

# CAPRICORN TVET COLLEGE



## ACADEMIC: STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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Academic: Student Attendance and Punctuality  
Policy

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## VISION OF CAPRICORN TVET COLLEGE



“A dynamic Technical Vocational Education and Training Institution of Excellence”

### MISSION STATEMENT OF CAPRICORN TVET COLLEGE

Capricorn College is to offer responsive, flexible and quality programmes that are accessible to all learners through formal learning, skills development and learnerships. This is achieved by adhering to policies and procedures, making use of committed human capital and employing appropriate physical and fiscal resources.

### Values

- **Respect:** We treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves. Abusive or disrespectful treatment is not tolerated. We will strive for fairness and equity.
- **Integrity:** We are committed to transparency, honesty and sincerity.
- **Communication:** We are committed to effective communication. We believe information is meant to move and that information moves people.
- **Excellence:** We are satisfied with nothing less than the best quality in everything we do.

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## ACADEMIC SERVICES POLICIES

### STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

#### 1. POLICY OBJECTIVES (*Declaration of Intent*)

##### 1.1 Introduction

The Department of Higher Education and Training recognizes the positive correlation between class attendance, student retention and academic achievement. Any class session or activity missed, regardless of cause, reduces the opportunity for learning and may negatively affect a student's achievement in the course.

Levels of attendance have a direct impact on the success of students. Students are more likely to complete and achieve their qualification if they attend classes regularly. Late arrival of students has an impact not just on their individual learning but also on the progress of the rest of the class. Similarly, employers set high expectations of attendance and punctuality in the workplace.

The Department therefore expects public Technical, Vocational Education and Training Colleges to set and enforce attendance and punctuality expectation levels for students to comply with, examination and NSFAS requirements, in preparation for their compliance with the professional culture of the workplace.

#### 2. DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

**2.1 Absence** means the state of being away from class or event.

**2.2 Attendance** means action of attending classes.

**2.3 Bursary** means financial assistance or grant awarded to a student.

**2.4 Class Register** means an official document, which may be an electronic document, in which attendance of learners/students in class is recorded each college day.

**2.5 College** means Capricorn College for TVET

**2.6 Council** means the College Council of Capricorn College for TVET as established in terms of CET Act 16 of 2006.

**2.7 Consequences** mean negative results of unauthorized absence from class.

**2.8 Deputy Principal: Academic Services** means the head of academic service(s) at the college.

**2.9 Disbursement** means paying out of money from a fund e.g. NSFAS.

**2.10 Disciplinary Action** means action taken by college authorities to correct unauthorized absence from classes.

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- 2.11 Exclusion** means denial of access to write examination/cancellation of entry to examination.
- 2.12 Expectation** means a strong believe that something will happen i.e. an expectation to attend classes.
- 2.13 Formal Hearing** means a chance given to someone to be heard in a formal setting as part of behavioral corrective measure.
- 2.14 Lecturing Staff** means people who offer lessons/lectures at a college or university.
- 2.15 Medical Certificate** means an official document from a medical practitioner's/registered traditional healer's used as evidence of sickness, e.g. consultation as reason for absence.
- 2.16 Present** means to be in class.
- 2.17 Punctuality** means doing of something at the appointed time, which is punctuality to class / work / event.
- 2.18 Scheduled Classes** means prescribed or planned classes.
- 2.19 Student** means a learner studying at a college or university.
- 2.20 Student absence form** means a form to be filled in by a student for his/her absence.
- 2.21 Student with disability** means a student who is disabled, has medical difficulty or with special needs.
- 2.22 Support needs** means special needs that need special support such as disabilities, learning difficulties / barriers and other support needs.
- 2.23 Tranche** means a portion or part of the bursary.
- 2.24 Warning** means information / advice of a possible danger for not attending classes regularly.

### 3. ABBREVIATIONS:

- 3.1 DHET** Department of Higher Education and Training
- 3.2 FET** Further Education and Training
- 3.3 TVET** Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- 3.4 SSS** Student Support Services

### 4. THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to all registered students excluding those that are registered for exam only at Capricorn College for TVET.

### 5. GOVERNING PRESCRIPTS (*Legislative Framework that informs the policy*)

- 5.1 DHET FET College Bursary Guidelines**
- 5.2 CET Act 16 of 2006 as amended.**

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## 6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES (Policy content)

### 6.1 General Principles

- 6.1.1 The expectation is for students to be 100% 'present' at all scheduled classes. The focus is on 'presence' rather than absence.
- 6.1.2 Students should know their own attendance levels, the regular review and reporting of attendance must be part of the student monitoring process. The measure of attendance will be 'present'.
- 6.1.3 To reduce the amount of time students are not in class, either from sickness or other reasons, there will be regular and consistent processes put in place by college management to monitor, follow up and report on attendance.
- 6.1.4 Students will be expected to explain in person the reason for their absence and the authorization of absences will be limited to specific situations.
- 6.1.5 There will be clear consequences for students whose attendance falls below agreed levels.
- 6.1.6 Attendance monitoring is part of the college quality processes. Responsibility for achieving high levels of attendance lies with Campus Managers.
- 6.1.7 All Campus Managers must keep accurate attendance records.

