

# Student Attendance and Absence Guidance

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**Session 2020/2021**

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# Student Attendance & Absence Guidance 2020-2021

The College sets out the following procedure and guidance below to inform all further education students of the requirement to receive any student funding payment(s) they are entitled to. Higher education students should also follow this procedure to update any absences on their record.

## ATTENDANCE

For payment of student funds you must achieve the attendance level set out in the Guide to Student Funding 2020-21 document to be paid from Student Funds.

## ABSENCES

Please see below the most common reasons for absences and the relevant instructions to cover those absences.

### Self-certificates

Each student is issued with a set number of self-certificates to use in block one and block two, once these are used no other self-certificates will be granted. The number of self-certificates is set out in the Student Funding Procedure. You will receive training on how to self-certificate an absence as part of your Induction and Enrolment Process.

All self-certificates must be recorded online **within** seven days of your absence as the College systems will not allow late submission. Failure to submit self-certificates on time **may** result in non-payment of your funding. You can submit a self-certificate via your MyInfo page and this can be done from any device with internet access either **at college or at home**.

If you have a problem self-certificating please contact your Teaching Department (or LDW if you have one) in the first instance to try and establish why you are unable to self-certificate within the seven day period of your absence. If you are unable to resolve the issue please email [funding@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:funding@forthvalley.ac.uk) with the problem and we can point you in the right direction of which department you need to report this to.

If you require any further information on how to submit a self-certificate please refer to the 'Self-Certificate Guidance' which can be accessed either via Moodle or your MyInfo.

### If your absence is under seven calendar days

If your absence is one hour or more per day you must complete the College's online self-certification process if you wish to cover the absence.

**Please Note: We may not log any medical certificates or doctor's letters that cover a period of less than seven days, these should be self-certificated.**

### If your absence is seven calendar days or greater

If you are absent due to ill health, you are required to comply with the following regulations, to receive a medically covered absence by Student Funding.

- If you are absent for seven consecutive calendar days or more, you may be given a medical certificate from your doctor if you have consulted him/her during your absence. You must meet any costs associated with getting a private medical certificate and this can only be given at your doctor's discretion.
- Doctor's medical certificates must be submitted to reception at any campus or by post if necessary, to Student Funding at the Falkirk campus as soon as the doctor has issued this to you. \*During holiday periods the College is normally open and certificates can be handed into your nearest campus, posted to us, or emailed to us.
- Please note that doctors are not required to issue medical certificates for periods of less than seven days and you should not ask your doctor to provide this.
- If you have been absent on extended medical leave for a continuous period, you should contact your Curriculum Manager to discuss when you will be returning to college and to determine whether you will be able to continue with your course/programme of study. You will only receive a maximum of one student support payment during periods of extended medical absence and your payments will be suspended if you have not returned to full attendance before the next instalment is due.

### If your absence is due to taking a holiday during college term time

If you have a holiday booked during term-time, you must notify Student Funding prior to going on holiday. We require you to submit documentary evidence such as a travel or accommodation booking to confirm the dates of your holiday, along with a request that we log this for you. Please Note: A holiday **will only be logged** providing you submit documentation **prior to your absence**. You can submit this to us via the college reception desk or via email. Due to Scottish Funding Council Guidance, Student Funding cannot make payments to students for holidays, so will withhold payment for any week which contains a holiday absence.

## Authorised Absence Requests - MAXIMUM OF 7 DAYS PER BLOCK

Student Funding **may** authorise the following types of absences as shown below. \*You can send an image of your documents to us via email providing this is a full, clear image.

Absence	Notification	Supporting documentation
Funeral of close relative or friend	If possible in advance of your absence or within two college days of your return.	In writing by letter or email
Bereavement	At the time of the absence - If you are absent due to bereavement please contact the Student Funding Team and we will advise you what we will be able to authorise.	In writing by letter or email
*Court appearance	In advance of your absence.	Court citation, letter from solicitor/ lawyer or court official
*Jury duty Initial day	In advance of your absence.	Court citation
*Subsequent days	During your absence or within two college days of your return	Court documentation confirming the dates that you will be required
Religious holidays	In advance	Letter or email confirming religious holiday/ celebration.
Illness of child - general illness	Authorised absence given when there is no one else available to care for them.	Please provide, where possible, a letter from the child's school, childcare provider or GP stating that the child was ill.
Appointment regarding child - Non Medical related (e.g. meeting at child's school, social work meeting)	In advance of your absence.	Documentation from establishment to confirm appointment (i.e. Headed letter)
University or college interview	In advance of your absence	Interview letter or email
Job interview	In advance	Interview letter or email
*Paternity appointments	In advance	Medical hospital appointments/scan appointments
*Paternity leave	Once document has been received	Child's Birth Certificate - we will authorise up to two weeks absence from the child's date of birth

