



## Supporting Absent Learners

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# COLEG MORGANNWG POLICY DOCUMENT

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## Preamble to the Policy

### Equal Opportunities

The College shall comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005), the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Human Rights Act 1998 (or any enactment modifying or replacing them) and all relevant statutory duties in respect of equal opportunities.

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Statement

The College shall have particular regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005) in respect of this policy.

The Act applies to people who are disabled according to the definition of disability in the DDA 1995. That is, a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

That effect must be:

1. Substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
2. Adverse, and
3. Long-term (that is, has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

The College is committed to take all reasonable steps to implement or adjust the policy taking in the circumstances of each individual. Reasonable steps may include, for example, alternative format documents, special arrangements for meetings. (Please note the examples are not exhaustive).

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## Supporting Absent Learners

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Absences

- 2.1 There are many reasons which cause students 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 students will perhaps suffer from sporadic absences due to problems outside their control. Due to the circumstances students' 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 student 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 student will necessarily be at the same point as other learners but support should aim to narrow the gap as far as possible. The student can expect the staff of the college to make reasonable efforts to support an absence.

### 4. Reasonable Actions to Support Absent Learners

A student 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 student 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 student together with suggested reading.
- 4.4 Suitable assignments are sent to the student.
- 4.5 The course tutor to investigate the loan of equipment if it will help.
- 4.6 The student 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 student's return from an absence.

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## **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 Senior Curriculum leader, Curriculum Area Manager, 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 student's file and if possible a copy of agreed actions sent to the student. These records will then be useful in tracking the student's position when reviewing the support required and given.

## **7. Communication**

- 7.1 This guidance note should be communicated to students during induction. Students should be encouraged to inform tutors of any planned periods of absence.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1 The Learner Services Officer shall periodically assess the implementation of this policy and suggest any amendments required.