

Policy on Recording and Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement

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1.0 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Consistent attendance and active engagement with a programme of study are key factors in both academic success and in maintaining a balanced and healthy student life.
- 1.2 Information about student attendance and engagement is crucial to providing academic and wellbeing support for students, and it is the responsibility of staff involved in any processes relating to attendance and engagement monitoring to that ensure that information can be and is collected accurately and comprehensively.
- 1.3 This policy requires that appropriate and timely processes are put in place to identify and act upon any concerns about a student's attendance or engagement that may arise from personal, health or other challenges, enabling the University to provide support for students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- 1.4 This policy also supports the University in complying with accreditation, regulatory or legislative obligations from external bodies that relate to student attendance and engagement.

- 1.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with [Regulation XX: Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students](#).
- 1.6 This policy is complemented by a supporting [Guidance document](#).

2.0 Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students including Postgraduate Research Students and all modes of teaching delivered by the University unless explicitly excluded in the accompanying Guidance.
- 2.2 For Postgraduate Research Students the word 'School' should be read as meaning their Doctoral Academy throughout this document.
- 2.3 This policy outlines the University's approach to recording and monitoring student attendance and engagement to support student welfare and attainment, as well as meeting the University's external obligations to bodies with accreditation, regulatory or legislative interests (see Paragraph 2.5).
- 2.4 This policy uses the following definitions for attendance at and engagement with teaching or assessment activities such as lectures, examinations, seminars, presentations, laboratories, workshops, performances etc.:
- a) **In-person attendance:** the act of being physically present at a scheduled teaching or assessment activity.
 - b) **Online attendance:** the act of joining a synchronous online teaching or assessment activity.
 - c) **Engagement:** active participation in the learning process. In synchronous learning, engagement includes real-time interaction and participation in activities or discussions, such as those facilitated through live online sessions or in-person classes. For asynchronous learning, engagement includes interacting with programme materials, completing assignments, and participating in online activities without real-time interaction.
- 2.5 Bodies with accreditation, regulatory or legislative interests are defined as:
- a) **Public Sector Bodies:** UK and international governmental and quasi-governmental bodies, including UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and the Student Loans Company.
 - b) **Professional Standards and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs):** UK organisations with a remit to maintain standards in a professional context, such as the General Medical Council.

- 2.6 Teaching and Learning Activities are grouped according to expectations of attendance into three types:
- a) **Compulsory activities** carry the strictest attendance requirements. For example, it may be that missing even a single activity requires an authorised absence or submission of formal mitigating circumstances or may have immediate implications for progression or professional accreditation¹.
 - b) **Expected activities**, while being an integral part of the learning provision, have more relaxed requirements. For example, occasional or isolated absences may have no immediate consequences (though will still count towards a student's overall attendance record and may in aggregate trigger interventions).
 - c) **Optional activities** are those where attendance is entirely at the discretion of the learner, and absence has no consequences with respect to their attendance record.
- 2.7 Recording Methods for attendance are grouped according to the confidence they confer into three types:
- a) **High confidence** is where the method employed, such as a member of staff completing a digital register or supervised use of a [Radio-frequency Identification card reader](#), provides evidence that firmly links a student's identity to presence at a teaching and learning event at a specific time.
 - b) **Medium confidence** is where the method employed, such as the use of a unique time-limited [Quick Response](#) or numeric code, provides firm evidence of a student's identity linked to weaker evidence of presence at a teaching and learning event, or firm evidence of presence at a teaching and learning event supported by weaker evidence of identity.
 - c) **Low confidence** is where the method employed records the student's attendance or absence, but this data cannot be corroborated by other evidence.
- 2.8 Allowed methods for recording attendance, categorised as defined in Paragraph 2.6, are listed in the Guidance.
- 2.9 Patterns of opportunities for recording attendance are defined in terms of Minimum or Extended Patterns:
- a) **Minimum Patterns** define the University-wide baseline for opportunities to record attendance. Unless an exception is granted in the Guidance, all Schools must provide opportunities that meet or exceed at least one of the Minimum Patterns for all students. Details of Minimum Patterns and exceptions can be found in the supporting Guidance.

¹ Note that here the use of compulsory relates to teaching activities, and has a different meaning to the use of compulsory when applied to course units (see <https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=13146>)

- b) **Extended Patterns** describe additional opportunities for recording attendance defined locally at School, Department/Division or Programme level. Schools may use these in addition to the Minimum Patterns to enable stricter attendance requirements, for example to meet the requirements of relevant PSRBs.

2.10 **Trigger points** are described in terms of the above Activity Types, Recording Methods and Patterns, and define thresholds at which interventions occur relating to attendance or engagement. Examples of these are given in the Guidance.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Directorate of Student Experience to:

- a) Provide mechanisms that enable the University to meet its obligation for recording attendance and/or engagement as specified by Public Sector Bodies and Professional Standards and Regulatory Bodies.
- b) Use the attendance and engagement information recorded by the University to monitor the attendance and engagement of students who require a University-sponsored visa to study in the UK.
- c) Formally notify Schools of any students holding University-sponsored visas who are not attending or engaging with their programme.
- d) Report non-attendance or non-engagement to Public Sector Bodies where required.
- e) Define the University's Minimum Patterns for recording attendance and/or engagement.

