

Attendance and Programme Completion Policy

Last reviewed	January 2021
Next review due	January 2023
Responsible division	Programmes
Responsible director	Programme Operations Director
Applies to	Participants of all Ambition programmes
Exceptions	Where contracts differ from this policy, the contractual terms will apply
Audience	Participants and schools
Applicable laws	N/A
Other relevant regulations	N/A

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1. Objectives

This policy will provide clarity around programme completion expectations, including attendance and associated qualifications, where applicable. This policy also outlines the process if a participant's circumstances change and they are no longer able to attend an event, 1:1 development session or complete an independent learning task.

2. Background and Legal/Regulatory Framework

Our aim is for participants to complete programmes in their entirety, including gaining qualifications where applicable. Programmes are designed as a sequence of learning episodes to be accessed in order and alongside a cohort of peers.

Where the programme carries an NPQ, master's qualification or other qualification, we need to ensure the participant has accessed the learning required to obtain this qualification.

The policy provides: a fair and consistent basis for setting completion and attendance expectations; guidance on when and how issues of non-attendance should be addressed; consistency with the Department for Education criteria.

3. Policy and Procedures

Scope of policy

This policy will cover our programme completion expectations, including attendance at events. We define an event as a learning activity that takes place at a specific date and time, with three or more attendees. Other programme elements included in this policy include independent learning tasks and 1:1 development sessions.

Each programme will have specific requirements, often drawn from requirements of qualifications or contractual terms with the programme funders. This policy sets out our base expectations and rationale but will be superseded by contractual terms if there is a difference in requirements.

Guiding principles

- > We endeavour to communicate the dates and times for training events far in advance. This allows potential clashes to be mitigated at an early stage.
- > We understand that personal and school situations can arise unexpectedly that could prevent participants from attending a session or completing another programme element. To enable us to support participants we ask that participants contact their Programme team as soon as possible if they cannot attend a session or complete another element of their programme.
- > Each school or trust has signed a contract to confirm their support for a participant to complete the programme in full. Therefore, we do not recognise 'usual' school duties as a reason for non-attendance at an event or non-completion of a programme element.
- > We intend to adopt a consistent and transparent approach wherever possible.

Programme completion requirements

Participants are required to complete programme content, including independent learning tasks, assignments and 1:1 sessions as outlined in their programme documents (normally Canvas or Programme Handbook). Where participants have a concern about their ability to complete an independent learning task or attend a 1:1 session, they must contact their Programme team at their earliest opportunity. Such instances will be managed on a case by case basis with individuals.

Attendance requirements

The attendance requirement for each programme is specified in the information provided during orientation or in the programme handbook. This will specify the number of mandatory and optional events for the programme, and if there are specific arrangements for catch-up.

If a participant's circumstances change and this makes it difficult to meet these attendance requirements, participants must contact their Programme team at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for a deferral to a future cohort, or if this would not be suitable, a withdrawal from the programme.

Please see withdrawal and deferral policies for more information.

Exceptional circumstances

We recognise there are some instances where participants will be prevented by circumstance from attending a planned session or meeting a deadline for an independent task. Such instances may include but are not limited to: a safeguarding issue; accident or emergency in school; sudden illness or hospitalisation; bereavement; sudden illness of a family member; other extenuating circumstances in school; or any force majeure event. If this were to occur, participants must notify Programme teams or their Partner Provider as soon as they are reasonably able to do so. If they wish, they may ask a line manager to communicate with Programme teams or their Partner Provider on their behalf.

Communication with Programme teams

When a participant cannot attend an event, 1:1 session or complete an independent task, they are asked to email their Programme team or their Partner Provider at the earliest opportunity to discuss their absence. The Programme team will work with the participant to explore options that maximise their ability to benefit from all Programme content, including but not limited to attending an alternative session or receiving catch-up materials.

Late arrival or early departure

We recognise that unforeseen situations may cause a participant to arrive late to an event or require them to leave early. This could be travel disruptions, family, personal or school emergencies.

If this occurs, participants must contact their Programme team or their Partner Provider as soon as they are reasonably able to do so. This will allow us to minimise disruption for the participant and the rest of the group.

We would not seek to penalise a participant's attendance if the delay resulted from circumstances beyond their control. However, we expect participants take reasonable steps to plan their travel, taking account of the start and end times of sessions. In these cases, we look at the proportion of the content that has been missed and decide if there is a need to catch-up.

