



Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership

Absence Policy



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Absence Policy

Definition of absence

Absence is defined as non-attendance at central professional studies sessions, subject pathways sessions, school induction and reorientation visits, school placements, or enhancement visits.

Notification of absence

- Central professional studies – contact the Course Director admin@gitep.org.uk and copy in the Course Administrator admin@gitep.org.uk
- Subject pathway sessions – contact the Subject Lead and copy in the Course Administrator.
- School induction and reorientation visits – contact the school Professional Lead and copy in the Course Administrator.
- School placements – contact the Subject Mentor and Professional Lead. It is also a professional courtesy to email the teachers of any classes the trainee is taking that day. Expectations of trainees regarding the setting of cover at each stage of the course is set out in the Trainee Log Book.
- Enhancement visits – contact the school and copy in the Course Administrator.

Trainees should notify the appropriate party by 7:45 am on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence unless otherwise agreed by the Course Director or Professional Lead.

If the provider has not been informed of an absence, they will contact the trainee or emergency contact to confirm their safety and ascertain why they are not in attendance.

If after ten working days the provider is unable to contact the trainee or the named representative, the provider will invoke a suspension of studies, informing Student Finance England (SFE) through a Change of Circumstances (COC) submission should one be required. This may have an impact on any maintenance loans and bursaries that have been arranged. If there is no contact in the following ten working days, the trainee will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course and the relevant authorities will be informed.

Monitoring Absence

During school placements absence is monitored by the Professional Lead and reported in the End of Placement Report.

Registers are taken at central professional studies and subject pathway sessions.



Absences are logged centrally by the Course Administrator.

Sickness absence

Self-certificated sickness

For absences of seven calendar days or less, a trainee will be required to self-certify.

Medically stated sickness

If a trainee is absent for more than seven calendar days, a medical certificate or statement signed by a doctor must be sent to the Course Administrator as soon as practicable and a record of return to work meeting form must be completed with the Professional Lead during a school placement, or a Lead Mentor if during centre professional studies.

If the trainee remains ill when the note expires, further medical evidence will be required.

If a trainee has a number of medical absences that do not require medical statements, but the level of absence raises concerns about the trainee's ability to meet the requirements for QTS, then a Support Plan should be put in place – see Trainee Support Policy, with the option to refer to the Fitness to Practice policy where this is not successful.

If the absence continues for a prolonged period (more than 15 working days) or a date for the return to study exceeds 15 working days from the beginning of the absence, the provider will notify the trainee in writing that it is suspending the trainee's study from that 15-day point. See Fitness to Practice Policy for details. If the trainee is in receipt of finance from Student 2 Finance England (SFE) a Change of Circumstances form (COC) will be submitted to SFE by the provider suspending studies on medical grounds effective from that date.

If a trainee is subject to an ongoing illness or other underlying health condition, such as depression, arthritis, unstable diabetes or asthma then refer to the Fitness to Practice Policy.

A trainee returning to work after an extended period of absence may be required to submit to a medical examination by Occupational Health professionals to determine whether and what staged return to work should be implemented.

Return to work

Course Leaders are expected to maintain regular contact with trainees who are absent. It is important that trainees do not feel isolated or out of touch. A return-to-work meeting will be scheduled for any absence longer than seven calendar days to welcome the trainee back; provide the opportunity to update the trainee on any changes that may have taken place in their absence; ensure that it is appropriate for the trainee to return to school / training; consider any advice provided by the GP on



the medical certificate; help to identify any issues at home or in the school that may be impacting on the trainee's health and well-being, or their attendance on the course; agree a support plan that details the work to be carried out and any priorities for the trainee's return. This meeting should be carried out by the Professional Lead during a school placement or by a Lead Mentor during centre professional studies.

Maternity leave

The nature of this one-year course means maternity leave as such is not available but GITEP SCITT will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible within the course structure to enable the trainee to achieve QTS.

The length of absence anticipated means that the course will have to be extended into another year providing there is no substantial change in the requirements for QTS anticipated.

A trainee who becomes pregnant after being offered a place or during the first half term of the course can apply to have the course deferred for one year only, subject to there being no substantial change to the requirements for QTS during the deferment. Any trainee requesting maternity leave must complete the course within six terms. One of those terms must be the final term of an academic year. There may be some implications for a trainee receiving finance from Student Finance England (SFE).

The preferred plan is for a trainee to return in the second year two weeks before the anniversary of the date of commencement of maternity leave. The trainee should notify GITEP as soon as is practicable but not later than 14 weeks (unless there is good cause) before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) that she wishes to be absent for maternity.

Absence on account of illness which is attributable to the pregnancy, including absence on account of miscarriage, and which occurs outside the period of absence for maternity, shall be treated as ordinary sickness absence and shall be subject to the conditions normally governing such leave, provided it is covered by a doctor's statement.

Maternity leave should not normally be taken earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC. When maternity leave begins, GITEP will write to the trainee to formally suspend the trainee's studies, informing the SFE through a CoC where required and record the trainee as dormant on the Single Central Record.

The trainee will inform GITEP of the date of birth of the child. The trainee may not return to study less than two weeks after the birth of the child. Thereafter, the



trainee should discuss with GITEP when she intends to return to study and a timeframe for the completion of the course be agreed.

Where a trainee does not make contact with GITEP, it may write to the trainee no earlier than 21 days before the anniversary of the commencement of maternity leave, asking them to confirm the date of birth and her intention to return to work. The trainee or their representative must respond within 14 days of receiving the request. If there is no response, GITEP will withdraw the trainee from the course.

