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Absence Procedure

This policy aims to enable us as a provider to exercise our duty of care and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that our trainees pursue their studies with diligence and avail themselves of the educational opportunities made available. It recognises that, in an intensive, one-year course, **absence, for whatever reason, leads to missed learning opportunities which may impact on the ability to provide evidence relating to the successful demonstration of the Teachers’ Standards** at the end of the course. It is, therefore, expected that a trainee will be regular and punctual in attendance at all centre and school-based sessions prescribed by the course.

This policy encompasses, with minor adaptions, approaches to the management of absence commonly used in the teaching profession.

Tracking of Absence

The JTSCITT monitors the extent of absence and patterns of absence for each trainee. We do this to:

* Track the impact on consistent and progressive learning
* Identify where trainees may be more at risk of failing to meet the teacher standards due to missed learning or teaching experience
* Monitor the impact on our partner schools
* Monitor the impact on students and learning in partner schools
* Raise a Cause for Concern with a trainee

**Cause for Concern**

The following are examples of a cause for concern and will initiate further actions:

* Repetitive absence patterns (e.g., days of the week or at time of particular activity)
* Repetitive absence patterns across a term/half term (e.g., increased absence towards the end of a term)
* Any unexplained absence
* Attendance that falls below 95% during the SCITT training programme
* Absence that indicates a disability or long term medical health condition that may require reasonable adjustments or additional support

The JTSCITT Administrator will monitor absence weekly and notify SCITT Programme Leads where any of the points above occur.

Where a trainees’ attendance is a cause for concern, in agreement with the SCITT Director, the SCITT Programme Leader will follow the process of:

Monitoring Absence.

Discuss the circumstances of the absence with the trainee to establish the circumstances for absences and, where appropriate investigate, the causes for absence.

If ‘yes’, the percentage returns to above 95% and there are no concerning patterns of absence

If ‘no’, the percentage remains to below 95% or there are concerning patterns of absence

Are any absences to be authorised or discountable from the total percentage of absence? See below for examples of discountable absences.

If absences are related to a trainee’s ability to teach or physical requirements of the occupation, consider the possible need/recommendation for a referral to Corazon Health

Attendance will continue to be tracked. If absence continues to be a cause for concern due to subsequent incidences of absence during the next 4 term-time weeks, a trainee will receive formal written notification that they are failing to meet the [Teachers’ Standards part 2](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a750668ed915d3c7d529cad/Teachers_standard_information.pdf)

Communicate in writing the reason for the cause for concern and notification that the trainee may be at risk of requiring a course extension or failure to meet [Teachers’ Standards part 2](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a750668ed915d3c7d529cad/Teachers_standard_information.pdf)

Discountable Absences

Examples of discountable absences include pregnancy-related sickness, some disability-related absence, official religious holidays and other compassionate grounds. This list is not exhaustive, and all final decisions will be made by the SCITT Director, after seeking HR advice from JTMAT, if required.

Continued and Persistent Absence

Where a trainee’s absence falls below 80% either within a single term or over the duration of the programme a trainee will receive formal written warning that they are failing to meet the [Teachers’ Standards part 2](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a750668ed915d3c7d529cad/Teachers_standard_information.pdf) and that their place on the SCITT Programme is at risk of being revoked. A panel made up of 3 members of the SCITT Executive Board will be formed and a trainee’s removal from the SCITT Programme will be considered and may be withdrawn.

**Course Extensions**

Where a trainee’s absence has fallen below the expectations of the JT SCITT, and/or the trainee has spent insufficient time on placement and is at risk of not providing sufficient evidence of meeting the Teacher Standards, the SCITT Programme Lead may decide to extend the Home School placement and training programme by 2 weeks at the end of the programme and further into the Autumn Term (without bursary payments for Secondary Trainees), delaying QTS which may impact upon a trainee’s employment.

Trainees will be notified if they require an extension at least four weeks prior to the original end date of the programme.

1. Notification of Absence – Trainee Expectations:

## The contact for all matters to do with SCITT absence is Di Whiting [di.whiting@jtmat.co.uk](mailto:di.whiting@jtmat.co.uk) and via telephone by calling 01283 247813.

## Trainees are responsible for notifying JTSCITT of any planned or unplanned absence from the course, whether the absence relates to school placement or the professional studies programme.

## A trainee must notify the JTSCITT no later than 7.45am on the first day of their absence and the specific reasons:

## By calling Di Whiting and leaving an answer phone message if appropriate.

## Contacting designated Programme Leader through email and/or phone

## A trainee must notify their placement school:

## Contacting school-based mentor via email and/or phone.

## By contacting the school based professional mentor via email and/or phone.

## Continued Absence - Trainees must report continued absence on all subsequent days of any period of absence, unless signed off for a period of time with a doctor’s note, or extenuating circumstances that have been discussed and agreed with the SCITT Programme Lead.

