arranged. Registers are imported directly from the system and are visible to students live, so this information **MUST** be correct as far in advance as possible.

Implementing the Policy - Staff Procedures and Guidance

The online registers system is accessible to lecturers 24/7 via the UCB Portal. Completion of daily class registers should take place within the **first 15 minutes** of the session start time. Available marks are **P** to indicate **Present** in the session and arrived on time, **A** to indicate **Absent** – not in the session, or **L** to indicate a **Late** arrival or **EL** to indicate an early leaver. The register can be updated by the original submitter as required after submission. Any late arrivals or early leavers should be marked as such and a note of their arrival/departure time entered.

Failure to complete registers swiftly may result in students missing out on payments from Student Financial Support.

Students unaccounted for who are vulnerable, or under the age of 18, may be a cause for concern and it is therefore vital that their absence is reported promptly.

Registers are auditable documents and must be maintained in a timely and accurate fashion. Where a member of staff persistently fails to mark a register, or marks registers late, they may be subject to disciplinary action. In the event of a staff member being off sick the Head of Department is responsible for arranging cover and that staff member must ensure that the register is completed. Submission details will be logged under each user with the date and time.

Students marked as 'NR' (not required) should always have a note added to explain why this is the case, except for Individual Tutorial registers. Any students in attendance whose names are not yet displayed on the register must be added manually using the Add Student facility and marked accordingly.

In the event of an error being made on the register, the mark may be amended by the lecturer who taught the session and completed the register on the day in question.

Students are normally expected to make medical and other appointments outside of timetabled hours. However, where a student knows in advance that they are unable to attend a lesson, they must report this to the Attendance Team and provide evidence of the absence so that the absence can be logged and possibly noted as 'authorised' on the register.

Authorised absences include:

- Medical appointments made by the NHS/private health provider which cannot be rearranged outside of timetabled hours
- A major religious holiday
- Visit to a University to attend an open day/interview or a career related interview
- Appointment with a Careers Advisor (should normally avoid disruption to studies)
- Occasional extra-curricular activity giving significant personal achievement, including field trips and visits
- Activity related to area of study such as sports fixtures, competitions and expeditions
- Attendance at a close family funeral
- Attendance at a probation meeting
- Severe, publicised disruption to transport, e.g. rail strike
- Work-based training
- A practical driving test (not lessons)
- A UCB representatives' meeting

An absence will **not** be authorised for any of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury (regardless of whether or not a GP note is provided)
- Routine check-up with GP, optician or dentist
- Bereavement
- Holidays or leisure activities
- Driving lessons and theory tests
- Birthdays or weddings
- Personal or family emergencies
- Full or Part-time work (other than scheduled work placement).

- Looking after family members (unless the student is 16-19 and a designated carer)

If the Attendance Team judges the absence to be legitimate, as per the FE and Sixth Form Absence Guidelines document, they should change the associated absent marks to authorised absence on the register. The authorisation process occurs weekly, once all FE attendance is recorded for the previous week.

Reported absence is visible on the online register as a red exclamation mark icon. If the mouse cursor is hovered over the icon, details of the date/time and a generic 'reason for absence' will be displayed. Details of all FE student absence logs can be viewed in full by the relevant staff via each individual's Student Dashboard page.

Where no justification for the absence is provided, the academic team must attempt to contact the student to ascertain the reason for the absence as soon as practicable. The Attendance Team will provide support with this as and when work capacity allows. If the location of any student identified as 'vulnerable' cannot be confirmed from this contact, the Academic Team must inform the Safeguarding team and the student's Personal Tutor. The Safeguarding Team will advise on whether or not the students' parent/carer/guardian should be contacted. The member of staff should record any contact made, discussions, reasons and information in the Student Comments section of the dashboard and/or ProMonitor and ensure this is communicated to other staff as required.

Where no justification for the absence is provided in advance, on the first day back in learning, the student is required to provide evidence to support the absence authorisation to the Attendance Team. Evidence must be in the form of an official letter, full email or clear SMS screenshot, showing the student's name/address as well as the date and time.

When the member of staff who marked the student absent next sees the student, they should ask for an explanation for the absence, draw the student's attention to the attendance policy and stress that non-attendance will be followed up and dealt with.

Should a pattern of non-attendance emerge, the tutor should follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the student, recording any information on the student dashboard/ProMonitor. The students' parents/guardians should be advised.