Catch-up

When a participant misses content, we will discuss the catch-up options with them individually. Where possible, participants may attend an alternative event where the same content is being delivered, subject to meeting any costs incurred by Ambition Institute. Alternatively, we may be able to share self-directed online materials to access the same content. Where the deadline for an independent task has been missed or a 1:1 session has been missed, catch-up options will be discussed with participants individually, considering their circumstances.

Non-attendance without notice

If a participant does not arrive at an event, 1:1 session or does not complete an independent task and has not notified their Programme team or their Partner Provider that they will not attend/complete, we will contact the participant via telephone with follow up via email if necessary. The follow up contact may be on the day of the event (by the Events Team) or in the following days, in line with the programme procedures. If Programme teams do not hear from the participant, we may contact the participant's school, speaking with their Line Manager/Headteacher to understand the participant reasons for non-attendance.

Charges relating to non-attendance or catch-up

We commit event costs in advance which are subject to cancellation charges. Therefore, we cannot recoup costs for non-attendance at events and attending an alternative event as a catch-up will incur additional costs. We reserve the right to pass these costs on to the participant, their school or trust.

Circumstances leading to deferral or withdrawal

If a participant does not attend multiple events or 1:1 sessions, does not complete multiple independent tasks, or does not take steps to catch-up missed content, Programme teams will contact the participant to discuss options for their continuation on the programme. These could include deferral to a subsequent cohort or withdrawal if it is not possible for participant to meet the attendance requirement for the programme.

Parental leave

If a participant is taking adoption, maternity, paternity, or shared parental leave during their programme, they are asked to contact their Programme team as soon as possible to discuss their options. The options available will depend on the length of the planned absence from school and from the programme with Ambition Institute.

Ambition Institute will do everything possible to support participants to successfully complete their programme where they are taking parental leave. Whilst each case will be considered individually, there may be some instances where it is not possible for a participant to complete their programme, due to the length of their planned absence. In these cases, deferral or withdrawal will be discussed with the participant.

Please see withdrawal and deferral policies for more information.

Financial implications of withdrawal/deferral

Please see Withdrawal and Deferral policies.

Force Majeure Policy

If it is unsafe or impossible to travel to an event due to any of the circumstances listed below, participants must contact their Programme team or Partner Provider at their earliest convenience:

- > Terrorism
- > Extreme weather
- > Domestic disaster
- > Political events i.e. demonstrations, teacher strikes
- > Traffic incidents or major road closures
- > Any other extreme event outside the control of the Participant or Ambition Institute

Ambition Institute will notify you if events are affected by the scenarios listed above. If an event is affected, then Ambition Institute will follow up with affected participants to explain the catch-up option(s) available.

Religious and Cultural Requirements

Ambition Institute understands that participants' religious or cultural needs may prevent them from participating in events. Ambition Institute will consider participants' specific requirements, treating all participants equally and providing the same opportunities to partake in programme learning. Where possible events will not clash with religious festivals. Ambition Institute will work with venue partners to provide a prayer space at full day events and cater for all special dietary requirements. We ask that participants please notify their Programme team if they require access to a prayer space during events.

4. Links to Other Policies

Other policies referenced here include:

- > [Withdrawal Policy](#)
- > [Deferral and NPQ Extension Policy](#)

