

Attendance Strategy 23-26

Introduction

The following strategies are evidence based to consider the impact they would have on improving attendance across City of Bristol College. Attendance is an issue for Bristol, with Bristol City Council sitting in the bottom 10% of local authorities for attendance at secondary school and post-16 (recorded in years 12 and 13).

There is a particular the south of the city, but also from those on the perimeter of Bristol facing disruption to travel.

While these issues have an impact on student expectations there are other contributing factors, many of which are linked to personal difficulties and traumas that people are experiencing. Our College is in the process of becoming a recognised trauma-informed College, and this will sit at the heart of our attendance strategy.

Our Targets and Aspirations for attendance

Defined in the Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study policy and the Code of Conduct for students, our expectation is for all students/apprentices to attend 100% of the sessions and be on time and ready to learn. The targets have been set to address the current position a work towards a target that will support attainment,

The following targets have been set for attendance over the next 3 academic years.

Annual targets to improve attendance are set for teachers/delivery staff as part of the annual appraisal but are holistically monitored, and discussed in 1:1s and team meetings.

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Attendance All	78%	80%	83%	85%+
HNS All	In line with peers			
Attendance 16-18 exc. E&M	80%	82%	85%	90%+
E&M Attendance*	60%	Within 10pp of main programme	Within 10pp of main programme	Within 10pp of main programme
Attendance Adults	82%	85%	90%	93%+
Attendance Apprentices	83%	85%	90%	95%+
Attendance HE	82%	85%	90%	93%+

*English and maths Attendance for 16-18 Study programmes.

E&M Attendance for adults will be included in the Adult Attendance.

1. Key Themes and Actions

There are 4 Key themes aimed at improving reported attendance, with an overarching fifth theme for Staff and Students Strategies to improve attendance that will have the wellbeing of people at their heart and support the Trauma Informed approach and use Positive Challenge, Growth Mindset and Acknowledgement and Praise of student efforts to improve attendance and access to learning.

- **1.1 Records, systems, and processes**

This theme will focus on ensuring that register and timetable records are accurate and recorded accurately and there is compliance with established systems. This will enable staff to monitor attendance patterns from programme start date and produce accurate analysis and reports.

- **1.2 Monitoring of Data & Reporting**

Analysing attendance data in a contextually detailed way and reporting by a range of characteristics to improve understanding of which students' attendance is consistently below target, support staff in managing interventions and responding efficiently to attendance/punctuality issues, monitoring the intervention impacts and communication with stakeholders (parents/careers/employers/sponsors)

- **1.3 Inclusion**

Identification of barriers to learning and ensuring all students have a clear sight of their learning journey to support interventions and actions. Understanding individual barriers to target support to those most in need and ensuring that interventions are linked to academic/progression targets.

- **1.4 Engagement, Enjoyment and Student Experience**

A positive approach in creating an outstanding student experience, in the classroom, enrichment activities and shared spaces, which is supported and shaped by student feedback and engagement.

2. Recording and Monitoring Attendance

The purpose of attendance reporting is to monitor student engagement use findings to improve student experience/outcomes and report to funding bodies. By empowering a more analytical and granular examination of attendance data involving teachers and students more directly, to identifying and agreeing improvement actions, everyone will have a greater influence.

2.1 Recording attendance

Attendance is recorded in ProSolution on class registers set up by the Department Team in line with curriculum planning and programme of study grids. The registers will add up to the appropriate planned hours of learning for the programme of study, ensuring compliance with funding regulations. This includes planned independent/remote learning and ad hoc sessions.

A register counts for the whole block of time a teacher is with the same group of students. Breaks in sessions **do not** require 2 separate registers, however, teachers are responsible for updating registers if a student does not return from break.

Registers are completed in class within the first 15 minutes of the lesson and then updated at the end of the lesson at the latest to account for late register marks/left early marks and absences that become notified.

Teachers can see their missing registers through ProSolution.

For weekly missing register reports, Heads of Department and teachers can view this directly through the Register by Lecturer report, which will show a list of registers by department, by lecturer and highlight unmarked (registers that have no marks) and incomplete (registers that have marks for individual students missing) for audit and support process.

