

The logo for Central Film School features a blue square on the right side with a white curved shape on its left edge. To the left of this graphic, the words "Central", "Film", and "School" are stacked vertically in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**Central  
Film  
School**

**Central Film School**

## **Student Attendance Policy**

## **Purpose**

CFSL prides itself on developing practices that reflect the industry as closely as possible whilst continuing to be an institution of learning. This means that all of our teaching staff are industry practitioners, and the gap between what we do here and the work that students later do in the profession is smaller than it is in some other educational institutions.

The film and television industries run to strict deadlines because making films is expensive and time is money. If one member of a film crew is late, thousands of pounds can be wasted paying the other members of the crew large sums of money to stand around waiting. Consequently professionalism, punctuality and reliability are highly prized attributes at CFSL.

This policy aims to reflect the nature of the industry and foster the necessary professional practice to help ensure future success as filmmakers and screenwriters. The objective of our attendance policy is to ensure that, when students are employed in the industry, professionalism is their key attribute. Film students should learn what it means to be a film or TV professional, as this is as vital for success as possessing technical skills and talent. Regular reminders are sent to encourage students to think about their attendance and to take steps to correct it if they are dropping below 80%. Attendance at classes of at least 80% is our general expectation. For overseas students further nationally mandated considerations apply (see below).

By accepting their study contract with the school, students also accept the contents of this Student Attendance Policy and Procedure Document. By accepting their teaching or administrative contract with the school, staff also accept the contents of this Student Attendance Policy and Procedure Document.

## **Personal Professional Development**

We believe that students will have the best possible learning experience and training for working in the film and television industry by being present and punctual. For all students starting their course in the 2017/2018 academic year and beyond, one of the learning outcomes in many modules captures Personal Professional Development (PPD).

An example of the PPD learning outcome is:

*Demonstrate an essential awareness of the importance of studentship, interpersonal skills, self-discipline and collaboration to support working within diverse teams.*

This learning outcome captures many aspects of your PPD, including attendance and punctuality. Part of the assignment mark and feedback you receive on a module could be affected, among other aspects of PPD, by poor attendance or persistent lateness. Your tutor will let you know which areas of skill attract marks in the assignment for that module. Marking emphases will vary between assignments. You should always be told how you can score well in an assignment, including where attendance and punctuality count towards the mark..

For those students whose course started in 2016/2017 or are studying here at postgraduate level, PPD is measured holistically and feedback provided through formative feedback and tutorials. However, this does not preclude students in this category from participating in PPD or take anything away from its importance to their development.

## **Recording Attendance and Punctuality**

Tutors take a register at the beginning of each class. This register is delivered to the Student Support Officer on reception immediately after the class finishes, and a record is kept of student attendance and punctuality.

If a student is unable to attend a scheduled class due to illness or other impediment, the student must inform the School as soon as possible, preferably before the class, via email to [attendance@centralfilmschool.com](mailto:attendance@centralfilmschool.com), stating the reason why they are unable to attend. Their email will be passed on to their tutor and to other relevant staff.

Consistent lateness or unauthorised absences which result in a student's overall attendance percentage dropping below 80% may result in withdrawal of privileges, such as access to kit for extra-curricular projects.

The school will regularly ensure that individuals and groups of students are aware of and adhere to our attendance policy through a variety of methods:

- Email and word-of-mouth reminders to both individuals and groups of students
- Informal meetings and tutorials
- Discussions with student representatives
- Setting minimum attendance targets for certain privileges
- Formal attendance meetings
- Official warnings
- Disciplinary Committee
- A warning about potential exclusion from the school

Once a student has been formally issued a written warning, and if their conduct continues to be unsatisfactory, the School's disciplinary procedures may be instigated and students may be asked to appear before the School's Disciplinary Committee (see below and also see the Student Disciplinary Policy for more detail on this committee). The committee may invoke the final stages of the student disciplinary process, and the result could ultimately be a student being excluded, following the outcome of any appeal.

### **Authorised/Unauthorised Absences**

Any absence due to illness or personal issues must be reported to reception through [attendance@centralfilmschool.com](mailto:attendance@centralfilmschool.com). If students are absent for more than three consecutive scheduled teaching days they should provide documented evidence outlining the reason behind their absence within ten working days of returning to school. If documented evidence is provided, students will be recorded as having **authorised absence**. If a student is having personal difficulties (whether related to studies or not) that result in continued absence, the student should arrange a pastoral tutorial with the Head of Curriculum to discuss how the school can help.