### 6.2 Students with Special Needs

- 6.2.1 If a student has a disability or medical difficulty that directly affects their attendance or ability to arrive on time, this should be discussed with the student and Student Support Services (SSS), and formally recorded on the student record file at the start of the academic year or at the time of the incident.
- 6.2.2 Based on justifiable reasons the college will work with the student to ensure that reasonable adjustments and support is put in place and levels of expectation are set accordingly.
- 6.2.3 Any reviews or disciplinary actions will take into account and be responsive to the needs of students with disabilities, learning difficulties or other emotional, social or behavioral needs.
- 6.2.4

### 6.3 Expectations of College Staff and Students Support college offer and students where appropriate.

Quality improvement is the responsibility of college lecturers as well as programme managers. The actions required by college staff and students to improve attendance and punctuality are specified in Item 8.

### 6.4 Consequences

The level for measuring attendance will be the 'present' level. Where absence is unauthorized the following three (3) stages of remedial actions are proposed:

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### **Stage 1: Formal Warning**

- a) An engagement between the lecturer and the student should take place before a warning is issued
- b) This may be issued by the lecturer where there are concerns about attendance. There should be no more than 3 formal warnings (verbal, written and final) before moving to stage 2.
- c) A formal warning should be issued if a student is absent two days or more in a week without a valid reason.
- d) A referral to SSS may be issued where there is need.

### **Stage 2: Formal Absence Review Meeting**

- a) Meeting with lecturer, SSS and Programme Manager (plus disciplinary warning if appropriate) where:
  - i) Attendance: Below 80% 'present', or absent one or more sessions in a week or 4 or more absences in any 4-week period.
  - ii) Lateness: Late twice in a week or more than 5 times in any 4-week period or other patterns of lateness.
  - iii) Patterns of absence, e.g. every Monday, every Friday, specific lessons, etc. or sickness occurring on a regular basis.
  - iv) Unauthorised absences could lead to NSFAS payments, where applicable, being stopped for the rest of the term/trimester.
- b) The review meeting should discuss reasons for absence, and decide on support where required and methods to catch up on missed work. The review meeting should result in an action plan which is agreed to by the student.
- c) There should be no more than two (2) formal absence review meetings before moving to stage three (3).

### **Stage 3: Formal Hearing with the Campus Manager**

- a) Attendance: Continued 'present' rate of less than 80%, persistent lateness or failure to improve despite warnings or absence reviews. (However admission requirements will be applicable where necessary)
- b) If a second formal hearing for poor attendance or punctuality is held, this can lead to final written warning.

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- c) Should a student fail to comply after the final written warning, this could lead to the cancellation of entry to a final examination or exclusion.
- d) Where attendance is affected by authorized absence, it is still necessary to address the matter directly with the student and institute the above processes where a trend of absence emerges and exceeds 20% of the class time at any given time in the programme. (However admission requirements will be applicable where necessary)

### 6.5 General Actions for Lecturing Staff

- 6.5.1 Where appropriate parents/employers should be involved to address issues of attendance and punctuality, it is imperative for them to receive information on attendance and punctuality the moment it becomes a concern.
- 6.5.2 Ensure that classes start promptly and finish as time-tabled. Lecturers should be in the classroom before commencement of lessons, ready to start at the scheduled time. Classes should start on time even if there are students who may arrive late.
- 6.5.3 Students should not be excluded from classes due to lateness unless there is a very good reason, for example, health and safety or the level of disruption.
- 6.5.4 Ensure that class attendance is enhanced by good practices in teaching and learning. This may include a variety of activities that engage students in challenging and interesting tasks, use of a variety of teaching styles and formative assessment feedback.
- 6.5.5 Emphasize motivational factors such as career progression routes, expectations of employers, the value of the final qualification in the job market or progression to universities, in order to maintain the students' interest and determination to achieve their goals.

### 6.6 Authorized Absence

Absence can only be authorized where:

- 6.6.1 It is agreed in advance with a college lecturer.
- 6.6.2 Every attempt has been made to schedule external appointments outside of college times.

Authorized absence may include:

- 6.6.3 Sickness supported by a medical certificate
- 6.6.4 Medical appointments
- 6.6.5 Court appearances
- 6.6.6 Work or university interviews
- 6.6.7 Appointments with government or voluntary organizations
- 6.6.8 Funerals



6.6.9 Religious holidays

6.6.10 Driving Tests

6.6.11 Curriculum or extra-curriculum (e.g. sports) agreed internal and external events or work placements.

6.6.12 An absence can be authorized by a college lecturer for exceptional and unavoidable personal circumstances or by agreement with an appropriate programme manager.