2.1.2 Register Marks

The following Register Marks are available to register owners

Register mark	Name	Explanation and uses	Attendance mark
/	Present	To be used in all sessions (including online and hybrid) a student/apprentice has attended a session. Registers for sessions should be defined as the activity type for Online and will negate the need for the old / (online present mark). For sessions where a hybrid session is set, the present mark will be used for all who attended regardless of format, but the teachers should record in the register notes those who were joining via an online link for the session.	Positive
O	Absent	To be used for all sessions where a student/apprentice is absent with no communication.	Negative
N	Notified Absence	To be used for all sessions where a student/apprentice is absent but has notified their teacher of their absence with a reason. This mark will also be used for any mitigated circumstances and will negate the need for the old A mark (Authorised absence) which was still recorded as a negative but would need a timetabling officer to change. The aim is to remove unnecessary admin.	Negative
S	Sickness Absence	To be used for all sessions where a student/apprentice is absent but has notified their teacher of their absence due to sickness. This can also be used if the student is self-isolating for Covid-19 or is in hospital for some time. Sickness absences will also be used for all forms of physical and mental health issues that prevent a student/apprentice from attending. Sickness absent records on registers may be reviewed under any concerns in line with the College Fitness to Study/Practice Policy	Negative
L	Late	To be used for all sessions where a student/apprentice arrives late (notified or un-notified) A student is considered late after 15 mins after the start of the session	Positive Attendance Negative punctuality
R	Suspension	To be used for all sessions where a student/apprentice has been suspended from college and cannot attend online or remotely. R marks should not be used for more than 10 days unless there has been an extension to a suspension period in line with the Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Fitness to Study Policy	Neutral
P	Work Placement	To be used in the event a student/apprentice must miss a session due to an arranged work placement activity. This includes Supported Industry Placement and mandatory placements as part of a qualification (T-Level). This mark must not be used for standard work experience activity.	Neutral

0 and 1	Directed Study	These marks will be used on directed study session. 0 will be did not access and 1 will be did access	Neither mark will impact overall attendance
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2.3 Register Ownership, Maintenance and Compliance

Registers are owned and the responsibility of the assigned teacher, study coach or personal tutor. A register has been assigned and will indicate several hours, which record hours of utilisation for teaching contracts. All staff assigned a register must be aware of their responsibilities and compliance that must adhere to ensure that registers are maintained and provide accurate data for analysis and reporting.

- **2.3.1 Timely marking of registers:** A register owner is responsible for marking their register and registers should be within the first 15 minutes of a session and updated before the end of the session. All Registers are reported on and those that remain unmarked will be flagged showing the number and the register code.
- **2.3.2 Accurate marking of registers:** A register owner is responsible for marking their registers accurately, ensuring only students who are present in the room or an online session are marked present (not for directed study). All other marks should be used by the table listed in 2.2.1. If a member of staff has identified an inaccurate mark, they can edit register marks. Accuracy of register marks is important in the event of any change requests for students (transfer, withdraw, change group). If a register is marked and then an inaccuracy is found, this must be reported to the register owner and dealt with by the department management team.
- **2.3.3 Reporting register inaccuracies:**
 - 2.3.3.1 Register Inaccuracy -** A register owner should ensure that a register is correct prior to marking it. any inaccurate information regarding a register is reported to the timetabling team, along with the Head of Department or Programme Manager, who would be authorised to make changes which include on length of session, room and staff member assigned. If a registered time for the session is incorrect and needs to be extended, the timetabling team will need HoD approval to do this to ensure it complies with the Programme of Study grid and/or timetabling principles. In the event a student is on the register that should not be on there, the register owner should mark them absent but report the inaccuracy to the timetabling team to change group. Register errors outside of the control of the registered owner should be reported to the timetabling team using the central email TimeTabling.TimeTabling@cityofbristol.ac.uk
 - 2.3.3.2 Registered marked inaccurately –** in the event a register is marked incorrectly, the register owner should amend the register at the earliest possibility. If the register mark found to be inaccurate at a point of withdraw or transfer, then confirmation of the register mark being inaccurate should be made and then changed by the staff member or by the Programme Manager/ Head of Department.

2.4 Records and Reports

Attendance records should be reviewed daily by the course tutors and all curriculum delivery staff are required to stay current with the register/attendance records of their students, including the attendance on study programme elements such as English and Maths.

