

Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

1.0 Context and purpose

- 1.1 There is clear evidence¹ to show that students who attend their timetabled sessions and engage with the learning resources available to them tend to achieve better results and therefore the University is committed to helping students engage and achieve the best possible outcomes from their studies
- 1.2 The Student Attendance and Engagement policy is intended to highlight the processes and monitoring in place to encourage and enable attendance with scheduled learning sessions. Where there are barriers to attendance, this policy will assist, through tracking non-attendance, in identifying the issues students are facing, and working with them and staff to resolve the issues faced.
- 1.3 The purpose of the attendance policy is to:
- articulate the University's expectations with respect to engagement with timetabled on-campus teaching
 - outline expectations around student online engagement
 - explain action taken when the expectations are not met
 - ensures that the University can meet the requirements of;
 - UKVI relating to sponsored students
 - ESFA apprenticeships
- 1.4 This policy applies to students studying taught courses at one of the University's campuses in the UK. The policy also applies to Postgraduate research students. It does not apply to students studying for one of the University's awards at collaborative partner institutions in the UK or overseas, where the partner institution attendance policy applies.

2.0 Principles

- 2.1 There are four principles that underpin the student attendance policy:
- (i) Student Attendance and Engagement policy applies to all students enrolled on a course at the University who are required to attend scheduled learning sessions. Students will be expected to reside in a location that enables them to comply fully with the requirements of the course they are enrolled onto.
- (ii) A timetable normally details the scheduled taught learning activities. The University expects students to attend scheduled learning sessions within their timetable associated with each module or course that they have elected to pursue. A session includes, but is not limited, to lectures, seminars, practical classes, laboratories, studios, tutorials, examinations, and other activities which students are expected to attend.

¹ Bijsmana & Schakel (2018) The impact of attendance on first-year study success in problem-based learning. *High Educ* **76**, 865–881[<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0243-4>]; Lukkarienen et al (2016) Relationship between Class Attendance and Student Performance *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* **228**, 341-347 [<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.07.051>.]

- (iii) Some scheduled learning sessions (e.g. laboratory sessions, studio sessions, workshops) may be mandatory due to Professional Body (PSRB) requirements. Schools will inform students, as part of the course handbook, if there are any enhanced attendance requirements.
- (iv) Attendance and engagement monitoring is supportive. This means that the University will contact students about their attendance and offer to help and/or encourage them to attend, if course attendance expectations have not been met.

3.0 The student attendance process

3.1 We are keen to support students to maximise their potential, and by monitoring attendance and engagement we are able to quickly spot patterns of attendance and work with students to help them overcome issues that may hinder their ability to be successful in their studies. We will monitor a range of engagement points; scheduled sessions (timetable), MSTeams sessions (timetable), campus gate data and Moodle access.

3.2 To enable this approach:

- a) The formal attendance monitoring process for all students is based on attendance records over a two-week interval. If over that two-week period a student has not met the monitoring threshold – 60% of scheduled activities - then that student will be contacted by email to discuss their attendance record and to explore the reasons for non-attendance.
- b) All students are expected to record their attendance by scanning their student card when they enter all scheduled learning sessions. Students can scan into a session 20 minutes before and after the session finishes.
- c) For scheduled learning sessions, a student will only be considered to have been in attendance if their card is scanned against, and recognised by, the readers located in each teaching room. Where sessions are in a room without a card reader, the lecturer will ensure attendance is captured in the system.
- d) Where MS Teams online sessions are scheduled, the attendance will be captured and uploaded into the attendance monitoring system.
- e) Attendance will also be monitored through data captured at campus gates and access to module Moodle sites.
- f) Attendance will only be considered when it is capable of being monitored. If, for example, a card reader not working, and attendance cannot be captured in another way, then this will not count against a student's attendance. Similarly, if extreme weather leads to the cancellation of an event, then attendance will not be monitored and will not count towards the student attendance record.
- g) A student is required to scan **using their own Student ID card only**. If a student scans using someone else's student card the actions of both the card holder and the student who scanned the card will be considered under the University's Disciplinary Procedure. Disciplinary action may be taken against students found to have fraudulently recorded their own or other students' attendance. Where a student is enrolled on a course leading directly (or partially) to a professional

qualification or the right to practice a particular profession, they may also be referred under the University's Fitness to Practise procedures.

- h) If a student does not scan their card at a scheduled learning session, they will be recorded as not attending. Students must check their attendance record through MySRS regularly to ensure that their attendance is being accurately recorded.

3.3 Students unable to attend campus

We recognise that some students will have exemptions in place, usually through personalised learning agreements or other formal arrangements, that take into account personal circumstances affecting their ability to attend scheduled learning on campus. Absences at such sessions on campus will be taken into account when monitoring attendance for these students

3.4 Student Route Visa holders

International students who have a student route visa will be expected to follow the same processes as identified in section 3.2 above.

