



UNIVERSITY OF  
LIVERPOOL

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Applicable to all cohorts

Approved June 2021  
Revised August 2024  
Effective 2024/25

Copies and alternative formats may be obtained from the  
Student Administration and Support Division on request

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University recognises that regular attendance at teaching and learning activities is a key element in successful student retention, progression, achievement and employability. The monitoring of student attendance is a supportive – not a punitive – measure.
- 1.2 Lack of attendance may also serve as an identifying factor in cases where students may be experiencing difficulties – whether academically and/or personally – and might need particular support.
- 1.3 Where issues are raised at any stage of this Policy that give rise to significant concerns regarding a student's health – whether that relates to their behaviour, disruption or the risk presented to themselves or to others – then appropriate reference should be made to the Fitness to Study and Engage in Student Experience Policy, available [here](#)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 The University also has a legal duty for the majority of its students to monitor attendance at teaching activities and to act on non-attendance. This legal duty arises from a requirement to report attendance to UK student loan agencies and to UK and overseas based external sponsors, as well as compliance responsibilities in relation to the sponsorship requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for the monitoring of international students studying in the UK on a student visa.
- 1.5 Some programmes – such as degree apprenticeships or those accredited by professional or statutory regulatory bodies (PSRBs) – and some sponsors may have their own attendance requirements, which must be met in order to fulfil the standards of the award and/or sponsorship agreement. This may include the requirement to exceed a particular percentage of attendance at scheduled teaching activities. Where these requirements are more rigorous than that set by the University in this Policy, the requirements of the PSRB, sponsor and/or degree apprenticeship provider shall prevail.
- 1.6 This Policy sets out the **minimum** expectations in relation to student attendance monitoring. Nothing in this Policy is designed to prevent an academic area from adopting a more rigorous approach, should it choose to do so.

## 2. Principles, definitions and expectations

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all taught<sup>2</sup> students<sup>3</sup> registered on a campus-based (i.e. not wholly online) academic programme at the University. This includes the taught components of Master of Research programmes and non-award bearing programmes such as inbound Study Abroad arrangements.
- 2.2 The University expects students to **attend** all scheduled learning sessions associated with each module or programme which they have elected to pursue, and to **engage** with the relevant learning and support resources that are made available to them.

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<sup>1</sup> For students on clinical programmes, reference should be made to the Fitness to Practise Procedures, available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Attendance expectations for students registered on research programmes are prescribed within the Postgraduate Research Code of Practice Appendix 2: Policy on Research Supervision, which can be found [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Including those students registered on degree apprenticeship programmes.

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- 2.3 Attendance at all scheduled seminars, tutorials, workshops, labs and other similar teaching activities is **mandatory**. The expectation for in-person attendance at lectures (and similar activities as defined within the Policy on Lecture Capture) shall be determined by the relevant academic area.
- 2.4 **Attendance** encompasses being present at scheduled learning, teaching and other activities required by the module and/or programme. This **may** include:
- Physical attendance at face-to-face scheduled teaching and/or other learning events as required by the module and/or programme (e.g. lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, tutorials, field trips and examinations);
  - Virtual attendance at scheduled synchronous online teaching and/or other learning events as required by the module and/or programme (e.g. synchronous participation in an online seminar or tutorial).
- 2.5 **Engagement** (as distinct from **attendance**) encompasses engaging with, and participating in, guided independent or group study activities, assessment and feedback, and any other activities required by the module and/or programme. This **may** include:
- Submitting formative and/or summative assessment within the defined deadlines;
  - Accessing and/or interacting asynchronously with online learning materials (e.g. lecture recordings, learning materials) and/or completing tasks in virtual learning environments;
  - Attending (physically and/or virtually) meetings with Academic Advisors.
- 2.6 Attendance and engagement are defined differently within this Policy because not all forms of engagement require students to be present, either physically or virtually, at a particular time and place. This Policy focusses on the monitoring of **attendance** (as defined in section 2.4) and the intervention, escalation and implications related to poor **attendance**. Expectations regarding levels of **engagement** (as defined in section 2.5) are **not** defined in this Policy. It is nevertheless anticipated that an overview of engagement may provide useful context during the meetings outlined later in this Policy.
- 2.7 Attendance expectations may be adjusted as required on health and wellbeing grounds, and where supported by a Student Support Information Sheet (SSIS)<sup>4</sup>. Students with a SSIS are still expected to submit requests for authorised absence as required.
- 2.8 The **attendance** expectations and interventions outlined within section 4 of this Policy are defined at the level of a student's **programme of study** (as opposed to an individual module or study component).
- 2.9 Where expectations and interventions within this Policy refer to a **contact point**, this shall be defined as any whole day where a student is expected (i.e. timetabled) to **attend** one or more teaching or learning event(s). A student shall be deemed to have met a contact point where they attend at least one teaching or learning event(s) on this day.
- 2.10 The University's monitoring of student attendance will be based on digital records, where available. Where a digital record of required attendance does not exist, alternative manual monitoring processes may be undertaken.