Programme managers and Heads of Department will be required to work through attendance with groups of teachers at the programme and department level, ensuring that interventions are in place, actions to resolve issues are progressing and updating timetables, when necessary, ahead of time.

Directors and Curriculum management will review Attendance records weekly and attendance reports are provided through the Power BI Dashboard for SLT and Heads of Department (Including Head of Additional Learning Support, Head of Student Experience and Head of Safeguarding) and RAG rated by departments.

2.41 The following reports are available and should be used to support attendance monitoring and actions

Student Group Tracker – Provides a breakdown of all Full-Time programmes and Higher Education timetabled courses by department, showing student attendance by element and indicating through colour flagging their attendance percentage overall. It also indicates all continuing students who have not registered a Last Date of Attendance (LDA) in the last 4 weeks. This report will be used by all teaching staff to monitor and track progress, identify anomalies, issues or inaction by areas and support intervention

Weekly Summary Attendance Report – Provides Heads of Department a report they can select by Funding stream and provision type. It also shows a weekly breakdown of attendance for comparisons and allows Heads of Department and programme managers to review particular areas of positive and negative patterns to analyse and review interventions, impact and direct support.

Student Register Report – This report provides staff with an overview of all registers by student and is aimed at highlighting register error marks and date discrepancies. This report can be used to audit registers but will be able to be used at individual intervention levels with students to provide evidence.

Schedule of Registers by Staff Report – This report provides Heads of Department and Programme managers a breakdown of registers in their areas by staff level and will highlight registers that have been marked, unmarked and that have incomplete marks. This report should be used bi-weekly to ensure timely register compliance

3. Interventions and Actions to Improve Attendance

In line with the [Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study Policy](#), the promotion of positive attendance and punctuality begins in the classroom and is driven by an engaging and dynamic curriculum that encourages attendance, consistent challenge using positive intervention that acknowledges barriers that individuals face but does not mitigate, clear communication of expectations that are linked to professional and industry relevant practices (contextualised to the relevant departments where necessary).

3.1 Prioritising Attendance

To ensure that attendance can improve, it needs to be actioned effectively and seen as a priority. Attendance will be the first point to review at each professional discussion (team meetings, one-to-one). Current and recent attendance (over the last 4 weeks) including barriers to student attendance is to be discussed and noted, with practical actions agreed and recorded.

Support and interventions for staff will be available in their management of student attendance and their use of resources and processes to effectively monitor the impact of these interventions.

3.2 A Positive and Consistent Approach

All staff should ensure all students have a clear sight of their learning journey and this is holistic through their programme. Key points in the year will dedicate time for a more detailed academic progress review, but attendance should be regularly discussed with students and addressed positively. The Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study gives curriculum staff agency to take attendance below 75% as gross misconduct and can be challenged at stage 3 of the intervention process as a result to support rapid high-level intervention.

Staff are encouraged to use logic and understanding in their interventions Student commitment to the course or inability to engage is being affected by barriers, and our undertraining of these is key to supporting them to attend, but consistency in challenge through targets and actions is essential in driving forward interventions. It is therefore essential that all staff who are dealing with attendance utilise the following:

- Acknowledge barriers but do not perpetuate these as barrier for learning and engagement

- Lead with individualised data about absences. This helps students/apprentices as well as parents/careers/employers know what is relevant to them and can drive home the scale of missed learning and provide more context of what this means (e.g. comparisons to the average) should increase impact.
- Frame absences in terms of the number of lessons, rather than days or weeks, missed. Research shows that this information is often described as 'new' and thought-provoking by students/apprentices as well as parents/careers/employers and challenges their assumption that days missed are easily caught up.
- Adopt a factual rather than punitive tone. Avoid being seen to say that allowing absences means a parent isn't concerned about their child's future. Instead, be factual when speaking about impact, and show you recognise parents' circumstances.
- Refer to formal guidelines. This is most important in the case of minor illness, where NHS guidelines give parents much-needed confidence and clarity. However, parents also say reminders about school policies are a 'non-judgemental' way of talking about absences.
- Do not generalise about student/apprentice's feelings and experiences. Suggesting that 'all' students/apprentices have specific needs and experiences can risk being dismissed especially by parents who feel this doesn't apply to them, especially those whose young people are SEND students.
- Emphasise the holistic benefits of learning. Referring to the positive impact of college on social and mental wellbeing and reiterating this particularly with parents/carers to help them reconsider absences. They also feel this helps show the value of attendance.
- Acknowledgement and Praise – recognising where there are positive patterns and using these as motivators to overcome barriers in other areas.

