

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT MONITORING POLICY

Introduction

1. This Policy is in the spirit of the University of Suffolk's commitment to be a supportive learning environment which enables all students who have chosen to study at the Institution or one of our partner institutions to achieve their full potential. The University recognises the investment that students and their sponsors make when a student enrolls on a course and believes that it has a duty to monitor engagement, act on non-engagement and support students to complete their programme of study. The policy is set in the context of ongoing research which demonstrates that increased engagement and attendance directly correlates with student performance.
2. This policy sets out the policy and procedure for the monitoring of student engagement and attendance in all University courses, including higher and degree apprenticeships, and while students attend assessed placement.
3. This Policy applies to all enrolled students at the University of Suffolk and partner institutions including those studying overseas.
4. The University is committed to improving engagement and attendance of all students, and therefore will take robust, timely action if either aspect falls below expected levels. Levels of engagement and attendance have the potential to indicate those students and apprentices who are at risk of withdrawal from their course early, and / or failure.
5. This policy includes information on the University's approaches to learner analytics, the gathering of data for each learner.
6. Learning and teaching at the University is usually delivered as blended learning. Blended learning is defined as including both in person, and online learning activities. All activities may be time-specific activities (timetabled) as well as activities which are not timetabled but delivered as independent study.
7. This Policy recognises that whilst good levels of attendance and engagement are essential for all students, different engagement and attendance requirements will be placed on students or apprentices due to the nature of the course. These may be associated with Professional, Statutory

and Regulatory Body (PSRB) regulations or be based on agreed academic practices. Furthermore, it recognises the different attendance and engagement monitoring systems in place at each campus/partner organisation and the range of interventions which may be applied. Details of the specific expectation and arrangements for each course will be approved at Validation and published in the Course Handbook.

8. The institution has statutory duties with regards to reporting poor attendance and/or engagement to a range of stakeholders, including the Student Loans Company and other funding bodies. In its fulfilment of these duties, the University will report non-attendance or engagement in a timely way and/or at the census points set by these third parties.

9. The institution also has a statutory duty to comply with the stipulations of the Home Office under its Student Sponsor licence which requires the accurate tracking of attendance of students subject to visa restrictions, as outlined in paragraphs 35-36.

Definitions

10. The University measures of engagement and attendance include:

- a. Attendance at teaching sessions including all types of timetabled session (lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, and lab-based learning).
- b. Attendance at timetabled activities including those delivered through guest lectures, field trips, Library and Learning Services, Careers Employability and Enterprise.
- c. Attendance at group and individual Personal Academic Coaching sessions or equivalent interactions.
- d. Engagement with online materials and completion of activities which are integral to the course of study.

11. Attendance at timetabled formal and informal learning opportunities that are offered at course, subject, School or university/partner level is a key component in attaining the best possible academic outcomes.

12. It is a student's responsibility to ensure they can engage with their studies and attend all timetabled sessions, whether online or face to face. Students should give due consideration to the commitment required prior to embarking on a programme of study, and should maintain arrangements such that they can continue to engage and attend for the duration of their course.

Students and apprentices are expected to attend and participate in all timetabled activities and learning opportunities, whether they are delivered in person or online, unless they have valid and mitigating reasons for not doing so.

13. The University provides students with a range of extra / co-curricular activities designed to further the learning of students and apprentices and provide opportunities to ensure success and progression into further higher study and / or graduate level employment, and includes a students' uptake of these opportunities when considering their overall engagement. These include activities delivered by Student Life, Library and Learning Services, Careers, Employability and Enterprise, or equivalent at partner institutions. Students and apprentices are strongly encouraged to engage with these activities throughout their studies.

Policy statement

14. Students and apprentices **must attend all learning and teaching sessions** unless they have valid mitigating reasons for not doing so. The learning and teaching methods for each course and component modules are set out in the Course Handbook. Examples of learning and teaching sessions (which may be face-to-face or virtual) include, but are not limited to: lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, laboratory and practical sessions, professional placements, field trips and industrial visits, meetings with Personal Academic Coaches (PACs) or equivalent, and in the case of research students, scheduled meetings with supervisors.

