

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2016-17 (Wales Campuses)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. For many students, levels of attendance at taught classes have a positive correlation with academic engagement and academic attainment. The University is committed to supporting student attainment and to the implementation of support systems for students who, for a variety of reasons, may be struggling with their studies or attendance at classes. Early identification of such students is vital and attendance monitoring is a critical aspect of this. The University may then offer timely assistance and guidance before the student's situation deteriorates, and/or they leave their programme of study. The University describes attendance monitoring for these academic and pastoral purposes as 'engagement and attainment' monitoring, which is managed at Programme/School level.
- 1.2. However, in order to retain its UK Visa and Immigration Service (UKVI) sponsor license, which enables the University to recruit international students, the University has attendance monitoring and reporting obligations in respect of students who require a visa to study in the UK, and for whom the University has issued a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number. For these students, the University implements defined attendance management mechanisms, and retains central oversight.
- 1.3. Thus, first, this policy specifies the requirements for academic engagement and attainment attendance management of all students. Second, the policy details the University's attendance management of international students who hold a visa, particularly under Tier 4 of the points-based immigration system, and for whom the University is Sponsor.

2. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT AND ATTAINMENT

- 2.1. Schools will monitor the attendance of all students for engagement and attainment purposes. However, responsibility for determining the approach to such monitoring is devolved to Schools (which must be in accord with the University's academic quality framework) and must include the principles specified in the remainder of Section 2.
- 2.2. Schools should include information for students about any general and/or specific attendance requirements for programmes of study in an 'Attendance Management for Engagement and Attainment' statement in the student Programme of Study Handbook or other suitable document that is made available to students.
- 2.3. Each School will ensure that its staff are aware of the University Attendance Policy and the School-specific arrangements.
- 2.4. Undergraduate (UG), post graduate (taught) (PGT) and postgraduate (research) (PGR) students should attend all of their scheduled academic sessions (e.g. lectures, tutorials,

seminars, workshops, supervisory meetings). Students will register their attendance at academic sessions by signing a paper register; this may take the form of a sign-in sheet, supervisory form or Appendix AP1 Record of Attendance, as appropriate. Schools/module tutors will submit the paper register to the Faculty Office normally within two days of the session having taken place. This data will be recorded in a University devised electronic attendance monitoring system by the module tutors and/or the Faculty Office.

- 2.5. Where there are circumstances in which a student is unable to attend for good reason, the School should provide students with an appropriate method to report their absence.
- 2.6. In determining whether a student is 'engaged' with their programme of studies or not, it is appropriate for Schools to exercise a degree of academic judgement to decide when a lack of attendance is having a negative effect on a student's academic progress and whether a student is submitting formative/summative coursework in a timely manner and attending all required examinations. Some programmes of study may have specific minimum levels of attendance, particularly where there are professional requirements.
- 2.7. Interventions taken by Schools in response to poor attendance may be informal or formal, as appropriate to each student's circumstances. Schools should maintain their own records of the student attendance monitoring activities they undertake.

3. UKVI-RELATED ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1. This section details the policy regarding the attendance management of international students, particularly those on a Tier 4 visa. Actions taken with respect to the monitoring of student attendance for engagement and attainment will not normally be used as part of the attendance management data for UKVI-related attendance management purposes.
- 3.2. At the beginning of each academic term or semester (as appropriate), the Registry will provide Faculties with a list of visa students whose attendance must be monitored.
- 3.3. The University will inform Tier 4 students of the specific attendance requirements in a statement in the student Programme of Study Handbook or other suitable medium that is made available to students.
- 3.4. Attendance data will be recorded in the electronic system as per Section 2.4. Where the data has been input by module tutors, the Faculty Office will conduct accuracy-checks of the registers to reconcile the paper register entries for international students with those recorded in the electronic system.
- 3.5. Each academic session represents an 'attendance point', that is, a scheduled academic learning, teaching or assessment event at which a lecturer, tutor or supervisor is in attendance. The location of the event is irrelevant.

- 3.6. If a student misses a scheduled attendance point it will be recorded as an absence, unless the absence has been authorised, normally using Appendix AP2 Request for Authorised Absence. The Guidance Notes within the form make reference to acceptable reasons for authorised absence and the evidentiary requirements.
- 3.7. In cases where students plan to travel away from the campus during term-time, vacation periods or at the end of their studies, they are required to submit Appendix AP2a Travel and Contact Details Form to provide details of their travel itinerary prior to their departure.
- 3.8. Given the different attendance patterns required for different levels/types of programme, the attendance policy differentiates in requirements for:
- Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (Taught) Part I students (PGT Part I). See Section 3.9.
 - Postgraduate (taught) Part II students (PGT Part II). See Section 3.10.
 - Postgraduate (research) students (PGR). See Section 3.11.

