

Student Attendance & Progress Policy

As part of the commitment to their studies students are (except for absence with good cause) expected to attend all elements of their programme – including attending all teaching activities necessary for the pursuit of their studies, undertaking all associated assessments and attending meetings and other activities as required by the College.

Good attendance has a positive impact on performance and is therefore key to students successfully achieving the outcomes of their programme. We are keen to support students to maximise their potential and by monitoring attendance the College is able to quickly spot patterns of non-attendance and work with students to help them overcome any issues that may be affecting their studies.

Students may be withdrawn from their programme if they do not demonstrate satisfactory attendance and progress. It is therefore important that students keep the College informed of any absence.

General

1. Students must register on their programme within 2 weeks of the start of teaching. Students who fail to do this are deemed to have abandoned their studies.
2. Students are required to remain in reasonable contact with the College for the duration of their studies.
3. Holidays have been built-in between semesters and attendance is not taken during these breaks.
4. If a student is absent from a session in which work is assessed, a mark of zero will be awarded for the relevant session, and this zero mark will be used in determining the unit grade.
5. Students should note attendance requirements specified in relation to their funding body, if applicable.
6. Where required the College will report non-attendance to appropriate authorities including the Home Office.

Reporting Absences

1. Students are expected to attend all the classes for each unit they are registered on.
2. Unit coordinators will maintain an attendance register on a weekly basis in order to keep records of student attendance, and non-attendance will be noted.
3. Where students face difficulty in attending sessions or undertaking assessments and examinations, it is their responsibility to inform their Unit Coordinator/Student Administration of this fact and to provide a satisfactory explanation. All authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to Student Administration and recorded as appropriate.

4. A student who is not able to attend the College should inform Student Administration and submit a Temporary Absence Form.

5. If a student is going to be absent/was absent for any reason from class, they should complete an online Absence Form in the Current Students section of the website

<https://www.almcollege.ac.uk/student-resources>

Once received electronically by Student Administration, they will refer this to the Unit Co-ordinator within 1 week of the absence. Whether or not to authorise the absence is at the discretion of the Unit Coordinator. The College reserves the right to reject requests for absence if there are concerns about a student's overall pattern of attendance.

6. For absences longer than 7 days, a student must also submit a medical certificate (if absence is due to illness).

7. If a student requires a coursework extension due to illness, misses an exam due to illness, or is absent due to illness for longer than 7 days a medical note will also be required.

8. Students are advised to consult their Unit Coordinator if there is a problem leading to long term absence (or a pattern of shorter absences) from the College. They may be able to support students through difficulties.

9. It is the student's responsibility to catch-up with academic work missed during a period of absence.

Specific Information for Tier 4 Students

1. Please note that if you are a Tier 4 student on a visa, unauthorised absences will result in you being reported to the UK Visas and Immigration.

2. If Tier 4 students miss 10 'points of contact' or more, the College is legally required to inform the UKVI. Points of contact include coursework submissions, classes, seminars, exams, scheduled meetings etc.

3. Tier 4 students should provide prior notice of planned absences (via a Temporary Absence Form), stating where they will be, why, how long for, and contact details for when they are away.

4. After the completion of the programme of study, Tier 4 students will be required to be present at the College once a week until they leave the UK, and to sign an attendance sheet.

Non-engagement and unauthorised absences

1. If students have any problems that are affecting their punctuality and/or attendance then they are encouraged to seek support.

2. Should a student accumulate three unauthorised absences within a semester, they will be sent a letter of warning reminding them of the requirement to engage with their programme and asking the student to confirm their continued participation/intention to interrupt or withdraw. The student will need to explain their absences and provide evidence where applicable. If the student fails to respond to the letter within the prescribed timescale or if a

fourth absence is then noted, the case will be discussed at the Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience Committee and further action may be taken.

3. Should a student be late for class three times within a semester, they will be sent a letter of warning reminding them of the requirement to engage with their programme and asking the student to confirm their continued participation/intention to interrupt or withdraw. If the student fails to respond to the letter within the prescribed timescale or if a fourth absence is then noted, the case will be discussed at the Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience Committee and further action may be taken.

4. Where students are absent without authorisation, to the point that it is not possible to continue with their studies, Student Administration will write to the student stating that they will be deemed to have withdrawn from the College and their student record will be amended to show that they have withdrawn.

5. If a student is very frequently late or misses over 30% of the classes in their unit, they will not be permitted to complete it. The student will be withdrawn from the unit and will have to take it again.

