
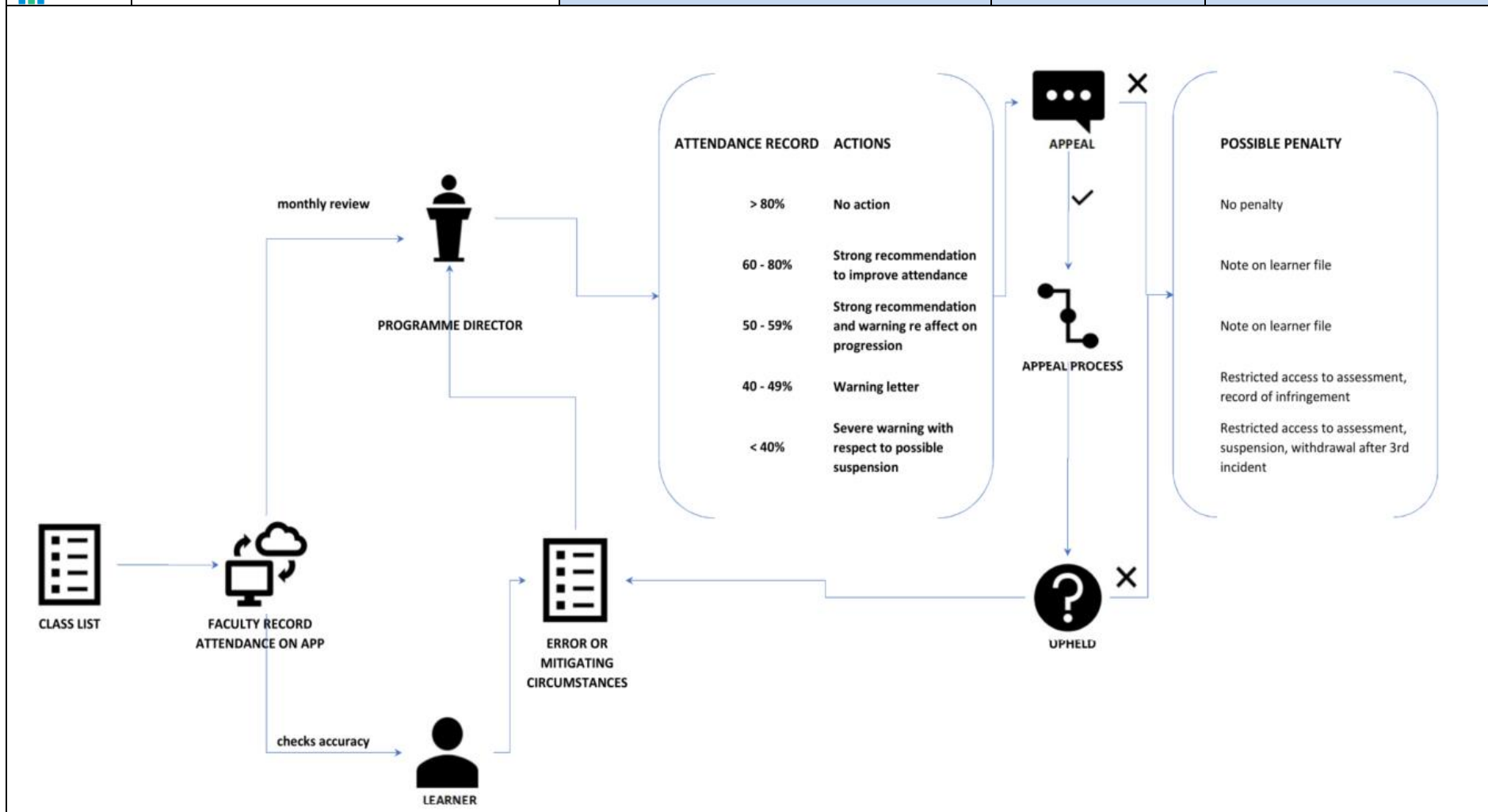


#	POLICY TITLE	POLICY AREA:	VERSION:	
	<b>7.10 ATTENDANCE POLICY</b>	7) SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS	4.0	September 2022



**Introduction and Context:**

SNMCI is a Higher Education Institution and the reputation of SNMCI and of its graduates depends upon upholding the highest standards of teaching, learning and academic activity. All learners are enrolled on staged modular programmes of more than one-year duration. All modules have assessment requirements. Some modules may involve 'real-time' continuous assessment such as in-class tests, presentations etc.

**Regular class attendance is crucial and is directly related to a learner's assessment performance.**

Class attendance is critical to facilitate learning and progression, and to help affirm an educational relationship between lecturers and learners.