## During periods of continued absence the trainee should maintain regular contact on at least a weekly basis with their Programme Lead and Placement School, unless there is some compelling reason why this is impractical or undesirable.

Notification of Absence – School Expectations

1.3 A **placement school must** contact the SCITT if a trainee does not attend a placement day and they have not had any contact from the trainee.

1.4 Trainees should have already submitted lesson plans/resources 48 hours in advance to their mentors as an expectation of the SCITT programmes. For the first 2 days of absence, schools might ask for trainees to communicate the intended next steps in learning for the lessons that they were due to deliver on the day/s of absence, to ensure the continuity and sequence of learning for students. We encourage trainees to support with this for the benefit of student’s learning.

1. Unexplained absence

Trainees will be asked for the contact details of a Named Representative who may be contacted in the event of unexplained trainee absence. If the trainee themselves cannot be contacted, the Named Representative may be contacted when a trainee is absent, without explanation. When a trainee is absent without authorisation and a Fit for Work certificate has not been provided, the following procedure will be followed:

* Both the trainee and the named representative will be contacted.
* The trainee will be asked to provide an explanation and/or attend a meeting with the SCITT Director.
* If after ten working days the **trainee has not responded to communications**, the JTSCITT will inform the trainee in writing that their studies have been suspended. Student Finance England will be informed accordingly. 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.

1. Sickness Absence

**Self-certificated absence**

* 1. For **all** absences a trainee is required to complete the self-certification of absence form (appendix 1) and email it to Di Whiting and their respective Programme Leader.

**Medically statemented sickness**

* 1. 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 provider as soon as practicable, and a record of return-to-work meeting form (appendix 2) must be completed by the SCITT Programme Lead or Professional Mentor (Primary). If the trainee remains ill when the note expires, further medical evidence will be required.
  2. 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. If the trainee is in receipt of finance from Student 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.
  3. If a trainee is subject to an ongoing illness or long term medical condition , they should submit a medical certificate which explains the extent of the illness and the likely effect on their progress through the course before the 15 working day deadline. The situation will be referred to the provider to determine whether the trainee should be considered for deferral on medical grounds.

## Periods of Convalescence (Recovery from an illness)

* 1. The nature of the course does not easily allow for light/alternative duties or other ways of reducing the workload. However, the provider will ensure that on return to the course, a trainee has a few days’ respite to become fully fit before carrying out important assessments relating to the progress of the trainee on programme.
  2. When a trainee is returning to work after an extended period of absence, JTSCITT, working in agreement with the trainee, may make a referral to Corazon Health, our chosen health assessment partner, for a confidential and independent Occupational Health assessment to seek advice on recommendations for what reasonable adjustments could be made to support the trainee.

1. Maternity and Adoption Leave
   1. General: The nature of this one- year course means statutory maternity leave will most likely result in a course deferral or extension. The provider 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 a second 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 SFE.
   2. 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.
   3. The trainee should notify the provider 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.
   4. 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.
   5. Maternity leave should not normally be taken earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC.
   6. When maternity leave begins, the provider will write to the trainee to formally suspend the trainee’s studies, informing the Student Finance England (SFE) through a change of Circumstances (COC) where required and record the trainee as dormant on the DMS.
   7. The trainee will inform the provider of the date of birth of the child.
   8. The trainee may not return to study less than two weeks after the birth of the child.
   9. Thereafter, the trainee should discuss with the provider when she intends to return to study and a timeframe for the completion of the course be agreed.
   10. Where a trainee does not make contact with the provider, the provider may write to the trainee no earlier than 21 days before the anniversary of the commencement of maternity leave, asking her to confirm the date of birth and her intention to return to work. The trainee or her representative must respond within 14 days of receiving the request. If there is no response, the provider will withdraw the trainee from the course.
   11. 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.
   12. 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, the provider has the right to request 25% of the total tuition fees direct from the trainee.
2. Paternity Leave
   1. For paternity leave the provider will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible to allow for this within the programme. With the nature of this one-year course, this does mean a short period of extension may need to be applied at the end of the course to enable the trainee to demonstrate that they have met the Teachers’ Standards and 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 7.2 below.
3. Medical Appointments
   1. A trainee should inform the provider of any appointments for which he/she needs 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.
   2. Other routine medical appointments should not be made during the working day.
4. Leave of Absence
   1. **Placement schools** should not agree to students taking time out of their placement without a discussion with the JTSCIT team
   2. Leave of absence for other reasons may be granted by the SCITT Director or Programme Leader acting on behalf of the provider.
   3. For absences longer than two consecutive days, or for a cumulative total of more than five days, the request will require additional approval. It is expected that an application will be made for leave of absence, in writing to their respective Programme Leader and SCITT Director, explaining the reasons for their absence, at least two working days before the absence occurs.