6. Students have the right to appeal against a decision to withdraw them from the unit/programme. The appeal must be made within 5 working days from the date this decision was sent to the student. The student should continue to attend all of their classes and submit work in accordance with deadlines whilst their appeal is pending.

Termination of Studies for Failure to Participate/Poor Academic Progress

1. Where a Unit Coordinator considers that a student is failing to participate adequately in their programme of study they will consult with the Programme Coordinator. With the approval of the SQA Coordinator formal written warning letter will be sent by Student Administration to the student setting out the actions required of the student for adequate participation.

2. If the student's participation remains inadequate, the Unit Coordinator shall inform the Programme Coordinator and SQA Coordinator. With the approval of the SQA Coordinator, the Programme Coordinator will write to the student advising that if they do not contact the College within 10 working days with a view to agreeing arrangements for adequate participation, the student shall be deemed to have abandoned their studies and the student's registration will be terminated.

3. If the student contacts the College within 10 working days, they will be given a final opportunity to establish participation to the satisfaction of the Programme Coordinator. Where a student fails to adhere to the requirements for adequate participation, the Programme Coordinator will report this to the SQA Coordinator. The SQA Coordinator may take the case to the Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience Committee and the student's registration may be terminated with immediate effect.

Appeals against the decision to terminate studies.

1. The student will be informed in writing of any decision to terminate their studies. Reasons will be given for the termination of studies. The student will be given the right to appeal against the decision within 10 working days. Appeals may be made on the following grounds:

- that there are mitigating circumstances relating to ill health or personal difficulties which the student was not in a position to raise at an earlier stage;
- that the information held by the College relating to the student's participation is incomplete or inaccurate and the student was not in a position to correct this information at an earlier stage;
- that there is evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the College.

2. The appeal should be submitted to Student Administration in writing with supporting evidence, and the College's Appeals Procedure will commence (at Formal Stage 1).

Withdrawing from Units/Studies

1. Where a student withdraws from the College, it is that student's responsibility to inform Student Administration.
2. The effective withdrawal date shall be the later of:
 - (i) the date on which Student Administration receives formal notification of withdrawal from the student;
 - (ii) the last date of attendance.
3. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to withdraw from a unit after the examinations have taken place.
4. If a student withdraws from a unit, an award of 0 will be given for any remaining assessments.

Interruption of Study

1. Students can request an Interruption of Study ranging between 3 weeks and 12 months, however, the length of time that you ask for may not be permitted if it is unsuitable for you to return at the point you want because of difficulties arising in teaching or assessments. In these circumstances, it is unlikely that you will be able to return to your programme part way through a semester.
2. An Interruption of Studies Form should be completed by the student.
3. An interruption of study may begin immediately in cases where a student's absence from the College is unavoidable or urgently required. In all other cases, the interruption of study of taught programmes students must begin from the end of a semester (ie after the end of the examinations attached to that semester) so that there is a clearly identifiable point at which a return to studies should occur.
4. You can be granted an Interruption of Study on the following grounds:
 - ill health evidenced by a medical certificate;
 - parental responsibility with appropriate evidence;

- exceptional professional commitments, if accompanied by a written explanation from your employer and if you are a part-time student;
- compassionate grounds where your personal, domestic or family circumstances justify a request;
- financial hardship due to changed circumstances beyond your control.

5. An Interruption of Study cannot be granted less than 10 days before an assessment period or during an assessment period.

6. When a student interrupts their study, their registration with the College will be temporarily suspended and all relevant authorities (where known) will be informed.

7. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that any sponsor or legal requirements are complied with when taking an interruption of study.

8. A student whose registration is suspended because of voluntary interruption of study is not entitled to attend any teaching or take any assessments and will not pay tuition fees during this period. However, they are still subject to the relevant regulations of the College.

9. If a student is from overseas and has student leave to remain in the UK, interruption of studies has serious implications for their immigration status and they are not permitted to remain in the UK if they are no longer studying. A student's ability to return to studies may be limited by immigration policy and this should be taken into account when considering a request for interruption.

10. Students should always consult their funding body before interrupting their study, and are reminded that the College cannot guarantee the resumption of any bursary/scholarship.

11. If a student interrupts their study and returns to repeat a unit/semester the student will be charged the appropriate tuition fee for the repeat period of study.

12. Where an interruption is granted the College may require the student on their return to repeat units already passed where the syllabus for that unit has been updated, or to take new units to replace outdated units previously passed.