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<sup>4</sup> The Policy and Procedures Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students is available [here](#).

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- 2.11 During periods of study off campus (e.g. fieldwork, dissertation periods, study abroad and industrial/professional placements<sup>5</sup>), the University will continue to expect all students to attend and engage satisfactorily with this element of their programme. However, the attendance expectations and intervention threshold identified in section 4.2 shall **not** apply during these periods.
- 2.12 Students on study abroad programmes and industrial/professional<sup>4</sup> placements are expected to confirm their arrival abroad/on placement at the beginning of their first semester, and to confirm their ongoing attendance at the beginning of their second semester (where applicable). Where students fail to confirm their arrival and/or attendance at one of these checkpoints, they will be escalated to **Stage One** of the intervention process (section 4.3).
- 2.13 Students on study abroad programmes and industrial/professional placements should also expect to be in regular contact with their Academic Advisor – at least once per semester throughout this period.
- 2.14 Some work placements involve a contract between the University and the placement provider whereby the latter will inform the University if attendance falls below the contracted expectations.
- 2.15 Students undertaking a dissertation as part of their programme of postgraduate study are expected to have regular contact with their allocated supervisor and should be available for such contact during normal office hours throughout this period. Where no contact has been received from the student within a rolling one-month period, they will be escalated to **Stage One** of the intervention process (section 4.3).
- 2.16 Students are responsible for ensuring that they follow the correct procedures in place at the time to record their attendance. The expectations on and responsibilities of students are outlined in the Appendix to this Policy.

### 3. Absence

- 3.1 Where a student fails to **attend** a required, scheduled learning activity, as defined in section 2.4, their absence will be recorded as either **unauthorised** or **authorised**.
- 3.2 An instance of **unauthorised** absence from a scheduled session will be recorded in one or more of the following non-exhaustive list of circumstances:
- Where a student is not present at that scheduled session without good cause;
  - Where a student attends a different session to that which is scheduled within their timetable without good cause;
  - Where a student is present at their scheduled session, but has not used the appropriate method in place at the time to record their attendance;
  - Where a student has arrived too late to their scheduled session for their attendance to be recorded.

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<sup>5</sup> This does **not** include students on clinical placements, who will be subject to the normal attendance expectations and the intervention threshold identified in section 4.2 or in accordance with the requirements of the relevant PSRB.