If students would like to request permission to be absent from any timetabled classes they must first gain permission to do so in writing. All requests should be made to the Head of Curriculum. Any absence that cannot be covered by documented evidence (for example, a written letter from a family member if there is a personal emergency) is recorded as **unauthorised**. A form to request leave (authorised absence) is available on Moodle.

### **Timekeeping and Punctuality**

Tutors will keep a record of students who attend a class late (ie after the start of the class). The tutor may, at the tutor's discretion, advise students arriving at a class more than 10 minutes after the start time that their late entry would be disruptive, and that it is better that they do not enter the class on that occasion. A student not entering a class will be recorded as absent.

### **Information for Tier-4 Visa students**

As a higher education provider with Tier-4 sponsor status we are required by law to report poor attendance by Tier-4 visa students to the Home Office (currently UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)). Tier-4 students are expected to comply with minimum attendance rates as a condition of their study in the UK, and failure to do so could result in their visa being withdrawn, with the consequential obligation to leave the country.

Current UK student migration rules state that Tier-4 students must be reported to the Home Office if they miss ten 'key contact points'. **A 'key contact point' as defined by CFSL is one half-day session. So, for example, if a Tier-4 student is absent for five consecutive full days when they are expected to be in class, we are obliged to make a note of this on their visa profile.** The same attendance monitoring and disciplinary process as outlined above is applied to Tier-4 students, with the addition of considerations surrounding the 'ten key contact points' rule.

## **Attendance Procedure**

### **Introduction**

CFSL is committed to ensuring that its procedures for recording and monitoring student attendance across all of its programmes are robust, and that they meet the requirements of the various statutory bodies, such as the UK visa authorities. It is also important that CFSL follows the procedures given here to assure itself that issues arising from poor student attendance are addressed in order to minimise the damage these attendance patterns may do to collective student attainment and experience. Persistent absence can have numerous consequences for students in general, and may lead to disciplinary procedures for an individual student. It is vital that the recording of attendance and punctuality is accurate.

### **Courses covered by these procedures**

This document is specific to the following courses:

- BA degree(s)
- Masters degree(s)

Note that records are kept of attendance on short courses offered by the school but those courses are not covered under these procedures.

### **Principles of the Procedures**

The principle aims of this procedural part of the present document are to:

- outline the various processes which the school follows when collecting and distributing attendance data
- summarise the roles and responsibilities of staff and tutors in attendance monitoring
- ensure that proper processes are followed at each stage of the procedure
- enable staff confidently to carry out their duties and responsibilities
- ensure that CFSL policies which supplement these procedures (such as the Student Disciplinary Policy) are aligned with current UK HE practice and statutory and regulatory requirements
- ensure CFSL practice adheres to UK visa authority guidelines
- consolidate existing practices into one document

## **1. Recording Student Attendance**

Administrative staff and tutors share the responsibilities for recording and monitoring student attendance, and for the consistent application of the rules.

Tutors are responsible for:

- reminding students how poor attendance can affect their grades and engagement with collaborative projects and crews
- discussing attendance with their group if a consistent pattern of missing sessions emerges on a module
- encouraging students to think about the importance of attendance as part of their personal professional development and what is expected of them in the industry
- reporting persistent lateness or non-attendance on their modules to CFSL staff
- working with CFSL staff to identify issues that might be leading to low attendance by a group or individuals on a particular module.

CFSL Staff, including the Head of Administration, Head of Curriculum, Student Support Officer and the Head of Production are responsible for:

- raising attendance issues directly through tutorials with individual students, groups and the Student Representatives
- ensuring attendance is discussed at senior management team (SMT) meetings and remedies sought
- enforcing minimum attendance requirements for certain privileges and ensuring consistency in the application of these requirements

### **Attendance Registers**

Upon enrolment all students have their photos taken for use in class registers and elsewhere in the school. Class registers for groups are created by the student support officer (receptionist) - for example a degree cohort may be split into two groups: Group A and Group B: each group will have its register.

