

5.05 Staff Attendance at Training Events

This policy seeks to introduce a common methodology across departments to pursue the issue of non-attendance at training events, providing guidance on how attendance should be managed and promoted.

- You will find the definition of non-attendance at training events, as used within this policy, within the policy Scope – [Section 1.8 Scope](#)
- Management of the process with relation to non-attendance at training events – [Section 2 Managing the Process](#)
- Role and responsibilities of departments and managers in relation to attendance at training events – [Section 3 Departmental and Management Responsibility](#)

The following terms within this policy are defined in the glossary:

Non-Attendance, Cancellation, Class

You may also be interested in the following policies:

There are currently no related policies.

This policy is version 1.0

For a printable version please click the icon. Please make sure that your printed version is current with the one on this portal.

This homepage is only a guide to the policy, not the policy itself. In the event of any discrepancy between the content of this homepage and the associated policy, the wording of the policy shall apply.

5.05 STAFF ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING EVENTS

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5.05 STAFF ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING EVENTS

1 Attendance at Training Events

Policy Statement

1.1 The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is fully committed to the development of its staff to ensure they have the skills necessary to fulfil their role and to ensure staff can reach their full potential and recognises the inherent need to develop all staff and the benefits which result from doing so.

1.2 Consequently, line managers have a responsibility to support staff in the identification of their development needs and to ensure these needs are addressed. All staff are given the opportunity to participate in developmental activities and training interventions appropriate to their individual development needs.

1.3 In providing access to training, there is a requirement for the NICS to consider the need to balance protection of the public purse with equal opportunities for all staff. Non-attendance at training, whether due to business or personal reasons, often results in a loss due to the cost of the unfilled place. To maximise limited Training and Development funds, it is imperative that staff attend training they are scheduled to attend.

Aim

1.4 Creation of a standardised NICS approach covering the management and promotion of training attendance is intended to introduce a common methodology to address the issue of non-attendance. This will include consideration of the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

1.5 Within the People criteria of the NICS Core Competence Framework, there is a general commitment to participation in development at all grades. At EOII and above, this is supplemented by a requirement to lead by example, demonstrating the importance of development by scheduling time for developmental activities.

1.6 This commitment is also supported by the eight key NICS Training and Development principles as detailed in the NICS Training and Development Strategy. The principles include ensuring equitable and fair access to training and defining a role for line managers to support their staff in taking more responsibility for their own development and career.

1.7 Non-attendance can have a significant negative impact on individuals, departments/business areas and providers, including:

- a.** Individuals:
 - i.** Business critical training not received/delay in receiving necessary training resulting in:
 - Impact on performance;
 - Impact on motivation;
 - Reduction of availability of further training due to reduced training resources.
- b.** Departments/business areas:
 - i.** Financial implications resulting from cancellation charges imposed by training providers on budget availability for further training provision (see sections 1.12 – 1.14 below for further details);
 - ii.** Potential impact on business targets as individuals not appropriately trained to fulfil requirements of post;
 - iii.** Resultant skills gaps against business skill needs;
 - iv.** Not obtaining value for money.
- c.** Training Providers (including external training organisations)
 - i.** courses cancelled due to lack of nominees;
 - ii.** impact on future scheduling;
 - iii.** impact on working relationships between Centre for Applied Learning/departments, and external training organisations, where training is bought in.

Scope

1.8 This policy will apply to the full range of training programmes delivered across Centre for Applied Learning and departments, both by internal and external providers.

1.9 It seeks to provide guidance on how training attendance should be managed to ensure full use of available resources and in order to maximise training and development opportunities for all staff.

1.10 While the policy is intended to provide guidance to ensure consistency in application within and across departments, it is recognised that the specific business environment varies across departments which may require flexibility at departmental level, subject to local consultation with Departmental Trade Union representatives. You should therefore refer to your individual departmental policy on training attendance, where appropriate.

1.11 Within the context of this policy, non-attendance is defined as follows:

- a.** Unenrolment – a participant who has accepted a class place is subsequently unable to attend and withdraws from the class before the start date.
- b.** Failure to attend – a participant who does not arrive at the venue on the agreed date to commence the class and has not cancelled prior to the start date.

1.12 It is recognised that at times there are genuine reasons for non-attendance, such as sickness, **critical** business need and unforeseen domestic crisis. However, despite the genuineness of the reason for non-attendance, where cancellation charges are applicable, these will still be incurred by the business area/Department.