**SNMCI requires a minimum annual class attendance rate of 80%, to facilitate successful academic achievement and progression.**

It is understood there may be occasions when a learner's attendance may be affected by mitigating circumstances. Where learners have a valid reason for missing taught sessions or placement, it is their responsibility to inform their Programme Director, and placement setting (programme dependent) and to provide any supporting evidence that may be required. (See Procedures section below)

The links between low attendance and progression vary on a case-by-case basis, but in general, poor attendance levels correlate with poor progression rates.

It should be noted that in some cases, poor attendance may result in non-progression, in particular on programmes accredited to an outside Professional Standards Regulatory Body (PSRB) e.g. THE Teaching Council of Ireland (TC) or the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI).

**Principles:**

- The Learner Attendance Policy has been developed as part of SNMCI'S commitment to provide a supportive learning environment that enables all learners to achieve their full potential.
- Regular class attendance and engagement is expected of ALL learners in ALL classes for which they are enrolled.
- Class attendance is recorded on a daily basis by SNMCI staff.
- Attendance is a key component of learner retention, progression, achievement and employability

**Definitions:**

**Attendance:** - SNMCI defines class attendance as being present in the classroom (F2F or virtual) for the duration of scheduled lectures or other learning sessions and in the case of Placement, as being present on the agreed days at the agreed times.

**Punctuality:** SNMCI uses the Cambridge English Dictionary definition of punctuality as the 'habit of arriving or happening at the time that has been agreed' (CED)

The general policy approach of SNMCI lecturers is to allow a period of 15 minutes for learners to arrive to class after which learners will be deemed absent for that session.

**Data Protection:**

- SNMCI staff dealing with attendance matters may often be in receipt of potentially sensitive information regarding learners' personal or medical circumstances, in order to excuse non-attendance. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- Such information will be kept securely in the archives for up to 1 year following the departure of the learner, after which it will be securely erased from the system.

**Note:** Learner's personal information provided to SNMCI is not, under any circumstances, shared with an external party without the expressed written consent of the learner, except where the College is required to fulfil a public function.

**Staff Involved:**

Lecturers, Year Heads (if appropriate) Programme Directors, Programme Managers, Head of Registrations and Examinations, DQAA.

**Policy:**

- SNMCI requires a minimum annual **class attendance rate of 80%**, to facilitate successful academic achievement and progression.
- Attendance will be monitored. Lecturers receive lists of learners for each scheduled module;
- Lecturers will allow learners to 'sign –in' (in person or virtually) up to 15 mins past the beginning of class. The list at that point is the one that will be recorded by the lecturer;
- It is the learner's responsibility to 'sign-in'/make their presence known.
- The falsification of learner attendance i.e. signing in on behalf of another learner is considered a major disciplinary offence and will be treated as such;
- A learner who is unable to attend class due to mitigating circumstances, such as illness, accident, or bereavement, must contact the Year Head or Programme Director on the morning of the first day of absence, to notify them of the absence and expected duration of absence;
- An absence due to illness which moves into a third day requires the learner to provide a medical certificate and to complete the Mitigating Circumstances Form (MC). The MC form must, in each case, be accompanied by supporting evidence/documentation;
- The form and supporting evidence must be submitted to the Programme Director
- The Programme Director will assess the documentation to determine whether or not the absence should be counted against the minimum attendance rate of 80%.
- **Notifications will be made by e-mail where attendance falls below acceptable levels**

**Roles and Responsibilities:****Learners are responsible for:**

- Attending all learning and teaching sessions either F2F or virtual;
- Attending all placement hours (where applicable);
- Notifying their Programme Directors in advance (in person, by phone or by email) when they are going to be absent from timetabled classes;
- Obtaining prior permission from a Programme Director for planned absences lasting two or more days during term time;
- Providing medical certs if absent for a third day;
- Arranging to meet with lecturers to discuss arrangements for catching up on missed work;
- Arranging to 'make-up' all placement days lost due to absence (where applicable)

**Staff members are responsible for:**

- Reminding learners of the importance of regular attendance (academic staff);
- Ensuring that attendance is recorded properly (lecturers/PD/DPD);
- Advising learners of SNMCI's College Attendance Policy during Induction (PD/DPD/PM);
- Monitoring and reporting on learners' attendance (PD/DPD);
- Ensuring that 'paperwork' regarding learner attendance is up-to-date (PD/DPD);
- Directing learners identified to be '**a cause for concern**' towards the support services available within SNMCI

Procedure Outline	Person/s Responsible	Records generated to ensure evidence of follow through
<b>Procedure for measuring class attendance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The principal method employed by SNMCI to measure a learner's daily attendance levels is through the use of Learner Attendance Lists. Lecturers receive lists of learners for each scheduled module;</li><li>- Lecturers will allow learners to sign –in up to 15 mins past the beginning of class. The list at that point is the one that will be recorded by the lecturer;</li><li>- It is the learner's responsibility to 'sign-in'. Lists will be reviewed by Programme Directors.</li><li>- The falsification of learner attendance i.e. a learner indicating that another learner is present when they are not. is considered a major disciplinary offence and will be treated as</li></ul>	Lecturers/ PDs/DPDs  Lecturer  Students	Attendance Lists, with any additional comments where applicable



