

Student Attendance and Engagement Policy for Foundation (2022)

Rationale

1. Whilst the University's Foundation courses are designed to encourage and support independent learning, it is essential that students demonstrate effective engagement with the course throughout their studies. All students are expected to demonstrate attendance consistent with full engagement with a full-time course of study. This forms part of the contract between the student and the University, and students should ensure that they are familiar with all course expectations.
2. In particular, the development of effective skills in collaborative working is key to successful engagement; team working forms an essential element within many units, whereby students are dependent on the input from their fellow team members. In addition, a number of units introduce new material which requires students' involvement and engagement, and even those units which can be developed off-site or use independent learning nonetheless have integral elements of tutorial monitoring, feedback and development.
3. Similarly, the University has a duty of care to its students and has a responsibility to ensure their wellbeing. Patterns of attendance which may indicate causes for concern will always be investigated in line with this policy. It should also be noted that overseas students who require a Student Route Visa to study in the UK may be required to leave the country if they do not meet the attendance requirements of the University. It should further be noted that Student Route Visa holders on Foundation courses are required to be timetabled for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Expectations

4. The following arrangements apply:
 - i) Student attendance will be recorded formally for all tutorials (individual or group) and seminars.
 - ii) In addition, all courses will maintain a register of attendance at scheduled sessions. This does not include independent study time within the studios or workshops, but only refers to all formal taught and timetabled sessions. Where activity is due to take place off-site, arrangements will be made for participation in this activity to be monitored and recorded.
 - iii) An assessment submission will constitute attendance, even where no other sessions are scheduled for that day.
5. In the event of illness, a student should contact the Academic Officer (Foundation) and notify them of his/her absence. Self-certification is permitted for up to one week of illness, after which time a doctor's note is required. While the University is sympathetic to students who are ill during the course of their studies, an extended period of absence through illness may result in the student being

required to intermit their studies to give them the best opportunity of securing the necessary learning. Under all circumstances, any student who is absent through illness must remain in touch with the University, or their absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Monitoring process

6. The University has a process for monitoring absence which ensures that students are notified progressively if their engagement is inconsistent with the expectations of full-time study, before ultimately leading to a termination of studies.
7. The Academic Officer (Foundation) will review all student registers at the end of each four-week period of each term (ie the end of weeks 4, 8, 12, 16 as appropriate) and inform the Course Leader where attendance letters are required. A student is required to maintain an attendance record of at least 85% of scheduled sessions, as described above, during each four-week period. The Academic Officer (Foundation) will retain oversight of this process, to ensure compliance.
8. If a student has an attendance record which does not meet these minimum expectations during this four-week time period, they will receive a warning from the Course Leader that their place on the course is at risk due to poor attendance.
9. This warning will be sent by email to the student's University email account; and a printed letter will be sent to their term-time correspondence address. In the event that a student has an outstanding debt to the University and has been barred from using services, and hence has their email account suspended, this notification will be sent by printed letter only. This may result in some students receiving notification later than would have been the case had they not been in debt to the University, or otherwise subject to disciplinary action.
10. If a student falls short of the minimum required attendance rate on a second occasion during the academic year, they will receive a second warning from the Course Leader. This warning will be sent by email to the student's University email account; and a printed letter will be sent to their term-time correspondence address. In the event that a student has an outstanding debt to the University and has been barred from using services, and hence has their email account suspended, this notification will be sent by printed letter only. This may result in some students receiving notification later than would have been the case had they not been in debt to the University, or otherwise subject to disciplinary action. The student is required to attend a formal "attendance" tutorial with their Stage 1 Tutor (should this second warning occur before Stage 1 Assessment) or Specialism Tutor (should it occur after Stage 1 Assessment). For Overseas students, it will include a reminder that failure to meet attendance requirements may result in the student being required to leave the country.
11. If a student falls short of the minimum attendance requirement for a third time during the academic year, the Course Leader will schedule a final "attendance" tutorial and discuss the serious situation with the student. The Course Leader may then refer the matter to the Academic Lead on Standards and Quality (ALSQ) with the recommendation that the student's studies be terminated on the grounds of engagement inconsistent with full-time study. The detailed procedures follow at paragraph 15.

