

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pearson College is committed to supporting all students to succeed. Student engagement with all aspects of the learning experience is crucial to academic success, and students are therefore expected to attend all of their classes and to make good use of the learning resources available to them. Furthermore, the College aims to replicate, as far as possible, the atmosphere of a modern workplace. In such an environment, unexplained absence, lateness and lack of preparation are not acceptable.
- 1.2. The College will monitor students' attendance and engagement, as described in section 2 below, in order to offer appropriate academic and pastoral support, and to identify where additional support may be necessary.
- 1.3. Students **must**:
  - a. Punctually attend all classes, whether held physically or online, and participate appropriately;
  - b. Undertake all assessments within the time frames set;
  - c. Attend all meetings and other activities as required by the College.
- 1.4. A class is any learning and teaching activity, and encompasses such events as: lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, field work, personal tutor meetings, and group work meetings. Where classes are provided online, students are expected to attend and engage with these as frequently as they would physical, in-person classes.
- 1.5. Participation means more than simply turning up, but also arriving having undertaken whatever reading, thinking, or research has been identified as necessary preparation.
- 1.6. If a student faces difficulty in attending any classes, it is their responsibility to inform the College and to provide a satisfactory explanation. Depending on the circumstances, the College may make appropriate accommodation(s). The procedure for reporting absences is described in sections 3 - 6 below.
- 1.7. Students must manage their time so as to balance their studies with work and other commitments. Students who are experiencing other problems that affect their attendance are encouraged to speak to their Personal Tutor, Module Tutor, Programme Leader or Student Services.
- 1.8. The College recognises that, due to disability or a long-term health condition, some individual students may require adjustments to the attendance requirements under this policy. This will be treated on a case-by-case basis, and may be agreed in advance in accordance with our Additional Learning Needs Policy. The College will only provide for adjustments which do not compromise academic standards or the ability of the student to reach the learning outcomes of the programme. Students who require any adjustments should contact Student Services to discuss these.

- 1.9. **This policy does not cover absence from timed, scheduled assessments, such as exams, in-class assessments or presentations.** If a student has missed a timed, scheduled assessment due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control (or anticipates that they will do so), they must make an extenuating circumstances application as a matter of urgency. The Extenuating Circumstances Policy<sup>1</sup> contains detailed information about all aspects of such situations, and Student Services will also be able to provide individual advice.

## 2. Attendance monitoring

- 2.1. The College will monitor attendance at all classes, whether held in person or online. The purpose of this monitoring will be to ensure that every student is supported to succeed, and to identify any patterns of non-attendance which cause concern about a student's wellbeing and/or academic progress.

## 3. Students' responsibilities with respect to absence

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of students to:
- a. Advise the College of any absence by submitting an Absence Form to Student Services;
  - b. Provide evidence of circumstances affecting their attendance for longer than seven days (see section 5 below), or provide a self-certification statement for absences lasting fewer than seven days (see section 6 below);
  - c. Agree a revised deadline with their module tutor/s for any seminar work missed due to absence;
  - d. Keep in touch with the College should they be absent for a prolonged period;
  - e. Recognise that submission of an Absence Form does not automatically mean that the absence has been authorised. If the absence has been deemed unacceptable, it will not be authorised and will count as an unauthorised absence on the student's record;
  - f. Recognise that, even when a student is absent for good reasons which are authorised, their progress on the programme may be affected, and they may be advised to take an Interruption of Studies;
  - g. Recognise that absence, whether authorised or not, does not constitute grounds for appeal against failure of a module or modules.

## 4. Absence Forms

- 4.1. Where a student is aware that circumstances have arisen which prevent them from attending a class or scheduled College activity, they must inform the College as soon as possible by filling in and submitting an Absence Form.
- 4.2. Absence Forms are available on the "Current Students" section of the College website under "Forms and documents"<sup>2</sup>. Hard copies are also available at the Student Services counter. Forms may be submitted to Student Services either electronically or as hard copies.