<p><u>Minor Attendance Infringement :</u> Any learner with an attendance rate between <b>60% and 80%</b> receives a notification from their PD at the end of the month, with a recommendation to be aware of the 80% rule.</p> <p><u>Intermediate Attendance Infringement :</u> Any learner with an attendance rate between <b>50% and 59%</b> receives a notification with a strong recommendation to improve class attendance dramatically, and a <b>first warning</b> of the possibility of falling below 80% across the remainder of the year.</p> <p><u>Major Attendance Infringement: -</u> Any learner with an attendance rate between <b>40% and 49%</b> receives a <b>warning letter</b> with a strong recommendation that the learner improves class attendance immediately, or faces <b>potential restriction of access to programme assessment</b> which may impact on progression to the following semester. SNMCI may <b>restrict access to assessment at the end of the semester</b>, if there is no appreciable increase in attendance.</p> <p><u>Severe Attendance Infringement :-</u> Any learner with a consistent rate <b>below 40%</b> is considered a cause for concern. The learner will be requested to meet with the Learner Support Officer to determine if the College can offer support. Where support offered does not improve learner attendance ,the learner may be restricted from access to assessment for the current semester, and following a review by the Programme Director (or appointed nominee) and the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs (or appointed nominee), a <b>suspension letter may be issued</b>, suspending the learner from the programme for the current academic year. The learner will not be permitted to re-enrol until the following academic year (pending outcome of a re-entry admissions meeting between the student, relevant Programme Director and Head of Registrations and Examinations (or relevant nominees)).</p>		Records of ALL email and letter correspondence between SNMCI and learners notifying them of poor attendance and penalties notifications on attendance infringements
<p><b>Fees: Effect of Attendance Infringements/Suspensions and Dismissals on fees paid</b> In the case of suspension from the current academic year, any fees paid for the semester in which the infringement and suspension took place are forfeit.</p>		

<p>When a learner is suspended in the first semester, fees for the second semester are not refunded but may be applied to the next academic year, when the period of suspension has ended.</p> <p><b>External Agencies: Effect of Attendance Infringements/Suspensions and Dismissals on Documentation for External Agencies</b></p> <p>Other indirect penalties of low attendance and progression, relate to scenarios where learners are dependent on documentation produced by SNMCI to confirm attendance rates for agencies external to SNMCI such as Government Grant Agencies (SUSI) the Dept. of Justice Immigration Authorities in Ireland (usually related to Non-EU nationals on study visa status).</p> <p><b>Falsification of Attendance Records</b></p> <p>Attempting to circumvent or corrupt the policies in this document is viewed as a case of misconduct (for instance if a learner signals the presence of another learner who is absent or otherwise falsifies attendance information). Such cases will be a matter for the Disciplinary Committee (QA 7.9)</p>		
<p><b>Appeals</b> (QA 7.11: Appeals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any notice or penalty for infringement (usually served by the Programme Director) may be appealed by the learner. All appeals will include a review of the attendance record in question.</li> <li>- The membership of the Appeals Committee consists of staff members not previously involved in the case. The committee is responsible for recommending a course of action, based on the information provided to them.</li> </ul>		<p>Records of all correspondence on appeals and minutes of Appeals Committee where relevant</p>

### Policy Control Sheet

<b>Policy</b>	<b>QA 7.10 Learner Attendance Policy.</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Adopted/Effective</b>	September 2022
<b>Supersedes</b>	3.0
<b>Monitoring/Next Review Date</b>	Yearly/August 2023
<b>Responsible Officer(s) Designated Reviewer(s)</b>	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs; Head of Examinations and Registrations;
<b>Scope</b>	All programmes

### References

<b>SNMCI Policy area</b>	<b>7) Support for Learners: QA Vol 2</b>
<b>Developed with reference to</b>	<i>QQI Assessment and Standards, 2013 (Revised)</i> <i>QQI (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines</i> <i>QQI (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis</i> <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), May 2015</i> <i>Green Paper on Assessment 2018</i>
<b>Related SNMCI Policies / Forms</b>	FQA Mitigating Circumstances Form

### Revision

<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>	<b>Originator</b>	<b>Approved By</b>
2.0/08/2020	Revision for blended learning	Office of DQAA	AB
3 /09/2022	Revision to return to policy which was approved at reengagement. The policy was temporarily amended during COVID 19 to accommodate the many mitigating circumstances during that time. From Sep 2022 the full policy applies.	Office of DQAA	