

Higher Education

Student Attendance and Engagement

Policy and Procedure

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Document Reference Number	WQM068
Originating Department	Quality Office
Version Number	V.3.02
Date Applicable from	Academic Year 2022-23
Date Equality Impact Assessed	June 2022
Approved and reviewed by	Academic Board
Date Approved	July 2022
Date of last review	June 2017
Access Public (website) or Internal (MyWi)	Website
Access Staff and Student or Staff Only	Staff and Student
Application to Collaborative	Mandatory (Policy)

HE Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the University College approach to engagement and attendance monitoring, associated expectations, response where concerns arise regarding a student's attendance and/or engagement; and how the University College uses engagement and attendance information to support success.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all Higher Education (HE) students at Writtle University College, regardless of mode or level of study.
- 1.3. This policy also sets out how the University College monitors students sponsored under the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) student visa route in accordance with the University College's statutory obligations under its UKVI license.
- 1.4. Some students may have additional attendance and engagement requirements that are not included within this policy:
 - 1.4.1. Students studying with fee sponsorship should refer to their sponsor contract for further information.
 - 1.4.2. Students studying on courses with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation should consult their Course Handbook/Moodle pages for further information.
- 1.5. This policy applies to all collaborative provision; procedures for capturing and recording attendance and engagement may vary across collaborative partner institutions.

2. Principles

- 2.1. The University College recognises the important relationship between academic engagement, performance, progression and achievement. Attendance at scheduled activities is essential to:
 - 2.1.1. Provide opportunities for students and tutors to assess and monitor academic progress
 - 2.1.2. Develop graduate attributes
 - 2.1.3. Keep up-to-date with developments relating to the course of study
 - 2.1.4. Share and learn with peers
 - 2.1.5. Act in accordance with our statutory responsibilities under UKVI as a Student Sponsor
- 2.2. Engagement with all learning resources available is also key to success.
- 2.3. The University College expects students to engage actively with their studies, become independent learners and take responsibility for their development and achievement.
- 2.4. The monitoring of engagement and attendance enables the University College to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties; either academically or personally, in order to more effectively support them in accessing support and intervention.
- 2.5. The policy also enables the University College to support international students in meeting the UKVI Student visa requirements (see Section 5).

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3. Expectations

The principal expectation is that any HE student who enrolls at the University College does so with the intention of achieving a qualification. Academic achievement is the overriding condition.

The University College expects all HE students to:

- 3.1. Actively engage in their studies, take part in all learning activities, opportunities and assessments; utilise learning resources and take responsibility for their learning. Some sessions are mandatory such as laboratory health and safety.
- 3.2. Arrive on time for scheduled sessions and remain for the duration of the session. Late arrival at, and early departure from, scheduled learning activities is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other students and tutors. Attendance in this context also includes appointments with Academic staff, External Examiners or Academic Committees.
- 3.3. Attend placements (including year in industry) as required by the employer organisation. At the end of the placement/year in industry students will be required to demonstrate that they have undertaken the required hours for the placement in addition to any assessment.
- 3.4. Inform the University College of any planned absences or sickness.
- 3.5. Inform the University College where they are struggling to engage and attend due to illness, disability or other extenuating circumstance.
- 3.6. Ensure that their registered contact information, including mobile phone numbers, is kept up to date.
- 3.7. Act responsibly and not falsify their own or others' attendance and/or engagement.

Students can expect the University College to:

- 3.8. Make efforts to ensure students can attend and engage with their studies.
- 3.9. Ensure any student who is experiencing difficulty engaging with their studies is signposted to and can access support, normally through the implementation of the Fitness to Study procedure.
- 3.10. Be transparent about how engagement and attendance data are collected, used, interpreted and acted upon.
- 3.11. Use anonymised engagement and attendance data to improve student support and services.

4. Requirements

- 4.1. All academic departments/schools must adopt the requirements and responsibilities outlined in this policy and associated procedure.
- 4.2. The University College timetable is the authoritative source for scheduled teaching information. All timetabled teaching is mandatory, unless explicitly marked to the contrary on the timetable, and contributes to a student's attendance percentage.
- 4.3. Students are required to attend all examinations (including presentations) that contribute to summative assessment.
- 4.4. The University College is required to abide by the Tier 4 Student Sponsorship duties outlined by the UKVI. Under these duties Writtle University College is legally required to monitor all students on a

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Tier 4 study visa and to maintain attendance and engagement records, reporting non-attendance and engagement where necessary (See [Section 5](#) of this Policy).

