

Ó Fiaich Institute Policy Documentation

**Attendance Policy**

**2019/20**

# Ó FIAICH INSTITUTE



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**Aim**

The Attendance Policy has been developed as part of the Institutes commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all enrolled learners to achieve their full potential.

**Scope**

Full and punctual attendance at classes is required for all programmes at Ó Fiaich Institute (OFI). Learners attendance on courses is recorded for pastoral, professional, ethical, practical and contractual reasons. In addition, payment of grants is contingent on verification of learners' attendance on the course by the college at regular intervals throughout the academic year. Information relating to attendance must be submitted to SUSI and grants will be withheld in cases of unsatisfactory attendance (less than 80%).

**Expectations of Learners**

Attendance is a key component in learner achievement, progression and preparation for employment. Regular attendance and academic attainment are closely linked. Learners who actively participate in their learning by attending scheduled classes regularly are more likely to:

- Enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed.
- Successfully complete their course.
- Attain better results.

The Institute expects learners to attend all scheduled classes and activities to successfully complete their course. The nature of courses at OFI, especially where continuous assessment or complex assessment techniques are used, means that learners who do not attend will be unable to meet course requirements.

**Absence Procedures**

When learners are unavoidably absent they should make contact with their teacher and coordinator (through email) to explain their absence. If absent from class it is the learners responsibility to obtain information regarding class notes, assignment briefs and deadlines or any other college notices which have been issued in the learners absence.

The Institute will treat all genuine instances of reduced attendance in such circumstances in a reasonable manner, and will seek to support the learner concerned, insofar as is possible, to ensure that they can continue within their course/class fully without impacting negatively on their own, or their fellow learners' studies.

**College Commitment**

The college will record, monitor and report on the attendance of all learners and will maintain attendance records in accordance with the obligations to other organisations and bodies, including LMETB, The Department of Education and Skills, SUSI and SOLAS.

As part of the learner support system within the college, there are regular reviews of learners' progress on their programme, including a review of attendance. These reviews serve to assist learners in managing their involvement and engagement with their course and to identify areas

where action is required to assist in the achievement of their academic aims or, where learners are failing to engage with the course, advising them on alternative study and/or career options.

Records of verbal and written communications with learners with regards to attendance will be kept in order to identify patterns of non-attendance, and these records will be used to support the college in its management of learner attendance and retention.

### **Learner Responsibility**

Learners are expected to:

- Attend punctually for all timetabled classes.
- If a learner arrives late to class, the onus is on the learner to ensure that their attendance is recorded. (The determination of whether a learner arriving late for class will be allowed to enter and participate is at the teacher's discretion).
- Report any absence due to illness or other reason to the course coordinator on the first and any subsequent day of absence.
- Avoid unnecessary absences.
- Medical and other personal appointments, except in the case of emergency, should be scheduled for outside of timetabled class activities.

It is recognised that certain absences are unavoidable. These are defined as follows:

- Medically certified illness
- Family Bereavements
- Accidents
- Emergency dental or medical treatment/s or tests
- Other extenuating circumstances

The learner must produce documentary evidence to the Course Co-ordinator. Cases of extenuating circumstances must be explained to the Course Co-ordinator whose discretion will be used in deciding whether the absence(s) is valid and excusable. Learners who suffer from chronic illness must inform the Course Co-ordinator and provide medical evidence of their condition.

In general, Poor Attendance/Punctuality may result in:

- Referral to the Attendance Disciplinary Committee.
- Suspension and/or removal of student from registered programme.
- Difficulty in providing a favourable reference to other colleges, training agencies or employers.
- Withdrawal of a place in second year, where a second year programme exists.
- Termination of student grant/allowances.

## **OFI Procedures for Dealing with Poor Attenders.**

### **Stage 1: Early Intervention**

Course Co-ordinators will review attendance of learners on a monthly basis and will meet with a learner who has built up 5-7 days unexcused absences over the programme. Learners should note that missed classes, late mornings or afternoons and half days are all reckoned in calculating the number of days absence. Each of the foregoing will constitute one half day's absence. Course Co-ordinators will note a record of this meeting and agreed outcomes and inform the Attendance Officer of such instances.

### **Stage 2: Referral to Attendance Disciplinary Committee**

If a learner has accumulated 10 unexcused absences, they will be required to appear before the Attendance Disciplinary Committee. The Attendance Officer will correspond with the student and provide notification of details of the meeting. This process is intended to be constructive and helpful and provides a forum for the learner to explain the reason(s) for their frequent absences and to cooperate with the Committee in resolving the situation. Goals will be set for the learner around attendance over a period of time which will need to be met. Failure to meet assigned goals will lead to Stage 3 of the policy.

### **Stage 3: Removal from Programme**

Learners who have failed to act on the advice received at Stage 2 and who build up six more days of unexcused absence will receive a letter informing them that they have voluntarily removed themselves from their course. The learner will be removed from the Institute Register, and the Maintenance Grant, if applicable, will be suspended. The learner will be invited to sign an Exit Form and will be asked to return the Institute ID card.

### **Appeals Process**

An Appeals Process is in place for those who have been deregistered. If a learner makes application for re-admission through the Appeals Process then each subject teacher will be asked for a recommendation. If a learner is re-admitted they will have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Attendance Disciplinary Committee that there will be no recurrence of unexcused attendances. If a learner fails in their appeal they will be informed by written correspondence to their primary address.

### **Confidentiality and Disclosure**

All records in respect of attendance will kept in accordance with the LMETB's Privacy Statement and Data Protection Policy and Procedures.