3.2 In co-ordination with their Faculty it is the responsibility of Schools to:

- a) Classify timetabled teaching and assessment activities as being Compulsory, Expected or Optional with respect to attendance and provide clear information in the Programme Handbook (or equivalent) as to how particular activities have been classified.
- b) Determine and implement the Extended Patterns for recording attendance that meet any local requirements or requirements imposed by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies. The supporting Guidance outlines the methods available for capturing student attendance information.
- c) Publish clear and accessible information for students on procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and engagement, reporting absences and the consequences of non-attendance or engagement.
- d) Actively attempt to contact students as soon as possible once they have passed an attendance trigger point associated with an Extended Pattern. The supporting Guidance outlines the methods available for contacting disengaged students.
- e) Report non-attendance or non-engagement to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies where required.

- 3.3 It is the responsibility of academic staff to:
- a) Take attendance in their classes using the methods agreed by the School to meet the Minimum Pattern of attendance monitoring and any Extended Patterns for their School and/or programme.
 - b) Assist or advise students who are unable to record their own attendance with the recording of their attendance.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of students to:
- a) Manage their attendance in line with this policy, ensuring attendance at Compulsory and Expected activities to fulfil course requirements and making informed decisions about attending Optional activities based on individual needs or learning goals.
 - b) Notify their School of any personal circumstances (such as illness) that will impact their attendance and/or engagement with their programme (see the [University's Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Extension Requests](#)).
 - c) Make sure that their attendance is recorded using the appropriate method(s).
 - d) To actively engage with the University regarding any non-engagement or non-attendance.

4.0 General Principles

4.1 Recording attendance and engagement

- 4.1.1 Attendance will be recorded for all students at all Compulsory and Expected timetabled activities using the University's approved attendance and engagement monitoring system as outlined in the supporting Guidance.
- 4.1.2 Attendance may be recorded at Optional activities, but must not be included in the determination of trigger points.
- 4.1.3 Low confidence methods may only be used to record attendance at Optional activities, or when other methods are unavailable.
- 4.1.4 Attendance points for Postgraduate Research Students will be defined and captured in addition to any timetabled activities they may attend.
- 4.1.5 Engagement will be captured from a variety of different data sources of information that relate directly to a student's teaching and learning activities – e.g., use of the Digital Learning Environment or lecture capture service. The details of which data sources are used is specified in the supporting Guidance.

- 4.1.6 Only data relating directly to a student's programme of academic study may be used for the purposes of monitoring attendance and engagement.
- 4.1.7 Where a method of recording attendance involves the use of a student's personal device, with the exception of a student's University email address, the University must not require access to user data on their device such as photographs, contacts, location or files.

4.2 Monitoring attendance and engagement

- 4.2.1 Data captured in the attendance and engagement monitoring system will be used to determine where students are not attending classes or engaging with their programme at a level expected or required by their programme.
- 4.2.2 Where a School is aware of health and/or wellbeing issues, these must be considered in line with the [Support To Study Procedure](#) when deciding how to progress cases of non-attendance or non-engagement.
- 4.2.3 The [Disengaged Student Process](#) describes the steps the University must take to contact a disengaged student and assess if anyone else has had contact or has concerns, and when cases should be escalated to the University's Advice and Response team to try to make contact with the student and/or their Emergency Contact.
- 4.2.4 If the student fails to comply with the steps outlined in the Disengaged Student Process, the School may refuse the student permission to proceed on their programme which may result in their exclusion from the programme of study.
- 4.2.5 A student who is dissatisfied with any actions taken on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance or engagement may submit an appeal to their School against that decision in accordance with the provisions of Regulation XIX Academic Appeals.
- 4.2.6 If the School is satisfied that mitigating circumstances exist that justify the student's lack of attendance or engagement, alternative action may be taken. This should include referral to relevant support services where appropriate.
- 4.2.7 The University requires all students to report their attendance and engagement truthfully. Failure to do so will be handled as a disciplinary offence in line with [General Regulation XVII Conduct and Discipline of Students](#). In cases where multiple students are involved (e.g., one student assisting another in the fraudulent recording of attendance), all students involved will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Version amendment history box and Document control box

Version amendment history:		
Version	Date	Reason for change
1.0	2004	Creation and approval by Senate
1.1	June 2014	Reviewed to tie in with the new Regulation XX
“	April and July 2016	Added links to the Guidelines on monitoring student attendance, and the Guidance on Monitoring the Attendance and Wellbeing of Undergraduate Students Abroad
“	January 2018	Added date of next review and updated TLSO website links
1.2	November 2021	Reviewed and updated to accompany the updated Regulation XX: Monitoring Attendance, Engagement and Wellbeing of Students, taking into account the new Student Attendance system/engagement monitoring tool
1.3	May 2023	Reviewed to ensure compliance with external requirements, inserting section 4, to specifically address obligations in relation to visa holders.
2.0	September 2024	Revised alongside implementation of new attendance monitoring system.

Document control box	
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Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	General Regulation XX – Monitoring Attendance, Engagement and Wellbeing of Students
Related Policies:	Policy on Mitigating Circumstances and Extension Requests.
Related Procedures and Guidance:	Guidance for Monitoring Student Attendance. Guidance on Monitoring the Attendance and Wellbeing of Undergraduate Students Abroad. Disengaged Students Process. Support To Study Procedure
Policy owner:	Director of the Division of Student and Academic Services
Lead contact:	Teaching and Learning Manager (Programme Enhancement), Division of Student and Academic Services