1.13 Current cancellation charges applicable to Centre for Applied Learning courses can be found within their Cancellation Policy. For any charges relating to non-Centre for Applied Learning courses, refer to individual provider information.

1.14 Details of cancellation charges for other training providers are outlined on an individual provider basis. If in doubt, you should check with your Training Unit on what charges may apply.

2 Managing the Process

Background

2.1 You will enrol onto either scheduled or planned classes, or place yourself on a waiting list for a particular class date. In most cases it is expected that you will be able to secure a place on a self selected date, thus immediately reducing the potential for a class being scheduled on a date when you are not available.

Enrolment on and Unenrolment from Training

2.2 All applications will be forwarded to your line manager and then to the designated budget holder for approval before you receive confirmation of a class place. Once your class place is confirmed, you have the opportunity to unenrol, up to the date of the class (or your line manager will have the ability to unenrol, a member of staff, for example long term sick absence). Within the definitions of non-attendance, once you have a confirmed place on a scheduled class, cancellation or failure to attend, would be classified as non-attendance.

2.3 If you intend to unenrol from a class you must discuss and agree the reason for your cancellation with your line manager prior to doing so. You should also contact your departmental/other training unit prior to unenrolling to allow them to consider identification of a possible replacement.

2.4 Similarly, where an individual is being unenrolled from a class, the line manager should take full account of the need for equality of opportunity prior to unenrolling a staff member. In the case of a dispute, the staff member can access the grievance procedure (HR Handbook policy [6.04 Grievance](#)).

2.5 It should be noted that unenrolment from a class, **in any instance**, should only be considered if it is **absolutely essential** and all other alternatives have been explored and discounted.

Cancellation Reason

2.6 Your cancellation reason must be recorded in order for the unenrolment to be actioned. Following your unenrolment, the class administrator within Centre for Applied Learning, departmental or other training unit will be advised of the fact. A system acknowledgement will also be generated, advising your line manager and budget holder of the unenrolment. Where cancellation charges are applicable, these will be advised.

Failure to Attend

2.7 Where you fail to attend on the day of the class, the training organiser (Centre for Applied Learning/departmental training unit/other training unit) will be responsible for following this up with you/your line manager on the day and, as required, conducting further follow up after the class. This is intended to facilitate your future attendance. You and your line manager will be prompted to complete a non-attendance form, recording the reason for failure to attend.

Reporting Arrangements

2.8 A range of reports on both individual cancellations and failure to attend can be generated. Only nominated individuals within departments will be able to access these to identify trends and assist with increasing attendance levels.

3 Departmental and Management Responsibility

3.1 Departments have an important part to play in relation to training attendance. This can be defined in terms of both a proactive/supportive role in ongoing promotion of attendance amongst both staff and line managers, and a monitoring role to follow up on available attendance information.

Proactive/Supportive Role

3.2 Both line managers and the staff they manage need to be made fully aware of, and be responsive to, their individual responsibilities. This is encouraged via the NICS Training and Development Strategy which puts an onus on line managers and their staff to take responsibility for ensuring they benefit from the training opportunities available to them.

3.3 All staff need to be regularly advised of the importance of attendance and encouraged to consider the impacts for both themselves, their colleagues and the service provision of their business areas/departments of not attending. This should include a clear message concerning any charges which may arise as a result of their actions, and the potential impact of these on budget availability for future training. Communication mechanisms for this general information could include, for example, use of the team brief and departmental brief, inclusion within induction training and intranet sites.

3.4 Line managers also have a key support role to play in ensuring that you are released from your duties and attend training. Through the performance management and personal development plan processes, line managers should ensure that applications for training are not approved for courses which you do not require. Similarly, they should endeavour to ensure provision is made for attendance at those courses for which approval has been given.

Monitoring Role

3.5 Access to reports on departmental attendance will be available to nominated individuals who will supply information on performance, including charges incurred, and identified trends to managers in their departments. Departments may also wish to consider publication of headline statistics for circulation throughout their department or to Heads of Divisions/Heads of Branches.

3.6 Departments will utilise available information to identify trends and will address these appropriately. For example there may need to be targeted action within individual branches, with respect to individual courses or in response to specific cancellation reasons, including where staff are prevented from attending because of business needs. This could include setting of percentage reduction targets.

3.7 Where trends are identified these should be highlighted to Heads of Branch/Division for their consideration and for implementation of actions to address.

Northern Ireland Civil Service
HR Policy

3.8 Corporate HR will monitor non-attendance levels across the NICS, identifying trends to inform future policy needs.