It is the student support officer's responsibility to ensure:

- initial compilation of class registers for use by tutors
- registers are made available for tutors to collect before the start of each class
- student sign-in sheets are created and attached to each register
- all registers are returned and filled out by tutors at the end of their teaching session(s)
- any tutor who does not submit the register is contacted to submit the record within 48 hours of the session(s)
- paper copies of each register are kept on file for one month
- at the end of each month, registers are scanned electronically and kept in the school shared drive
- after two months sign-in sheets are scanned and recorded
- any changes in group membership are made quickly to avoid confusion

It is the responsibility of tutors to ensure:

- registers are collected before they commence teaching for that day, and, if offsite delivery is taking place, that they have collected paper copies beforehand
- registers are completed accurately and fairly.
- students who are late should be marked as such and consistency is applied in the use of the rules regarding lateness (see above for policy on lateness)
- registers are returned to the reception desk at the end of the teaching session.

### **Lateness**

Students entering a class late (after the class has started) will be recorded by the tutor as present but late. The tutor may, at the tutor's discretion, advise students arriving at a class more than 10 minutes after the start time that their late entry would be disruptive, and that it is better that they do not enter the class on that occasion. A student not entering a class will be recorded as absent.

A tutor or other member of staff will not attempt physically to prevent a student entering a class, and is advised not go beyond the form of words given immediately above. A tutor or other member of staff will not tolerate another student or students attempting in any way to exclude a student from a class.

The procedure for recording attendance and punctuality is particularly important for students on a Tier-4 visa, as the immigration authorities may request their attendance record during audits and random spot checks.

## **Attendance and Punctuality Spreadsheets**

### ***2017/2018 Academic Year***

For the 2017/2018 academic year (ACY) CFS uses a spreadsheet to record all attendance. This spreadsheet has been designed to calculate attendance on a per-term and per 4-week period basis. It is possible to calculate manually a per-module attendance rate using this system.

### ***From 2018/2019 ACY onwards***

From 2018/2019 onwards, attendance will be recorded in a system linked to the school's timetabling software. This system gives the school a comprehensive set of tools to view and report on attendance patterns for individuals, groups and cohorts across a range of dates and for individual modules. Guidance on use will be incorporated into this document. The responsibilities for recording attendance and punctuality are given above.

## **2. Monitoring Student Attendance**

### **First Stage: Attendance Inbox Monitoring**

If a student is unable to attend a scheduled class due to illness or other impediment, the student must inform the School as soon as possible, preferably before the class, via email to **attendance@centralfilmschool.com**, stating the reason why they are unable to attend. The email is then circulated amongst CFS staff including: Head of Curriculum, Head of Administration Curriculum Coordinator and the tutor, for information purposes.

It is the Student Support Officer's responsibility to ensure that:

- the attendance email inbox is monitored every day and particularly at the the start of the day
- emails are circulated before the start of the session for which a student has notified the school of absence
- any emails that require a response, such as when a student will be absent for more than a day or for a personal or medical emergency, are followed up at the earliest opportunity
- students are reminded that they must submit documented evidence if they would like their absence to be considered as authorised, particularly where it is a planned absence
- another member of staff is tasked with monitoring the inbox and following the above procedures whenever the Student Support Officer is absent

### **Second Stage: Publishing Attendance and Punctuality Rates**

Relevant staff should have access to attendance rates for individuals and all staff for each cohort. Attendance rates are particularly important for the resource team as students may be prevented from booking kit for a personal project if their rate drops below 80%. Students should have access to their attendance and punctuality records, but not to those of others.

It is the Student Support Officer's responsibility to ensure that:

- attendance rates are regularly circulated to staff, and at least every two weeks
- students have access, via regular emails and/or orally, to their current attendance percentage
- significant drops in attendance for individual students are closely monitored and contact attempts are made (and recorded) to discover why this is the case
- any student who has missed more than three consecutive days of scheduled classes is contacted by phone and email

- members of the senior management team are provided with attendance figures for the scheduled meetings
- tutors have access to individual module attendance rates and are briefed about any health or personal issues (as far as data protection allows) for students, which might be affecting their attendance

### **Third Stage: Action To Be Taken**

Before beginning disciplinary procedures against any student CFSL takes remedial action for students whose attendance has fallen below 80% or whose punctuality record is very poor. The potential pre-disciplinary-procedure actions which the school may take are summarised below:

#### **Informal Remedial:**

- Email and oral reminders to both individuals and groups of students
- Informal meetings and tutorials
- Discussions with Student Representatives
- Setting minimum attendance requirements for certain privileges (ie booking kit for personal projects)

#### **Formal remedial:**

Formal procedures will begin on agreement between the Head of Curriculum and Head of Administration, where it can be demonstrated that informal action has not resulted in improvement in attendance.

