Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Student Attendance and Engagement procedure has been developed as part of the University's commitment to providing a supportive learning environment that actively facilitates student success. It is intended to enable the delivery of the University's **Learning Teaching and Student Success Policy Statement**.

This procedure is aligned with our University values including:

Integrity

- Clearly outlined responsibilities and expectations for all students.
- Consistent application.

Respect

- Treating all with dignity and respect.
- Recognition of our diverse University community, we ensure all students can meet their potential and adhere to regulatory requirements.

Inclusivity

- Inclusive policy design and application within the regulatory framework.
- Communicating in plain English, with up-to-date and relevant information

Accountability

- Transparent processes, decision-making, and reporting with recognised roles and responsibilities.
- Commitment to deadlines and timely information sharing.

Students who are studying at UWS on a Student Route visa are required to also meet the UK Visa & Immigration attendance requirements. The UKVI requirements are set out by the Home Office, see section 4.

This procedure applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students.
For longer periods of absence, students should be referred to **Authorised Interruption of Study Guidance**

For the purpose of these procedures, the University uses the following definition of Student Attendance and Engagement:

> *Students are academically engaged if they are attending and participating in all timetabled programme activities including on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, placement, work-based elements, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.*

It is recognised that from time-to-time students will have justifiable reasons for periods of lack of engagement. Students who are unable to attend timetabled classes for any reason should report their absence to their programme leader or their personal tutor or equivalent*. Specific information on how absences should be reported are detailed in the relevant Programme Handbook.

https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/policies-procedures-guidance/[*Note that arrangements for personal tutor support vary across programmes at UWS. In some cases, programme leaders or year leaders provide personal tutor support.
Arrangements for personal tutor support can be found in the relevant Programme Handbook and students can find their allocated Personal Tutor on Self Service Banner].

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In developing this procedure, the University aims to:

- Support and encourage all students to achieve their full potential in their studies and in developing graduate skills and competencies.
- Outline clear expectations for students and staff about the nature of required attendance and engagement in the University's model of delivery.
- Enhance the overall learning environment and University community by encouraging active attendance and participation for all areas of study; and
- Proactively monitor student attendance, engagement and performance to support student success.
- Ensure students are compliant with legislation as appropriate (e.g. UKVI).
- Provide guidance to students and staff when specific concerns about student engagement are raised.

3. UWS APPROACH AND PROCEDURES

The University monitors student attendance and engagement and considers the situation of individual students on a case-by-case basis, whilst ensuring consistency, regulatory compliance, and clarity across the student population. The Student Success and Early Intervention Specialists consider attendance and engagement patterns, liaising with key colleagues in each Faculty to determine application of this procedure to contextual factors. The University recognises that individual Faculties and programmes may have differing thresholds for engagement, and specific requirements for physical attendance, depending on factors such as professional body requirements and unique pedagogic practices. Whilst the definition of engagement, and the timing of the three-stage process outlined below, may vary between Faculties and programmes, the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure is followed by all programme leaders, with support from the Student Success and Early Intervention Specialists and Faculty Professional Support Services teams.

UWS is committed to an approach which focuses on formal and informal early warning indicators and provides tools to track student attendance and engagement. The UWS approach seeks to provide appropriate support and advice to students at an early stage. Faculty Retention Task Forces (RTFs) are the key conduit for considering student attendance and engagement data in relation to different cohorts and making collective decisions based on this procedure.
Much of this approach to supporting students takes place within modules and programmes. For example, Programme Handbooks and Virtual Learning Environment sites are key sources of information in reinforcing engagement expectations, explicitly highlighting support. Teaching staff focus on active participation and connection with students as part of our learning and teaching approach at UWS. Early engagement is a key aspect of/contributory factor to student success.

The Student Success and Early Intervention Specialists provide tools and a range of proactive approaches for students and staff to support early connection, engagement and warning, through analytics, and a robust and consistent advising system.

The Attendance and Engagement procedure consists of two elements:

a. Establishment of Engagement Thresholds

Faculties agree expected levels of attendance and engagement for every academic programme based on factors such as professional body requirements and discipline- specific practices. They stipulate clearly how engagement is monitored. This information is clearly outlined in the Guidance on Implementation of the Revised Student Attendance

and Engagement Procedure, which will be developed by each Faculty.

The expected levels of attendance and engagement contain measurable reference to elements such as attendance at on-campus or online synchronous classes, placement, work-based elements, completion of online asynchronous learning activities, completion of assessment, engagement with online and electronic learning resources, and are quantifiable via resources such as attendance monitoring, records of online activity, and learner analytics data.

The expected levels of attendance and engagement are communicated to all students in their Programme Handbook and are specified in the Programme Specification. In addition, they are published on the UWS website before students make the commitment to enrol on a programme.

Where a module forms part of more than one programme, it is the responsibility of the Module Co-ordinator to ensure that the same expectations of attendance and engagement are used for all students on the module, irrespective of their programme of study.

Monitoring and Review of Individual Student Engagement

Individual student attendance and engagement is considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to a three-stage process which is intended to enable students, who are disengaging from their programme of study, to be supported to reintegrate and resume their studies effectively. Oversight of this activity is undertaken by the Faculty RTF, with support from the Student Success and Early Intervention Specialists.

The timing of each stage of the process is determined by the programme leader, with advice from the Student Success and Early Intervention Specialist for each Faculty (see appendix A for process flow). Clear record keeping is important to support the effective and accurate implementation of this procedure and therefore any communication with students is documented and the RTF kept updated.