Students' responsibilities

You are expected to:

1. Attend 100% of timetabled sessions. This includes online sessions, workshops, work placements, compulsory visits and activities, and tutorials.
2. Report any absence due to illness or other reason to the College by 0900am on the first and every subsequent day of absence (by phone or e-mail to the Attendance Team)
3. Do everything possible to avoid unnecessary absences by making medical appointments outside class time unless it is an emergency
4. Avoid going on holiday during term time
5. Arrange appointments with careers advisors outside of lesson time

6. Provide medical evidence for absences of more than 5 consecutive days
7. Inform the Attendance Team and tutors by logging absences on ProPortal in advance if you know you are going to miss a lesson or arrive late
8. On the first day back in learning after an absence, present evidence to support your absence or email this to the Attendance Team if it meets the criteria for authorisation.
9. Comply with our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and any agreed action plan and associated sanctions if your attendance falls below 95%.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring the good attendance and punctuality of their students and for dealing with attendance and punctuality issues whenever they occur. There are some specific responsibilities attached to staff, these are outlined below:

Teaching staff or those taking class registers are responsible for:

1. Accurately completing the register on the day of attendance – within the first 15 minutes of the lesson.
2. Noting on the register any absences and lateness not already visible as 'logged'
3. Following up absence with the student when they next meet
4. Reporting any persistent issues with students to the student's personal tutor or Senior Lecturer.
5. Promote and model good punctuality and attendance through their own behaviour and teaching standards.
6. Keeping appropriate college systems up-to-date with accurate notes and actions.

Personal Tutors are responsible for:

1. Monitoring attendance and punctuality of their student group and taking early action to resolve issues.
2. Contacting students directly to ascertain whether the student's location is known and the student is safe.
3. When unable to confirm that a vulnerable student is safe to notify immediately the Safeguarding team and, on their advice, contact parents, guardians or carers of students who are vulnerable who are absent to inform them and
4. Working with the curriculum team to follow up any absences and ascertain reasons
5. Supporting students to attend well and to achieve. Agreeing and monitoring action plans and targets with students to rectify any poor attendance or punctuality.
6. Dealing with any personal/pastoral issues that affect poor attendance and punctuality
7. Working with the safeguarding team where patterns or instances of absence and/or lateness may indicate a safeguarding concern
8. Liaising with parents, guardian and carers of students aged 16-18 in order to improve attendance and resolves issues

9. Updating college systems with notes and actions relating to attendance or punctuality and any meetings held with individual students
10. Implementing this the disciplinary policy as required if students do not sufficiently improve their attendance and punctuality.

The Senior Lecturer is responsible for:

1. Monitoring overall attendance at programme level
2. Ensuring that, in the event of a staff member being absent, the register is taken or in instances of long-term absence reallocated on the timetable
3. Ensuring that registers are marked accurately and in a timely fashion and following up on any unmarked registers with individuals in their team
4. Escalating attendance/punctuality concerns to the Head of Department where necessary
5. Working with the team on strategies to improve overall attendance and punctuality for their programmes
6. Working with staff on implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and where necessary the student discipline policy

The Attendance Team is responsible for

1. Administering the Group Management system for checking enrolments and assigning students to the correct timetable group.
2. Maintaining online registers for all timetabled activities and exams.
3. Reviewing applications and evidence for absence and authorise in accordance with this policy and the FE and Sixth Form Absence Guidelines document.
4. Support academic teams in contacting students who are absent without prior authorisation and who have not contacted the team by 0900am, to ascertain their reason for non-attendance; documenting this reason.
5. Making students aware that absence which is not authorised is unacceptable.
6. Supporting staff with access to reports and data as required.

How attendance is recorded

A register is taken for every lesson in College or delivered online, including Tutorials, GCSE English and Maths and Functional Skills. Lecturers mark the register and once the session is finished, the data is stored on our information system. Recording attendance at a placement is described later in this document.

Students can check their own detailed attendance record by logging onto their individual student dashboard or UCB app. Parents/Guardians can also access this information via the student dashboard.

Visits and open days

The College will know the names of students who are going on trips and visits, so these should be timetabled in advance. However, trip organisers or academic teams should still review this with the Attendance Team in advance of these absences. This will make sure that these events are recorded for the correct students and will not then negatively affect their attendance record.

Reporting on attendance

The College monitors attendance closely and tutors should routinely check student attendance. Tutors should follow up ALL absences with students, via a meeting within 5 working days of occurrence and reinforce the expectation that students attend all activities. Similarly, other than very infrequent lateness, all issues relating to punctuality should be followed up with students.

