



# **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Applicable to all cohorts

Approved June 2021  
Effective September 2023

Copies and alternative formats may be obtained from the  
Student Administration and Support Division on request

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University recognises that regular attendance at teaching and learning activities is a key element in successful student retention, progression, achievement and employability. The monitoring of student attendance is a supportive – not a punitive – measure.
- 1.2 Lack of attendance may also serve as an identifying factor in cases where students may be experiencing difficulties – whether academically and/or personally – and might need particular support.
- 1.3 Where issues are raised at any stage of this Policy that give rise to significant concerns regarding a student's health – whether that relates to their behaviour, disruption or the risk presented to themselves or to others – then appropriate reference should be made to the Policy and Procedures to Determine and Support a Student's Fitness to Continue in Study, available [here](#).
- 1.4 The University also has a legal duty for the majority of its students to monitor attendance at teaching activities and to act on non-attendance. This legal duty arises from a requirement to report attendance to UK student loan agencies and to UK and overseas based external sponsors, as well as compliance responsibilities in relation to the sponsorship requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for the monitoring of international students studying in the UK on a student visa.
- 1.5 Some programmes, such as degree apprenticeships or those accredited by professional or statutory regulatory bodies (PSRBs), may have their own attendance requirements, which must be met in order to fulfil the standards of their award. Where these are more rigorous than that set by the University in this Policy, the requirements of the PSRB and/or degree apprenticeship provider shall prevail.

## 2. Principles, definitions and expectations

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all taught<sup>1</sup> students<sup>2</sup> registered on a campus-based (i.e. not wholly online) academic programme at the University. This includes the taught components of Master of Research programmes and non-award bearing programmes such as inbound Study Abroad arrangements.
- 2.2 The University expects students to **attend** all scheduled learning sessions associated with each module or programme which they have elected to pursue, and to **engage** with the relevant learning and support resources that are made available to them.
- 2.3 **Attendance** encompasses being present at scheduled learning, teaching and other activities required by the module and/or programme. This **may** include:
  - Physical attendance at face-to-face scheduled teaching and/or other learning events **as required** by the module and/or programme (e.g. lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, tutorials, field trips and examinations);
  - Virtual attendance at scheduled synchronous online teaching and/or other learning events **as required** by the module and/or programme (e.g. synchronous participation in an online seminar or tutorial).

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<sup>1</sup> Attendance expectations for students registered on research programmes are prescribed within the Postgraduate Research Code of Practice Appendix 2: Policy on Research Supervision, which can be found [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Including those students registered on degree apprenticeship programmes.

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- 2.4 **Engagement** (as distinct from **attendance**) encompasses engaging with, and participating in, guided independent or group study activities, assessment and feedback, and any other activities required by the module and/or programme. This **may** include:
- Submitting formative and/or summative assessment within the defined deadlines;
  - Accessing and/or interacting asynchronously with online learning materials (e.g. lecture recordings, learning materials) and/or completing tasks in virtual learning environments;
  - Attending (physically and/or virtually) meetings with Academic Advisors.
- 2.5 Attendance and engagement are defined differently within this Policy because not all forms of engagement require students to be present, either physically or virtually, at a particular time and place.
- 2.6 Attendance expectations may be adjusted as required on health and wellbeing grounds, and where supported by a Student Support Plan<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.7 The **attendance** expectations and interventions outlined within section 4 of this Policy are defined at the level of a student's **programme of study** (as opposed to an individual module or study component).
- 2.8 Where expectations and interventions within this Policy refer to a **contact point**, this shall be defined as any whole day where a student is expected (i.e. timetabled) to **attend** one or more teaching or learning event(s). A student shall be deemed to have met a contact point where they attend at least one teaching or learning event(s) on this day.
- 2.9 The University's monitoring of student attendance will be based on digital records, where available. Where a digital record of required attendance does not exist, alternative manual monitoring processes may be undertaken.
- 2.10 During periods of study off campus (e.g. fieldwork, dissertation periods, study abroad and industrial/professional placements<sup>4</sup>), the University will continue to expect all students to attend and engage satisfactorily with this element of their programme. However, the attendance expectations and intervention thresholds identified in section 4.2 shall **not** apply during these periods.
- 2.11 Students on study abroad programmes and industrial/professional<sup>4</sup> placements are expected to confirm their arrival abroad/on placement at the beginning of their first semester, and to confirm their ongoing attendance at the beginning of their second semester (where applicable). Where students fail to confirm their arrival and/or attendance at one of these checkpoints, they will be escalated to **Stage One** of the intervention process (section 4.4).
- 2.12 Students on study abroad programmes and industrial/professional placements should also expect to be in regular contact with their Academic Advisor – at least once per semester throughout this period.
- 2.13 Some work placements involve a contract between the University and the placement provider whereby the latter will inform the University if attendance falls below the contracted expectations.

