

**UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING**



POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

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Contents

POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT	3
Purpose	3
Definitions	3
Scope	4
Policy	4
General	4
Impact of Non-Attendance/Engagement.....	6
Mitigation for Non-Attendance/Engagement.....	6
Responsibilities for Attendance and Engagement.....	6
Staff Responsibilities	6
Student Responsibilities	8
Procedure.....	10
Process for Monitoring Attendance and Engagement.....	10
University Action / Outcomes in Response to Attendance/Engagement Concerns.....	10
Presumed Withdrawn Process	14

POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

1. The University of Stirling is committed to delivering an excellent student learning experience and supporting students to achieve success.
2. Student engagement with all aspects of the learning experience of a programme of study (whether requiring physical attendance or not) is a key component of attaining the best possible academic outcomes and as such, the University expects that students will fully and proactively engage with their programme of study and the learning and teaching activities within the programme.
3. Students who are student visa holders are obliged under the requirements of their visa to attend and engage with their programme of study and the University is required to monitor their attendance and engagement and take action in response to non-engagement.
4. This policy and procedure set out the University's position on student attendance and engagement, its expectations of both staff and students regarding student attendance, and its procedure for monitoring and taking follow-up action in response to non-engagement.
5. The policy and procedure forms part of the University's overall academic framework and should therefore be read in conjunction with relevant regulation, policy, and procedure.

Definitions

6. **Academic engagement points.** All learning and teaching activities that are timetabled. It is necessary for student attendance at all of these activities to be recorded via the Attendance App (see also 23).
7. **Class.** A class includes teaching sessions, tutorials, seminars, or laboratory sessions.
8. **Compulsory Module Requirement.** A requirement that is a precondition for the successful completion and award of credit for a module. These requirements may relate to e.g. a class, learning and teaching activity or assessment.
9. **Compulsory Class or Activity.** A class or an activity may be designated as compulsory where attendance at the class/participation in the activity is a precondition for successfully completing the module, achieving the relevant learning outcomes and receiving credit for the module, normally based only on a statutory or professional requirement. If the student fails to attend the compulsory class or activity the student may receive an overall fail on the module (X grade), on the basis that the module requirements have not been met.
10. **Evidence of attendance and engagement.** This will include evidence of attendance, and engagement with academic engagement points (see paragraphs 6 and 23) and non-academic engagement points. Non-academic engagement points might include, for example,

completing enrolment, logging into a University system, accessing the Library, or for student visa holders, attending a Student Immigration Services team monitoring event.

11. **Significant impact on studies.** Where, through absence, a student will miss an assessment, or a compulsory class or activity (e.g. required placement); or the period of absence will last 14 calendar days or more; or any absence where the student holds a student visa.

Scope

12. The policy and procedure apply to all students undertaking undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research study.
13. INTO Stirling students are required to adhere to the attendance and engagement requirements and procedures in place at the INTO Stirling centre. Where an INTO student progresses to study as a registered student of the University, this policy and procedure will apply.
14. Registered students of the University of Stirling studying at partner institutions are also required to abide by any policy and/or procedure relevant to attendance and/or engagement which the partner institution has in place and as agreed as part of the University's partnership approval process.

Policy

General

15. As active partners in their learning, the University expects that all students will consistently, fully and proactively engage with all elements of their programme of study.
16. Where a student is undertaking a campus-based programme, the student is expected to live close enough to the University campus in Stirling to be able to get there readily and regularly, to enable their full and proactive engagement with all elements of their programme. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they can meet this expectation, and also to ensure that any travel that is associated with this, and the cost of it, are sustainable for them for the full duration of their programme.
17. Through the operation of this policy and procedure, the University records and monitors evidence of attendance and engagement to support students to reach a successful outcome.
18. In respect of students who hold a student visa, the University is required by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) function of the Home Office to monitor the attendance and engagement of students in line with the expectations of both the student visa and the licence granted to the University to sponsor international students. This requirement extends throughout the duration of a student's period of study at the University of Stirling. For research students with a current student visa, the attendance and engagement monitoring process continues through the stages of viva, discussions on minor amendments and resubmission of thesis as required.
19. The University may also be obliged to undertake structured monitoring of evidence of attendance and engagement to comply with funding body requirements or the requirements of professional bodies, which accredit some programmes of study.

