



Writtle
University
College

Higher Education Attendance Policy

Writtle University College
Lordship Road, Chelmsford
Essex, CM1 3RR

Tel: +44 (0)1245 424200
Fax: +44 (0)1245 420456
Email: info@writtle.ac.uk
www.writtle.ac.uk



Policy Owner	Department
Academic Registrar	CASTLe
Version Number	Date drafted/Date of review
3.0	Review for AB July 2018
Date Equality Impact Assessed	Has Prevent been considered (see Policies Guidance if unsure)
June 2017	Yes
Reviewed and Approved by (see Policies Guidance for approval process)	Date
ASQEC	26 th June 2017
Academic Board	5 th July 2017
Public access (website) <input type="checkbox"/> And/Or Internal access (MyWi) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff and Student access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Or Staff access only <input type="checkbox"/>

Policy and Procedure

A Principles and Rationale

1. This **Attendance Policy** applies to all HE students at Writtle University College. This includes all undergraduate, taught postgraduate and postgraduate research students.
2. The monitoring of attendance and therefore absence is important in supporting student engagement with learning, improving retention, progression and student performance. It also improves the accuracy and reporting of data to regulatory authorities.
3. The University College takes non-attendance seriously, as it impacts on the students' opportunity to learn, may compromise their achievement and the opportunities of other students.
4. Prolonged, unchecked student absence is unsatisfactory and potentially the University College could be in receipt of a government backed tuition fee loan for a student who was in effect no longer attending a particular module.
5. This Policy also enables the University College to support international students in meeting the **'Tier 4 (General) student'** visa requirements of the Home Office. The University College is legally required to inform the Home Office of any international students who do not enrol on their course or do not attend 10 consecutive contacts. The University College may decide to withdraw sponsorship of the student and will notify the Home Office of this. The student will then be required to leave the UK. Examples of expected contacts include a lesson, lecture, tutorial, seminar, meeting with a supervisor or an examination.
6. The University College also confirms students' attendance to loan or grant providers, including the Student Loans Company, government sponsors, banks and employers. Non-attendance without approval or unauthorised absence may result in loans or grants having to be repaid immediately. The University College may terminate the studies of any student who persistently fails to attend or perform the required work of the course on which they are registered.
7. Professional body requirements sometimes have different attendance levels and competencies including practical session and placements, which must be considered alongside this policy.

B Attendance Policy: Expectations of Students

1. It is expected that any Higher Education (HE) student who enrolls at the University College does so with the intention of achieving a qualification. Academic achievement is the overriding condition.

2. All HE Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PG) students will normally attend **all** scheduled learning, teaching and assessment sessions associated with the programme on which they are enrolled. It is expected that students will aim for 100% attendance. This includes regular attendance at all course lectures, practical classes, tutorials, seminars, field trips, dissertation tutorials, laboratory sessions, and assessment opportunities. Some sessions will be compulsory such as laboratory health and safety. It is recognised that rarely students will have a justifiable reason for non-attendance.
3. Students are expected to arrive on time for scheduled classes and remain for the duration of the session. Late arrival at, and early departure from, scheduled learning activity is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other class members and tutors. Attendance in this context also includes appointments with Academic Tutors and External Examiners or Academic Committees.
4. Unsatisfactory attendance includes failure to attend regularly, learning teaching and assessment sessions, without providing a satisfactory reason to tutors for their absence. Unsatisfactory attendance also includes persistent late arrival at, or early departure from, learning and teaching sessions.
5. Students are required to attend all examinations (including presentations) that contribute to summative assessment (*HE Academic Regulations 5.6.4*).

C Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. Students will be supported in their studies in a variety of ways including through attendance monitoring.
2. Monitoring will occur in such a way which is effective but not overly onerous for either students or staff.
3. HE academic staff will take registers at each timetabled 'contact points' with students as agreed with the University College Registry. Monitoring attendance can provide an early indication of student commitment, motivation and any difficulties which need to be addressed.
4. Students who do not attend regularly (attendance falls below 75%) will be considered to have disengaged with their studies.
5. Attendance data will be recorded and made available to HE staff, Course Scheme Managers and Programme Area Managers for use when advising and guiding students.
6. Non-attendance without approval from teaching and learning activities, or unauthorised absence from assessment activity may also affect the validity of student loans and the decisions of awards boards. Non authorised absence of 5 consecutive sessions or attendance at less than 75% of timetabled sessions will trigger an intervention by the University College. A student who is absent or remains unresponsive for a further 10 consecutive sessions will be considered to have withdrawn from their course.
7. In the event that students are unable to attend scheduled learning activities reasonable notification in advance should be given to the staff concerned and the course tutors.

8. It is important for students to appreciate that in the event of any unexplained or unauthorised absence, or lack of participation could lead to disciplinary procedures being invoked and the relevant local authority and sponsor being informed (*HE Academic Regulations Reporting Absence: Section 3.2 Student Absence Reporting Procedures*). It is important that students notify their Programme Area in advance of absence at any time if they have problems which will impact on their attendance (*See HE Academic Regulation 3.2*).

