Taught Student Attendance Policy

Owner:	*Sam Grady*
	Director of Student Experience
Approved by:	*Academic Committee*
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1.0	06/07/2022	General update to the Policy.	Matthew Clark (Senior Registry Officer)	Approved

Taught Student Attendance Policy

1.   Introduction

1.1   The purpose of this policy is to provide detailed information and guidance on the process and management of the student attendance system for Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses.

1.2   Research indicates a strong correlation between regular attendance and retention, progression, wellbeing, and academic achievement. By regularly reviewing student attendance, the University can offer additional support and guidance to the students who may need it.

1.3   Having an appropriate attendance recording system will ensure not only that the University fully discharges its duty of care to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all students, but that it is also able to meet its reporting obligations to external bodies and agencies on a prompt and timely basis. These include government funding organisations such as the Student Loans Company, third party sponsors, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

1.4   This policy has been developed as part of the University's commitment to provide a supported learning environment in which students are encouraged to develop knowledge, understanding and the range of skills and attributes that will be useful to them during their time at the University and beyond. The University encourages active participation in all learning activities through regular attendance.

2.   Aims and principles

2.1   Aims

- Promote academic attainment, standards and progression.
- Help support students' health and wellbeing.
- Maximise and enhance the student experience.
- Satisfy external reporting/accreditation requirements and legal obligations, for example, in relation to the UK's immigration authorities or certain professional bodies.

2.2   Principles

- **Fairness**: All students will be treated equally in relation to attendance requirements as far as possible.
- **Support and Welfare**: High levels of student attendance and engagement have been linked to high academic achievement. The University recognises that not all students who are struggling either personally or academically will show a pattern of behaviour that includes reduced attendance. However, it is important for the University to measure attendance (as a proxy for engagement) in order to identify and offer additional support to students who may have personal circumstances or health issues that are affecting their studies. Thus, the University's primary response to non- or low attendance will be centred on student wellbeing.
- **Student Ownership**: The University is committed to providing a supportive learning environment. However, students are expected to take responsibility to complete the online enrolment onto the course and to meet the University's minimum attendance requirements for each module.

3. Definitions

3.1 'Attendance' is the activity of attending scheduled academic sessions. Face-to-face and/or online attendance at scheduled teaching and learning events is a core component of student retention, progression and achievement.

3.2 'Engagement' is the activity of students participating fully in their course of study, engaging actively with learning opportunities and taking responsibility for their learning. Students are further expected to contribute to all aspects of their course of study consistently and proactively.

3.3 'Teaching event' refers to any teaching and learning session. It includes such things as lectures, seminars, tutorials, practicals, workshops, and studio sessions.

3.4 'Minimum attendance requirement' is the minimum attendance expected of all students to still be considered active students. The university expects students to attend 100% of their classes but accepts that sometimes that is not possible, so the minimum attendance threshold is 75%. Students must meet the requirement for each of the modules they are enrolled on.

4. Scope

4.1 The policy is relevant to all taught students enrolled at the University and all staff responsible for reviewing attendance. 'Staff' includes any individual working at or for the University. This includes, but is not limited to temporary, honorary, visiting, casual, voluntary, emeritus and agency workers, students employed by the University and its suppliers.

4.2 This policy covers in-person and/or online attendance of all timetabled events and trips. It also covers students on Study Abroad or work placement.

5. Attendance expectations

5.1 The University expects students to attend all scheduled learning events on their timetable as this gives students the best chance of academic success. This includes all events set out in the course specification or those provided to students during a module, including personal tutorials and scheduled off-campus learning sessions.

5.2 Students' submission of assessments will also be recorded as a form of attendance. For students on a visa, this will also contribute towards the UKVI conditions associated with their visa.

5.3 Students should familiarise themselves with attendance requirements and must ensure that they engage with the method of recording attendance used by the University. Students are responsible for ensuring that their attendance is recorded.

5.4 It is important that students attend teaching events punctually to not disrupt the learning of others. It is vital that students arrive on time so they are present for information that may be given at the start of a session, for example, Health & Safety instructions. Please note that the University's attendance monitoring system will record time of arrival and if a pattern of lateness or absence is observed, the University may wish to explore the reasons for this with the student concerned.

5.5 Study Abroad

5.5.1 Students who are on a Study Abroad programme as a mandatory and assessed part of their course must comply with this Taught Student Attendance Policy.

5.5.2 The Study Abroad team will obtain confirmation of registration and engagement from the partner institution on a fortnightly basis. Academic teams may also contact the student directly for an update on their placement.