20. On some modules, a compulsory attendance requirement may be applied (following suitable approval through the relevant curriculum management and assessment policies and procedures) and where this is the case, it will be clearly designated in the module details on the VLE (Canvas). Such attendance requirements must be designed on pedagogical basis and normally only based on a statutory or professional requirement. Any proposed compulsory attendance requirements are considered during the module approval process which is provided in the University's Curriculum Development and Management Policy and Procedure.
21. Attendance and engagement monitoring is fundamentally based around academic engagement points. Non-academic engagement may also be considered within evidence of a student's overall attendance and/or engagement.
22. Student attendance at, or engagement with, all timetabled learning and teaching activity must be consistently recorded via the University Attendance App.
23. Academic engagement points must be timetabled learning, teaching or assessment activities, such as lectures and seminars. As such, they are determined in line with the learning, teaching and assessment arrangements for every programme. Examples of appropriate academic engagement points include (but are not limited to):
 - a. attending a seminar or workshop;
 - b. attending a lecture;
 - c. attending any activity that has a compulsory attendance requirement.
24. During any periods of placement or dissertation/project work, academic engagement requirements must be defined as relevant to the placement/activity.
25. In respect of PGR students, attendance and engagement expectations, arrangements and the responsibilities of students, research degree supervisors and other staff members, are formulated and specified in the Code of Practice: Research Degrees, but are underpinned by, and are in overall alignment with the provisions of this policy and procedure.
26. Attendance at academic engagement points must be monitored on a continuing basis. In addition, non-academic engagement may also be considered within evidence of a student's overall attendance and/or engagement.
27. An assessment of student attendance/engagement takes place at weeks 3, 6, 9 and 12 of each semester.
28. Instances of non-engagement are considered and followed-up in line with this procedure. Follow up actions are taken on the following levels of non-engagement which are determined on the basis of all academic engagement points, cumulatively across each semester:
 - a. **Low:** less than 75% attendance at academic engagement points.
 - b. **Medium:** less than 50% attendance at academic engagement points.
 - c. **High:** less than 25% attendance at academic engagement points.
29. Data collected, stored and analysed in the implementation of this policy/procedure are managed in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy and the Privacy Notice for Students.

Impact of Non-Attendance/Engagement

30. If a student does not fully attend and/or engage this may have a direct impact on their academic progression and/or achievement, and/or their continuing registration as a student of the University.
31. In addition, if a student is a student visa holder, non-engagement may also have a direct impact on their visa and the University's continuing sponsorship of them to study in the UK.
32. More details on the actions and impacts that can arise or be taken in response to non-engagement are set out in the section on '[University Action / Outcomes in Response to Attendance/Engagement Concerns](#)'.

Mitigation for Non-Attendance/Engagement

33. The University may consider disregarding non-engagement where a high level is identified, on the basis of its 'Mitigation Policy'.
34. A decision to disregard a student absence or lack of engagement is normally an academic decision based on the student's ability to meet the learning outcomes of the module. Any submission of supporting documentation or evidence does not guarantee that an absence or lack of engagement will be disregarded. Any such documentation which is in a language other than English must also have an official translation, not one completed by the student.
35. An absence or period of lack of engagement can only be disregarded if the relevant Programme Director decides that it is possible to make alternative arrangements for the student to meet the relevant learning outcome(s).
36. Furthermore, where a student is a student visa holder, absence or lack of engagement can only be disregarded where alternative academic arrangements are possible for the student to meet the relevant learning outcome(s), and Student Immigration Services have been consulted and confirmed that there are no visa compliance issues that would be associated with the absence or lack of engagement being disregarded.