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. **In all circumstances**, if authorisation is granted, **trainees must inform their placement school of authorised absence** in advance of the date. Trainees are expected to communicate the sequence of learning and next steps in learning for students with their placement school, so that classes are not disadvantaged by authorised absence.

* 1. **Graduation ceremonies**: Absence of one day to attend a graduation ceremony for a first degree will be granted. Any requests for travelling time must be agreed in advance with the SCITT Programme Leader.
  2. **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.
  3. **Visits to schools before application/interview**: The JT SCITT support trainees to visit a school prior to applying for a post. We encourage trainees to prioritise meeting their minimum number of teaching hours per week and to minimise disruption to learning for pupils and impact on the workload of colleagues in school. JT SCITT will consider requests to attend a school during an Intensive Training and Practice (ITaP) week or training sessions.

1. Compassionate Leave
   1. In the event of such emergencies as bereavement, serious accident or illness of an immediate family member/dependant, up to three working days will be allowed for the death of a father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister and up to five working days leave on the death of a husband, wife or partner. JTSCITT will consider these circumstances on an individual basis and aim to support the trainee with their personal situation.
   2. Requests for additional compassionate leave, or in the case of a cumulative total of more than ten working days, must be referred to the SCITT Director.
2. Private and Personal

Trainees are advised to contact their Programme Lead and the JTSCTT administrator via email at the earliest opportunity to discuss their circumstances and needs.

* 1. 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.
  2. **Holidays**: Trainees not entitled to holiday leave during term time. The intensive nature of the course means that holidays, including those booked before commencement of the course, should not be undertaken.
  3. **Jury Duty**: Where possible, trainees are encouraged to request to defer this duty to minimise the impact on their training and prevent a potential 2-week extension at the end of the programme.
  4. If a provider wishes to allow holiday leave, for example to attend a family wedding, it should be noted that Student Finance England will be informed and an adjustment to any maintenance loans may follow.

**Appendix 1** - Self-certification of absence form

**Self-Certification of Sickness**

**Trainee’s Declaration:** Complete this form to cover days 1 to 7 of your sickness/injury absence, unless covered by a medical note (this includes weekends, bank holidays and non-working days), then sign and return to Di Whiting ([di.whiting@jtmat.co.uk](mailto:di.whiting@jtmat.co.uk)).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To be completed by the Trainee:** | |
| Name: |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Period of absence covered by this declaration:** | | | |
| First Day of Absence: |  | Last Day of Absence: |  |
| Total number of days absent to nearest half day (including Saturdays and Sundays) | | |  |
| **Reason for your absence:** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Details of treatment received by GP/Hospital/Health Specialist:** (if applicable) | | | |
|  | | | |
| **Related Information:** |  |  |  |
| Do you consider this absence to be disability related? Yes/No (\*please delete one)  If yes, please provide details below: | | | |
| Was the absence as a result of an accident at work? Yes/No (\*please delete one)  If yes, please provide details below: | | | |
|  | | | |
| Was the absence pregnancy related? Yes/No (\*please delete one)  If yes, please provide details below: | | | |
|  | | | |
| I declare that the information I have given is correct and to the best of my knowledge.  I understand that knowingly giving false certification is a disciplinary offence and  any such instances may result in disciplinary action being taken against me not excluding dismissal. | | | |
| Signed: |  | Date: |  |

**Appendix 2** – Return to work meeting record

**Return to Work Discussion Form**

**Personal details:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** |  | **Placement School** |  |
| **Phase** |  | **Subject (Secondary)** |  |

**Details of most recent absence:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Start date of absence** |  | **Last date of absence** |  |
| **Total calendar days** |  | **Reason** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Start Date** | **Last Date** | **Total calendar days** | **Reason** | **Absence Discounted** |
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**Details of sickness absences during the duration of the SCITT programme:**

**Return to work discussion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Discussion point** | **Please circle** | **Notes** |
| Did the employee report the absence in accordance with the process? | Yes / No |  |
| Did the employee attend an appointment with their GP/Health Specialist? | Yes / No |  |
| Did the employee provide Fit Note/s in accordance with the policy? | Yes / No |  |
| Is the employee fit to return to work? | Yes / No |  |
| Did the GP recommend any adjustments to aid the RTW? | Yes / No |  |
| Will these adjustments be implemented? | Yes / No |  |
| Do other adjustments need to be implemented to support the employee? | Yes / No |  |
| Are there any work related factors that have impacted on this absence? | Yes / No |  |
| Does the employee have a disability? | Yes / No |  |
| Does the employee need to be referred to Occupational Health? | Yes / No |  |
| Is this absence discountable? | Yes / No |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Trainee signature |  | Date |  |
| SCITT Lead signature |  | Date |  |