5. Appendix: Programme-specific requirements

Programme Name	Curriculum for Senior Leaders
Mandatory events	All events are mandatory over the 18 months. 9 Development Days and 16 Peer Learning Groups.
Optional Events	
Attendance requirement	Attendance at all events is mandatory.
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	We do not routinely chase non-attendance, unless this becomes a pattern. We may chase for key events, as agreed by the PL and PS BP.
Catch-up Options	Where possible, PLGs are recorded and shared on Canvas. Development Day content is made available on Canvas following events.
Late arrival/early departure	Where participants notify us in advanced of a planned late arrival/early departure, we offer alternative events/respond case by case, as directed by the PL.
Dispensations	
Point of contact	curriculumleaders@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Curriculum Specialists (bulk buy)
Mandatory events	All events are mandatory over the 18 months. 18-month programme – 9 Development Days and 9 Peer Learning Groups 12-month programme – 6 Development Days and 6 Peer Learning Groups
Optional Events	
Attendance requirement	Attendance at all events is mandatory
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	We do not routinely chase non-attendance, unless this becomes a pattern. We may chase for key events, as agreed by the PL and PS BP or as requested by the Trust/school.
Catch-up Options	Where possible, PLGs are recorded and shared on Canvas. Development Day content is made available on Canvas following events.
Late arrival/early departure	Where participants notify us in advanced of a planned late arrival/early departure, we offer alternative events/respond case by case, as directed by the PL
Dispensations	
Point of contact	curriculumspecialists@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Early Career Framework
Mandatory events	All events are mandatory Early roll out: 2 x <u>Lead Online Induction sessions</u> 1 x Mentor <u>Online Induction session</u> 4x Mentor - <u>Peer Learning Groups</u> - 2 per year 12x ECT – <u>Sense Making Clinics</u> - 6 per year 1x ECT <u>Mid-point Conference</u> - 2 nd year only Expansion roll out: 2x Mentor - <u>Peer Learning Groups</u> 6x ECT – <u>Sense Making Clinics</u>

	National roll out: 1x Mentor & Lead - Induction Conference – start of first year 1x ECT - Induction Conference – start of first year 4x Mentor - Peer Learning Groups (PLGs) – 2 per year 12x ECT – Sense Making Clinics (SMCs) – 6 per year 1x ECT - Mid-point Conference – start of 2 nd year
Optional Events	
Attendance requirement	Attendance at all events is mandatory
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Attendance reports are sent on a weekly basis to ECF Leads and DP Leads. We ask Partners to follow up with non-attendees.
Catch-up Options	During covid we have created additional Steplab courses, with recorded versions of live sessions, that participants can use to catch up. In extenuating circumstances, the participant may ask to be reassigned to a later session.
Late arrival/early departure	N/A
Dispensations	N/A
Point of contact	ECTs – ect@ambition.org.uk Mentors – ectmentors@ambition.org.uk ECF Leads – ecflead@ambition.org.uk Visiting Fellows – ecfvisitingfellows@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Executive Leaders
Mandatory events	Residential 1, Residential 2, Residential 3, Online modules, School visit
Optional Events	
Attendance requirement	100% completion of programme material. At least 80% at time of delivery and no more than 20% in catch up.
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Residential: offer place on an alternative cohort's residential. If the participant is unable to attend this or it is not an option, send them the catch-up materials. Online event: If a participant does not complete a mandatory online event, the Programme team will contact them and ensure that they complete it.
Catch-up Options	Residential: If participant is unable to attend an alternative residential in place of the one they missed, the Programme team will share the materials from the residential with them.
Late arrival/early departure	N/A
Dispensations	N/A
Point of contact	Executive.leaders@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Expert Middle Leaders
Mandatory events	4 day Summer residential, 3 day mid-point residential, 7 development days, 13 peer learning groups, 8 virtual twilights, 5 Academic Tutoring Sessions
Optional Events	9 Coaching sessions – Can opt out of coaching at start of programme but if opting in expected to attend all 9 sessions

Attendance requirement	<p>Expectation is set for attendance at all events however this is not part of graduation requirement or to pass through to Year 2.</p> <p>If participant is due to complete an NPQ as part of the programme in Year 2, they must engage with 100% of content. This can be made up of 80% live attendance, and 20% catch up materials.</p>
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	<p>Residential: At launch events, participants cannot start the programme if they cannot attend.</p> <p>Mid-point event: If there is no show without prior authorised absence, participant will be asked why they did not attend and without good reason will be asked to leave the course.</p> <p>If a request is made prior, participant is asked to complete a form that is then signed off/approved by Programme Leader. Participant will then be sent catch up materials.</p> <p>Development day: If contacted to say cannot attend, they will be offered to an alternative session.</p> <p>We will make phone calls on the day if possible to participants we were expecting to attend, then follow up by e-mail. Workbooks shared and participants expected to complete.</p> <p>Peer Learning Group/Virtual Twilight: Alternative session offered in the first instance. If not, workbooks and recording of sessions shared via e-mail to those who did not attend. These are stored on canvas.</p>
Catch-up Options	<p>Offered alternative events to attend for development days, virtual twilights and peer learning groups if possible.</p> <p>Otherwise sent recorded online sessions for PLG and VT as well as workbooks to complete in their own time.</p>
Late arrival/early departure	Pre-approved only.
Dispensations	
Point of contact	<p>Eml@ambition.org.uk</p> <p>Eml2020@ambition.org.uk</p>

Programme Name	Future Leaders
Mandatory events	4 x Residentials, 4 x Cohort Weekends, 1x Headship Weekend, 3x Regional Learning Days 1x Study Tour
Optional Events	N/A
Attendance requirement	100% attendance at all mandatory events
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Residential: The Programme team will call participants who do not attend (excluding those who notified us in advance that they would not attend).