3.9. UNDERGRADUATE (UG) AND POSTGRADUATE (TAUGHT) PART I STUDENTS (PGT PART I)

- 3.9.1. At the start of the academic year, a 'minimum number of expected contact points' (MECPs) per student, per week will be identified by each Faculty. For UG students, this is typically any 3 of the available attendance points per week; for PGT Part I students it is typically any 2 per week. However, the weekly MECPs will vary according to the programme being studied and its delivery pattern; there is likely to be reduced contact in assessment weeks and reading weeks, for example. The Faculties will record in the electronic system the Schedule of MECPs for the duration of the programme, to the point at which learning, teaching and/or assessment ends (which may not coincide with the end of term).
- 3.9.2. The students' level of achievement of these MECPs, as recorded in the electronic attendance management system, will be used by Faculties to monitor UKVI-related attendance in two ways and at designated checkpoints:
- a) Consecutive absence will be monitored at weekly checkpoints.
 - i. Students who miss 5 or more of the MECPs consecutively and adjacent to the checkpoint, will be issued with an email warning (Letter AL1a Attendance Warning (Consecutive Absence)).
 - ii. Students who miss 10 of the MECPs consecutively will be withdrawn and have their visa cancelled (Letter AL1b Notification of Withdrawal due to Consecutive Absence).
 - b) Percentage termly attendance will be monitored at mid-term and end-of-term checkpoints.
 - (1) End of term checkpoint: the count of attendance points achieved by a student for a term divided by the aggregated count of MECPs per week for the term will be used to calculate a percentage level of attendance. For

instance, if the term is of 10 weeks duration and a student is expected to achieve 3 MECPs per week, then the total MECPs for the term would be 30. If 'Student A' had attended 40 attendance points, then he or she would have achieved 100% of the MECPs required and therefore no action would be taken. If 'Student B' had attended 18 attendance points, his or her attendance would be 60% of the MECPs required and he or she would be liable to disciplinary action, as follows:

- i. Any student whose percentage attendance for a term is 40% or above and below 70% will receive a warning letter from the Faculty informing them that their attendance has fallen below the level required by the University (Letter AL2b Percentage Attendance Warning). The Faculty will meet with the student at the start of the next academic term to advise them that continued poor attendance places them at risk of being withdrawn.
- ii. Any student who has received Letter AL2b Percentage Attendance Warning and whose attendance for a second term during the academic year is 40% or above and below 70% will be issued with a notification that informs them that they will be withdrawn (Letter AL2c Notification of Withdrawal due to Percentage Attendance (Second Offence)).
- iii. Any student whose attendance falls below 40% for an academic term will be issued with a notification of withdrawal letter that informs them that they will be withdrawn (Letter AL2d Notification of Withdrawal due to Percentage Attendance Below 40%).

(2) Mid-term checkpoint: the count of attendance points achieved by a student at a mid-point during a term will be calculated using the principles specified in 3.9.2(b)(1). Any student whose percentage attendance for a part-term is below 70% will receive a reminder email from the Faculty informing them that their percentage attendance to date has fallen below the level required by the University and must improve to avoid disciplinary action at the end-of-term (Letter AL2a Percentage Attendance Reminder).

- 3.9.3. Each period of measuring the percentage of student attendance will be reset at the beginning of a new term.
- 3.9.4. For undergraduates, attendance is assessed across the duration of a level of study and is reset at the beginning of the new level of study. For postgraduate Part I students, attendance is assessed across the duration of the level of study within Part I and is reset at the beginning of study at Part II.
- 3.9.5. The principles specified in 3.9.4 notwithstanding, the University reserves the right to take disciplinary action where a student evidences ongoing unsatisfactory attendance levels.

3.10. POSTGRADUATE (TAUGHT) PART II STUDENTS (PGT PART II).

- 3.10.1. The attendance pattern of a Masters Part II student completing a Dissertation, Major Project or equivalent differs from that of the student attending taught modules in Part I. A Supervisor will be allocated, who will have regular face-to-face contact with his/her student, which may be supplemented by Skype, telephone and/or email contact. The face-to-face attendance points will be used to monitor attendance.
- 3.10.2. Normally there will be at least 10 attendance points distributed through the duration of Part II studies. These may be group workshops or individual supervision sessions.
- 3.10.3. At the commencement of Part II studies, Faculties will develop a Schedule of MECPs for PGT Part II students. There will be a minimum of 10 MECPs scheduled during the duration of Part II, with at least one per month during term time, to the point at which the student will have completed all learning and assessment activity (which may not coincide with the end of term). Anticipated trips to the student's home country for fieldwork and data gathering will be noted, as will vacation periods. The Schedule will be recorded in the electronic attendance system.
- 3.10.4. It is permissible in reasonable circumstances, for a student and Supervisor to reschedule the date of an attendance point/expected contact. In such cases, the Supervisor must inform the Faculty Office so that the Schedule can be updated.
- 3.10.5. At weekly checkpoints the students' level of achievement of the MECPs will be used by Faculties to monitor UKVI-related attendance and consecutive absence:
- a) Students who miss 2 or more of the MECPs consecutively will be issued with an email warning (Letter AL1a Attendance Warning (Consecutive Absence)).
 - b) Students who have received an attendance warning and who subsequently miss 2 or more of the MECPs consecutively, within the same academic year, will be issued with a final warning (Letter AL1c Final Warning (Consecutive Absence)).
 - c) Students who have received a final warning and who subsequently miss 2 or more of the MECPs consecutively, within the same academic year, will be withdrawn and have their visa cancelled (Letter AL1d Notification of Withdrawal due to Consecutive Absence (PGT Part II)).
- 3.9.6 Attendance is assessed across the duration of Part II.