15. Students must arrive on time for classes and remain for the duration of the session. Late arrival at, and early departure from, sessions is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other class members and tutors.

16. Students are part of the University of Suffolk academic community and as such are expected to contribute to their fellow students' learning experience. This is particularly the case when engaging in assessed group work where non-attendance at any stage in the learning process can impact adversely on others' experience. It is unacceptable for a student to fail to engage or attend without valid mitigating reasons when this will have a direct impact on the experience of fellow students.

17. The method/system in place to register attendance at each campus or partner institution will be confirmed in the Course Handbook.

Authorised and Unauthorised absences

18. The University understands that students may face difficulty in attending all sessions, and as such recognises that there will be cases of both planned and unexpected absence from either in-person or virtual classroom teaching, or both, usually as a result of:

- short-term illness, accident or injury, or medical appointments where rearrangement is not possible;
- the death or serious illness of a close family member or dependent (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence in accordance with compassionate leave regulations);
- significant adverse personal or family circumstances directly affecting the student;
- interviews or associated opportunities to gain paid or voluntary work where these appointments cannot reasonably be rearranged;
- other significant exceptional factor.

Students should make module leaders and Academic Administrators/Higher Education Administrators aware when they are unable to attend sessions due to the above, giving as much advanced notice of the absence as possible.

Placements

19. The attendance requirements for placements, including the reporting of absences from placement, will be outlined in the Course or Placement Handbook.

Roles and Responsibilities

20. Students are responsible for:

- Attending **all** learning and teaching sessions as outlined in paragraph 12;
- Engaging with the registration mechanisms in place within their location of study;
- Notifying their Academic Administrator/Higher Education Administrator and Module Leader regarding any unavoidable absences prior to or as soon as is practicably possible after the event;
- Notifying the Student Centre or their Higher Education Office of any concerns regarding recording attendance;
- Making applications in good time for Extenuating Circumstances where absence is impacting their ability to study and submit work to prescribed deadlines. Evidence will be required as outlined in the [Additional Time due to Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#);

- In addition to the above, students studying on programmes with professional practice placements must report absence from placement to the relevant team as outlined in the Student Course Handbook or Placement Handbook. In such cases, evidence will be required.

21. Academic staff:

- Are responsible for encouraging a culture of student attendance/engagement, including providing information, advice and guidance to students at Induction and key points throughout their programme of study;
- Are required to encourage students to engage with registration processes. This extends to include compliance with any back-up systems used in the event of electronic system failure;
- Have the opportunity to trigger the unsatisfactory attendance processes as defined within the Course Handbook in cases where concerns have been informally raised and/or when formal attendance triggers are hit;
- Should advise relevant Academic Administrators/Higher Education Administrators of student absence when this is not confirmed by electronic records.

22. Administrative staff:

- Are responsible for retaining student attendance records;
- Will liaise with students and staff to arrange meetings with Personal Academic Coaches (or equivalent), Course Leaders and Deans of School (or equivalent), or their nominee regarding unsatisfactory attendance as required;
- Will provide formal attendance monitoring data on request, and other relevant student success and progression monitoring processes.

23. All parties have additional responsibilities with regards to attendance of international students who are subject to visa restrictions. Refer to the [Admissions Policy](#) and paragraph 34-35 below.

Unsatisfactory attendance/engagement

24. Unsatisfactory attendance/engagement (whether in-person or virtually) is deemed to be when a student, without valid reason, either,

- a. does not attend any scheduled sessions for a period of fourteen consecutive days,

- b. or where student attendance falls below 80% for an identified period of study, typically measured within each module or unit.

25. The requirements of any PSRB associated with the programme, or any in-country regulatory body for transnational education provision, will have precedence where the expectations for engagement and attendance are above those set by the University.

26. Unsatisfactory attendance actions will be triggered by formal attendance registration data and/or in cases where other unsatisfactory behaviours are identified. This may include cases of persistent late arrival/early departure, poor attendance patterns across specific modules or types of activity, persistent non-submission of work or where there is other cause for concern.