The College strongly recommends that **students check their own records regularly** and raise any concerns immediately with the academic team because attendance rates will be included on all reports about individual student progress and in all references that are written to potential employers, other Colleges or Universities. If students have a genuine reason for a high absence rate, we will comment sensitively about this in any reference. We aim to be fair to students but, in line with our values, if attendance is unsatisfactory for no good reason, we will be honest about this. The College's usual practice is to discuss references with students when they are being written.

Attendance at placements

Students must get their attendance booklet or online tracker dated and signed for every day they attend placement. The booklet should show their full name and student ID. The placement name/supervisor information should also be filled in at the start of each new placement.

It is recommended that all scheduled placement dates are input on the booklet or tracker in advance. If the student fails to attend, the signature box for the date in question should be crossed through and 'ABSENT' written next to it to make this clear. Teacher training days, polling days, strike action and severe weather closures should be detailed on the booklet and verified by the placement supervisor with a signature.

The registers should be completed by each group's personal tutor, or confirmed by the Hired Team in the case of T-Level qualifications, as soon as possible after students' return to College. An Industry Placement Tracker spreadsheet is provided to staff for recording placement days and additional Block Placement grids can be provided by the Attendance Team to make it easier to record this information in bulk.

Students who fail to show their booklet/tracker at the designated session, or who do not have their booklet signed should be marked ABSENT. Attendance entered late will be marked as UPDATED on their record which counts as present. Dates and signatures anywhere other than on an official UCB Placement booklet or the online tracker are not acceptable as proof of attendance, although the Placement Tutor can transcribe and countersign verified dates in exceptional circumstances.

If a student is waiting for their DBS check to be certified, they should be marked as 'DBS' and processed as 'not required' until this comes through. There is no requirement for the student to come into College and sign in with anyone. However, they should be encouraged to complete their DBS application as a matter of urgency and to make up any days missed wherever possible.

Absences reported to the Attendance Team should also be copied to the Hired team if via email: hiredadmin@ucb.ac.uk or the relevant Placement Tutor contacted by phone if logged via the Absence Hotline. If the student states on the voicemail that they are missing placement, this information will be passed on by the Attendance Team.

If a student is withdrawn from their placement, Hired will inform the Attendance Team. Based on the circumstances of the withdrawal, a decision will be made as to whether or not the student is marked 'Not Required' or 'Absent' and if the student is required to sign in with the Placement Team on their placement days until a new placement commences. Generally, if a student is removed from the placement through no fault of their own, they can be marked as 'Not Required'. If they are withdrawn due to poor attendance, punctuality or behaviour they will be marked as 'Absent', regardless of whether or not they sign in to UCB each week instead.

Any additional days, or dates made up by the student throughout the year should be added at the end of the booklet. Extra dates must be signed by the placement supervisor, as normal, and then the details added to the tracker and a comment included so that retrospective attendance marks can be backdated against the relevant registers and the comment updated for easy reference.

What if attendance is poor?

If attendance rates are unsatisfactory students can expect this to be followed up by their tutor initially and senior staff if required. Parents, guardians and carers of students aged under 18 will be contacted if no improvement is seen. For students being supported by an employer through a programme we may also contact them with absence reports.

If students have worries or personal problems that are affecting their attendance, they should be encouraged to discuss these with the class tutor or Personal Tutor.

Poor attendance may be dealt with as part of the Student Disciplinary Policy or Academic Performance Policy and may result in a final written warning or withdrawal.

If a student is absent without sufficient reason for more than 4 weeks, a 'Notice to Withdraw' letter will be sent.

Frequently asked questions

1. What will be accepted as an authorised absence?

- Medical appointments made by the NHS/private health provider which cannot be rearranged outside of timetabled hours
- A major religious holiday
- Visit to a University to attend an open day/interview or a career related interview
- Appointment with a Careers Advisor (should normally avoid disruption to studies)
- Occasional extra-curricular activity giving significant personal achievement, including field trips and visits
- Activity related to area of study such as sports fixtures, competitions and expeditions
- Attendance at a close family funeral
- Attendance at a probation meeting
- Severe, publicised disruption to transport, e.g. rail strike
- Work-based training
- A practical driving test (not lessons)
- A UCB representatives' meeting

2. What are not acceptable reasons for absence?

- Illness or injury (regardless of whether or not a GP note is provided)
- Routine check-up with GP, optician or dentist
- Bereavement
- Holidays or leisure activities
- Driving lessons and theory tests
- Birthdays or weddings
- Personal or family emergencies
- Full or Part-time work (other than scheduled work placement).
- Looking after family members (unless the student is 16-19 and a designated carer)

3. What about unplanned absence?

You must inform the Attendance Team and tutors of your absence by logging the absence on ProPortal by 0900am on the day of absence that you will be missing lessons. Evidence can be provided retrospectively for the purposes of authorisation.