If requiring student finance, the trainee will need to apply for finance (as a returning student repeating Year 1) for the second academic year. At the beginning of the first term, the trainee will continue to have their studies suspended and SFE informed through a COC. A further COC will be completed when the trainee returns to the course. For a trainee paying fees through an SFE loan, the fee structure means that the trainee must be present in Term 3 of one of the years in question. If that is not the case, GITEP has the right to request 25% of the total tuition fees direct from the trainee.

Paternalty leave

The nature of this one-year course means paternalty leave as such is not available but the provider will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible to allow a short period of absence within the course structure to enable the trainee to achieve QTS. If the length of absence anticipated is significant, the course is likely to have to be extended into a second year for which there may be financial implications. See compassionate leave below.

Medical appointments

A trainee should inform GITEP course leadership and the Professional Lead during a school placement of any appointments for which they need to take leave, being prepared to offer further evidence if requested. The difficulty of obtaining GP and hospital appointments is acknowledged and these will be honoured wherever possible though a trainee should attempt to ensure follow up appointments do not impact unnecessarily on attendance on the course. Other routine medical appointments should not be made during the working day.

Leave of absence

Leave of absence for other reasons may be granted by Course Leaders or Professional Leads who will inform the Course Administrator so up-to-date attendance records can be kept. For absences longer than two consecutive days, or for a cumulative total of more than five days, the request will require the additional approval of the Course Director. It is expected that an application will be made for leave of absence, in writing via email at least two working days



(admin@gitep.org.uk) before the absence occurs. In the case of absence included in private and personal or compassionate categories, GITEP should be informed in writing via email on the return to study. The following outlines the rationale for decisions relating to common requests for leave of absence. They should not be seen as an exhaustive list but serve as an indication as to how leave of absence decisions will be expedited.

Graduation ceremonies

Absence of one day to attend a graduation ceremony for a first degree will be granted. Any requests for travelling time associated with this would not be expected to exceed half a day in total.

Interviews

All reasonable requests will be honoured. Decisions relating to absence for interviews abroad or in places involving extra days for travel will be limited to a cumulative maximum of three working days in the year.

Visits to schools before application/interview

Requests will be considered, but given the significant demands of the course, will not be automatically granted. In refusing the application, GITEP will, if requested by the trainee, contact the school in question, informing them both of the trainee's expression of interest in attending, and the rationale for the refusal of the application.

Visits to schools prior to employment

One day will be granted before the end of the final teaching experience. A further day may be granted after this date and before the course ends. Additional days requested by the school employing the trainee after the course may be granted at the discretion of GITEP.

Compassionate leave

In the event of such emergencies as bereavement, serious accident or illness of an immediate family member/dependant, compassionate leave will be granted. Requests for additional compassionate leave, or in the case of a cumulative total of more than ten working days, must be referred to the Course Director.

Private and personal

A maximum of two days at any one time will be granted for the purposes of urgent and unforeseen personal business which does not come under the scope of compassionate leave or to fulfil an important and significant personal commitment which cannot be undertaken at any other time, for example where a child is ill.

The intensive nature of the course means that holidays, including those booked before commencement of the course, should not be undertaken. If GITEP allows



holiday leave, for example to attend a family wedding, it should be noted that SFE will be informed and an adjustment to any maintenance loans may follow.

Equality Act

GITEP recognises its legal obligations to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act. In the event that this procedure is applied to a trainee who is disabled under the Equality Act then a full investigation will be undertaken to ensure that GITEP's legal obligations have been met. Particular attention will be paid to a review of requests for reasonable adjustments, the implementation of those adjustments and the effects of these adjustments. Absences due to an employee's disability under the Equality Act will not be taken into account when monitoring levels of sickness absence unless there is objective justification, for example where the impact of the absence on teaching and learning cannot be reasonably tolerated. Guidance will be obtained from the GITEP's Course Director before any action is initiated.

Trainee support

Where trainee absence raises concern for their safety and wellbeing, or where there is a risk the trainee will be unable to achieve QTS in the timeframe agreed, the Course Leaders will refer to the Trainee Support Policy and/or Safeguarding Policy as appropriate.

Full attendance (100%) at all timetabled sessions is a requirement of GITEP SCITT and ensures the trainees have completed the full training necessary for the recommendation for QTS. Attendance is also an indication of professional commitment and where trainees have been unable to attend any sessions, there is an expectation that they will engage with the session materials provided to catch up.

There is a legal requirement that trainees complete a minimum of 120 days in school and where a trainee is unable to meet this requirement, the Course Leaders will refer to the Trainee Support Policy and consider whether top-up days or a move to a flexible route are appropriate.

Punctuality

Punctuality is extremely important as it is an indicator of professional commitment, and, along with good attendance, a requirement of Part of Two of the Teachers Standards.

If a trainee knows they are likely to be late to central professional studies sessions, subject pathways sessions, school induction and reorientation visits, school placements, or enhancement visits, they should make all reasonable efforts to inform the relevant GITEP or school staff.



Repeated lateness would be seen as a cause for concern and dealt with by the Trainee Support Policy.

Links to other policies

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

[Trainee Support Policy](#)

Document history

Review Date	Significant Amendments	Made by	Approved by	Approval Date	Next review
Created: June 2023		KLF	Partnership Board		June 2026