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<sup>3</sup> The Policy Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students is available [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> This does **not** include students on clinical placements, who will be subject to the normal attendance expectations and the intervention thresholds identified in section 4.2 or in accordance with the requirements of the relevant PSRB.

- 2.14 Students undertaking a dissertation as part of their programme of postgraduate study are expected to have regular contact with their allocated supervisor. Where no contact has been received from the student within a rolling one-month period, they will be escalated to **Stage One** of the intervention process (section 4.4).
- 2.15 Students are responsible for ensuring that they follow the correct procedures in place at the time to record their attendance. The expectations on and responsibilities of students are outlined in the Appendix to this Policy.

### 3. Absence

- 3.1 Where a student fails to attend a required, scheduled learning activity, as defined in section 2.3, their absence will be recorded as either **unauthorised** or **authorised**.
- 3.2 An instance of **unauthorised** absence from a scheduled session will be recorded in one or more of the following non-exhaustive list of circumstances:
- Where a student is not present at that scheduled session without good cause;
  - Where a student attends a different session to that which is scheduled within their timetable without good cause;
  - Where a student is present at their scheduled session, but has not used the appropriate method in place at the time to record their attendance;
  - Where a student has arrived too late to their scheduled session for their attendance to be recorded.
- 3.3 An instance of **authorised** absence will be recorded in one or more the following circumstances:
- Where absence from a scheduled session is approved by the relevant School – in advance or after the event – for exceptional, **evidenced** reasons, in line with sections 3.4 through to 3.7;
  - Where a scheduled teaching event is cancelled;
  - Where an absence results from an unavoidable clash in scheduled activities.
- 3.4 Students are responsible for ensuring that they follow the correct procedures in place at the time to request authorisation for any absence. This will normally require a student to inform their School Support Office (or equivalent) **in advance of the scheduled event(s) wherever possible**. No absences will normally be authorised where notification is received later than **five working days** after the date(s) of absence, or where a student fails to contact their School Support Office.
- 3.5 Where students are absent from a scheduled session or sessions (as defined in section 2.3) through illness (or other reason as outlined in section 3.7), they may self-certify their absence for a period of **no longer than seven consecutive calendar days**. Absence for longer than seven consecutive calendar days must be supported by a medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner, otherwise the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The University may revise these timeframes and/or requirements in the event of major disruption (e.g. a global and/or national pandemic). In revising such measures, the University will be guided by its commitment to its students.

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- 3.6 Students may only self-certify their absence on a maximum of two occasions within one term. All additional absences will be considered to be **unauthorised**, unless exceptional approval is granted by the Head of Department, or relevant delegate.
- 3.7 In addition to illness, the following constitutes a **non-exhaustive** list of reasons for absence that may result in a recording of **authorised** absence, subject to School approval where appropriate:
- Medical appointment;
  - Parental or other caring responsibilities;
  - Bereavement or other compassionate grounds;
  - Unforeseen domestic (or other) emergency (including isolated IT issues);
  - Appointment with Police or visa authority for immigration purposes;
  - Interview (e.g. for a placement or internship), or other career-related appointment;
  - Jury service;
  - Disability (in accordance with a Student Support Plan<sup>6</sup>);
  - Approved University visits, events, workshops and/or conferences.
- 3.8 **Students are not able to self-certify their absence from examinations and/or any other submission of summative assessment under any circumstances<sup>7</sup>.**
- 3.9 Students are expected to take responsibility for their attendance and absence records – which will be made available to them via the appropriate system in place at the time – and to bring to the attention of their School any discrepancies in their timetable and/or their attendance/absence records in reasonable time after the scheduled event.

### 4. Interventions and escalation

- 4.1 The monitoring of student attendance is a supportive – not a punitive – measure. The intention of the University's interventions and escalation process is to assist and support students to get the help they might need and, wherever possible, to resume attendance on their programme.
- 4.2 Students will enter a staged escalation process should **either**:
- Five consecutive contact points (as defined in section 2.8) be missed and recorded as **unauthorised**; or,
  - A student's overall attendance rate<sup>8</sup> (based on **all** scheduled learning activity) drops below 70% over the preceding four-week period.
- 4.3 Students' overall % percentage attendance rate will be reviewed on **at least** two occasions each teaching semester.

