

Quick guide

Attendance confirmations

When and why?

You must submit accurate and timely attendance confirmations so that we can release fee payments to your university or college on behalf of students.

Attendance on a course means a student’s active and ongoing engagement with the activities and learning opportunities you make available during the course. These include, but are not limited to, scheduled learning and teaching activities.

You need to confirm attendance for students in receipt of tuition fee loans at 3 separate liability points in the academic year. These liability points correspond to the term dates that you supply as part of your course submission on the Courses Management Service (CMS). You should confirm attendance when the student has begun attending the course and has become liable for tuition fees. A minimum two-week period of attendance is required for undergraduate part-time and postgraduate Northern Ireland students in term one.

From academic year 2018/19, the number of attendance confirmations for part-time students will increase from one to 3 per year in line with the full-time confirmation process. For all students we need you to submit an attendance each term. This will release the payment instalment for each liability period.

We will pay tuition fees in 3 instalments of 25%, 25% and 50%. The payment dates are shown below:

Season (Academic year start)	Payment 1	%	Payment 2	%	Payment 3	%
AUT (Sep – Dec)	third Wed Oct	25%	first Wed Feb	25%	first Wed May	50%
WIN (Jan – Mar)	first Wed Feb	25%	first Wed May	25%	third Wed Oct	50%
SPR (Apr – Jun)	first Wed May	25%	first Wed Oct	25%	first Wed Feb	50%
SUM (Jul – Aug)	third Wed July	25%	first Wed Feb	25%	first Wed May	50%

You should only confirm attendance for students after you have registered them with the appropriate awarding body.

You are only entitled to receive the full fee loan or fee grant (Welsh students) if you have confirmed student attendance at each of the liability points. After the initial payment point further payments will be made weekly.

You should submit attendance confirmations by close of business on the Thursday before the main payment dates in October, February or May to ensure fees are paid at the earliest opportunity. If you have not confirmed attendance by the main payment dates in each liability period, BACS payments will be made each Wednesday after the first payment date. To ensure that payments are made the following Wednesday, you should make the relevant attendance confirmations on SIS by the preceding Thursday.

Blocking future maintenance instalments on negative attendance confirmation:
If we receive a negative attendance confirmation (X code) for a tuition fee loan product, future maintenance instalments will be blocked and not released. This payment block is applied automatically on submission of an X code. We will issue a letter to the student to notify them, but you will need to submit the follow-up Change of Circumstance submission for us to reassess the student's application.

If we have already released a maintenance payment when you confirm non-attendance for that term, we will block maintenance for the following term. Once you have confirmed attendance, all payments that were due to be released until the date of the attendance confirmation will be paid to the student.

Access

You must hold Attendance Administrator access to the HE Gateway to confirm attendance. If you need this to be added to your account you should contact the User Administrator at your university or college.

Cooling Off – Attendance

Students have a cooling off period where they can cancel their contract for educational services with a higher education provider. The duration the cooling off period varies across the sector, and this is an arrangement that is separate from student finance. Our guidance is to confirm attendance for students only when they have become liable for fees, after their cooling off period has come to an end. If students choose to leave during their cooling off period, they must be withdrawn with the real-time effective date because attendance has not been confirmed.

Example

- the student's registration is correctly confirmed on 17 September once the student has enrolled on their course
- the student's course starts on 24 September
- you have a two-week cooling off period – as the student has not become liable for fees within this period, you should not submit an attendance confirmation yet
- the cooling off period for this student ends on 8 October
- the student drops out of the course within the cooling off period on 4 October
- you should submit a Withdrawal CoC with the real-time effective date of 4 October

Positive attendance submitted in error – Student withdrawn

If you have submitted a positive confirmation in error and the student has not attended in that liability period, and will not be returning to study, you should submit a Withdrawal CoC with the effective date before the term one course start date.

Example 1

- the student's registration is correctly confirmed on 17 September once the student has enrolled on their course
- the course start date is 24 September
- the student's attendance confirmation for liability 1 is confirmed as A on 1 October in error
- the student has not attended and will not start the course
- you should submit a Withdrawal CoC with the effective date of 23 September

Example 2

- the student has positive registration and attendance confirmed correctly for term one
- the student has attendance for liability two confirmed as A on 7 January in error
- the student is not continuing with the course
- you should submit a Withdrawal CoC with the effective date as the date of last attendance (before 7 January)

Negative attendance submitted in error

If you have submitted a negative attendance confirmation in error, you can change this. The **Attendance Code** dropdown filter will still be visible so you can reselect a positive code and select the **Save** or **Submit** option as needed.