4. What do you mean by 'evidence of absence'?

The following things can be counted as evidence for an absence and must show your name, along with the date and time where relevant. However the [FE Absence Guidelines](#) outline what is and is not classed as authorised absence;

- An NHS letter or medical appointment card/record book

- A doctor's certificate (in the case of absences of 5 or more days' illness/injury)
- An official letter or email from a government body or other external group
- Driving test notification letter or email
- An official email or letter regarding a job interview/training from your employer
- University Open Day/Interview confirmation of booking email or letter
- A letter from a parent/care/guardian (students under 18 only)

5. What happens if it snows or if the weather is really bad?

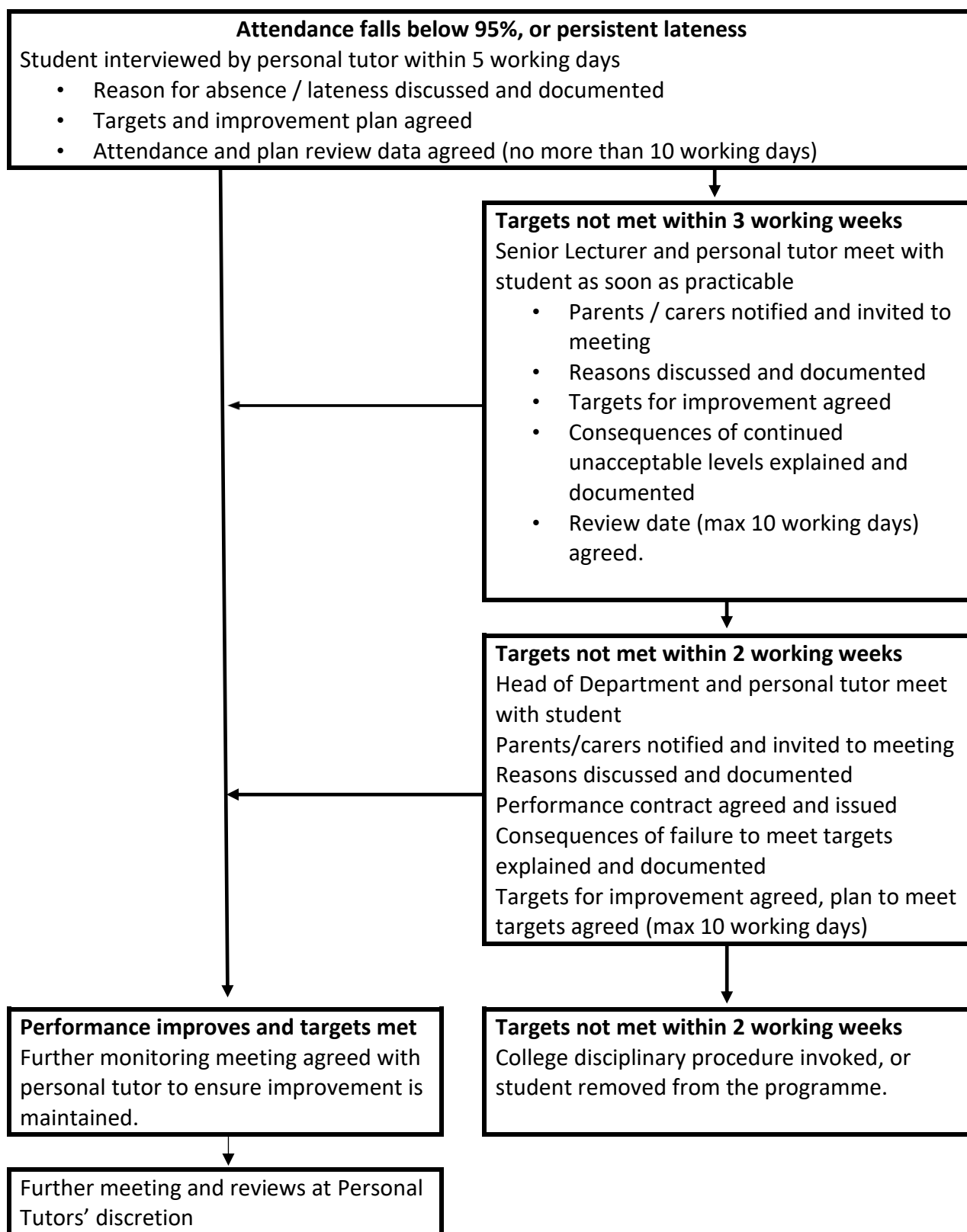
If the weather is severe the College may shut for health and safety reasons. The College will announce any closures on local radio and on the College website. In such situations, scheduled classes will be removed from the timetable should learning not be able to be delivered online.