3.4.1 Courses below degree-level:

Student Route Visa holders on courses below degree-level are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours of classroom-based study per week. Attendance will be monitored over a four-week interval. If over that four-week period a student has not met the monitoring threshold – 85% of scheduled activities – then that student will be contacted by email to discuss their attendance.

3.5 Apprenticeships

The University, through the Academic Partnership Unit, advises apprentice employers of any missed sessions, as students are salaried employees on employer sourced training. An employer is notified of any missed sessions

- 3.5.1 Attendance data is part of the tripartite review, expectations on attendance are set out from the employer, apprentice and BCU in the commitment statement signed prior to the apprentice training start date. Support is available to manage learning hours and provide flexibility as felt appropriate in consultation with university and employer. All individual apprentice, actual learning hours must be recorded and returned on APTEM - this is a ESFA requirement for funding and audit.

3.6 Taught Students Dissertation Periods

Engagement for students who are studying for a dissertation only, with no taught elements, will be based on the student's regular meetings with their dissertation supervisor which are expected to be recorded monthly as a minimum. For all other taught session's students will be expected to attend all taught sessions.

3.7 Postgraduate Research Requirements

For students who are enrolled on postgraduate research courses engagement will be monitored via supervisor meetings which are expected to be recorded on a monthly basis. It is the responsibility of students to ensure the supervisory meetings are recorded and logged on the appropriate systems.

3.8 Non-Standard Teaching Periods

During teaching periods where alternative teaching and learning activities take place e.g. work placements, field trips, study abroad, students will be required to maintain engagement with the University on a monthly basis as minimum. This may be in person, via email, virtual meetings etc.

4.0 Outcomes from student attendance monitoring

4.1 Students are expected to meet the attendance requirements of the course of study – a monitoring threshold of 60% attendance at scheduled activities over a two-week period - and any additional/higher attendance requirements (e.g. those specified by PSRBs and requirements set out in repeat year learning agreements).

This process will require:

- (i) Student attendance to be reviewed by a student's home School from the start of the course.
- (ii) All notifications to students required by this policy will be sent, in the first instance, to the student's official University e-mail address. Students will be provided with clear instructions as to how to contact the School to discuss any issues which may affect attendance.
- (iii) The Student Attendance and Engagement Policy comprises a three-stage approach to monitoring instances of poor attendance;

Stage 1 – 'Early notification' sent from Head of School

Stage 2 – "Cause for Concern" sent from PVC Dean of Faculty

Stage 3 – "Notice of Withdrawal" sent from Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

- (iv) If a student has no record of attendance over any 2-week period, an email will be sent to the student highlighting the situation and providing contact points for the student to respond to the University. If no response is forthcoming, the University will consider withdrawing the student.
- (v) The University will take appropriate action against a student who does not engage with the escalation process and whose attendance does not improve. In exceptional cases the University may withdraw a student.

Before withdrawal will be considered the University will ensure that a student has

been given sufficient notice to improve attendance and that steps have been taken by the School to discuss attendance and put in place proportionate and reasonable support measures to assist the student to attend.

The Stage 3 notice includes an opportunity to contest the intention to permanently withdraw. An appeal made to the contact email in the notice within a period of 5 working days will be reviewed and a decision made 5 days after the appeal window ends.

4.2 Student Route Visa holders

For international students who have a student route visa the attendance monitoring process will be as outlined above (4.1), however they may need to adhere to additional attendance requirements in order that the University can fulfil its obligations as Sponsor. As student attendance relates to the student's visa, the University may withdraw Visa- holding students who do not meet the required attendance thresholds.

4.2.1 International students who have been issued a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) and are engaging with their studies, but who may not yet have fully enrolled, will also be attendance monitored according to the same three-stage approach.

4.2.2 The University reserves the right to issue a Stage 3 notice to any student holding a Student Route Visa who has no history of attendance within any 2-week monitoring period.

5.0 Appeal process

The Stage 3 notice includes an opportunity to appeal the proposed decision to permanently withdraw within a period of 5 working days from date issued by following the instructions in the notice.

If the student does not appeal, or their request to review the intention to withdraw is unsuccessful, the student will be permanently withdrawn in the student record system by Academic Registry.

5.1 If, after following the process in section 5.0, students wish to formally appeal the University's decision to withdraw following a Stage 3 outcome, the Student Complaints Procedure should be followed.

5.2 Student Route Visa holders

For student's subject to immigration control, the ability to appeal a decision is the same as in section 5.0 above, however, the University's UKVI Compliance Team will be notified and will report the withdrawal of Student Visa sponsorship to the Home Office.

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