Responsibilities for Attendance and Engagement

Staff Responsibilities

37. **Faculty Deans** are responsible for:
 - a. ensuring, delivering and managing consistent adherence with, and implementation of, all elements of this policy and procedure across their Faculty;
 - b. ensuring that action is taken where required to respond swiftly through line-management structures, to any instances of staff non-adherence to the policy and the requirements/responsibilities of the procedure.

38. **Programme Directors** are responsible for:
- a. providing the necessary information on all learning and teaching activities that are to be timetabled, in line with the requirements of the University's policies and procedures relating to timetabling;
 - b. where a level of non-engagement is identified, deciding whether absence or non-engagement can or cannot be disregarded, on the basis of the Mitigation Policy, taking account of paragraphs 33 – 36 and in line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure;
 - c. ensuring that follow-up contact takes place with students with an absence that could have a significant impact on their studies and with an identified level of non-engagement, in line with the procedure that accompanies this policy (see paragraph 60);
 - d. meeting with students as required regarding non-engagement, providing or signposting to any support or guidance the student may require (see paragraph 61);
 - e. where a high level of non-engagement is not rectified by the student, with support as appropriate from Student and Faculty Operations staff, considering as required if the student should be withdrawn as a student as a result of their non-engagement.
39. **Module Coordinators** are responsible for:
- a. ensuring details of the learning and teaching activities and all module level attendance/engagement requirements are available within module information on Canvas so that this is made clear to students.
40. **Academic Staff** are responsible for:
- a. ensuring that at all timetabled learning and teaching activities they deliver or lead, they require students to record their attendance on the University App and provide them with the opportunity to do so;
 - b. encouraging student attendance and engagement through e.g. stressing the importance and value of consistent, full engagement with the module/programme.
41. **Academic Staff who are also PGR Supervisors** are responsible for:
- a. adhering to and undertaking all of the requirements and actions set out in the Code of Practice: Research Degrees relevant to student attendance and engagement.
42. **Student and Faculty Operations Staff** are responsible for:
- a. liaising with Academic Staff in an agreed and consistent way across each faculty;
 - b. communicating with students at the beginning of each semester, making clear the importance of academic engagement, and reminding them of the need for them to record their attendance at all timetabled activity;
 - c. monitoring the engagement of all students via the institutional monitoring reports and tools in line with this procedure;
 - d. contacting students who are identified as having a level of non-engagement in line with this procedure;
 - e. making referrals to Student Services (in an agreed and consistent approach) of students who are identified as having a level of non-engagement, in line with the requirements of this procedure;

- f. alerting Student Immigration Services where a student who is a student visa holder has reached a medium or high level of non-engagement;
 - g. actioning student withdrawals decided upon through this policy/procedure and the Presumed Withdrawn Process as appropriate in line with this policy/procedure.
43. **Student Immigration Services** is responsible for:
- a. reviewing and considering the attendance/engagement of any student visa holder identified (through monitoring as referenced in 42c) as having a level of non-engagement;
 - b. contacting any student visa holder identified as having a level of non-engagement to re-iterate the potential consequences on their visa of continuing non-engagement and advise on further guidance available;
 - c. taking all appropriate and required actions in respect of a student's visa and the University's student immigration compliance, where a student visa holder is withdrawn as a student, as a result of their non-engagement;
 - d. monitoring student non-engagement and considering/preparing recommendations for withdrawal of sponsorship of a student visa holder where appropriate/necessary, for final consideration and decision making by the Academic Registrar;
 - e. actioning any withdrawal of sponsorship decisions in line with UKVI expectations and timelines.
44. **Student Support Services** is responsible for:
- a. providing support through the University's support provisions to students referred by a Faculty team in response to an identified level of non-engagement.
45. **Information Services** is responsible for:
- a. providing and maintaining system infrastructure and tools to facilitate and enable attendance and engagement data recording, monitoring and reporting, in line with this policy and procedure.