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- 3.3 An instance of **authorised** absence will be recorded in one or more the following circumstances:
- Where absence from a scheduled session is approved by the relevant School – in advance or after the event – in line with sections 3.4 through to 3.7;
  - Where a scheduled teaching event is cancelled;
  - Where an absence results from an unavoidable clash in scheduled activities.
- 3.4 Students are responsible for ensuring that they follow the correct procedures in place at the time to request authorisation for any absence. This will normally require a student to inform their School Support Office (or equivalent) using the appropriate system in place for reporting an absence **in advance of the scheduled event(s) wherever possible**. No absences will normally be authorised where notification is received later than **five working days** after the date(s) of absence, or where a student fails to contact their School Support Office.
- 3.5 Where students are absent from a scheduled session or sessions (as defined in section 2.4) through illness and/or injury (or other reason as outlined in section 3.7), they may self-certify their absence for a period of **no longer than seven consecutive calendar days**.
- 3.6 Students may only self-certify their absence on a maximum of two occasions within one term. All additional absences will be considered to be **unauthorised**, unless exceptional approval is granted by the Head of Department, or relevant delegate.
- 3.7 In addition to illness and/or injury, the following constitutes the list of reasons for absence that **may** result in a recording of **authorised** absence, subject to School approval:
- Medical appointment;
  - Parental or other caring responsibilities;
  - Bereavement or other compassionate grounds;
  - Unforeseen domestic (or other) emergency (including isolated IT issues);
  - Unforeseen and/or unpreventable event (e.g. transport strike);
  - Appointment with Police or visa authority for immigration purposes;
  - Career-related appointment or interview (e.g. for a placement or internship);
  - Employment-related absence;
  - Military educational activity;
  - Other military service;
  - Religious observance;
  - Vacation/family event;
  - Volunteering service;
  - Jury service;
  - Disability (in accordance with a Student Support Information Sheet<sup>6</sup>);
  - Elite sport-related;
  - Approved University visits, events, workshops and/or conferences.

Students should always aim to provide documentation to support absence requests. Absence for longer than seven consecutive calendar days **must always** be supported by the appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> The Policy and Procedures Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students is available [here](#).

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documentation, otherwise the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.<sup>7</sup>

- 3.8 Students are not able to self-certify their absence from examinations and/or any other submission of summative assessment under any circumstances<sup>8</sup>.**
- 3.9 Students are expected to take responsibility for their attendance and absence records – which will be made available to them via the appropriate system in place at the time – and to bring to the attention of their School any discrepancies in their timetable and/or their attendance/absence records in reasonable time after the scheduled event.
- 3.10 Whether an absence is authorised or otherwise, students remain responsible for:
- Engaging with any missed academic content;
  - Meeting any professional or statutory regulatory body expectations in relation to attendance;
  - Meeting any attendance requirements in relation to a student visa and/or sponsorship agreement.

### 4. Interventions and escalation

- 4.1 The monitoring of student attendance is a supportive – not a punitive – measure. The intention of the University’s interventions and escalation process is to assist and support students to get the help they might need and, wherever possible, to resume attendance on their programme.
- 4.2 Students will enter a staged escalation process should five consecutive contact points (as defined in section 2.9) be missed and recorded as **unauthorised**.

#### Stage One

- 4.3 Students who reach the threshold identified in section 4.2 (or, where applicable, breach the requirements described in sections 2.12 and 2.15) will be escalated to **Stage One**. A notification will be sent to the student to alert them to their attendance record, and to signpost them to appropriate mechanisms of support. The student will be required to resume attendance on their programme at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 4.4 If a student has good underlying reasons<sup>9</sup> for a lack of attendance then it is vitally important that they inform their School Support Office, where possible using the appropriate system in place for reporting an absence, in order to prevent further escalation and for the correct help and/or course of action to be offered. It is expected that the student will resume attendance on their programme at the earliest possible opportunity following this initiation of contact.

#### Stage Two

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<sup>7</sup> The relevant School will decide what constitutes acceptable supporting documentation. The University may also revise these timeframes and/or documentation requirements in the event of major disruption (e.g. a global and/or national pandemic). In revising such measures, the University will be guided by its commitment to its students.

<sup>8</sup> In such instances, students should follow the procedures set out in Appendix M (including Annex 1) of the Code of Practice on Assessment: Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, available [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> Such as those defined within Appendix M (including Annex 1) of the Code of Practice on Assessment: Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, available [here](#).