Actions in case of unsatisfactory attendance

27. The actions taken in cases of unsatisfactory attendance and/or engagement will be defined and set out in the Course Handbook. Typically in cases of consecutive non-engagement or non-attendance and where previous attempts to contact the student have not resulted in re-engagement with studies, the concern will be escalated to the Dean of School (or equivalent), or their nominee, and formal action will be taken. This may include the issuing of an Attendance Agreement. This will be no later than 28 days after the start of the period of unauthorised absence. A sample Attendance Agreement can be found in Appendix 1.

28. Failure to re-engage with studies or to adhere to an Attendance Agreement will usually result in the student being notified of the intention to withdraw them from their programme of studies after a further 7 days if there is no evidence of re-engagement.

29. The student's sponsor, including an employer, the Local Authority, or the Student Loan Company may be informed about the ongoing unsatisfactory attendance.

30. Non-attendance by an **apprentice** will result in the University contacting the apprentice's employer. Reporting expectations are outlined in the relevant Course Handbook.

31. Postgraduate Research students are expected to be in regular contact with supervisors, typically on a monthly basis. They must be able to provide evidence of continued research and progress with their research topic and this will be formally discussed in the annual review progress

Boards. Lack of research progress and/or non-attendance at planned supervisor sessions will be investigated by the supervisor.

32. Attendance and engagement records will be considered in the following cases:
- At Assessment Boards when considering the opportunities made available to students to retake failed modules, or when considering a student's eligibility to progress onto a sandwich year;
 - When considering academic appeals, where this information is relevant to the case;
 - When considering applications to the Financial Support Fund (FSF);
 - When calculating exact fee refunds, where these are applicable;
 - When confirming eligibility to receive University of Suffolk bursaries;
 - When assessing whether students are meeting attendance requirements of the Student Loans Company (SLC) or other funding body;
 - During or following study on receipt of an academic reference request.
 - During Postgraduate Research annual progress review Boards.

33. Ongoing unsatisfactory attendance and non-engagement with the above processes will result in the student being removed from their programme of study. Where a student is withdrawn from their course due to unsatisfactory attendance, they will have the right to appeal via the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

34. Deliberate misuse of electronic systems or paper registers with the aim of falsifying attendance records will be treated seriously and will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the [Student Discipline Procedure](#).

Students subject to visa restrictions

35. All parties have additional responsibilities with regards to attendance of visa sponsored students as detailed in the [Admissions Policy](#).

36. In accordance with UK immigration law, if a period of non-attendance or non-engagement by a visa sponsored student reaches 60 days or more, a report will be made to the Home Office. Such reports will result in withdrawal of sponsorship and will cause the Home Office to revoke the student's permission to stay in the UK. A report will also be made to the Home Office if a visa

sponsored student has an unsatisfactory engagement or attendance record despite support from the University.

APPENDIX 1

ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT

As a student or apprentice at the University of Suffolk it is essential that you understand attendance and engagement with your course is required in order for you to succeed academically. Failure to attend or engage with your course, without a valid mitigating reason, can result in:

- The issuing of an Attendance Agreement, which will outline specific actions you must take to be considered as suitably engaged with your course;
- A report being made to the Student Loans Company (SLC), other funding body or sponsor, which may result in the suspension or withdrawal of tuition fee or maintenance support;
- In the case of an apprentice, a report being made to your employer;
- In the case of a visa sponsored student, a report being made to the Home Office.

Ongoing failure to engage with your course or adhere to this Attendance Agreement without valid mitigating reasons will result in your withdrawal from study.

As a student, you are reminded of your responsibilities with regards to attendance and engagement:

1. You must attend all learning and teaching sessions as outlined in paragraph 12 of the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy;
2. Engage with the registration mechanism in place at your location of study;
3. Notify your Academic Administrator or equivalent and module leader if you cannot attend with good reason. Wherever possible you should contact staff in advance of the session you cannot attend.
4. Abide by any specific attendance and engagement requirements set out in your Course or Placement Handbook.

Student name	
Student ID number	
Course and location of study	

Action plan to address poor attendance or engagement.

Brief description of agreed action	Any support required:	Who is responsible for taking the action	Date to complete or review action
Other notes/comments:			

Signed by student:

Signed by staff member:

Date: