The
Growth
Company

Education & Skills: Attendance Policy

Version 1.4 September 2024

GC Education and Skills: Attendance Policy

Attendance Policy

Values – Intent

The Education and Skills Attendance Policy is designed to encourage and support learners to complete their chosen programme of study. This policy applies to any, and all, learners enrolled on a course of study with The Growth Company, Education and Skills.

The five key drivers informing our approach to the retention of learners on programme work alongside the values and missions of The Growth Company:

- **Doing the Right Thing** by supporting all learners, enabling successful completion in their chosen programme of study.
- Effectively managing and monitoring progression including tripartite reviews, ensuring we are **Stronger Together**.
- Inter-team collaboration effectively contributes to learner success and achievement, thereby **Making a Positive Difference**.
- Providing a respectful culture of open communication whereby learners feel safe and secure, ensuring individual needs are met, **Empowering People** to achieve.
- Ensuring the retention of learners should result in an increase in key performance indicators and feed into the Quality Improvement Plans for Attendance, Retention and Achievement to **Build on Success**.

*Subcontracted providers, who have their own policies for learner attendance, must ensure that their policies meet our required standards. This must be proven to the satisfaction of The Growth Company Education and Skills.

Attendance Expectations

All learners and apprentices are expected to achieve 100% punctuality and attendance. This will be monitored using PowerBI RAG rating outlined below:

Red: Less than 80%.
Amber: 80% to less than 90%.
Green: 90% and above.

Attendance Procedure

All teams are responsible for tracking and monitoring learner attendance, and the accepted company software for completing registers is **Smart Assessor**. The data source for attendance tracking, monitoring, and reporting is **PowerBI**.

Important – all registers must be completed by the end of the day; this is a legal obligation in ensuring the Safeguarding of all learners (KCSIE)

All non-attendance must be documented with a contact log in Smart Assessor. A contact log can span several instances of non-attendance, i.e. annual leave, sick leave, however for general absence a contact log should be represented per instance of absence.

Register Marks

The below outlines all register marks that are in place and must be used to log attendance for learners via Smart Assessor. They have been split into register marks that impact positively, negatively, or neutrally on a learner's overall attendance percentage.

Positive Register Marks

- **Attended –** When the learner/apprentice has attended a session on time.
- **Attended including Employer** – When the apprentice and employer were both present at a session/review.
- **Learner Late** – When the learner/apprentice arrives late to a session, but still attended.
- **Assessor Late** – When the assessor/tutor arrives late to a session, but still attended.

Negative Register Marks

- **Authorised Absence** – When the learner/apprentice has permission to be absent.
  - **Annual Leave**
  - **Medical Appointments**
  - **Family Emergency**
  - **Religious Observance**
  - **Court Appearance**
  - **Special Circumstances**
  - **Sickness**
- **Learner Not Attended** – When the learner/apprentice fails to attend.
- **Cancelled** – When a scheduled session is cancelled. Record the reason as a 'Planning Note' on Smart Assessor.
- **Cancelled by Assessor/Learner/Employer** – When the assessor/Learner/Employer cancels a session. Record the reason as a 'Planning Note' on Smart Assessor.

Neutral Register Marks

Remove from Register: Learner Achieved – When a learner has successfully achieved the learning objectives for the session, however, the session booking cannot be removed. This should only be used for achievers.

Remove from Register: Learner Withdrawn – When a learner has been withdrawn from the course, however, the session booking cannot be removed.

Removce for Register: Break in Learning – When a leanre is on a break in learning, however, the session booking cannot be removed.

Guided or Independent Learning

Guided or Independent learning (GoIL) has been removed from the pool of potential attendance markers that are in place on Smart Assessor and should not be used. Guided Learning and Independent learning have been split out and placed within other register marks, which should be utilised in place of the previously used GoIL register mark.

For learning that is classed as 'Guided' please refer to positive attendance marks and make use the most relevant attendance mark available. Where an attendance mark is considered as 'Guided' then evidence of what has been delivered to the learner must be added to Smart Assessor under Planning Notes and Session Feedback options.

For any learning that is considered 'Independent', colleagues must refer to the negative register marks, again selecting the most relevant mark. Independent learning sits outside of a learners deliverable Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and, as such, should not be used to mark positive attendance. If apprentices engage with independent learning, they should add this to their timelog on Smart Assessor by selecting the activity type of 'Guided learning with no trainer / assessor present'.

Authorised Absence

"Authorised Absence" refers to situations whereby a learner is granted permission to be absent from sessions for a legitimate reason. It is important for learners, parents, and caregivers to be aware of, and adhere to, the specific requirements of authorised absence and request these in advance of sessions taking place.

Each learner absence request will be reviewed and can only be authorised by Delivery Managers, Pastoral Manager and Sector Directors.