5.5.3 Where concerns are raised by the partner institution in relation to a student's engagement, the University will ask the student to provide copies of any work submitted, tutorial notes and confirmation of successful completion of the Study Abroad.

5.6 Work Placements

5.6.1 Students who are on a work placement as a mandatory and assessed part of their course must comply with this Taught Student Attendance Policy.

5.6.2 The Career, Enterprise & Industry team will obtain confirmation of attendance from a supervisor at the work placement organisation on a monthly basis.

5.6.3 Where concerns are raised in relation to a student's progress on the placement, academic teams may contact students directly.

5.7 Sponsored students

5.7.1 All sponsored students on a Study Abroad programme or work placement remain sponsored by the University and engagement monitoring will therefore continue in line with the University's policies and obligations to meet UKVI requirements. If students adhere to the minimum attendance requirements set out in the regulations, they will automatically also meet the attendance requirements stipulated by UKVI.

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Accessing campus and associated facilities

6.1.1 The University uses card readers across campus to record whether students are on campus. This includes card readers inside or outside a teaching room, building or at campus entrances.

6.1.2 The University asks students to keep their student ID card safe and that they always carry their ID card with them while on campus. As well as providing proof of identity and controlling access to buildings, this ensures that students can record their attendance at all timetabled sessions.

6.2 Using the card readers

6.2.1 In order to record attendance accurately, card readers have been installed in all the main teaching spaces.

6.2.2 The attendance monitoring system is linked to the University's timetabling system. To be marked 'present' at a timetabled teaching event, the student must tap in with their ID card on the card readers placed inside or outside the teaching room. Please note that attendance cannot be recorded more than 10 minutes before the start of a teaching event.

6.2.3 Students are responsible of their own attendance and must tap into each individual timetabled event even where they have back-to-back events in the same room.

6.2.4 If students have an issue with their card and do not report it to a member of staff promptly, or if they do not have an explanatory note added to their record stating why they did not tap in to a scheduled teaching event, they will be marked:

    A. 'late' if they do not tap the card reader within 10 minutes of the start of the session, and;

    B. 'absent' if they do not tap the card reader within 30 minutes of the start of the scheduled teaching event.

6.3 Recording attendance for off-campus teaching events

6.3.1 Academic staff will take attendance where students are required to attend learning events off campus (museum visits, trips, etc.). These will be recorded in the University's attendance monitoring system.

6.4 Student access to attendance data

6.4.1 All students will be able to view their own attendance data captured via the attendance monitoring system.

6.5 Fraudulent attendance

6.5.1 The use of a student ID card is personal to the individual to whom it is issued, and students must not allow their card to be used by any other individual. If students are found to be fraudulently using the system; for example, by tapping in on others' behalf or allowing others to tap in on their behalf, or by tapping in and then leaving the teaching session, they may be subject to the procedures in Student Disciplinary Policy.

6.6 ID card failures

6.6.1 If a student is not able to register their attendance by tapping into a session, they should notify the in-class tutor who will record the student's attendance manually in the attendance monitoring system. Students should visit the Student Hub where they will be able to test that their ID card is not faulty.

6.7 Lost or stolen ID cards

6.7.1 Lost or stolen ID cards must be reported to the Security Office as soon as possible so that the old card can be deactivated and a replacement ID card can be issued.

6.8 Room changes

6.8.1 Where possible, all room changes will be amended on the University's timetabling system and communicated to students in advance of the session. If a room change is required at the last minute for any reason, the relevant member of staff will make alternative arrangements. Students will then be required to tap into the new room to ensure their attendance can be recorded.

6.9 Cancelled teaching events

6.9.1 The tutor will ensure that the University's timetabling and attendance monitoring system is updated where teaching events are cancelled at short notice. Similar to room changes, where possible, cancelled teaching events will be communicated to students in advance of the session.

7.   Absences

7.1   The University understands that absences are sometimes unavoidable. In such cases, it is up to the student to notify their Module Tutor of the reasons for the absence at the earliest opportunity (ideally in advance, but, if this is not possible, within 48 hours of the start of the absence). The Module Tutor will record these as "Notified Absences" within the University's attendance monitoring system.

7.2   All absences will count towards students' overall attendance figures. If a student falls below the minimum attendance threshold of 75%, then a four-stage process will be initiated (see section 8).

7.3   If a student is absent from a summative assessment due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, they should follow the procedures as set out in the University's Academic Regulations. Absences recorded in the University's attendance monitoring system will not count as extenuating circumstances.

7.4   Disabled students or those with a long-term medical or mental health condition are advised to contact the Student Support & Welfare team to get reasonable adjustments for specific learning requirements. All students, irrespective of any adjustment agreed, still need to meet the University's attendance requirements.