Sporadic attendance

12. The above arrangements notwithstanding, if a student's attendance and engagement with the course is giving cause for concern, the Course Leader may initiate a review. This entails consideration of the attendance registers, and consideration of any other salient factors, such as timely submission of work, engagement with the course and attendance at scheduled tutorials. It may also involve a meeting with the student. If, in their academic judgement, the Course Leader considers that the student is failing to engage properly with the course, a warning may be issued as described in paragraphs 8-9 above. This will constitute the first warning where none has previously been given; the second warning where a first warning has been given; and will recommend the termination of studies to the ALSQ if two warnings have already been given.

Termination of studies

13. Where a Student Route Visa holder records an extremely low attendance rate for a four-week period and the University is concerned about the student's whereabouts or progression, the Course Leader may recommend immediate withdrawal from the course. In such cases, the student will always be invited to explain their poor attendance prior to withdrawal. This meeting will be arranged as soon as possible and will proceed in the absence of the student if they do not attend as invited.
14. Where a Student Route Visa holder records an attendance of below 70% for three consecutive months the student will be withdrawn from the course with immediate effect. The student will be notified of this action via email and letter to their term-time correspondence address, subject to clause 9 above. The only exception to this rule is where there is an exceptional and evidenced reason for the lack of engagement, such as an illness
15. On receipt of a recommendation that a student's studies should be terminated on the grounds of inadequate attendance, the Course Leader will review the evidence that the attendance requirement has not been met and will confirm that appropriate warnings have been issued to the student, in accordance with this procedure. The Course Leader will ask the ALSQ to terminate the student's studies where the attendance requirements have been found to not have been met.
16. The ALSQ will duly terminate the student's studies unless it is clear that the procedure has not been followed.
17. Any student excluded on the grounds of attendance has the right of appeal to the ALSQ. A formal letter of appeal must be received by the Academic Office within seven working days of the date of termination. The ALSQ or their appointed nominee will consider the case (including meeting with the student and members of the course team as appropriate) and will provide a formal written response within seven working days. There is no further right of appeal.
18. If the studies are terminated of any student holding a Student Route Visa, the University is required to inform UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) that this action has been taken, and the student is no longer registered at the institution. This is likely to mean that the individual is required to leave the country.

19. Students are reminded that the University's *Fees and Charges Payment Policy* sets out the circumstances in which fees are refunded. Termination on the grounds of poor attendance will not constitute grounds for a claim for the refund of fees over and above that set out in the Policy.

Late attendance

20. Late arrival to class or rehearsal is not acceptable. It denotes a lack of respect for the work and for other members of the group because the late arrival of a student is, essentially, disruptive and in some cases (e.g., a physical skills or workshop class) may be hazardous to the individual student. In the professional world late arrival is viewed as being extremely unprofessional.
21. A student who arrives within the first 10 minutes of the class will be deemed late and the lateness recorded in the register. Under normal circumstances, a student not more than 10 minutes late will be allowed to participate in the class, subject to the agreement of the tutor leading the session.
22. The student who is habitually late may find their place on the course at risk, as regular lateness is another form of absenteeism. Where a student has been late for more than 25% of their scheduled classes, they will be given a written warning that their place on the course is at risk, following the procedure for sporadic engagement at paragraph 12 above. This can lead to a recommendation to the Head of PrepHE that the student's studies be terminated.
23. A student who is more than 10 minutes late for a class will be marked absent and will be subject to sanction accordingly under the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy.
24. A student who is more than 10 minutes late for a class may not be entitled to participate in the session, at the discretion of the tutor concerned.

Monitoring of the Attendance Policy

25. The UKVI Group, chaired by the University Secretary, will receive regular reports on the number of warnings issued to Student Route Visa holders and any of these students receiving more than one such warning. The UKVI Group reports directly to the University Leadership Team. The UKVI Group may recommend that a student is withdrawn from the course in line with clauses 13 or 14 above; any such recommendation will be forwarded to the Course Leader.