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<sup>1</sup> The Extenuating Circumstances Policy is available at: <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/content/dam/region-core/uk/pearson-college/Documents%20and%20Forms/Policy%20Documents/Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/for-students/current-students/registry-forms-and-documents.html>

- 4.3. A student's Absence Form will be considered by Student Services, who may decide to authorise the student's absence. If Student Services are minded not to authorise the student's absence, the decision will be referred to the Deputy Dean of School or their nominee, who will make a final decision as to whether or not the absence can be authorised.
- 4.4. The decision to authorise an absence will depend upon the reason given and the documentation supplied as evidence (if required). Whilst it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of every possible circumstance, the following will **not** normally be deemed acceptable: moving house, holidays, wedding preparations, sporting commitments (except where unavoidable and the commitment is at national/county level), employment/volunteering commitments.
- 4.5. The College will maintain records of student absence applications.

## 5. Authorisation of absence: self-certification for short periods of absence

- 5.1. If a student is absent for a period lasting **seven working days or fewer** due to illness or some other unforeseen reason (such as bereavement), they are permitted to 'self-certify' the reasons for their absence, without providing additional written evidence to support their Absence Form. In such circumstances, the student must provide a brief statement of the reasons for their absence.
- 5.2. In order to use self-certification, the student must submit their Absence Form as early as possible, preferably in advance, and no later than the **first day** when they are absent.
- 5.3. The College recognises that in exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible for a student to notify the College on their first day of absence. If a student is unable to submit an absence form on or before their first day of absence, self-certification cannot be used, and the student must provide written evidence in support of their Absence Form, as described in section 6 below.
- 5.4. The College maintains records of the use of self-certification for absences. Should a student's overall level of non-attendance become a cause for concern, the student may be invited for a discussion with Student Services or the Deputy Dean of their School to ensure that any exceptional circumstances and/ or additional learning needs are identified and that students are appropriately supported academically and pastorally, as described in section 7. Following such a meeting, if there continue to be serious concerns about a student's academic engagement, the Fitness to Study Procedure may be invoked.
- 5.5. Dishonest or fraudulent self-certification may lead to disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Code.

## 6. Authorisation of longer periods of absence

- 6.1. If there are circumstances which prevent a student from attending classes for longer than seven working days, the student must provide documentary evidence of these circumstances. An Absence Form, together with evidence, must be submitted to Student Services as early as possible. This includes previously self-certified absences which have unexpectedly extended beyond seven days: in such cases, the student must submit a new form, with evidence.
- 6.2. If there is a delay in obtaining evidence, the student should, nonetheless, submit an Absence Form as early as possible, and should indicate on the form the date when evidence

is likely to be provided to Student Services. In case of any difficulty with obtaining evidence, students may contact Student Services for additional advice.

### Evidence

- 6.3. Whether a particular document is acceptable as evidence is at the College's discretion, and the most appropriate type of evidence will depend on the particular circumstances. However, the table below indicates the type of evidence that will normally be acceptable in support of an Absence Form.

<b>Reason for absence</b>	<b>Evidence required</b>
Any circumstance lasting no longer than 7 days, such as short-term illness, bereavement, a medical or dental appointment, severe transport problem	The student's brief written description of the circumstances ('self-certification statement'), submitted no later than the first day of absence
Period of illness lasting longer than 7 days	Letter from a suitably qualified medical practitioner, normally a GP or hospital doctor
Personal problems	Letter from someone, e.g. counsellor, who has direct knowledge of the problem and/or is involved in supporting the student
Illness of dependent or family member	Medical certification of the person's illness and statement explaining its impact on the student
Bereavement	Death certificate or funeral order of service. Where bereavement is causing a student's long-term absence, the College may, at its discretion, request an additional written statement from a person supporting the student, such as a counsellor
Court attendance or jury service	Official correspondence from the court confirming attendance requirement
Victim of crime	Statement of events, police report and crime reference number. Where a crime has caused a student's long-term absence, the College may, at its discretion, request an additional written statement from a person supporting the student, such as a counsellor
Involvement in a significant or prestigious event	Letter of invitation from the relevant organising body confirming the requirement to be available on specific dates

