UNIVERSITY FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE 2015-16

This framework is to cover all students who are studying at the Liverpool or London campuses on taught programmes of study, including MRes programmes. The framework covers all formally scheduled activity associated with the delivery of modules and study of a programme on a University of Liverpool campus.

The attendance recording and monitoring requirements for Postgraduate Research students are set out in the Guide on the Academic Progress of Postgraduate Research Students (The Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research).

This framework is related to other University policies and procedures, including:

- Student Sickness Absence Policy
- Mitigating Circumstances Policy
- Policy for discharging sponsorship responsibilities for Student-Specific Record Keeping and Reporting under the UK Home Office’s Points-based Immigration System (PBS)
- Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline
- Code of Practice on Assessment
- Student Charter

1. Introduction

Students are expected to attend all scheduled activities for their programme of study. It is widely recognised that students who attend regularly are more successful in their studies. The University is committed to supporting students’ active engagement with their programme and to identifying student absence early, in order to address any issues this may highlight. Schools have a variety of systems in place to monitor students’ engagement and progress on their academic programme of study and this framework aims to formalise the minimum requirements of the University in relation to student attendance recording and engagement monitoring on students and staff. The primary reason for recording students’ attendance and monitoring their engagement is to support students in achieving their degree. It is acknowledged that attendance in class is not the sole indicator that a student is engaging with their studies, but non-attendance is often an early sign that a student may be experiencing difficulties with their studies.

It is accepted that one of the key features of study at University is independent and self-directed study for which the student is monitored through their output of coursework submissions including drafts, performance in all assessments and in their overall academic progress, and not just by attendance at scheduled activities.
Activities should be designated as ‘recordable’ based on sound academic rationale for the respective discipline area.

The key principles are:

1.1 Students are expected to attend all teaching and learning activities unless explicitly stated otherwise in the module rubric;
1.2 Where students do not attend due to circumstances such as illness, the existing Sickness Absence Policy must be adhered to;
1.3 Students’ attendance at some or all of the scheduled activities will be recorded and monitored in line with this framework;
1.4 Student attendance recording and monitoring applies to all students within the scope of this framework;
1.5 Attendance recording takes place at module level;
1.6 The monitoring of recorded student attendance is determined and takes place within the subject area with overall responsibility for the student, such as at programme level.

2. Attendance Recording

In order to monitor effectively students’ engagement with their programme and to take remedial action where a student’s engagement is not at the required level, the recording of attendance of students at various scheduled activities is essential; these are referred to as ‘recordable activities’.

2.1 Attendance recording takes place at module/component\(^1\) level;
2.2 Each module will clearly list the activities through which the module is delivered and will identify those activities at which students’ attendance will be recorded;
2.3 If an activity is identified as recordable, students’ attendance at that activity must be recorded. It is not expected that every activity associated with the delivery of a module must be identified as recordable unless this is required and it is possible to record attendance;
2.4 Typically each module must have a minimum of one defined recordable activity across a period of two calendar weeks, where possible, (e.g. a lecture, workshop, lab, tutorial) in addition to submission of coursework and/or attendance at examination. There may be more than this. For modules which deliver intensive teaching blocks followed by student independent study, or for periods of teaching through blended learning, the expectation is that this minimum definition could be met as an average for the period as a whole;
2.5 Heads of School, with the support of teaching staff and the School Manager, are responsible for ensuring that all activity defined as recordable is recorded;
2.6 Students undertaking non-timetabled activity (e.g. clinical placements, industrial placements, study abroad, dissertation supervision) are expected to adhere to the relevant attendance and engagement requirements of the respective placement.

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\(^1\) Component in this context refers to a discrete element or specific part of a non-modular clinical programme.
3. **Engagement Monitoring**

Engagement monitoring commences once a student is fully registered and after the end of the prescribed registration period, normally two weeks at the start of both semesters, allowing for full registration to be completed and any changes to students’ module registrations to be made.

3.1 The monitoring of recorded student attendance takes place within the area which has overall responsibility for the student which is normally at programme level or at the organisation level which determines a student’s academic progress;

3.2 Engagement requirements, including minimum attendance requirements, are defined at programme level which would set minimum attendance thresholds which, if not met, would trigger some form of action by the School or Department;

3.3 It is expected that each student should have a minimum of one recorded activity per calendar week across their programme of study, except for weeks where no activity is scheduled;

3.4 It is expected that for part-time students, the frequency for recording attendance at recordable activities is the same as for full-time students but it is recognised that, at programme level, they may not have one recordable activity per calendar week across their programme because of the study intensity. For students who repeat failed modules with attendance, the frequency will be the same as full-time students for the period of time spent by the student in active study on the specific module. Students who are repeating modules without attendance should not attend;

3.5 Heads of School, normally through the programme director and supported by the School Manager, are responsible for the monitoring of student engagement. The monitoring of student engagement by reviewing attendance at recordable activities will form part of the School’s overall monitoring of students’ academic progress and their support for their wellbeing. A range of systems will be in place to do this, including the Academic Advisor system;

3.6 If, without good reason, a student fails to attend any of the identified recordable activities across their programme of study within a two calendar week period, a first communication must be sent from the School informing the student that they are required to explain the reason for this to a nominated person in their School Office. This should give the student one calendar week to present themselves in person to their School Support Office. If they do, this will be recorded and no further action against the student will be taken;

3.7 If a student does not respond to this first request and continues to fail to attend the required recordable activities across their programme, a second communication must be sent from the School giving the student one further calendar week to present themselves in person to their School Support Office. If they do, this will be recorded and no further action against the student taken;

3.8 If a student does not respond to the second communication, and continues to fail to engage with their programme at the required intensity, a third communication must be sent from the School informing the student that their absence(s) will be reported to the next meeting of the Board of Examiners, acting as Progression Boards or Progress Panels;
3.9 Where a student has not responded to requests to visit the School Office, the School should carry out an investigation to establish that the student is fit and well, liaising with the central specialist support services if required;

3.10 If a student subsequently returns to their studies, a meeting will be held with their academic adviser to discuss their attendance and investigate any underlying issues or contributing factors affecting poor attendance.

3.11 Whilst the series of actions (3.6 to 3.10 above) is the minimum action to be taken by Schools to handle the circumstance where a student has failed to attend at all, where a student is showing poor engagement by intermittent attendance, the normal processes for exploring the reasons for this with the student and providing support should take place, normally with the academic adviser.

3.12 Boards of Examiners and Progress Panels retain their powers to terminate studies and deem students withdrawn, in accordance with the University’s Progress Procedures for taught programmes (Code of Practice on Assessment, Appendix E). Student attendance records will be considered by the Board of Examiners in determining their on-going academic standing. It is acknowledged that different programmes of study across the University will require different intensity of engagement by students. It is for the Board of Examiners to decide whether or not the lack of attendance at recordable activities registered for a student falls below the acceptable threshold for the programme. The attendance data held by the School for students will support this decision-making.