Student Responsibilities

46. As active partners in their learning, all students are required to consistently, fully and proactively engage with all elements of their programme of study.
47. All students are expected to adhere to this policy and procedure and co-operate with attendance and engagement monitoring processes as required.
48. In addition, students should:
- a. arrive for all learning and teaching activities, classes and appointments on time.
 - b. engage with learning and teaching activities and classes throughout the duration of the activity/class. Leaving early without prior agreement is not acceptable.
 - c. use the support systems in place to seek advice and guidance where this may be beneficial in relation to challenges or difficulties that may be experienced. The University's support systems include Personal Tutors, Advisers of Studies and Student Support Services.

- d. check their University of Stirling email account on a consistently very regular basis for any formal notifications/communications and respond to communications from members of staff of the University as requested.
- e. maintain up-to-date contact details via the Student Portal.
- f. register with Student Support Services to be assessed for an Agreed Record of University Adjustments (ARUAA) if they have a disability or long-term limiting physical or mental health condition that is likely to affect attendance. The presence of an ARUAA however, does not provide automatic exemption from classes (see section on 'Mitigation for Non-Attendance/Engagement' at paragraphs 33-36).

49. In addition, undergraduate and taught postgraduate students are expected to:

- a. Confirm attendance/absence in classes/activities via the University App, and contact the relevant member of academic staff promptly if they are unable to do so, for any reason e.g. do not have a device on which to register attendance electronically. Guidance on how to use the University Attendance App to register attendance is available for students.
- b. Never falsify attendance recording or information or assist others to falsify such information. Disciplinary action may be taken against any student found to have done so.
- c. Self-certify for absences of less than seven days via the Student Portal.
- d. Notify their Programme Director as soon as practically possible of absence which is likely to have/had a significant impact on their studies and provide suitable supporting documentation indicating the nature of the circumstances that prevented attendance on the dates in question. It is the student's responsibility to provide formal documentation to support the reasons for their absence. Note that medical certificates will not normally be available for periods of less than 7 calendar days and doctors may charge for some documentation.
- e. Obtain academic approval for a period away from study during a dissertation period, and ensuring that only one such period is taken, for a maximum of 14 calendar days.

50. In addition, research students are expected to:

- a. Engage with their studies as outlined in the Code of Practice: Research Degrees and use the Research Compass system to record a plan for their research project, support timely project progression and maintain a systematic record of progress against set milestones;
- b. Maintain regular contact with their supervisory team and agree an appropriate schedule of meetings and objectives and record dates in Research Compass;
- c. Raise any concerns or difficulties affecting their research with the supervisory team or the Institute for Advanced Studies.

51. In addition, students who are student visa holders are required to also comply with all the engagement and contact requirements communicated to them by the Student Immigration Services team.

Procedure

Process for Monitoring Attendance and Engagement

52. General attendance and engagement requirements are published to new students through the website.
53. In addition, information on general engagement requirements for student visa holders, in line with the conditions of the visa, are provided on the University's website and through direct communications with students from Student Immigration Services.
54. Programme Directors provide the necessary information on all learning and teaching activities that are to be timetabled, in line with the requirements of the University's policies and procedures relating to timetabling.
55. Student and Faculty Operations staff communicate with students at the beginning of each semester, making clear the importance of academic engagement, and reminding them of the need for them to record their attendance at all timetabled activity;
56. Module Co-ordinators ensure that details of the learning and teaching activities and all attendance/engagement requirements are available within module information on the VLE (Canvas) so that this is made clear to students. Along with the other relevant information, this will include:
 - a) Details of any compulsory classes and/or activities at which attendance is required for successful completion of the module;
 - b) Any specific attendance or engagement requirements of a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body;
 - c) Details of the attendance monitoring process via the University Attendance App with a link to the student guidance [link]; details of the requirement to notify absence through self-certification on the student portal and any special requirements associated with activities on the module e.g. placements or field trips.
 - d) Potential consequences of non-attendance/engagement.
57. Academic staff ensure that at all scheduled teaching sessions/academic engagement points, students have the opportunity to record their attendance on the University App and are told that they are required to do so in line with the University's attendance and engagement monitoring.
58. Student and Faculty Operations staff monitor the engagement of all students via the institutional monitoring reports and tools on an ongoing basis, starting from week 3 of each semester and then at weeks 6, 9 and 12 of the semester.