#### **Formal remedial procedures include:**

- Formal meeting(s) with a student and request that the student sign an undertaking
- Formal warnings that the school may later invoke the Student Disciplinary Procedure

This list is not exhaustive and action taken may not necessarily be in the order set out above.

Each individual student whose attendance or punctuality is falling below the standard set will be assessed on his or her circumstances and general record, and opportunity will be given for a student to improve before further formal action is taken (such as following the school Disciplinary Procedures in the case of chronic absence). It is for the judgement of senior staff to decide at what point informal/formal remedial action or later disciplinary procedure action is taken against a student.

The Head of Curriculum is responsible for:

- writing to the student(s) to invite them for a formal attendance tutorial attended by both the Head of Curriculum and Head of Administration (or Programme Leader)
- explaining to the student why formal action has been taken and the subsequent procedures that will follow
- monitoring the students' attendance once a formal tutorial and/or letter has been issued
- ensuring follow up action takes place, either to continue formal procedures or to stop the process if satisfied by the students' improvement

The Head of Administration is responsible for:

- collating and presenting attendance data and records related to informal action
- working with the Head of Curriculum to ensure follow up actions are completed
- ensuring records of formal action are kept on the students file and updated on a regular basis
- ensuring the SMT is kept informed of each stage of formal procedures
- taking the required action as necessary under Tier-4 guidelines (see below).

## Tier-4 Exceptions

The only instance where formal action must be taken before informal or formal remedial action has been completed is when a Tier-4 student misses **10 Key Contact Points**. This is where a student on a Tier-4 visa has missed five full consecutive days of classes (ie 10 half-day Key Contact Points as described above), having had no contact with the school nor supplied formal documentation to demonstrate a medical or personal issue affecting attendance, ie has been unauthorised in the absence.

It is the Student Support Officer's responsibility to:

- monitor the attendance spreadsheet/software each week for students who have missed more than three consecutive days
- provide the Senior Management Team with updates on any Tier-4 student who may be in danger of missing 10 key contact points
- ensure information on students is passed in a timely fashion to the Head of Administration for the student's circumstances to be assessed
- assist the Head of Administration in carrying out the duties listed below

In these circumstances, it is the Head of Administration's responsibility to:

- assess each case of a Tier-4 student near to missing 10 key contact points on its individual circumstances
- ensure that good attempts have been made to contact that person, including use of emergency contact information
- when contact is made (before the 10 key contact point limit), ensure action is taken against the student in accordance with these procedures
- send a final warning via email that the 10 key contact rule will be breached on a given date if attendance does not resume
- request of other members of staff and tutors further information and ensure that all staff are aware of the student's circumstances
- send a final notification to the student once all options have been exhausted
- update the immigration authorities' reporting database with the information that the student has missed 10 key contact points
- update the immigration authorities' reporting database if contact is re-established with the student
- instigate the Third Stage actions listed above in these procedures as appropriate

## Disciplinary Procedures

If the formal remedial procedures (eg meetings with a student about attendance and/or warning letters) do not result in improvement in a student's attendance, the school's Disciplinary Policy will be triggered (see separate policy and procedure document)

<b>Document Title:</b>	CFS Student Attendance Policy
<b>Document Ref:</b>	CFSSAP_01
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Issuing Authority:</b>	CFS Academic Board
<b>Owner:</b>	Head of Administration & Quality Assurance
<b>Author:</b>	Brett Cuming
<b>Document Approval Date:</b>	31/08/2017
<b>Last Amended:</b>	31/08/2017
<b>Sensitivity:</b>	Unclassified
<b>Effective from:</b>	2017/2018 Academic Year
<b>Review Date:</b>	Prior to 2019/2020 Academic Year in collaboration with the awarding body
<b>History:</b>	First Published: 31/08/2018