UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction and context

The Student Engagement and Attendance Policy is designed to support and monitor the engagement of all students. For the majority of students to achieve academic success there is a need to engage fully, as studying and attending lectures, seminars, tutorials and labs/workshops provides opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully achieve the outcomes of our taught programmes. This Policy sets out how the University aims to support its student to engage fully with their studies and is intended to:

- improve the engagement and attendance of all students
- ensure a proactive approach to providing support when needed
- enable students to maximise their full potential, increasing success and achievement.

Sufficient attendance at relevant classes is a strong indicator of engagement and for international students with a Tier 4 visa, engagement monitoring is essential to ensure visa compliance. It is an important principle of this Policy that Home and International students should not be treated differently in terms of attendance monitoring (though follow-up may be different for international Tier 4 visa holders because of the UKVI requirements). Non-engagement may also be a strong indicator that a student is not thriving academically or personally.

Attendance

Monitoring of student attendance is important for pedagogic and pastoral reasons, enabling the timely identification of students who may be at risk in terms of wellbeing, progression or retention. Follow-up actions can then be taken to support students and encourage engagement with the programme.

Engagement

The issue of engagement involves understanding how students learn, are motivated, what increases their attention/focus and how students study: alone, in small/large groups and in the wider context (for example online/distance), therefore a more detailed Student Engagement Policy will be developed during 2019/20.

Key principles

Principle of non-discrimination: All students should be treated equally in relation to attendance and supervision requirements regardless of their immigration status.

Principle of student wellbeing: Students and staff should be able to engage with one another in confidence whilst seeking to ensure the wellbeing of each other.

Principle of student learning: Students have opportunities to engage with their programmes of study, seeking staff guidance and support, whilst remaining responsible for their own learning.

Principle of ethical data use: the use of student data will be transparent and adhere to all legal protocols.

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1 This Policy should be read alongside the University Rules and Regulations for Students, and the Student Agreement


https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0187078

3 The monitoring of relevant international students' engagement with their studies is a requirement by the Home Office UK Visa and Immigration division (UKVI) for the University to maintain its Tier 4 Sponsor Licence as a sponsor of international student Tier 4 visa holders.
ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy is applicable to all students: undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students, including Home/EU and international students. Some programmes may have specific attendance requirements because of Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body\(^4\) and/or other statutory or contractual requirements and these will be specified in relevant programme documentation.

Attendance and engagement at scheduled sessions and meetings is essential to:

- Ensure students gain the maximum benefit from the learning activities on their programme;
- Meet particular unit and programme-specific intended learning outcomes or accreditation requirements, where safety issues are dealt with or activities cannot be repeated e.g. some labs, fieldtrips or seminars;
- Enhance their own learning experience and those of any group they may be working with;
- Help them to prepare for and understand the requirements of assessments and expectations of graduate work;
- Receive information about their programme of study;
- Allow opportunities to seek advice and assistance where necessary;

The **aims** of the University Attendance Policy are to:

i. support the timely identification of students whose attendance record or patterns suggest that they may be at personal risk or risk of failing to progress, or of breaching their visa compliance requirements, so that follow-up measures can be put in place to support students and encourage engagement with the programme.

ii. Ensure all academic programmes of study have monitoring procedures in place to confirm that all students are engaging satisfactorily with the programme.

As a minimum we expect students to:

- Attend scheduled and timetabled learning and teaching activities;
- Attend placements you are required to complete as part of your programme;
- Engage with and participate fully in all learning activities;
- Complete and submit assessments by set hand-in dates and attend examinations;
- Undertake independent learning in support of your studies as directed by academic staff across your programme;
- Attend scheduled meetings with university staff;
- Inform us if you are unable to attend your timetabled learning and teaching activities (inducing placements) for reasons of illness or other extenuating circumstances
- Students who repeatedly fail to attend may be asked to withdraw.

**Attendance covers such events as:**

- Scheduled learning and teaching events: lectures/seminars
- Academic learning/teaching events (for example, but not limited to laboratory work, supervised field work, placements, workshops, rehearsals and performance classes)
- Meetings with personal tutors/ academic advisers/ supervisors.

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\(^4\) **Programmes such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary: covered by the General Medical Council/General Dental Council/Royal Veterinary College where failure to attend can potentially lead to ‘fitness to practice’ issues.**
Faculty/School/programme requirements

a) Attendance requirements and monitoring patterns may vary in some subjects, attendance may be monitored at the majority of sessions or classes, whilst in other subjects, attendance may be monitored less frequently. Monitored sessions or classes are normally agreed in advance* for each programme of study.

  *In certain circumstances it may be necessary to modify the agreed monitored events retrospectively (after the start of the term), for example when some classes are designated ‘optional’ or when one or more classes are cancelled.

b) Students are responsible for ensuring, in person, that their attendance is recorded.

c) The use of students’ personal data is subject to the provisions of the Policy on How the University uses student personal data5.

d) Subject to the specific approval of the relevant Faculty Education Director, in individual disciplines where this is deemed to be necessary (eg for the purposes of professional references where attendance information is explicitly requested), data may be used to inform general statements provided this information is shared in advance with the student / graduate concerned.

e) Where the attendance of any student falls below the agreed attendance threshold for a particular programme of study, this will trigger a sequence of follow-up contacts with the student to check whether any support or further advice are required. For international Tier 4 visa students follow-up communications will be initiated as the University is legally obliged to report to the Home Office (UKVI) any Tier 4 visa holder who fails, without good cause, to attend the programme, and this is likely to result in the termination of the student’s visa.

f) This Policy and the associated expectations, guidelines and procedures fall within the over-arching provisions of the University Rules and Regulations for Students and relevant student procedures (eg. those relating to appeals and complaints). Re: non-engagement - Sections 22.4 and 22.5 of the Code provides boards of examiners with the power to require students to withdraw who do not engage.

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