- 4.5. The University College attendance percentage threshold (minimum expected attendance) is set and reviewed annually.; any student whose attendance is lower than the threshold (75%) will be contacted and offered support to re-engage.
- 4.6. Attendance percentage is defined as the number of mandatory hours attended divided by the total number of mandatory hours a student is scheduled to attend, multiplied by 100.

5. UKVI Student Attendance and Engagement

- 5.1. The University College has a duty to ensure that students sponsored on the UKVI student route are in attendance; this monitoring and reporting is a legal requirement and includes engagement during any placement, as a condition of the University College's UKVI Student Sponsor License. Non-attendance could result in withdrawal of sponsorship, which will be reported to the UKVI, consequently affecting the student's status in the UK.
- 5.2. Any student who has been issued with a student visa to begin their course (including pre-sessional courses) will be provided with a start date. If the student does not attend within two weeks of the enrolment period or start date, their non-attendance will be reported to the UKVI and their sponsorship withdrawn.
- 5.3. Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students are expected to attend all scheduled teaching sessions, any student who fails to attend for a maximum of 5 consecutive days will be contacted by Registry to ascertain the reason for non-attendance and to request appropriate evidence e.g. medical certificate. Any student who does not re-engage, or who fails to respond to University College attempts to contact them, after 10 days will have their sponsorship withdrawn and the UKVI will be informed in accordance with UKVI requirements.
- 5.4. Where a student is on an assessed placement their attendance is also compulsory, attendance will be monitored by the University College placement team. Where a student is absent without authorisation attempts will be made to re-engage the student as described in para 5.3 above. Non-engagement after 10 days will result in sponsorship being withdrawn and the UKVI being informed.
- 5.5. Taught postgraduate students studying for their dissertation, or PG research students, must have supervision meetings at least once per month. The dissertation supervisor is responsible for logging meetings and investigating any absences. It should be noted that undertaking a dissertation is deemed a full-time activity.
- 5.6. The attendance of a UKVI visa student who is elected as a full-time Student Union Sabbatical Officer will be monitored by the Students' Union. If the student fails to undertake their role as required they will be reported to Registry for investigation and, if necessary, sponsorship will be withdrawn.

6. Authorised Absence

- 6.1. Short-term absences; up to 5 consecutive days (UKVI students should refer to para 6.4) due to illness do not need to be authorised, however students must advise the University College (HE.Absence@writtle.ac.uk) in writing to inform them if they are not able to attend scheduled sessions or individual meetings.

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- 6.2. Students must notify their Course Scheme Manager (CSM) in advance on the rare occasion that a planned short-term absence is necessary or if they are experiencing issues that will impact on their attendance. The CSM should seek advice from Registry and the Quality Office with regard to student planned absence.
- 6.3. Repeated absences, consecutive or non-consecutive, whether due to illness or that are unexplained or unauthorised; and/or lack of engagement are likely to invoke the Fitness to Study procedure and any relevant sponsor/employer being informed.
- 6.4. UKVI visa students must have all absences of 5 consecutive days or more authorised by the International Admissions and Compliance Manager. Absence for more than 5 days during a semester will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.5. Where long-term absence is necessary due to personal or health related issues, the policy on Withdrawals, Interruption and Resumption of Study enables a student to apply for an interruption of studies. Advice and guidance on interruption of studies can be found in the HE Student Handbook and is also available from the Quality Office.

APPENDIX 1: Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Procedure

1. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring

- 1.1. Attendance monitoring refers to all recording of student attendance at scheduled taught sessions. Students are required to register at the beginning of all scheduled on-campus sessions including lectures, workshops, seminars, laboratory sessions etc. Synchronous online session attendance will be captured through online session software (e.g. Teams).
- 1.2. An attendance percentage threshold that falls below the minimum (75%) will be deemed unsatisfactory.
- 1.3. Engagement is monitored through the students' activity on Moodle as well as their use of library, learning resources and assessment activity.
- 1.4. Students who are not attending or engaging with online learning resources, will be contacted in an effort to re-engage them with their course. Failure to re-engage appropriately may result in withdrawal from the course.
- 1.5. The procedure for addressing unsatisfactory attendance and engagement is defined in **Section 4** below.

2. Use of Attendance and Engagement data

- 2.1. Attendance and engagement data will be made available to Course Scheme Managers, Heads of Department/School and HE Professional Support Departments for use when advising and guiding students.
- 2.2. The University College may be required to provide attendance data to external organisations or regulatory bodies as part of legal or contractual obligations. It may also be required to provide anonymised data as part of a Freedom of Information request.
- 2.3. Attendance and engagement data are used to assess whether students are meeting the attendance requirements for the Student Loans Company (SLC). A student who is not attending or engaging may be withdrawn and the SLC informed.
- 2.4. Attendance and engagement data may be considered by Extenuating Circumstance Committees in the process of reviewing an application for Extenuating Circumstance or Late Work.
- 2.5. Course Teams may use absence reporting as a measure of a student's commitment to their studies to assist the Board of Examiners in making decisions relating to opportunities for reassessment or repeat year.
- 2.6. The University College may use attendance and engagement information stored or generated in the systems when providing references for students and when making a decision on whether to make an offer to a student applying to study on subsequent courses at the University College.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. All academic school/departments 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.