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<sup>6</sup> The Policy Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students is available [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> In such instances, students should follow the procedures set out in Appendix M (including Annex 1) of the Code of Practice on Assessment: Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, available [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> This includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

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### Stage One

- 4.4 Students who reach **either** of the thresholds identified in section 4.2 (or, where applicable, breach the requirements described in sections 2.11 and 2.14) will be escalated to **Stage One**. A notification will be sent to the student to alert them to their attendance record, and to signpost them to appropriate mechanisms of support. The student will be required to respond to this notification within five working days, and to resume attendance on their programme.
- 4.5 If a student has good underlying reasons<sup>9</sup> for a lack of attendance then it is vitally important that they inform their School at this stage in order to prevent further escalation and for the correct help and/or course of action to be offered. It is expected that the student will resume attendance on their programme at the earliest possible opportunity following this initiation of contact.

### Stage Two

- 4.6 Students will be escalated to **Stage Two** in one or more of the following circumstances:
- Where no response from the student to the notification described in section 4.4 is received within five working days;
  - Where the student's absence extends to eight consecutive unauthorised missed contact points;
  - Where the student's response to the first stage notification is, in the view of the receiving School, insufficient to warrant recommending an alternative course of action.
- 4.7 Escalation to **Stage Two** will involve the student being invited – physically or virtually – to an informal meeting to discuss their absence. The meeting may be held with the student's Academic Advisor, Liaison Academic Tutor, or an appropriate Learning and Teaching Support Officer. The meeting will be an opportunity for the student to discuss their circumstances in more detail, and for the School – in liaison with the student – to draw up an action plan in relation to any further academic and/or pastoral support that might be required. It is expected that the student will resume attendance on their programme at the earliest possible opportunity following agreement of this action plan.

### Stage Three

- 4.8 Students will be escalated to **Stage Three** in one or more of the following circumstances:
- Where no response from the student is received to the invitation described in section 4.7 within five working days;
  - Where the student responds but fails to attend the arranged meeting, unless exceptional circumstances are offered and accepted by the School, in which case a further meeting shall be arranged;
  - Where the student's absence extends to ten consecutive unauthorised missed contact points;
  - Where the student fails to resume attendance on their programme despite agreement of an action plan, or where the student fails to adhere to the action plans satisfactorily.
- 4.9 If a student fails to resume attendance on their programme after **Stage Three** has been reached; continues to have poor and/or intermittent patterns of attendance; or fails to take any recommended action(s) which have been put in place to seek to mitigate any issues they are experiencing, then the

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<sup>9</sup> Such as those defined within Appendix M (including Annex 1) of the Code of Practice on Assessment: Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, available [here](#).

student's case will be referred to a formal Progress Panel (acting on behalf of a Board of Examiners) within ten working days.

- 4.10 A detailed record of all notes, correspondence and action plans shall be retained within students' records in all cases and at all stages.

### 5. Sanctions and consequences

- 5.1 Progress Panels have the authority to remove a student from their programme of study for a lack of attendance. The Panel will review the student's case holistically, taking account not only of their poor attendance, but also of relevant engagement, attainment and welfare indicators.
- 5.2 Good academic attainment and/or engagement with activities which are not mandatory for attendance monitoring purposes (e.g. attendance at non-timetabled drop-in sessions) cannot fully excuse a rate or pattern of attendance which falls below the minimum requirements stated in this Policy. In such circumstances, a student will be instructed to improve their attendance and warned of the consequences of not doing so.
- 5.3 Progress Panels are convened and constituted in accordance with the University's Guide on the Progress of Students on Taught Programmes of Study (Appendix E, Code of Practice on Assessment). Students shall have the right of appeal to a Faculty Progress Committee against any decision to terminate their studies, as prescribed within the Code of Practice.

### International students

- 5.4 The University has additional compliance responsibilities in relation to those international students studying at the University on a student visa. These students are required to be in regular attendance as part of the ongoing conditions of their visa. As the student's immigration sponsor, the University has obligations to UKVI to closely monitor their attendance at scheduled sessions and to take appropriate action where required.<sup>10</sup>
- 5.5 **Where a visa-holding student's studies are terminated by the Progress Panel – and subject to the outcome of any subsequent appeal – the student's change of circumstances will be reported to UKVI and the University will withdraw its sponsorship of the student. The student will then be required to leave the UK.**

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<sup>10</sup> In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, UKVI has introduced temporary concessions that allow international students with a student visa to study via distance learning, and hence attendance may be monitored purely based on virtual attendance should Covid-19 measures prevent the student from physically attending.

To mitigate these concessions, UKVI has prescribed reduced timeframes for acting should a student studying via distance learning stop attending. If a student on a student visa fails to resume attendance on their programme within 30 days of the first intervention, the University will now be required to withdraw sponsorship. To ensure we comply with this requirement, a Progress Panel must be held **within five working days** of a student being referred to one.

