



# Learner Withdrawal Policy and Procedure

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## **Scope**

MI Skills Development Centre, Education, Skills & Employment team aims to ensure that all of its learners receive the best possible information advice and guidance so that they are able to enrol on the best possible course for them and for their needs. In addition, the service aims to ensure that the learners experience when on their chosen course is of the highest level.

However, there will always be circumstances where a learner will wish to leave their chosen course, whether due to changes in personal circumstances, changes in personal ambitions or changes in the requirements of the skills needed to achieve learners' goals.

## **Purpose**

We seek to constantly improve outcomes for our learners, and we monitor key performance indicators such as retention, achievement and satisfaction rates to help us identify 'failure demand' and, in particular, predictable 'failure demand'. As a service we can then work to remove predictable 'failure demand' from our systems.

Minimum standards of performance are set as part of our quality measures of our provisions with expected minimum attendance rate at 80%, retention 90% for Adult Skills provision and provision falling below this level in significant numbers will incur investigation and there could be implications for funding and/or Ofsted inspection.

Our aim is always for 100% success as we are not prepared to accept any targets that allow failure, however whilst we don't set arbitrary targets locally, we measure retention and attendance regularly to ensure the learners are never being let down by the service they receive. Therefore, it is not only important for the learner, but it is important to us as the provider, that learners get the best information about their course to make informed enrolment choices and then receive the highest quality learning programme to ensure they stay on programme and achieve. If learners are not completing their courses of study in a timely fashion and in line with their Individual Learning and Support Plans, we need to establish the reasons and investigate the circumstances.

We recognise that people choose different courses for different reasons and that they may choose to leave those courses for different reasons. Any tutor or manager seeking to apply the guidance in this policy statement should treat the needs and wishes of the learner as pre-eminent over any practical measures in this policy statement. The requirement to find out why a learner wishes to leave a course should never aggravate a situation which, for the learner, has already not matched what they had hoped for. Those implementing this policy should therefore apply their own discretion in individual learners' circumstances, however those applying discretion should be willing to document their reason for doing so in order that managers can have a wider understanding of the learners' experience.

All tutors should inform learners of how they can contact them in the event that they are going to be absent, so as to minimise unexplained absences. All tutors should make every effort to contact learners following an unexplained absence and should have made this practice clear to the learners at induction and reinforced throughout the course. Additionally, tutors should use the VLE and LMS to host work for learners that are either struggling to attend some sessions or who need to spend more time or work at their own pace to achieve their learning objectives.

### **Absence and Withdrawal Guidance**

Following one unexplained absence, there is an expectation that a phone call from the tutor to the learner is best practice though it is acknowledged that in some circumstances, this is not always appropriate. In these situations, it is vital that the tutor discusses this with their Quality, Head of Curriculum & Curriculum lead within the Education, Skills & Employment team.

If a learner leaves their course early the tutor (with the support of the learner if they are still contactable) should complete a Completion/Withdrawal form and forward to the Data Management and Administration team. This will ensure that their completion status is correctly recorded on the main Management Information (MI) database and subsequently on the ILR return to the Funder. The Funder/s has rules around claiming funding which relate to learners leaving a course early which may affect the money to be claimed from the ESFA/LA, ESF and therefore paid to providers. For example, if a course is due to run for between 14 to 167 days then a learner withdrawing before completing 14 days would not be fundable unless they achieve the aim they were studying for.

As stated earlier the needs of the learner are paramount and so the implementation of this policy should in no way be to the detriment of the learner. It may be not be possible/appropriate to have a learners involvement in the completion of the withdrawal forms so they should be completed by the Tutor as fully as possible and sent in to Data Management team. However, if the learner is available at the time of withdrawal they should also be asked to complete a course feedback form. Reasons for withdrawal will be discussed between the Officer and the various team meetings e.g. at a quality monitoring visit and the outcome recorded and acted upon.

### **Withdrawal due to Securing Employment**

If a learner withdraws early from the course due to securing employment, confirmation of this must be sent by the learner to the provider using the **Employment Outcome form**. This will ensure partial achievement funding can be drawn down (where available) and the withdrawal doesn't affect overall retention rates negatively.

## **The Forms – What We Need to Find out**

There are 4 distinct objectives that forms associated with learner withdrawal must aim to achieve.

1. A withdrawal procedure should inform all relevant MI (Management Information) systems of the learner's withdrawal.
2. They should attempt to find out why the learner withdrew.
3. They should attempt to integrate the withdrawn learner into any learner satisfaction systems, which in turn should give the learner an opportunity to explain what the service, provider or tutor could have done better.
4. In the case of Adult Education provision, if the learner withdrew because they secured employment, confirmation from the learner needs to be sought so that achievement funding can be drawn down and retention and achievement statistics not affected by what is a very positive outcome.

### **To keep withdrawals to a minimum:**

- Appropriate information, advice and guidance will be given to every prospective learner before enrolment.
- Course outlines available for every learner providing information about entry requirements, course content, scope of course, costs (if any charged) .
- Tutors name and managers details shared with prospective learners.
- Registers kept up to date by tutors to show up any unexpected absences.
- Tutor and organisation manager to follow up absent learners.
- Where possible introduction courses should precede longer courses so that learners can find out more about their subject before, they commit their time to the longer course.

### **We will monitor the effectiveness of the Withdrawal process by:**

- Analysing returned withdrawal forms for indications of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the course and following up with the partner provider.
- Monitoring and analysing retention data at provider and tutor level as appropriate.
- Auditing registers for all directly delivered courses through Course Summary Report Forms.
- Provide training to new and inexperienced tutors to establish good practice is observed regarding withdrawals.
- Check individual tutors practice during teaching and learning observations and monitor registers during this time.
- Auditing at Quality Support visit, retention issues with tutors and sub contracted providers.
- Monitor and analyse satisfaction rates and audit learner feedback.
- The Quality team will monitor withdrawal information and report concerns to the relevant Quality, Head of Curriculum and Curriculum leads.
- The Quality team will monitor overarching retention and achievement rates compared with national benchmarks in similar learning.

## **Withdrawal Policy Statement**

MISDC is committed to providing support for all learners to achieve their qualifications in a timely manner. We expect all learners to complete their qualifications within the time span given.

Once a learner has achieved their qualification and the certificate has been received, the learner will be withdrawn from the programme as completed.

If a learner fails to attend classes or to meet learning targets set by Tutors of MISDC, on 3 occasions without good reason, we will notify them in writing of our intention to withdraw them from the programme.

If a response is not received within 10 working days, we will withdraw them from the programme by notifying them in writing. We will accredit any units that have been achieved and request certificates for these units which will be sent to them. This learner will be a partial or non-completer depending on the achievement of any full units.