APPENDIX 1: Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Procedure

3.2. **Heads of School/Department** are responsible for ensuring that:

- 3.2.1. All teaching staff maintain an accurate record of student attendance.
- 3.2.2. Appropriate systems are in place at school/department level for students to notify designated staff of planned absences and to report unexpected absences to the Quality Office.
- 3.2.3. Students are informed in writing of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions, e.g. through Course Moodle page/Course Scheme Handbooks; and of any course or module specific attendance requirements.
- 3.2.4. All students have access to a Personal Tutor and Tutorials (QA079 Tutorial Policy)
- 3.2.5. There are regular reviews of student progress on the course including attendance, completion of assessment requirements and academic achievement and engagement with the VLE and Library etc.,
- 3.2.6. 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 an alternative career path.
- 3.2.7. Students are advised of the support available to them whether provided by the school/department e.g. Personal Tutors, or by Student Support Services, or through the Student Union.

3.3. **Academic Staff** are responsible for:

- 3.3.1. Reminding students of the importance of regular attendance at scheduled teaching and learning sessions.
- 3.3.2. Recording student attendance in accordance with the University College procedures.
- 3.3.3. Signposting 'at risk' students to Student Support Services available within the University College, e.g. Wellbeing and Inclusion, Student Success etc.

3.4. **Students** are responsible for:

- 3.4.1. Ensuring they attend all scheduled and timetabled sessions.
- 3.4.2. Informing the University College if they are unable to attend their scheduled sessions in advance, contacting HE.Absence@writtle.ac.uk on the first day of unplanned absence.
- 3.4.3. Engaging with learning resources provided through the VLE, Library etc.
- 3.4.4. Understanding that falsifying their own or others' attendance and/or engagement may lead to disciplinary action.

3.5. **Quality Office** are responsible for:

- 3.5.1. Recording absences (planned and unplanned).
- 3.5.2. Reviewing attendance at weeks 3, 6, 9 and 12 of each semester; and disseminating reports to CSMs and the Director of HE.

3.6. **Registry/International Admissions and Compliance Manager** will be responsible for:

- 3.6.1. Monitoring attendance of students with a visa under UKVI.

4. Unsatisfactory Attendance and Engagement

- 4.1. Attendance and engagement data will be reviewed at weeks 3, 6, 9 and 12 by the Quality Office, any persistent issues with attendance and engagement will be reported to the relevant Course Scheme Manager and Director of Higher Education. A summary report will be submitted to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) quarterly.
- 4.2. Where a non-UKVI visa student's attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the Year Tutor and/or Course Scheme Manager will meet informally with the student to review their attendance and investigate the reasons why it has fallen below expectation. The following outcomes are available from the meeting:
- 4.3. Where there are no mitigating reasons for poor attendance and engagement:
 - 4.3.1. If the student has not had attendance issues previously, a verbal warning will be given and the student advised that further persistent absence and/or lack of engagement will lead to a written warning and potentially termination of registration.
 - 4.3.2. If there is no noticeable improvement in attendance and engagement at the next data review point, a written warning will be issued and the student advised that further persistent absence and/or lack of engagement will lead to termination of registration. Additionally, that any sponsor/employer will be notified.
 - 4.3.3. If there is no noticeable improvement in attendance and engagement at the next data review point, the student will be advised in writing that their registration is to be terminated and any sponsor/employer as well as the Student Loans Company will be informed.
- 4.4. Where there are mitigating reasons for poor attendance and engagement, or cause for concern arises from the discussion:
 - 4.4.1. The Fitness to Study procedure may be invoked to determine what support the student needs to improve their attendance and engagement. The Fitness to Study procedure may be invoked at Level 1, 2 or 3 depending on the severity of the concerns; and/or
 - 4.4.2. The student should be referred to relevant Student Support Services within the University College.
- 4.5. A formal report on a student's attendance may be made to the student's sponsor, employer and Student Loan Company.
- 4.6. In accordance with the UKVI requirements a report will be made to UKVI if any international student holding a student visa is absent from the University College for more than 10 consecutive contact points without authorisation.
- 4.7. Reference requests from students may refer to the student's record of attendance.