Stage 1 – 1st missed engagement

At the point a student fails to meet the expected level of attendance and engagement (as detailed in their Programme Handbook), for the first time, the student is contacted by the Programme Leader or nominee (this could be the Module Co-ordinator, Personal Tutor or the Student Success and Early Intervention Specialist, for example. This is determined by the RTF). The communication with the student highlights concerns, encourages re-engagement with their studies and identifies the full range of support available within the University. The student is encouraged to reach out to the Student Success Team for a “check in and chat” to see if any additional support can be provided.

Stage 2 – 2nd missed engagement

If a student fails to meet the attendance and engagement threshold for a second time, the student is contacted by the Programme Leader or nominee as determined by the RTF. The RTF is alerted to the Stage 2 communication being issued and agrees to whom the student needs to contact to support their re-engagement (the “designated Faculty contact”). The communication makes the student aware of the consequences of low attendance and engagement making reference to Stage 3 of this procedure and strongly encourages them to meet with the designated Faculty contact within one week to discuss their engagement. At this meeting the student and designated Faculty contact agree a re-engagement plan which details the steps the student needs to undertake to re-engage and the support the University

provides to assist them. This re-engagement plan is forwarded to the Programme Leader or nominee and Early Intervention Specialist for information.

Stage 3 – 3rd missed engagement

At the point a student:

- fails to meet the minimum attendance and engagement threshold for a third time,
- fails to engage with their designated Faculty contact at Stage 2, or
- fails to fulfil the requirements of their agreed re-engagement plan.

The student is contacted by the Student Success Team and invited to another meeting by the designated Faculty contact. Should the student fail to attend this meeting, the RTF is informed and approves the sending of the Withdrawal letter to the student, confirming the student has been withdrawn and providing information regarding the appeals process. The letter is signed off by the Dean of Faculty and circulated to the student by the Faculty. After the appeals period (10 working days) has elapsed and, subject to confirmation that no appeal has been submitted, a Student Record Amendment Form (SRAF) is completed by the Faculty and submitted to Registry to action the student withdrawal. Should an appeal be successful, the student record is updated accordingly. All Stage 3 communications and outcomes are documented and reported to the RTF.

4. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR SPONSORED STUDENT VISA HOLDERS - UKVI REQUIREMENTS

Sponsored Students must follow the UKVI study conditions and attendance requirements.

Enrolment - All Sponsored Students enrol for full-time study. Changes to enrolment status must be made through Registry.

Attendance - UKVI may ask the University at any time to provide details of each of Sponsored Student's attendance/absence. If requested, this must be sent to UKVI within 21 days of the date of the request, providing all required information.

The level, nature and timing of required attendance points differ across programmes. Sponsored students who are in the UK must attend all in-person classes as well as engaging with the online elements of their course.

To show a student's attendance and engagement with their studies, the attendance points must be spread across the academic year and include those which indicate the student's presence on campus.

A minimum requirement of two in-person contact points must be recorded per month.

On campus timetabled activities are used as the basis for attendance monitoring.

Examples of expected contact points include:

• a lesson, lecture, tutorial or seminar, face-to-face and/or online • attending a supervisory meeting • lab work • a test, examination or assessment • PhD progress review	• a meeting with a personal tutor • a research-method meeting, writing up seminars or doctoral workshops • an oral examination (viva) • submitting coursework • an interim dissertation, coursework or report

The University continues to monitor Sponsored Student's attendance while they are:

- on work placements
- undertaking external research; and
- attending study abroad.

Non-Attendance

UKVI Sponsor guidance states that the maximum period of non-attendance before intervention takes place must not exceed 60 days in duration. The University is required to report any Sponsored Students who have missed 10 consecutive expected contact points without explicit prior permission. At that point the University is required to withdraw sponsorship of the student.

Non-attendance and absences must be recorded and acted upon within a reasonable timescale. UKVI requires the University to report within 10 working days from the final notification that a student has been withdrawn from the University. Reporting is also required when a student has changed their programme, moved campus, or has Authorised Interruption of Studies. Faculties must notify Registry when a Sponsored Student is to be withdrawn and/or reported. When a student has missed expected contact points and there are no known mitigating circumstances, or where there are other concerns regarding a student's engagement, the Faculty investigates to determine if any action is required.

Student Route visa holders - Authorised Absence

Students are not allowed to be absent from teaching sessions during term-time for the purpose of holiday travel or attending social occasions (e.g. weddings). In limited and compelling circumstances, a brief period of authorised absence, limited to a maximum of ten working days leave during term-time in one academic year may be permitted by the Faculty. If the 'authorised absence' period is granted, the student must be able to complete the programme within their existing visa expiry date. Visa extensions are not allowed to offset this type of leave.

Students must ensure the request for authorised absence is submitted at least two weeks before the start date of the proposed period of authorised absence. For any exceptional circumstances that fall outside of the authorised absence process, Faculties may review these on an individual basis. It is recommended that student visa holders only take leave during the University official holiday periods in line with their visa requirements.

Recording Attendance Information

The University is subject to compliance auditing by UKVI and is required to keep evidence showing that Sponsored student attendance monitoring has taken place and that any concerns about attendance have been investigated. Attendance points are monitored by tracking students against their timetabled activities. Exception reports (highlighting low attendance and absences) are available via a central reporting tool. Faculties are responsible for monitoring student attendance and for taking action to confirm a student's status.

Assessment Only

If a student is completing modules on an assessment only basis while remaining in the UK, they must use the Tap-in points located across the campuses to tap in at least twice a month.

Writing Up of Thesis

If a student resides in the UK whilst writing up a thesis, there must be regular contact with their supervisor, and their contact details must be kept up to date. Where a student chooses to write up their thesis/ dissertation outside of the UK, the University informs the student that their sponsorship will be withdrawn, and UKVI is notified.

5. RIGHT OF APPEAL

A student has the right of appeal against a decision to withdraw them from a programme of study through the University's **Student Appeals Procedure**.

Appendix A – Process Flow for the Student Engagement Timelines