\*These types of absences will not be included in your maximum day allowance

## Medical Absence - MAXIMUM OF 14 DAYS PER BLOCK

Student Funding **may** log the following types of medical absences as shown below

Absence	Notification	Supporting documentation
Hospital appointments/clinics/ Orthodontist appointments	In advance	Hospital letter or appointment card
Emergency dental or doctor appointments	Within two college days of your return.	Please provide confirmation that this was an emergency - appointment card confirming emergency appointment.
Medical illness (7 days and over)	Immediately once received	Medical Certificate/Doctor's Letter
Illness of children - Serious Illness/Injury	Immediately once received	Please provide, where possible, a letter from the child's GP/Hospital that the child was ill/injured.
Child's hospital appointment	In advance	Hospital letter or appointment card
Bereavement - if longer than 7 days	Immediately once received	Medical Certificate/Doctor's Letter
*Maternity appointments	In advance	Medical hospital appointments/scan appointments
**Maternity leave	Once document has been received	Child's Birth Certificate - we will authorise two weeks from the child's date of birth. If you require further time off we will require medical evidence to be submitted. Please note a maximum of 4 weeks funding will be payable for this time.
Self-isolation due to Covid 19 symptoms and/or exposure*	Immediately once advised	Notification from local health authority/Doctor

\* These types of absences will not be included in your maximum 14 day allowance.

COVID-19 - Please note that as the Covid-19 situation evolves and government guidance changes, we will update our advice on absence and the implications with regards to funding. For the most recent updates, please check Moodle/MyInfo

\*\* The first two weeks of Maternity Leave will not be included in your maximum 14 day allowance, however any further absence will be.

All documentation and notification should be sent to Student Funding. If you are absent for any reason not shown above please contact Student Funding by letter or email or speak to a Learner Advisor at your campus. We can then advise you how to cover your absence.

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## **Please Note:**

The deadline for submitting absence documentation to ensure payment of funding instalments can be found on the 'Further Education Bursary and Travel Payments 2020/21' document which is available to view on your moodle page.

Failure to submit documentation by the deadline date may result in non-payment of your funding. There is no guarantee that any late documentation which is submitted will be logged and any non-payment may remain as a non-payment.

## **On-going Medical Condition**

If you have an on-going medical condition you must notify Student Funding of this at the start of your course or when you have been diagnosed of the condition. Additional days authorised absence may be granted dependent of the condition.

You should provide evidence to outline your condition and suggest how this may affect your studies.

This will be reviewed by the Student Funding Co-ordinator and, in discussion with your Curriculum Manager, if they feel you may have short periods of absence which is due to your condition they may give you additional days authorised absence. We will then contact you to advise how you use these.

Please note these additional days would be for short absences only, if you attend any appointments we would still require appointment letters and if you were absent for a period of a week or longer we would still require a medical certificate or doctor's letter to update your absence.

## **Unauthorised Absences**

The following absences will not be covered by authorised absence, but can be covered by a self-certificate

- Community Service
- Weddings, Christenings, etc.
- Dental and Doctor appointments (non-emergency)
- Illness that is less than 7 days, even when a medical certificate is submitted
- Theory and Driving Tests (unless it can be shown that you could only get this date)
- Work-related activities

## **CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENT FUNDING**

For authorised absences, and holiday notification, you can contact Student Funding by either emailing us at [funding@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:funding@forthvalley.ac.uk) or by writing to:

**Student Funding**  
Forth Valley College  
Grangemouth Road  
FALKIRK  
FK2 9AD

Letters or documentary evidence can be handed into any of the campus receptions, or emailed to us, but the following information should be included in all correspondence so that we can identify and assist you:

- Your full name
- Your ID number
- Date(s) of absence

*If you are sending any documentation to us via email, please ensure this is a full clear copy of all pages of the document*

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Do not wait until your student funding payment has been withheld, before informing us of a problem with self-certificating or to request an authorised absence as this will be too late and your payment may not be released.

The payment dates are available on Moodle and will provide you with the following information: the period of attendance for each payment and final submission dates to hand in any evidence to cover absences.

If you are not paid due to poor attendance, you can appeal this decision. Please complete an appeal form which can be found in the Student Funding section on your Moodle page and submit this with any supporting evidence. This can be submitted via email or via your college campus reception. Your appeal will then be reviewed by a member of the Student Funding Team.

If you find you are unable to continue with your course for any reason, you should notify Student Funding immediately. You may have to repay allowances already received as some payments are made in advance. Failure to notify us may mean that any overpayment may be higher.

## **PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Should your personal circumstances change unexpectedly and impact on your short-term attendance at college, please contact Student Funding for advice on what can be done to cover your absences.