Learners' Smart Assessor session should state the category only for authorised absence, without giving specific details. Professional judgement should be used; however, the below categories are examples of authorised absence:

Category	Description	Additional Information	Signed off by
Authorised Absence - Annual Leave	Confirmation email from the employer/manager/parent to confirm learner's annual leave		Delivery Manager / Training Centre Manager
Authorised Absence - Medical Appointments	When a learner has a medical appointment. If the learner is under the age of 18 confirmation with a parent/caregiver must be obtained.	Do not take copies of any evidence in reference to medical appointments.	
Authorised Absence - Family Emergency	Professional judgement and discretion should be applied to 'family emergency'. Examples could be bereavement, childcare/carer responsibilities etc.	The Safeguarding procedure applies to all learners classed as 'Family Emergency' and logged on CURA	
Authorised Absence - Religious Observance	When a religious festival or celebration occurs during operational dates.		
Authorised Absence - Court Appearance	When a learner is participating as a Claimant, Victim, Defendant, Jury Duty, or Witness.	The Safeguarding procedure applies to all learners classed as 'Court Appearance' and logged on CURA	
Authorised Absence Type Removed			
Authorised Absence - Sickness	If a learner or apprentice is absent from centre for 7 days, or more, based on sickness	If a learner is under 18, or has an EHCP, and reported sickness themselves, contact with parents/caregivers must take place to confirm sickness	
Authorised Absence - Special Circumstances	Can only be approved by a relevant Head of Department and include situations such as participation in a national event or competition.		Relevant Head of Department (Sector Director / Head of Foundation Learning etc)

All authorised absence outcomes **must be logged as a contact log in Smart Assessor**. A single contact log can span two or more absences, however, this must be made clear and obvious in the contact log

Catchup Session

Catchup sessions on Smart Assessor are utilised when a learner misses a scheduled session. They can be booked through Smart Assessor and are solely intended to cover missed learning from a regular session. It is important to schedule catchup sessions at the earliest possible time after the missed session occurs.

Each catchup session should correspond to a specific course. For instance, if a learner misses both a vocational and a maths session in a week, they should have two catch up sessions aligned with these respective subjects.

The requirement for catchup sessions is as a direct result of learner's non-attendance to scheduled lessons. Consistent non-attendance will trigger the disciplinary process outlined in the learner code of conduct.

Catchup sessions are a consequence of non-attendance and therefore should be messaged in this manner. There is a requirement to improve the learners scheduled session attendance, and as such, these sessions are not to be deemed a default option for learners. This is to reinforce behaviours and attitudes and lead to develop our learners as active citizens, ready to make the transition to the working world.

Catchup session data will be audited on a regular basis and become a bespoke element of all attendance deep dives. This is to establish trends and themes; ratios of scheduled vs catch up sessions and what has been done to improve the leaners attendance to scheduled sessions.

Lateness

All learners are expected to attend organised sessions promptly and on time. A learner is considered late if they arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of any session. The application of the lateness timing may be reduced in certain business areas; however, it should not be extended beyond the 15-minute period.

In any circumstance, the learner's location or reason for non-attendance must be determined and recorded as a contact log in Smart Assessor.

Supporting Documentation

- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy 2023
- Appeals Procedure 2023
- Alleged, Suspected and Actual Malpractice Policy and Procedure 2023
- Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure 2023
- Acceptable Use of IT for Participants 2023

Register help guides.

- Booking a catchup session
- Adding Learners to a Catchup Session
- Deleting sessions and removing learners from a register
- Making changes and marking a register

Version Control

Description	Name/Title	Signature	Date
Prepared by	Roosevelt Alexander / Sector Director Technical	R. Alexander	10/10/2023
Reviewed by	Emma Thorpe / Quality of Education Manager Jack Higson / Quality of Education Manager	E. Thorpe J. Higson	13/10/2023 13/10/2023

Approved by	Jon-Paul Rimington / Managing Director Education and Skills	JP. Rimington	16/10/2023
Reviewed by	Emma Thorpe / Quality of Education Manager Jack Higson / Quality of Education Manager	E. Thorpe J. Higson	09/01/2024 09/01/2024
Review by	Julie Gilles / Designated Safeguarding Lead	J. Gilles	14/03/2024
Approved by	Helen Stevenson-Miller / Quality Director	H. Stevenson-Miller	14/03/2024
April Update by	Jack Higson / Quality of Education Manager	J. Higson	07/05/2024
May Update by	Jon-Paul Rimmington / Managing Director Education and Skills	JP. Rimmington	15/05/2024
July Update by	Helen Stevenson Miller / Quality Director	H. Stevenson-Miller	04/07/2024
August Update by	Jack Higson / Quality of Education Manager	J. Higson	06/08/2024
September Update by	Jack Higson / Quality of Education Manager	J. Higson	20/09/2024
Policy Review Date	September 2025		

Policy Updates

29/04/2024 – Update to policy to include 'Catchup Sessions'.

08/05/2024 – Clarification around the use of contact logs being required for all instances of absence.

15/05/2024 – Alteration to RAG ratings for Attendance.

04/07/2024 – Revision of RAG ratings for Attendance.

06/08/2024 – Official setting of lateness time (15 mins), Clarification on the use of Guided or Independent Learning attendance mark.

20/09/2024 – Clarification of positive, negative and neutral attendance marks. Guidelines related to the removal of Guided or Independent Learning register mark.

11/10/2024 – Removal of Break in Learning from Authorised Absence to Remove in Register marking.