University Action / Outcomes in Response to Attendance/Engagement Concerns

59. Where attendance and engagement monitoring identifies non-engagement, the University will take action to communicate and liaise with the student, and offer information, guidance or support.
60. At the week 3 monitoring point, students with any level of non-engagement (as specified in paragraph 28) will be sent an email advising them that non-engagement has been identified, and of the importance of engagement in terms of their success and sources of support.

61. At weeks 6 and 9, where a level of non-engagement is identified (as specified in paragraph 28), follow-up action is taken as follows:

Level of Non-Engagement: Low	
Follow-Up Action	Responsible
<p>The student is contacted and advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that a low level of non-engagement has been identified; • that they are required to re-engage to ensure their attendance and engagement is satisfactory; • of the importance of re-engagement and the potential impact on their studies of continuing non-engagement; • where they are a student visa holder, of the importance of re-engagement and the potential impact on their visa of continuing non-engagement; • that support is available from their Personal Tutor and the University's Student Support Services; • of a point of contact within the Faculty should they wish to discuss their non-engagement. 	<p>Programme Director, supported by Student and Faculty Operations</p>
Level of Non-Engagement: Medium	
Follow-Up Action	Responsible
<p>The student is contacted and advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that a medium level of non-engagement has been identified; • that they are required to re-engage to bring their attendance and engagement to a satisfactory level; • of the importance of re-engagement and the potential impact on their studies of continuing non-engagement; • that they are required to organise to meet with the Programme Director as soon as possible to discuss their non-engagement and any support or guidance they might require; • that support is available from their Personal Tutor and the University's Student Support Services; • where they are a student visa holder, of the importance of re-engagement and the potential impact on their visa of continuing non-engagement. 	<p>Programme Director, supported by Student and Faculty Operations</p>
<p>A referral should be made to the Student Services Hub to facilitate Student Support Services staff contacting the student and offering support.</p>	<p>Student and Faculty Operations</p>
<p>Where they are a student visa holder, the student's non-engagement should be alerted to the Student Immigration Services team.</p>	<p>Student and Faculty Operations</p>
<p>Where they are a student visa holder, the student should be further contacted without delay to re-iterate the potential consequences on their visa of continuing non-engagement and advise on guidance available from Student Immigration Services.</p>	<p>Student Immigration Services</p>

Level of Non-Engagement: **High**

Follow-Up Action	Responsible
<p>The student is contacted and advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that a high level of non-engagement has been identified; • that they are required to re-engage with their studies immediately; • that they are that they are at risk of being withdrawn from their programme/the University as a result of their non-engagement; • where they are a student visa holder, of the importance of re-engagement and the potential impact on their visa of continuing non-engagement; • that they are required to organise to meet with the Programme Director as soon as possible to discuss their non-engagement and any support or guidance they might require; • that support is available from their Personal Tutor and the University's Student Support Services. 	<p>Programme Director, supported by Student and Faculty Operations</p>
<p>Where a student indicates that they have mitigating grounds for non-engagement, a decision should be made as to whether or not the grounds are valid (in line with the Mitigation Policy) and if the non-engagement can be disregarded or not.</p>	<p>Programme Director</p>
<p>A referral should be made to the Student Services Hub to facilitate Student Support Services staff contacting the student and offering support.</p>	<p>Student and Faculty Operations</p>
<p>Where they are a student visa holder, the student's non-engagement should be flagged to the Student Immigration Services team.</p>	<p>Student and Faculty Operations</p>
<p>Where they are a student visa holder, the student should be further contacted without delay to re-iterate the potential consequences on their visa of continuing non-engagement and advise on guidance available from Student Immigration Services.</p>	<p>Student Immigration Services</p>

62. At the week 12 monitoring point, a report will be available for Student and Faculty Operations staff and Programme Directors, setting out an assessment of non-engagement at that point. The purpose of the report is to provide an assessment of non-engagement at the end of the semester and therefore data on where students may have recovered a previous level or non-engagement or where non-engagement persists and may therefore potentially continue into the next semester. There is no requirement for follow-up action to be taken further to the week 12 report and no standard communications are sent to students, however staff have discretion to contact students regarding non-engagement as they see required/appropriate.

