

Student Engagement and Attendance Policy 2023/24

Responsibility of	Teaching Committee
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1. **Aims of the policy**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the regulations and processes employed by the University of Westminster to monitor student engagement and attendance on all pre-sessional, foundation, degree and research programmes, including programmes of study with a placement. It needs to be read within the context of the University's efforts to enhance student success and continuation, and the strategic initiatives deployed across the whole breadth of the student experience, both within and outside of the curriculum. Further information can be found on the [Student Engagement and Attendance](#) page on the web.
- 1.2 Engagement and attendance monitoring is valued for its potential to indicate those students at risk of leaving their course early and/or failing their programme of study and to help students understand the importance of regular engagement and attendance.
- 1.3 The University aims to improve the engagement and attendance of all students. Our goal is to enable students from every background to develop into resilient, skilled graduates and lifelong learners, who succeed and contribute to society in ways they value.
- 1.4 While there are additional requirements relating to attendance for the [UK Visas and Immigration Department](#) (UKVI) sponsored visa students, this policy is applicable to the student body as a whole.¹
- 1.5 This policy applies only to students enrolled on courses run at the University of Westminster premises and would not therefore apply to students studying at collaborative partner locations.

2. **Engagement and Attendance Requirements**

- 2.1 Attendance at enrolment, arrival and any designated pre-sessional courses is compulsory as appropriate.
- 2.2 Students are expected to attend every element of the programme of study. This refers to lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions and any form of summative or formative assessment. Students are expected to attend and engage with all sessions as per the delivery method outlined in the timetable.
- 2.3 The University offers students a vibrant on-campus learning experience with some content delivered virtually. As per government guidance (OfS and UKVI) 'attendance' means that the student is required to be at a provider location, or other specified location (such as a partner provider, or defined workplace) to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the

¹ The University is required to report all sponsored visa students, who fail to attend and have no satisfactory explanation for the absence, to the UKVI with the consequence that their sponsorship may be withdrawn, and they will be withdrawn from the University.

workplace, or sandwich work placement. Therefore, when classes are scheduled to take place on-campus students are expected to attend them on-campus. For sponsored visa students where on-campus delivery is optional students should attend, this includes for optional classes and when classes are delivered hybrid (both on-campus and online).

- 2.4 Engagement and attendance requirements are inclusive of all sessions whether completed as a large group in lectures, small group for tutorials, or one on one sessions (such as dissertation supervision or work placements).
- 2.5 Students should refer to their timetable in the [CMIS timetabling system](#). For information on classes and other expected attendance students should check their course and module handbooks and [Blackboard](#).
- 2.6 Students undertaking a year or period of time in industry or practice or study at another Higher Education Institution are also expected to attend that placement/period of study away from the University of Westminster.
- 2.7 Students' engagement and attendance will be monitored and recorded. The University will act on data as appropriate.
- 2.8 Attendance of sponsored visa students is subject to additional controls due to the requirements of the UKVI. Sponsored visa students will be informed of these requirements before enrolment. These controls may be subject to change to respond to developments in UKVI policy. Students will be notified by the University of any changes. Non-compliance with UKVI regulations regarding attendance can result in exclusion from the University.
- 2.9 The University has a range of [support services](#) that students may find helpful in managing their studies. If students are experiencing problems engaging with and attending their programme of study due to personal circumstances, they should seek guidance and advice via the [Student Centre](#) or direct from [Personal Tutors](#).

3. Recording engagement and attendance

- 3.1 Students are active participants in their learning experience and are expected to take responsibility for achieving their potential through engaging fully with those experiences and with the requirements of their chosen course of study.
- 3.2 In order to alert staff to students who may be experiencing difficulties, all students will have their engagement and attendance monitored. Students are expected to register their attendance at all classes as per the information on the [SEA webpage](#).
- 3.3 Information about engagement and attendance will be gathered as follows:
 - ID Card swipe - At enrolment students are issued their official student ID card. In order to access any University of Westminster property students must swipe their card creating an electronic record of their entry/exit.
 - Students also need to swipe their ID Card at readers in required contact points (lectures, seminars, tutorials, studio events) to register attendance and these are matched against the student's expected contact points in the timetable.
 - Student engagement will additionally be monitored through the analysis of assessment submission and performance, assessment offences, Mitigating

Circumstances (MC) submissions, missing credits, numbers of modules with clashes, use of Blackboard and other elements of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

- Attendance data for online classes will be obtained through records of logins to activities accessed through module Blackboard sites and matched against the students expected online class events in their timetable.