D Reporting arrangements

1. Effective reporting structures exist to ensure that information on unexplained or persistent student absences and non-submissions are brought to the attention of the relevant Personal Tutor/Course Scheme Manager and/or Programme Area Manager so as to ensure that the non-attending student is given the necessary support and advice.
2. **Student Progress Meetings** for all taught programmes will occur at the start of the second semester to provide feedback on individual student progress (**Ref: WQM069 Guidelines for Programme Area Managers – Monitoring Student Performance and WQM070 Monitoring Student Performance – Student Progress Meetings**).
3. Monitoring attendance for all teaching and learning events on a weekly basis will occur as a minimum, commencing in week one of the relevant programme.
4. Tutors will remind students that library use and on line access to university learning and teaching resources via the VLE are examples of legitimate engagement which may also be monitored and considered in any discussions relating to engagement with learning.

E Guidance for Programme Areas and staff

The following guidance is intended to provide staff with greater clarity of the University College's expectation in relation to the attendance monitoring process. Attendance at scheduled activity is essential to:

- provide opportunities for students and tutors to assess and monitor academic progress
- develop graduate attributes
- keep up to date with developments relating to the programmes of study
- share and learn with peers.

F Responsibilities of the Programme Areas

Programme Areas are required to monitor student attendance through a range of contact points or interactions. The attendance monitoring and recording will be carried out using an electronic register/attendance system. Programme Areas must monitor and record the attendance

throughout the academic year. A number of audit points throughout the year will be used to formally monitor attendance, from which action might flow.

G Programme Area Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- (i) all lecturing staff maintain an accurate record of student attendance.
- (ii) appropriate systems are in place at Programme Area level for students to notify the designated Programme Area staff of planned absences and to report to the Programme Area Office unexpected absences.
- (iii) students are informed in writing of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions, e.g. through Course Scheme Handbooks, and of any approved programme or module specific attendance requirements.
- (iv) all students have access to a Personal Tutor and Tutorials (**Ref: QA079 Tutorial Policy**).
- (v) there are regular reviews of students' progress on their programme, including attendance, completion of assessment requirements and academic achievement, and engagement with the VLE and Library.
- (vi) that appropriate action is taken either to help students' achieve their academic aims or, where students are failing to engage with the course, advising them to seek alternative career paths.
- (vii) students are advised of the support available to them, whether provided by the Programme Area for example by Personal Tutors, or by Learner Services e.g. counselling, or through the Student Union Academic Sabbatical Officer e.g. mentoring support.

H Academic staff are responsible for:

- (i) Reminding students of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching activity, i.e., through **The Student Partnership Agreement/Student Charter, Course Handbook, The HE Academic Regulations** and via tutorials.
- (ii) Recording student attendance in accordance with the University College procedures.
- (iii) Signposting 'at risk' students to other support services available within the University College such as to Learner Services, Library Services, Registry Services, Student Union Services, Counselling Services or other relevant Student Services.

The course team may also use absence reporting as a measure of a student's commitment to their studies to assist the Board of Examiners about decisions relating to repeating studies (*see HE Academic Regulation 5.9.2*).

I Unsatisfactory Attendance

Where a student's attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the module leader should report the absence to the Course Scheme Manager. One or more of the following actions may be taken:

- (i) Staff may contact the student to seek an explanation for their unsatisfactory attendance;

- (ii) students may be invited to discuss with their personal tutor, Course Scheme Manager or Programme Area Manager how their attendance will be improved and any support that may be required;
- (iii) students may be issued with a formal written warning about their attendance;
- (iv) a formal report on a student's attendance may be made to the student's sponsor, including an employer, the Local Authority, the Student Loan Company;
- (v) students who fail to respond to warnings about their attendance may be required to enter into a formal **Attendance Agreement**. Students may be withdrawn from their programme if they fail to respond to warnings or breach the terms of their Attendance Agreement;
- (vi) in accordance with UK immigration law, a report will be made to the Home Office if an International student holding a student visa is absent from the University for more than 10 consecutive sessions without authorisation, or in the case of research students, fails to attend 10 scheduled supervisions;
- (vii) members of staff writing references for students may refer to students' record of attendance.

J Equality Impact Assessment

1. The University College is committed to provide an environment which promotes equality of opportunity and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind. The University College's commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of plain English and the advancement of equality of opportunity between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic, including race, disability, gender and gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief.
2. The University College recognises and is supportive of the legal requirements to make reasonable adjustments for students in accordance with its Equality Policy, which may adversely affect attendance.
3. Where a student has made a disclosure e.g. disability or health condition, programmes will take account of this and provide a carefully considered response in consultation with the Disability Co-ordinator and/or other appropriate staff as appropriate.
4. The University College seeks to ensure that institutional procedures take account of the diversity of religion or belief and will seek to accommodate an individual's religious observances on a case by case basis.

K Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be monitored by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) and Programme Area Managers.

The Policy will be reviewed annually by ASQEC.

L Dissemination of and Access to the Policy

This Policy will be available on Moodle under Centre for Academic Standards, Teaching and Learning (CASTLe) section. It is expected that reference to this policy will be included in Handbooks and that the importance of regular attendance is included in student induction.

Supporting Policies and Documents for Students and Staff:

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- The Student Charter / Partnership Agreement
- The HE Academic Regulations
- The University College's response to the QAA UK Quality Code Chapter B5 (Engagement)

This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing University College documents. Writtle University College may amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, through Writtle Weekly or by email.

If this information is difficult to access, read or understand, it can be provided in another format, for example in large print, or by someone talking it through with you.

Version Control

Version Number	Purpose/Amendment	Date
3.0	Review of existing policy	July 2017