3.11. POSTGRADUATE (RESEARCH) STUDENTS (PGR)

3.11.1. Postgraduate research programmes include:

- Part II of the MRes or Professional Doctorate;
- all MPhil and PhD by Research;
- PhD by Published Work students.

3.11.2. The Supervisory Team will have regular face-to-face contact with their student, which may be supplemented by Skype, telephone and/or email contact. The face-to-face contact points will be used to monitor attendance.

3.11.3. The attendance pattern of a postgraduate research student would normally include at least 10 attendance points distributed through the academic year. These may be group workshops or individual supervision sessions.

3.11.4. At the commencement of PGR studies, Faculties will develop a Schedule of MECPs for PGR students (based on the RM3 Record of Research Contact Schedule). There will be a minimum of 10 MECPs scheduled across the academic year, with at least one per month during term time, to the point at which the student will have completed all learning and assessment activity (which may not coincide with the end of term). Anticipated trips to the student's home country for fieldwork and data gathering will be noted, as will vacation periods. The Schedule will be recorded in the electronic attendance system.

3.11.5. It is permissible in reasonable circumstances, for a student and Supervisor to reschedule the date of an attendance point/expected contact. In such cases, the Supervisor must inform the Faculty Office so that the Schedule can be updated.

3.11.6. At weekly checkpoints the students' level of achievement of the MECPs will be used by Faculties to monitor UKVI-related attendance and consecutive absence:

- a) Students who miss 2 or more of the MECPs consecutively will be issued with an email warning (Letter AL1a Attendance Warning (Consecutive Absence)).
- b) Students who have received an attendance warning and who subsequently miss 1 or more of the MECPs, within the same academic year, will be issued with a final warning (Letter AL1c Final Warning (Consecutive Absence)).
- c) Students who have received a final warning and who subsequently miss 1 or more of the MECPs, within the same academic year, will be withdrawn and have their visa cancelled (Letter AL1d Notification of Withdrawal due to Consecutive Absence (PGT Part II)).

3.11.7. Attendance is assessed across the duration of an academic year of study and is reset at the beginning of the new academic year.

3.12. The University's Registry provides designated points during the academic year at which Tier 4 visa students are required to enrol or re-register. Any student who fails to enrol

or re-register will be withdrawn and his/her visa will be cancelled, subject to the appeals process – see Section 3.13.

- 3.13. Students may appeal an attendance-related disciplinary action through the University procedures relating to student appeals (see Appendix AP3 Administrative Appeal (Attendance) Procedure). Appeal applications must be submitted using Appendix AP4 Administrative Appeal (Attendance) form.
- 3.14. Authorised absence will not count as an absence for reporting purposes and will not count towards the calculation of consecutive absences. It may reduce the expected contacts for the authorised absence time period but does not reset a student's consecutive absences to 0.
- 3.15. The University retains its sponsor duties for Tier 4 students during approved placements and periods of study abroad. All students on a placement or study abroad will have an established attendance monitoring plan with a minimum number of expected contact points which will be agreed in advance with the Placement Provider or partner institution.
- 3.16. At the weekly checkpoints, the Faculties will ensure that all attendance management activity for the previous week is up-to-date and recorded in the electronic attendance system:
- All attendance data from sign-in sheets/supervisory forms;
 - Authorised absences;
 - Formal attendance management interventions, including warning letters and withdrawals.
- 3.17. On a weekly basis, by the following Friday of each week, the Faculties will ensure that the designated University shared electronic folder contains:
- complete attendance monitoring spreadsheets for that time period;
 - authorised absence documents with supporting evidence;
 - documentation relating to any formal attendance management intervention, including warning letters and withdrawal forms.
- 3.18. The Faculties will liaise with the University Registry in order that:
- the student's file is updated with copies of all documents relating to the disciplinary process;
 - the student is withdrawn from their programme of study, if appropriate;
 - the student's sponsorship is withdrawn within 10 days of the decision (via the UKVI Sponsor Management System), if appropriate, and subject to the appeals process.
- 3.19. The University may amend any of the above in line with new legislation and good practice.