Catch-up Options	Residentials: If the non-attendance is pre-approved (for exceptional circumstances only), catch up work will be provided with catch up content from the event such as the workbook and any other materials provided by Learning Design. This will be available on Canvas.
Late arrival/early departure	Pre-approved only
Dispensations	If applicable. E.g. attendance assigned for Ofsted, grace periods, parental leave, bereavement, illness
Point of contact	futureleaders@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Headship (inc. NPQH)
Mandatory events	Old design: 3 x Residentials, 2 x Module Days New Design: 3 x Residentials, 7 x Virtual Twilights
Optional Events	N/A
Attendance requirement	100% attendance at all mandatory events
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Residential: Events leads call participants who do not attend (excluding those who notified us in advance that they would not attend). VTs: If a participant does not attend a VT PS team call the participant the next day
Catch-up Options	Residentials: If the non-attendance is pre-approved (for exceptional circumstances only), the participant can attend the missed event with the next cohort (e.g if a July 20 participant misses Residential 2, they can attend Residential 2 with the Nov 20 cohort). If a participant cannot attend an alternative event, they will be provided with catch up content from the event such as the workbook and any other materials provided by Learning Design. VTs: If the non-attendance is pre-approved (for exceptional circumstances only), the participant can attend an alternative session with another VT group in their cohort. If a participant cannot attend an alternative session, they will be provided with catch up content from the event such as the workbook and any other materials provided by Learning Design.
Late arrival/early departure	Pre-approved only
Dispensations	If applicable. Eg attendance assigned for Ofsted, grace periods and parental leave, bereavement, illness
Point of contact	Headship@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	NPQ Alliance Programmes
Mandatory events	NPQML and NPQH: all 6 sessions which form the core of the relevant NPQ curricula. NPQSL: all 9 sessions which form the core of the relevant NPQ curriculum.
Optional Events	N/A
Attendance requirement	Participants cannot miss more than 2 sessions and must engage with a suitable catch-up option for all sessions which they do miss.

Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Not applicable (this is led by the Partner who must offer a suitable alternative to the participant, tracking attendance/engagement with this – see below).
Catch-up Options	To be decided by the Partner.
Late arrival/early departure	N/A
Dispensations	Not applicable
Point of contact	NPQ@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Master's in Expert Teaching
Mandatory events	Module conferences: 2-day events held at the start of each module. There are 6 modules over the 2-year programme. Sense making clinics: held in the weeks following each module conference. Each participant attends one SMC per module.
Optional Events	N/A
Attendance requirement	There is no formal attendance requirement for the programme. Participants are strongly advised to attend all events, as they are designed to support their learning on the programme.
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Conferences: The Programme team will contact participants who did not attend and not let us know why.
Catch-up Options	There are no alternative dates for conferences, as they are a whole cohort event. Materials and recordings are uploaded to Canvas after the event.
Late arrival/early departure	N/A
Dispensations	
Point of contact	masters@ambition.org.uk

Programme Name	Teacher Education Fellows
Mandatory events	2-day face to face/virtual conferences, with online webinars and independent tasks in between. Includes school visits.
Optional Events	
Attendance requirements	There is no formal attendance requirement for the programme, although participants are strongly advised to attend all events.
Follow-up procedure for non-attendance	Participants are all from the same trust, so we will always know why an individual hasn't attended. Events lead will follow up if not.
Catch-up Options	There are no alternative dates for conferences, as they are a whole cohort event. Materials are uploaded to Canvas after the event.
Late arrival/early departure	
Dispensations	
Point of contact	Fellowshippupport@ambition.org.uk

Trust Leaders:

There is no attendance requirement for Trust Leaders as they are not awarded a pass/fail at the end of the programme.