Links to attendance research can be found below

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/attendance-interventions-rapid-evidence-assessment>

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/18/school-attendance-important-risks-missing-day/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/securing-good-attendance-and-tackling-persistent-absence/securing-good-attendance-and-tackling-persistent-absence>

3.3 Department Ownership and Strategies

To ensure that attendance is a priority, attendance monitoring will form part of every quality review process and a specific Attendance Action Plan will be used to support department ownership and activity.

The reporting available will support heads of department and programme managers to access accurate attendance information and review against the wider sector targets in the Department QIPs.

Attendance will be a main point of review and discussion in all Quality Review Meetings conducted by the Director of Student Experience, Quality and Safeguarding, however specific attendance monitoring by sectors will:

3.3.1 16-18 Study Programmes including High Needs - Fortnightly meetings with Each Department will be undertaken in line with the overall 16-18 Monitoring. Attendance will focus on the overall target but also the English and Maths attendance per department in line with the target and attendance of High Needs students in mainstream programmes. All study programme attendance is owned by the Head of Department for the vocational area. This will be conducted by the Director of Further and Higher Education.

3.3.2 Adult Learning Programmes – Adult attendance data will be monitored weekly by The Director FLS and the Head of Department. The Director for FLS will hold fortnightly meetings with each Head of Department to identify

courses that need rapid targeted intervention to improve. All Adults on study programmes will be included in the 16-18 monitoring and intervention strategy to ensure that a consistent approach for study programme intervention is applied.

3.3.3 Apprenticeship attendance (off-the-job training including block release for English and Maths) – this will be part of the AQAs that of Head of Quality and Curriculum for Apprenticeships conducts with apprenticeship trainers and Heads of Department.

3.3.4 Higher Education and Higher-Level Learning – Attendance in Higher Education programmes will be reviewed as part of the specific higher education quality monitoring meetings that will sit outside of the Quality Review Meetings and will be conducted Head of Higher Education.

Actions will be explicitly linked to Departmental QIPs' clear ownership and accountability.

3.4 Punctuality and readiness for learning

We expect that all students arrive on time and are prepared to learn and attend the entire session to the end.

3.4.1 Each Head of Department has a localised approach to punctuality that has been agreed upon by the relevant Director responsible for that sector and the Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality.

3.4.2 Responsibility for attending on time is the students. Teachers will assure themselves that any latecomers to lessons are welcomed at appropriate points to not disrupt the learning of others or to create any health and safety risks for example in a workshop or workplace environment.

3.4.3 Teachers/Study Coaches will check in with the students during the session to ensure they can access the learning and know how to catch up on missed work. The teacher will check for underlying issues and where needed support will be agreed upon with the student to help them develop strategies to improve their punctuality, e.g. checklists, prompts or mentor support. Where caring or other issues outside college create a barrier to prompt attendance, teachers may need to offer a personalised approach to ensure learning isn't affected.

3.4.4 As stated in the [Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study Policy](#), persistent lateness is defined as three or more times for the same class and applies particularly where this disrupts others' learning. Lateness after breaks is inexcusable and the City of Bristol College regards this as disruptive behaviour. This must be addressed in line with the intervention policy at the first stage of intervention in the case of a first event and the responsibility will be that of the session owner.

As with the challenge of attendance., consistency is critical in ensuring that the expectation of being on time is clear to the student and the impact this has on their own learning and professional development.

3.4.5 Register owners are responsible for ensuring that their registers are recorded accurately to identify late arrivals using the late mark.

3.4.6 In the event a student/apprentice leaves early with no prior notification or reason, challenged in the same manner as arriving for a lesson late. Any student who has an EHCP or HN will need to be immediately raised by the teacher to the ALS team, who will contact parents/carers.

3.4.7 To reinforce the importance of punctuality and timekeeping, teachers/study coaches and personal tutors must be in their sessions at least 15 minutes before the session starts in the morning sessions where punctuality issues are more likely to be seen.

