

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Academic 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 **Student Experience Policy** and to complement other related procedures such as the personal tutor scheme.

For the purpose of these procedures, the University uses the following definition of Academic Engagement:

Students are academically engaged if they are regularly engaged with timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, 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. In particular, owing to the post-COVID-19 Government regulations and advice to limit non-essential gatherings, the lack of physical attendance on campus cannot in isolation be seen as an indicator of disengagement. Nevertheless, students who are unable to attend mandatory 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 the relevant Student Programme Handbook.

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

[*Note that arrangements for personal tutor support vary across the 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 Student 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 students to achieve their full potential in their studies and in developing graduate skills and competencies;
- Outline clear expectations for students and teachers about the nature of required engagement in the University's hybrid model of delivery;
- Enhance the overall learning environment and University community by encouraging active on-campus and online participation for all areas of study; and
- Proactively monitor academic engagement and performance through the School, and provide guidance to students and staff when specific concerns about academic engagement are raised.

3. SCHOOL REVIEW AND PROCEDURES

The University will monitor each student's personal engagement individually and consider the situation of individual students on a case by case basis whilst ensuring consistency and clarity across the student population.

The University recognises that individual Schools and programmes may have differing thresholds for engagement, and some may have 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 programmes, the Engagement procedure should be followed by all programme leaders.

The Engagement procedure consists of four elements:

a. Informal early-warning indicators

UWS is committed to providing tools for students, staff in schools and centrally to track student engagement and to seek and provide appropriate support and advice at an early stage, when a student might be finding it difficult to engage with their studies but before this has begun to impact their success.

Much of this is best done informally and organically at the level of the module and programme. Module and programme handbooks and VLE sites should explicitly point students to the support available, and all teaching staff should seek to engage and connect with their students in-person and/or online as part of normal pedagogical practice. Active early engagement with Personal Tutors or equivalent is also a key aspect to student success.

UWS will also provide tools for students and staff to support early connection, engagement and early-warning, through analytics such as My Journey, and a robust and consistent Personal Tutor system.

b. Establishment of Engagement Thresholds

Schools will agree minimum thresholds of engagement for every academic programme based on factors such as professional body requirements and discipline-specific pedagogic practices. They will also stipulate clearly how engagement will be monitored.

The minimum threshold for engagement will contain measurable reference to elements such as attendance at on-campus or online synchronous classes, completion of online asynchronous learning activities, completion of assessment, engagement with online and electronic learning resources, and will be quantifiable via resources such as attendance monitoring, records of online activity, and learner analytics software (e.g. My Journey).

The minimum threshold for the following academic year will be set and ratified by the School Board.

The minimum threshold for engagement will be communicated to all students via their Programme Handbook and will be specified in the Programme Specification for each programme. In addition, minimum thresholds for engagement need to be 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 minimum threshold for engagement is used for all students on the module, irrespective of their programme of study.

c. Monitoring and Review of Individual Student Engagement

Individual student engagement will be considered on a case by case basis and a three-stage process is intended to enable students who are disengaged with their programme of study to be supported to reintegrate and resume their studies effectively.

The three stage process does provide for the removal of disengaged students from their programme of study as a last resort, where such students can be demonstrated to be so far adrift from the levels of engagement required to complete the programme successfully that supporting the student to re-engage is no longer a viable option.

The timing of each stage of the process will be determined by the programme leader.

Stage 1 – 1st Missed engagement

At the point at which a student fails to meet the minimum threshold for engagement for their programme of studies the student is contacted highlighting concern and identifying the full range of support available within the University.

The student is encouraged to contact their Personal Tutor or equivalent to discuss their engagement and seek additional support if needed.

Stage 2 – 2nd missed engagement

If a student fails to meet the engagement threshold for a second time, the student will be contacted, making them aware of the consequences of poor engagement and requiring them to meet with their Personal Tutor or equivalent within one week to discuss their engagement.

The student is advised of the consequences of a continued lack of engagement, including potential for withdrawal.

During the mandatory meeting with the Personal Tutor or equivalent, the student and tutor will agree and sign a re-engagement plan, detailing the steps the student will undertake to re-engage, and the support the University will provide to assist them. This re-engagement plan will be forwarded to the Programme Leader.

Stage 3 – 3rd missed engagement

At the point a student:

- fails to meet the minimum engagement threshold for a third time,
- fails to engage with their Personal Tutor meeting at the previous stage, or
- fails to fulfil the requirements of their agreed re-engagement plan, the student will receive a notification requiring them to contact their Programme Leader (or designate) for a one to one meeting regarding engagement within one week.

Should the student fail to attend this meeting, or if their engagement is considered to be sufficiently poor, the Programme Leader may make a case to the Dean of School to withdraw the student from the programme of study. Only the Dean can authorise the withdrawal of a student from a programme of study, following implementation of this procedure.

Engagement Panel

Engagement Panels will be convened within each School to consider the overall engagement of students generally in the School.

The membership of each Panel is determined by the Deputy Dean. It is a requirement that the Engagement Panel includes appropriate student representation.

This panel will review engagement across programmes generally, as well as any individual action plans that have been agreed and delivered by either Personal Tutors or Programme Leaders as part of Stage 1. The panel may wish to explore good practice in relation to student support practices through the review of successful action plans.

The review panel can agree to develop an action plan with relevant Programme Leaders where there are concerns about academic engagement. In addition, the panel can recommend enhancements to the personal tutoring structure in the School and dissemination of good practice.

4. RIGHT OF APPEAL

A student will have the right of appeal against a decision to withdraw them from a programme of study through the University's **Student Appeals Procedure**. Grounds for appeal may include new evidence from the student of alternative forms of engagement that demonstrate attainment of *learning* objectives, or pressing personal circumstances not previously noted that provide a reasonable explanation for the lack of engagement.

Students will be entitled to continue with their studies until their appeal is resolved.

Procedure Author – Vice-Principal - Learning, Teaching & Students	Procedure Owner – Vice-Principal - Learning, Teaching & Students
Parent Policy Statement - Student Experience Policy	Public Access or Staff Only Access - Public
Version 2.1 – September 2020	Changes and Reason for Changes –name change to delete reference to attendance in relation to COVID 19 updates in relation to School responsibilities re threshold setting, composition of School panel and clarification that the Dean has to authorise the recommendation to remove a student from a programme of study