## 6.7 Examinations

6.7.1. A student shall be allowed to write the examination for every subject for which he/she has attained a minimum of 80% attendance (including authorized absence and sickness) per subject. (However admission requirements will be applicable where necessary)

6.7.2. Colleges will be required to verify and provide attendance information to the Department before the release of examination entry permits to students at the start of an examination session. A student may not be given access to the examination room without this permit.

6.7.3. The campus examination officers should issue printouts of absentees to lecturers to verify correctness.

## 6.8 National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Payments.

In terms of the Department's TVET College Bursary Guidelines, the disbursement of tuition, travel and accommodation allowances are intended to promote student attendance and ensure student academic performance. Paragraph 17 of the Guidelines states that allowances must be disbursed in tranches (portions) after thorough analysis of student attendance.

In order to ensure that the tuition, travel and accommodation allowances serve the purpose for which they are intended, it is imperative that the Department regulates the disbursement of these allowances to students.

NSFAS tuition, travel and accommodation disbursements can only be made to students if they have minimum of 80% attendance (including authorized absence and sickness) for classes. (however admission requirements outlined in the annexure A will be applicable where necessary)

If days or periods of sickness are occurring regularly and affecting progress in a course or if a lecturer suspects that sickness without a medical certificate may not be genuine, then the lecturer can call the student to an absence review meeting and if appropriate, stop NSFAS disbursements to the student. NSFAS disbursements to a student must be reviewed if any absence including authorized absence by a student lasts longer than one week.

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## 7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Student absenteeism must be captured weekly on the student system in order to generate reliable report for 80% attendance and reports should be submitted to Deputy Principal: Academic Division on a monthly basis.

(However admission requirements outlined in the annexure A will be applicable where necessary)

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENTS

### 8.1 College Staff

College staff is expected to:

- 8.1.1 Communicate clearly the Department's expectations that students are to be present in 100% of classes and to arrive before the start of class for them to be ready to learn. It is recommended that students sign a code of conduct document at the start of the academic year which includes a commitment to attend class and be punctual.
- 8.1.2 Consistently reinforce the message that poor attendance or punctuality is not acceptable and where it falls below an agreed level this will lead to action, including possible disciplinary action, cancellation of entry to a final examination or even exclusion.
- 8.1.3 Provide students with clear instructions on how to communicate their intended absence.
- 8.1.4 Accurately and fully complete each class register by the end of each session.
- 8.1.5 Ensure that when a student returns, they complete a Student Absence Form to be signed by the lecturer which is processed and filed with the class register. Attendance should only be 'authorized' for absence agreed in advance or for exceptional personal circumstances. Sickness without a medical/registered traditional healer's certificate is not authorised but must be marked as sickness on the Student Absence Form.
- 8.1.6 Engage any student who arrives 10 minutes after the stipulated starting time of the class and record this student on the attendance register as being late and follow this up with the student after the lesson is over. Lateness must be recorded in the register with an 'L'. Late students should not be excluded from the class unless it affects health and safety or disrupts the class.
- 8.1.7 Ensure that attendance and lateness is monitored weekly by a specific member of the college staff and the consequences as given below are followed.
- 8.1.8 Openly and regularly discuss the trends in attendance and lateness levels of a group or individual students in class sessions.
- 8.1.9 Directly address issues of attendance and punctuality in individual progress reviews as well as to set and monitor targets for improvement.
- 8.1.10 Regularly obtain attendance reports for each group and discuss trends and concerns with other lecturers, Senior lecturers, Head of departments, Campus Managers and Academic Services section.



## 8.2 Students

Students are expected to:

- 8.2.1 Ensure that they attend all classes and arrive before the start of the class properly equipped and prepared to participate in the session.
- 8.2.2 Inform their lecturer in person before the start of class or by an agreed contact route (way), if they have genuine reasons for lateness or absence.
- 8.2.3 Understand the expectations of attendance, the levels at which follow up action will happen and what the consequences will be.
- 8.2.4 Always schedule medical and other appointments out of College hours where possible.
- 8.2.5 Not take on work commitments that clash with scheduled class times at the college. Any absence for work will constitute unauthorised absence.
- 8.2.6 Commit themselves to complete outstanding work as homework from classes missed due to poor punctuality or attendance
- 8.2.7 It is the responsibility of the student to verify correctness of captured attendance

## 9. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

### 9.1 Availability

A copy of this policy and other relevant documentation should be made available on the College website.

### 9.2 Implementation and Review

- 9.2.1 This policy will be implemented the day on which it has been approved by the College Council
- 9.2.2 This policy will be subject to review after three years by College management to ensure its relevance.
- 9.2.3 Any recommended changes to this policy should be presented to the College Council for approval.