63. Further to paragraphs 30 and 31, if a student has a level of non-engagement, this may have a direct impact on their academic progression and/or achievement, and/or their continuing registration as a student of the University, and/or the University's continuing sponsorship of their student visa.
64. There is a range of impacts of non-engagement which are routinely actioned by the University through its other relevant policies and compliance obligations. For example, if a student:
- a. does not attend/engage with a compulsory class or activity, this will result in failure of the module and an X grade being awarded on the basis that the module requirements have not been met. In these circumstances, no resubmission/resit opportunity will be offered.
 - b. does not attend an examination or submit an assessment in line with requirements, the consequences and possible mitigations are as set out in the Assessment Policy and Procedure. In certain circumstances a student may apply for a deferred examination or extenuating circumstances to mitigate the impact.
 - c. does not engage with *any* assessments on a module, they will not have an automatic right to a reassessment opportunity and must seek a discretionary reassessment as set out in the Assessment Policy and Procedure.
 - d. continually does not engage satisfactorily and make progress, they will become at risk of being withdrawn from their programme of study by the University, in line with relevant policy and/or regulation.
65. It is important to note that the follow-up action set out in paragraph 60 operates in parallel to the routine operation of other University policies and procedures such as the Assessment Procedure as discussed in paragraph 62. Any follow-up action having been taken or not taken by the University under the provisions of this policy/procedure does not prevent the University from actioning any outcome through its other relevant policies that may be determined based on a student's attendance or engagement.
66. Additionally, where an identified high level of non-engagement is not rectified by the student, the Programme Director (or other appropriate alternate) with support as appropriate from Student and Faculty Operations staff can decide under the provisions of this policy/procedure that the student should be withdrawn as a student as a result of their non-engagement. Where this is the case, Student and Faculty Operations staff will facilitate the administrative steps required to progress the withdrawal, ensuring that where the student is a student visa holder, Student Immigration Services is made aware of the withdrawal to in turn ensure that required decisions and actions can be progressed by Student Immigration Services in respect of the impact of this on the student's visa and the University's continuing sponsorship of them to study in the UK.
67. Furthermore, if a student is a student visa holder, regardless of whether or not an academic decision has been made to withdraw a student, a level of non-engagement may lead to the University being required to report the non-engagement to UKVI as part of its compliance obligations. Where this is the case, it will normally result in the University's sponsorship of the student being withdrawn and the student's visa being cancelled.

68. Withdrawal of visa sponsorship will normally result in the student being withdrawn from their programme and the University. There may be instances where an exception can be made to this such as where the student has switched to another Home Office/UKVI immigration category in the UK, or the student has returned home and has academic approval to complete their programme overseas.
69. If a student is formally withdrawn from a programme of study the University may be required to inform the authority providing funding support for tuition fees and the Student Loans Company.

Presumed Withdrawn Process

70. Where a currently registered student has been identified as having a high level of non-engagement and has not responded to any follow-up action or communication from the University where this follow-up has been ongoing for at least four weeks, the University will presume that a student intends to withdraw from their studies/the University and will automatically commence the withdrawal process.
71. Where this process is to be put into action, Student and Faculty Operations staff will contact the student to notify them of this and sources of advice, and will communicate a potential cause for concern to the Student Support Services team via the Student Hub.
72. In addition, where the student is a student visa holder, advice sources will include those relevant to visa status, and Student Immigration Services will also be notified and will subsequently take all appropriate and required actions in respect of the student's visa and the University's student immigration compliance.