7.5   A student may wish to consider taking a break in study, if there is an ongoing period of absence that that means they need additional time to complete their course. Students should discuss their requirements with their Personal Tutor or the Student Support & Welfare team. Student Visa holders should also discuss their options with the Student Immigration & Compliance team as an interruption of studies may affect their Student Visa status.

7.6   Students who repeatedly fail to attend timetabled teaching events without having notified their Module Tutor of their absence will be go through the following process.

8.   Consequences of repeated low or non-attendance

8.1   The University sets the minimum attendance requirement for students following the procedures in the University's Academic Regulations. Students must meet these requirements for each of the modules that they are enrolled on.

8.2   The University checks attendance reports on a regular basis. The data is used to identify any students whose attendance has fallen below the minimum attendance requirements. The University will then decide how to follow up with students whose attendance has become a cause for concern. Depending on the circumstances, low or non-attendance may trigger a sequence of follow-up contacts with the student to check whether any support or further advice is required. The stages are as follows:

8.3   Stage 1

8.3.1   Once a student has missed the first minimum attendance threshold, they will receive an email from their Personal Tutor to check if they are well, advocating that the student returns to their timetabled teaching events and signposting them to sources of support. This email will be copied to the Student Achievement team.

8.4 Stage 2

8.4.1 If the student's low or non-attendance attendance continues within the 7 days after the Stage 1 email, they will receive a second email asking them to get in touch with their Achievement Officer to discuss the reasons for non-attendance. The student may also be signposted to appropriate support where required.

8.5 Stage 3

8.5.1 If the student has not been in contact with their Achievement Officer within 7 days of the Stage 2 email or their low or non-attendance attendance continues to cause concern, they must attend a meeting with their Course Leader to discuss the situation and what support the student may need to improve their attendance. This meeting must take place within 10 days after the end of Stage 2 (i.e., 3 days after the initial 7 day period in Stage 3) and will result in the agreement of an action plan and whether a change in student status might be an appropriate course of action. The action plan will be formally recorded on the student's record.

8.6 Stage 4

8.6.1 If the student has not been in contact with their Course Leader within 15 days after the Stage 3 email, an action plan has not been submitted, or the student's attendance continues to cause concern, the student will be notified that they will be referred to the University's Suspension Review Panel. The Suspension Review Panel will consider the evidence at hand, including the student's engagement profile, the action plan and any mitigation, with a view to formally change the student's status at the University.

8.7 At any stage of the process, a student may be referred to Student Support & Welfare team if they are concerned about their safety or wellbeing. A referral under the Fitness to Study Policy may also be completed.

8.8 If the student meets with their Course Leader or Module Leader at any stage in the process and agrees a plan of action which they then fulfil, they may move back to the previous stage of the process.

8.9 If a student has progressed to Stage 4, the university may decide to take one or more of the following courses of action:

      A.   Barring the student from assessment;
      B.   Suspending the student from their studies on the grounds of academic insufficiency; or
      C.   Withdrawing the student from the University.

8.10 All students have a right to make a complaint under the University's Student Complaints Policy if they have any concerns about the measures associated with low attendance.

8.11 Sponsored students

8.11.1 Sponsored students may find that their visa status is impacted if their studies are terminated, suspended (due to academic insufficiency) or interrupted (for the duration of the interruption). The law means that the University must inform UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) of any changes to a student's status. In addition, any sponsored student who has no engagement for 60 days or more

will be automatically withdrawn from the University and will have their visa sponsorship withdrawn by UKVI.

8.11.2 Students who are on a Student Visa must read the Student Visa responsibilities guidance which provides information about the visa requirements. If students need any Student Visa advice, they should get in touch with the Student Immigration & Compliance team.

9.   Privacy Notice

9.1   The University processes personal information about its students, including attendance information. This includes attendance at different teaching events, number of absences and changes in student status. Staff has access to student attendance data. The attendance system complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

9.2   The Privacy Notice applies to the personal data the University collects from students and personal data which is passed to the University by third parties. Please read the following carefully to understand how the university processes students' personal data (https://www.regents.ac.uk/privacy-and-cookies).

9.3   **Who the University shares students' attendance data with**

9.3.1 Students' personal data will be collected and processed primarily by University staff, but the University may have to share students' data with relevant third parties for the purpose of statutory and legal reporting, such as:

- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)
- Student Loans Company
- Third party sponsors
- Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

9.3.2 The University requires all third parties to respect the security of students' personal data and to treat it in accordance with the law. The University does not allow its third-party service providers to use students' personal data for their own purposes – the University only permits them to process students' personal data for specified purposes and in accordance with its instructions.