

## SUPPORTING ABSENT LEARNERS

<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Head of Learner Services</b>		
<b>Policy Approved by:</b>	<b>Strategic Management Team</b>	<b>7/5/03</b>	<b>Minute 768</b>
		<b>5/4/06</b>	<b>Minute 1081b</b>
		<b>29/03/11</b>	<b>Minute 1934</b>
	<b>Academic Board</b>	<b>6/5/03</b>	<b>Minute 226</b>
		<b>9/5/06</b>	<b>Minute 312</b>
	<b>Curriculum &amp; Quality Panel</b>	<b>06/05/11</b>	<b>Minute 460</b>
	<b>Operational Management Team</b>	<b>9/5/03</b>	<b>Minute 23</b>
	<b>Curriculum and Quality Committee</b>	<b>19/5/03</b>	<b>Minute 68</b>
		<b>8/6/06</b>	
		<b>06/06/11</b>	<b>Minute 271 (xvi)</b>
<b>Equality impact assessed &amp; endorsed</b>		<b>23/02/11</b>	
<b>AOS Aims 2&amp;3</b>			
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>May 2003, June 2006, February 2011</b>		
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>March 2015</b>		

## **Preamble to the Policy**

### **Equal Opportunities**

The College shall comply with all statutory duties in respect of equal opportunities in the areas of sex, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, transgender, religion, belief, pregnancy, maternity and paternity, marriage and civil partnership and the rehabilitation of offenders. The College shall also comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and any subsequent enactments or modifications.

### **Supporting Absent Learners**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The College has developed many good practices to support individual learners' needs. This policy recognises the need to support learners who suffer forced absences.

#### **2. Absences**

- 2.1 There are many reasons which cause learners to be absent from their studies but this note concentrates on supporting those who are absent for reasons beyond their control. These absences might typically be lengthy illness including psychiatric/psychological illness, maternity, enforced work commitment, jury or other service, caring for sick members of the family. Some learners will perhaps suffer from sporadic absences due to problems outside their control. Due to the circumstances learners' priorities change so staff will need to be proactive in contacting absentees and obtaining the reasons behind absences.

#### **3. The Aim**

- 3.1 The aim of supporting a learner is to, as far as possible, help them to continue their studies when the reason for absence is removed. The nature of being absent will not mean the learner will necessarily be at the same point as other learners but support should aim to narrow the gap as far as possible. The learner can expect the staff of the college to make reasonable efforts to support an absence.

#### **4. Reasonable Actions to Support Absent Learners**

A learner can reasonably expect:

- 4.1 The course tutor to contact him/her shortly after an absence starts to discuss the possibility of support.
- 4.2 The course tutor speaks, or writes, to the learner at least monthly to receive a progress report on the reason for absence and to discuss support needs.

- 4.3 Suitable course notes are sent to the learner together with suggested reading.
- 4.4 Suitable assignments are sent to the learner.
- 4.5 The course tutor to investigate the loan of equipment if it will help.
- 4.6 The learner to be invited to any field trips or other events that they could potentially attend.
- 4.7 The course tutor to investigate the support needed on the learner's return from an absence.

## **5. Support for Tutors**

- 5.1 Faced with an absentee a tutor may feel unable to provide appropriate support. This may be a matter of time, resource or expertise. The tutor is encouraged to use management and learner support systems to obtain help and advice.  
There are a number of people who may be able to help at this time and they are Assistant Curriculum Director, Curriculum Director, Inclusive Learning staff, Key Skills staff and Learner Services Staff

## **6. Record Keeping**

- 6.1 Good record keeping should always accompany good practice. There should be a special effort to keep records of the contacts with, and support given to, such learners. The course tutor should note all actions taken in such cases briefly noting the main issues each time. The notes should be kept in the learner's file and if possible a copy of agreed actions sent to the learner. These records will then be useful in tracking the learner's position when reviewing the support required and given.

## **7. Communication**

- 7.1 This policy should be communicated to learners during induction. Learners should be encouraged to inform tutors of any planned periods of absence.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1 The Head of Learner Services shall periodically assess and monitor the implementation of this policy and suggest any amendments required. The policy will be reviewed every four years.