If the College remains open, then attendance is still expected wherever public transport systems are still running and where students live within walking distance from the campus.

6. What happens if there is a rail strike?

If train services are stopped due to a publicised strike/industrial action, it will be assumed that alternative public transport can and should be used by students within the region. The Attendance Team will refer to the address listed on the student's record to determine whether or not absence is unavoidable.

Appendix A – Poor attendance flow chart



Appendix B – Register codes

In the event of an error being made on the online register, the mark may be amended on the request of the lecturer who taught the session and completed the register on the day in question. The lecturer must either complete and sign an Attendance Amendment Request form, or send a detailed request to the Attendance Team via email.

The Attendance Team are able to enter a variety of attendance marks other than Present, Late, Absent or 'NR' (not required) to suit all circumstances, as listed below:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>For use</u>	<u>Calculation</u>
AB	Absent	Unauthorised absence	Absent (negatively affects attendance %)
AB - Authorised	Authorised	Authorized absence	Absent (negatively affects official attendance % but not Portal/App/Tracker data)
C	Completed	Unit/Assessment completed, prior to course sign-off	Ignore (does not affect attendance %)
EL	Early Leaver	Partial attendance at class	Present (positively affects attendance %)
L	Late	Partial attendance at class	Present (positively affects attendance %)
N	Not Required to Attend Session	Attendance not compulsory, e.g. Individual tutorials	Ignore (does not affect attendance %)
O	Offsite (placement)	Attended placement instead of College – agreed in advance	Present (positively affects attendance %)
P	Present	Full attendance at timetabled class	Present (positively affects attendance %)
R	Retrospective Attendance	Extra attendance to make up class/placement day missed	Present (positively affects attendance %)
S	Signed In	Accounted for on-site/online but not in timetabled class, e.g. rep meeting/ASC	Present (positively affects attendance %)
V	Visit (Linked to Course)	Offsite visit during class time	Ignore (does not affect attendance % – Attendance marked on Visit register)
X	Examinations	Examination during class time	Ignore (does not affect attendance % – Attendance marked on Exam register)

Appendix C – Attendance letter/email/student comment suggested templates

First Stage:



**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM**

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Dear #student#

I have noted that your attendance at college is #% and I have no record of any reason for this. As you know, good attendance is very important if you are to successfully complete your study programme.

Please contact me by dd/mm/yy - five working days so that we can support you to improve your attendance. My telephone number is #, my e-mail address is #@ucb.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

##

Personal Tutor

Second Stage:



**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM**

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Dear #student#

I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to contact you to discuss my concerns over the level of your attendance at college. It is important that you contact me as soon as possible to arrange a meeting to discuss this.

If I do not hear from you by dd/mm/yy - seven working days, I will assume that you do not wish to continue on your study programme and I will complete the appropriate withdrawal paperwork.

My telephone number is #
My contact e-mail is #@ucb.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

##

Personal Tutor



**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM**

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Dear #parent/guardian#

I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to contact #student# to discuss my concerns over the level of their attendance at college. I should be grateful if you could contact me to arrange a meeting to discuss this.

If I do not hear from you, I will assume that #student# does not wish to continue on their study programme.

My telephone number is #
My contact e-mail is #@ucb.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

##

Personal Tutor

Third Stage (withdrawal):



**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM**

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Dear #student#

I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to contact you to discuss my concerns over the level of your attendance at college.

As I have not had any response from you, I have now completed the appropriate withdrawal paperwork and you are no longer an active student at University College Birmingham.

My telephone number is #
My contact e-mail is #@ucb.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

##

Personal Tutor



**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM**

Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Dear #parent/guardian#

I have attempted, unsuccessfully, to contact you to discuss my concerns over #student# level of attendance at college.

As I have not heard from you or them, I have completed the appropriate withdrawal paperwork and they are no longer an active student at University College Birmingham.

My telephone number is #
My contact e-mail is #@ucb.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

##

Personal Tutor