

Student Engagement and Attendance Policy 2022/23

Responsibility of	Teaching Committee
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1. **Aims of the policy**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the regulations and processes employed by the University of Westminster to monitor student attendance and engagement on all pre-sessional, foundation, degree and research programmes, including programmes of study with a placement. It needs to be read within the context of the University's efforts to enhance student success and retention, and the strategic initiatives deployed across the whole breadth of the student experience, both within and outside of the curriculum. Further information can be found on the [Student Engagement and Attendance](#) page on the web.
- 1.2 Engagement and attendance monitoring is valued for its potential to indicate those students at risk of leaving their course early and/or failing their programme of study.
- 1.3 While there are additional requirements relating to attendance for the [UK Visas and Immigration Department](#) (UKVI) sponsored visa students, this policy is applicable to the student body as a whole.¹
- 1.4 The University aims to improve the engagement and attendance of all students as the programme of study is designed to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete the course.
- 1.5 This policy applies only to students enrolled on courses run at the University of Westminster premises and would not therefore apply to students studying at collaborative partner locations.

2. **Attendance Requirements**

- 2.1 Students are expected to attend every element of the programme of study. This refers to lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions and any form of summative or formative assessment.
- 2.2 Attendance requirements are inclusive of all sessions whether completed as a large group in lectures, small group for tutorials, or one on one sessions (such as dissertation supervision or work placements).
- 2.3 Attendance is expected for all sessions whether they are on-site or online.
- 2.4 Attendance at enrolment, arrival and any designated pre-sessional courses is compulsory.

¹ The University is required to report all sponsored visa students, who fail to attend and have no satisfactory explanation for the absence, to the UKVI with the consequence that their sponsorship may be withdrawn and they will be withdrawn from the University.

- 2.5 Students undertaking a year or period of time in industry or practice or study at another Higher Education Institution are also expected to attend that placement/period of study away from the University of Westminster.
- 2.6 Students should refer to their timetable, Course and Module handbooks and Blackboard for information on lectures/seminars and all other expected attendance.
- 2.7 Students' attendance and engagement will be monitored and recorded.
- 2.8 Attendance of sponsored visa students is subject to additional controls due to the requirements of the UKVI. Sponsored visa students will be informed of these requirements before enrolment. These controls may be subject to change to respond to developments in UKVI policy. Students will be notified by the University of any changes. Non-compliance with UKVI regulations regarding attendance can result in exclusion from the University.

3. Recording engagement and attendance

- 3.1 Students are active participants in their learning experience and are expected to take responsibility for achieving their potential through engaging fully with those experiences and with the requirements of their chosen course of study. Through such engagement students are able to demonstrate industry, diligence and a positive attitudinal approach to their studies.
- 3.2 In order to alert staff to students who may be experiencing difficulties, all students will have their engagement and attendance monitored.
- 3.3 Information about engagement and attendance will be gathered as follows:
 - Touch Card/Sign In - At enrolment students are issued their official student card. In order to access any University of Westminster property students must swipe their card creating an electronic record of their entry/exit.
 - Touch cards will also be used to register attendance at readers in required contact points (lectures, seminars, tutorials, studio events) and matched against the student's expected contact points in the timetable
 - Student engagement will additionally be monitored through the analysis of assignment submission and performance, assessment offences, Mitigating Circumstances (MC) submissions, missing credits, numbers of modules with clashes, use of Blackboard and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
 - Attendance data for online classes will be obtained through records of log-ins to activities within module blackboard sites and matched against the students expected module events in their CMIS timetable.
- 3.4 This data will be used to collate information on students' engagement and attendance and will help to identify students who may be at risk of not completing their studies. It will also aid the University to develop student retention strategies.
- 3.5 Students studying in the UK on a Student Visa should be aware that attendance at formal teaching sessions is a condition of their visa.

- 3.6 Information is recorded and stored on a secure third party system ([SEA](#)) and internal system for the Learner Analytics Dashboard (LAD). Reports from the system will be analysed and monitored by Personal Tutors, Course Leaders, the Student Retention and Engagement Team (SRE) and other authorised staff. This will enable the University to monitor engagement and contact students who are neither attending nor engaging in any other course related activity. Personal Tutors will provide the primary interface with students on issues of retention and will have a particularly responsibility to identify students at risk of non-continuation and make appropriate interventions as required.
- 3.7 Students will have access to their daily attendance record through the [SEA system](#) via the student hub, phone or PC app.
- 3.8 Academic staff will have access to reports on attendance for the modules for which they have responsibility.
- 3.9 Research students should be in regular contact with their supervisors and be able to provide evidence of continued research and progress in their research topic.
- 3.10 Students on work placement should be in regular contact with their University supervisors or work placement administrators. This contact will be recorded as an engagement activity on the system.
- 3.11 If it is identified that a student has swiped into class but was not in attendance, their record will be amended and the absence recorded. Where a student is found to have continually swiped into class but was not in attendance then disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#).

4. Absence

- 4.1 Short-term absences of up to two weeks due to illness do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that students inform their Personal Tutor if they are not able to attend a fixed teaching session or individual supervision meeting. Longer periods should be covered by a medical certificate.
- 4.2 Instances of illness or other unforeseen circumstance that affect an assessment must be reported to the University, and where relevant, a [Mitigating Circumstances claim](#) made online and completed with the relevant evidence (e.g. doctors or hospital note). Further details are found in the [Mitigating Circumstances Regulations](#).
- 4.3 Students are permitted to apply to interrupt their programme of study for personal or medical reasons. Guidance and advice on these processes can be sought from Tutors, the Student Centre or Student Advisors.
- 4.4 The University of Westminster is required to maintain attendance records for all sponsored visa students and to report absence to UKVI. This monitoring will comply with the requirements of the UKVI and students will receive information on this process and the implications of any absence as part of their enrolment at the University.
- 4.5 Students studying on a Student visa may request an authorised absence from the University Visa Compliance Team. This will be discussed with the College. An absence may only be approved if it is unavoidable and will not adversely affect academic progress.

- 4.6 Continued absence from scheduled activities will trigger a process of communication and support, which will encourage students to resume their studies. The University will endeavour to identify the reason for the absence and provide appropriate support if this is required.
- 4.7 In accordance with the [Academic Regulations](#), students who are no longer attending will be presumed withdrawn.