

## 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 Statement** 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 participating in 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 all students will have reasons why engagement with their studies is difficult. Family and caring responsibilities, work commitments, illness and other reasons all need to be juggled alongside study. The *UWS Curriculum Framework*, introduced in 2021, aims to give students as much flexibility as possible in how they engage with their learning – on campus, online; synchronous and asynchronous.

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

### 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 engagement in the University's flexible 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 and supportively monitor students' academic engagement and performance through the School, and provide guidance to students and staff about how to proceed when the University becomes concerned that a student's pattern of engagement might indicate that they need to be supported differently.

### 3. ATTENDANCE, ASSESSMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

The lack of physical attendance on campus cannot in isolation be seen as an indication of disengagement. Usually there are several different ways in which a student can engage with the content and learning activities in their module.

However, in some cases the nature of the learning activities require students to physically attend. This will be for an important reason that will be spelled out in the module and programme documentation: because a core skill is being developed and assessed in real time; because students need to access particular equipment of facilities; because students need to work together to complete group work or assessment; because a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body has mandated attendance for that learning, or for some other reason.

The programme and module documentation will make clear how the learning activities that the students are required to complete will be assessed (e.g. "10% of the module mark will be awarded for participation in class and online tutorial discussion") together with the assessment criteria for the task. It will also specify what the consequences of non-attendance will be (e.g. zero marks for that assessed activity).

Students who are unable to attend these mandatory classes for any reason should report their absence to their programme leader and module coordinator. Specific information on how absences should be reported are detailed the relevant Student Programme Handbook.

### 4. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The University will monitor each student's personal engagement individually, using a variety of data which *may* include:

- Participation in on-campus and online learning activities
- Activity in the University's online environments
- Students' use of resources online and through the library
- Assessment completion and submission
- Students' contact and correspondence with the university

Students agree to the University using these data to monitor their engagement at the point of enrollment. **The purpose of this engagement monitoring is purely supportive: to identify students who might benefit from different types of support.**

The University recognises that individual programmes may have differing types of student engagement, and some may have specific requirements for physical attendance, depending on factors such as professional body requirements and unique pedagogic practices. The expected levels of engagement that are commensurate with student success in a particular programme will be communicated to all students via their Programme Handbook and will be specified in the Programme Specification for each programme. In addition, they will be published on the UWS website before students make the commitment to enrol on a programme.

In addition, the University recognises that student visa holders will be subject to attendance monitoring requirements that are covered within our **Attendance Management Guidance for Sponsored Student Visa Holders**.

The Engagement procedure consists of two 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. This is done informally and organically at the level of the module and programme and by the Student Success Hub. 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 and academic advisers 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, and a robust system of personal and academic advisers.

**b. Assumed Withdrawal**

Where students have demonstrated no evidence of engaging with the University for six or more weeks during term time they will be assumed to have withdrawn. "No evidence of engaging" under this procedure includes:

- no attendance at classes on campus or online;
- no assessments attempted or submitted;
- no access to learning resources or the virtual learning environment;
- no communication with lecturers or the Student Success Hub about the reasons for lack of engagement

A student that is assumed to have withdrawn will be contacted by the University in the form of an "Assumed Withdrawn" letter. If the student does not respond to the letter they will be formally Withdrawn on the authority of the School Dean.

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.

**Official Use**

**Procedure Author** – Vice-Principal - Learning, Teaching & Students

**Procedure Owner** – Vice-Principal - Learning, Teaching & Students

**Parent Policy Statement** – Student Experience

**Public Access or Staff Only Access** – Public

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**Changes and Reason for Changes** – revised to remove references to COVID but still maintain flexibility of approach in recognising UWS' adoption of hybrid learning and teaching. Also revised to make responsibilities of school staff clearer. Further updated to focus on supportive intervention that the forthcoming SEAT team will implement.