Sport commitment at national/county level	Official correspondence from the relevant sporting body confirming the requirement to be available on specific dates
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## 7. Meetings

- 7.1. Students who miss classes without authorisation will be contacted by the College. If a student continues to be absent without authorisation, they will be called to meet a member of College staff, such as their Personal Tutor, Programme Leader, Dean or Deputy Dean.
- 7.2. A student may also be called to a meeting if:
  - a. they have a large number of authorised absences;
  - b. they have been absent for two weeks or more, with authorisation;
  - c. they are attending classes, but are ill-prepared, do not participate appropriately or are consistently late.
- 7.3. The primary purpose of the meeting will be to explore the reasons for absence and to establish whether there are any underlying issues or any support which may be required.
- 7.4. If a student's attendance continues to cause serious concern about their academic progress and/or wellbeing, the College may choose to invoke its Fitness to Study Policy and procedures.

## 8. Group work

- 8.1. Group work is an important element of all programmes at the College and in some modules, students will be involved in assessed group projects, reports or presentations. The College expects all students to participate actively in these group activities.
- 8.2. If a student does not attend and participate actively in group sessions, their fellow students are expected to notify the Module Tutor or Student Services, who will call the student to a meeting to investigate their reasons for non-participation. The College will take appropriate action to ensure that no student is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by a student's non-attendance at group meetings.

## 9. Absence from Assessments

- 9.1. Authorisation to be absent from class does not automatically authorise absence from assessments during the same period. For scheduled examinations, in-class assessments or presentations, students must submit an Extenuating Circumstances application, substantiated by objective and authoritative evidence. For coursework assessments, students may be able to request an extension either via a self-certification application (see section 5 above and 9.4 – 9.7 below), or a concessions application (if the application is made after the deadline has passed and/ or is ineligible for self-certification). Failure to do so risks an academic penalty, which is highly likely to result in a mark of zero on a missed assessment.
- 9.2. Students should consult the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, available on the 'Current Students' section of the College website under 'Policies and Regulations'<sup>3</sup>. Student Services will also be able to provide advice about this. To request a deadline extension using self-certification for absence, the student must apply using the deadline extension request

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/content/dam/region-core/uk/pearson-college/Documents%20and%20Forms/Policy%20Documents/Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy.pdf>

form, available on the 'Current Students' section of the College website under 'Forms and Documents'<sup>4</sup>, **in addition to** submitting an Absence Form. Deadline extensions and authorisation of absence are different procedures, and the College will not proactively check whether a student who is absent also requires a deadline extension.

- 9.3. Extensions must be requested at least 48 hours before the relevant deadline.
- 9.4. Coursework extensions will be granted on the basis of self-certification for **a maximum of two absence periods per academic year**. Any further applications for deadline extensions must be supported by objective and authoritative evidence, as described in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. This does not affect the overall number of times a student may self-certify their absence, although frequent absences may prompt intervention, as described in paragraph 5.4 above.
- 9.5. Under self-certification, the coursework deadline extension will normally be of equal length to the self-certified absence period (of up to 7 working days), subject to a maximum extension deadline for the current assessment period, as detailed in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. Students applying for extensions under self-certification who are unable to meet the maximum extension deadline for the current assessment period within their authorized period of self-certified absence will be advised to defer their submission to the following assessment period. Students should note that this may cause a delay to their progression or graduation (for final-year students) and are advised to consult Student Services on the implications of this course of action.
- 9.6. The decision to allow a deadline extension will take precedence over the decision to authorise a student's absence. So long as a student reports their absence on the first day, it will be open to the student to make a valid extension request for any coursework deadlines that fall within the self-certified absence period.
- 9.7. Self-certification cannot be used to defer examinations or other timed assessments. Any student who is unable to attend an examination due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control should consult Student Services to make a concession application.

## 10. Allied Policies

This Policy is aligned to the following Pearson College Policies:

- (i) Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure
- (ii) Assessment Procedure
- (iii) Fitness to Study Policy
- (iv) Student Disciplinary Code
- (v) Additional Learning Needs

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/for-students/current-students/registry-forms-and-documents.html>

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