- 3.4 This data will be used to collate information on students' engagement and attendance and will help to identify students who may be at risk of not completing their studies. It will also aid the University to develop student continuation strategies.
- 3.5 Students studying in the UK on a Student Visa should be aware that attendance at formal teaching sessions is a condition of their visa.
- 3.6 Information is recorded and stored on a secure third party system ([SEA](#)) and internal system for the Learner Analytics Dashboard (LAD). Reports from the system will be analyzed and monitored by Personal Tutors, Course Leaders, the Student Retention and Engagement Team (SRE) and other authorised staff. This will enable the University to monitor engagement and contact students who are having difficulty engaging and attending their course. Personal Tutors will provide the primary interface with students on issues of continuation and will have a particular responsibility to identify students at risk of non-continuation and make appropriate interventions as required.
- 3.7 Students will have access to their daily attendance record through the [SEA system](#) via the [Student Hub](#), phone or PC app.
- 3.8 Academic staff will have access to reports on attendance for the modules for which they have responsibility.
- 3.9 The Graduate School monitors the engagement and attendance of doctoral researchers to ensure that you are receiving sufficient supervisory support and are on course to meet key academic stages in a timely fashion. A key part of this monitoring is for regular meetings to take place between you and your Director of Studies and other members of your supervisor team, as appropriate – see Regulation B3. It is your responsibility to ensure these meetings are scheduled and documented in the VRE (Section 2.5 of the [Research Degree Handbook](#) further information can also be found in Appendix D of the handbook)
- 3.10 Students on a visa and participating in work placements should be in regular contact with their university supervisors and/or the work placement team. This contact will be recorded as an engagement activity and shared with the Visa Compliance Team.² Home students should remain in contact with their academic supervisors and/or the work placement team and keep them informed as to any changes to the placement (e.g., end date, location of work) or issues arising on placement.
- 3.11 If it is identified that a student has swiped into class but was not in attendance, their record will be amended, and the absence recorded. Where a student is found to have continually swiped into class but was not in attendance then disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#).

4. Absence

² This data does not appear in the attendance monitoring systems but is shared with the Visa Compliance Team

- 4.1 Short-term absences of up to two weeks due to illness do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that students inform their Personal Tutor if they will be absent for longer than two weeks to discuss any support measures needed and what options are available depending on an individual's circumstances.
- 4.2 Where classes are missed it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any work they may have missed and liaise with class tutors as needed.
- 4.3 Students should add an absence note to their attendance record when they miss a class, providing a reason for their absence, via the [SEA system](#).
- 4.4 Where illness or other unforeseen circumstance affect an assessment students may wish to submit a [Mitigating Circumstances claim](#) where appropriate.
- 4.5 Students are permitted to apply to [interrupt their programme of study](#) for personal or medical reasons. Guidance and advice on these processes can be sought via the [Student Centre](#) or direct from [Personal Tutors](#).
- 4.6 The University of Westminster is required to maintain attendance records for all sponsored visa students and to report absence to UKVI. This monitoring will comply with the requirements of the UKVI, and students will receive information on this process and the implications of any absence as part of their enrolment at the University.
- 4.7 Students studying on a student visa may request an authorised absence from the University Visa Compliance Team. This will be discussed with the College. An absence may only be approved if it is unavoidable and will not adversely affect academic progress.
- 4.8 Continued absence from scheduled activities will trigger a process of communication and support, which will encourage students to re-engage with their studies and consider the options available to them depending on their circumstances.
- 4.9 In accordance with the [Academic Regulations](#), students who are no longer attending may be deemed to have withdrawn and have their enrolment terminated.