4. Attendance Action Plan

Attendance improvement is central to college quality improvement strategies and overall student attainment.

The following actions for the attendance action plan are:

Theme	Objective	Actions for 2023	
		Actions	Owner
Records, systems, and processes	<p>Ensuring that register and timetable records are accurate and recorded accurately and there is compliance with established systems.</p> <p>Enable staff to monitor attendance patterns from programme start date and produce accurate analysis and reports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Launch the attendance strategy and action plan <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance strategy and plan to include updated information on register marks and usage. <input type="checkbox"/> Timetable reviews to ensure that revised and improved timetables are ready post-October half-term to improve attendance. <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance strategy and monitoring plan to be the main agenda point in all Curriculum Management presentations to staff, team meetings and one-to-ones <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance reporting and guidance to feature on the staff intranet and through pop-ups <input type="checkbox"/> Training for all heads of Department and Programme managers on monitoring and understanding reporting data to use and analyse in setting actions for departmental improvement plans 	Director of FE&HE
Monitoring of Data & Reporting	Analysing attendance data in a contextually detailed way and reporting by a range of characteristics to improve understanding of which students' attendance is consistently below target, support staff in managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance monitoring by including a range of factors and characteristics in specified reports and looking for patterns 	Director of FE&HE Director of MIS



	<p>interventions and responding efficiently to attendance/punctuality issues, monitoring the intervention impacts and communication with stakeholders (parents/careers/employers/sponsors)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Narratives by department / Sector developed from as well a data-driven approach to understanding <input type="checkbox"/> reasons students miss sessions including questions on staff and student surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Production of an early leaver's survey where a student withdraws of their own accord from a programme <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the link between progression and social mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Use attendance data as an indicator of impact for cross-college services including student services, safeguarding, and welfare 	
<p>Inclusion</p>	<p>Identification of barriers to learning and ensuring all students have a clear sight of their learning journey to support interventions and actions.</p> <p>Understanding individual barriers to target support to those most in need and ensuring that interventions are linked to academic/progression targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student retention patterns to 42 days and departmental attrition rate to be analysed. <input type="checkbox"/> Early leaver surveys are undertaken systematically post-withdrawal to provide insight <input type="checkbox"/> Heads of Department and Programme Managers to understand and share narratives on students with very low attendance and the reasons behind this in a supportive, not punitive, way. <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance patterns for students with low self-esteem and confidence to be compared to more confident peers (will also link to students with EHCP and/or ALS intervention) <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the impact of caring responsibilities and living independently for young people about their attendance. 	<p>Director of FE&HE Director of SE,Q&S</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the impact of attendance-related posts in departments (is it part of a wider role? Explore the amount of time a person is allocated to attendance and any correlation with student attendance/teacher attendance. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop mentoring support for students needing help with life organisation skills <input type="checkbox"/> Maximise take-up of student funds to overcome financial barriers. 	
<p>Engagement, enjoyment and student experience</p>	<p>A positive approach in creating an outstanding student experience, in the classroom, enrichment activities and shared spaces, which is supported and shaped by student feedback and engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance is a core part of professional development activities and the theme of teaching and learning, with staff understanding cognitive load and how learning happens as being an influence of attendance for their students. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify whether links between retention to 42 days and attendance. <input type="checkbox"/> The link between progress and attendance is explored at the course level as part of monitoring student outcomes to establish an understanding of a causation or correlation effect <input type="checkbox"/> Department English and Maths attendance (16-18) is reviewed to review the promotion and the intervention from the main curriculum staff in driving the importance and contextualising content. <input type="checkbox"/> Look at the relationship between SEND and attendance (explicitly in mainstream study programme provision). 	<p>Director of FE&HE Director of SE,Q&S</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explore whether students with clearly recorded career and work experience plans attend better 	
Wellbeing	Strategies to Improve attendance will have the wellbeing of people at their heart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the relationship between teacher workload, well-being and student attendance <input type="checkbox"/> The impact of teacher absence, poor punctuality or negative behaviours on engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Embedding a culture built on transparency, information sharing, developing friendships and cultivating an ethos of belonging <input type="checkbox"/> The impact of key organisational strategies on student attendance, e.g. restorative approaches. 	<p>Director of FE&HE</p> <p>Director of SE, Q&S</p>