If it is not feasible for Progress Panels to be held within five working days for all students, those studying on a student visa via distance learning will be prioritised to ensure their cases can be heard within this timeframe. Students studying on a student visa but via face-to-face or a hybrid of face-to-face and virtual attendance do not need to be prioritised in the same way.

## 6. Misuse and fraudulent activity

- 6.1 The University expects its students to act honestly in relation to their records of attendance. In accordance with section 3.2, where a student has been unable to record their attendance at a scheduled activity, or otherwise believes that there is an error on their attendance record, then they should contact their School in reasonable time in order to address this.
- 6.2 Any attempt by a student to falsify their attendance records will be addressed in line with the University's Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline.
- 6.3 Students must only record their **own** attendance at scheduled sessions. If a student is identified as having fraudulently recorded attendance for another student or students, then all students involved will be dealt with in line with the University's Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline.
- 6.4 The following is a non-exhaustive list of what **may** constitute misuse and fraudulent activity:
- Where a student provides their personal IT credentials, or a time-limited attendance access code, to another student for the purpose of that student falsely recording their attendance at a scheduled activity;
  - Where a student provides their personal or University property (e.g. phone or ID card) to another student for the purpose of that student falsely recording their attendance at a scheduled activity;
  - Where a student may develop a pattern of behaviour for registering their attendance at scheduled activities but then absenting themselves from said activities before an appropriate time;
  - Where a student falsifies their reasons for non-attendance, or their reasons for not successfully registering attendance, in an attempt to claim an instance of authorised absence.

## 7. Equality and inclusivity

- 7.1 This Policy has been developed with full regard to the Equality Act 2010 and has undergone a full Equality Impact Assessment.
- 7.2 The University supports disabled students as part of its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, disabled students are protected against discrimination arising from their disability and any failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- 7.3 The University is committed to providing an inclusive environment which enables all students and staff to achieve their potential. Its Policy and Procedures Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students outlines in detail how the University delivers on this commitment.

## 8. Data processing

- 8.1 The personal data that are collected and processed for the purposes of this Policy are done so in accordance with the University's legitimate interest to help students interact successfully with their study programme, and to support their welfare and success.
- 8.2 The University will hold and process students' personal data in compliance with its obligations as Data Controller under the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. It will not

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share students' data with third parties unless it holds an appropriate consent from the student, is under a statutory or regulatory obligation to do so, or is otherwise permitted to do so under the appropriate Acts of Parliament.

- 8.3 In the interests of transparency, the University maintains a series of Privacy Statements which outline in more detail how it collects, retains and processes students' personal data, which may be updated from time to time. These are available at [www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data\\_protection/privacy-notice/](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data_protection/privacy-notice/).

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## APPENDIX

### STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Students will:

- Ensure they are familiar with the terms and expectations contained within this Policy;
- Take responsibility for their own attendance;
- Attend all timetabled teaching and learning sessions associated with their programme of study, and ensure they have their attendance recorded correctly;
- Participate and engage in all modules and programmes in which they are registered, including all guided independent study, assessment and feedback;
- Self-report any absences which may occur during the course of their programme, in advance wherever possible, and/or by the deadline set by the relevant School;
- Ensure they submit a medical certificate for absences lasting more than seven consecutive calendar days;
- Review their attendance and absence records on a regular basis and bring to the attention of their School any discrepancies in their timetable and/or their attendance/absence records in reasonable time after the scheduled event;
- Ensure that they check their University of Liverpool email account on a regular basis for any formal notifications/communications;
- Ensure, where applicable, that their attendance matches the requirements of their placement provider;
- Attend all necessary formal examinations and submit coursework by the published submission dates;
- Obtain a replacement student card as a matter of priority if it becomes lost, damaged or forgotten;
- Maintain regular contact with their Academic Advisor;
- Observe the University's Policy on Extenuating Circumstances as laid out in the Code of Practice on Assessment, and ensure they are aware of how, where and when to apply for consideration of extenuating circumstances;
- Attend any meetings with Academic Advisors, Student Experience staff, Programme Directors etc. which are called as the result of concerning patterns or rates of attendance.

#### The University will:

- Ensure that all students on taught programmes are aware of the University's expectations in relation to attendance;
- Ensure that accessible and convenient arrangements are in place for students to record and monitor their attendance and absence;
- Provide students with convenient access to their attendance records;
- Communicate regularly with students to update them on their levels of attendance;
- Support students' attendance by providing a range of professional and academic services;
- Ensure that all students, prior to and during their studies, have access to this Policy.