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- 4.5 Students will be escalated to **Stage Two** in the event that their absence extends to eight consecutive unauthorised missed contact points.
- 4.6 Escalation to **Stage Two** will involve the student being invited – physically or virtually – to an informal meeting to discuss their absence. The meeting will be an opportunity for the student to discuss their circumstances in more detail, and for the School – in liaison with the student – to draw up an action plan in relation to any further academic and/or pastoral support that might be required. It is expected that the student will resume attendance on their programme at the earliest possible opportunity following agreement of this action plan.

### Stage Three

- 4.7 Students will be escalated to **Stage Three** in one or more of the following circumstances:
- Where the student fails to attend the arranged informal meeting, unless exceptional circumstances are offered and accepted by the School, in which case a further meeting shall be arranged;
  - Where the student's absence extends to fifteen consecutive unauthorised missed contact points.
- 4.8 Students entering **Stage Three** will be invited to attend an **Attendance Progress Review Meeting**. An action plan will be developed – which the student will be expected to adhere to – and attendance on the student's programme is expected to resume at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 4.9 If a student fails to resume attendance on their programme after **Stage Three** has been reached; fails to attend the **Attendance Progress Review Meeting**; or fails to take any recommended action(s) which have been put in place to seek to mitigate any issues they are experiencing, then the student's case will be referred to a formal **Progression Board of Examiners** or **Progress Panel** (acting on behalf of a Board of Examiners).
- 4.10 The formal **Progress Panel/Progression Board of Examiners** should be convened within a further ten working days. The student is not required to attend the meeting of the **Progress Panel/Progression Board of Examiners**, unless they are specifically invited to do so.
- 4.11 A detailed record of all notes, correspondence and action plans shall be retained within students' records in all cases and at all stages.

## 5. Sanctions and consequences

- 5.1 The **Attendance Progress Review Meeting** and the **Progress Panel/Progression Board of Examiners** will review the student's case holistically, taking account not only of their poor attendance, but also of relevant engagement, attainment and welfare indicators. **Progress Panels** and **Progression Boards of Examiners** have the authority to remove a student from their programme of study for a lack of attendance.
- 5.2 Good academic attainment and/or engagement with activities which are not mandatory for attendance monitoring purposes (e.g. attendance at non-timetabled drop-in sessions) cannot fully excuse a rate or pattern of attendance which falls below the minimum requirements stated in this Policy. In such circumstances, a student will be instructed to improve their attendance and warned of the consequences of not doing so.

- 5.3 **Progress Panels and Progression Boards of Examiners** are convened and constituted in accordance with the University's Guide on the Progress of Students on Taught Programmes of Study (Appendix E, Code of Practice on Assessment). Students shall have the right of appeal to a Faculty Progress Committee against any decision to terminate their studies, as prescribed within the Code of Practice.

### International students

- 5.4 The University has additional compliance responsibilities in relation to those international students studying at the University on a student visa. These students are required to be in regular attendance as part of the ongoing conditions of their visa. As the student's immigration sponsor, the University has obligations to UKVI to closely monitor their attendance at scheduled sessions and to take appropriate action where required.
- 5.5 **Where a visa-holding student's studies are terminated by the Progress Panel – and subject to the outcome of any subsequent appeal – the student's change of circumstances will be reported to UKVI and the University will withdraw its sponsorship of the student. The student will then be required to leave the UK.**

### 6. Misuse and fraudulent activity

- 6.1 The University expects its students to act honestly in relation to their records of attendance. In accordance with section 3.2, where a student has been unable to record their attendance at a scheduled activity, or otherwise believes that there is an error on their attendance record, then they should contact their School in reasonable time in order to address this.
- 6.2 Any attempt by a student to falsify their attendance records will be addressed in line with the University's Student Conduct Policy or Fitness to Practise Procedures, as appropriate. These policies can be found [here](#).
- 6.3 Students must only record their **own** attendance at scheduled sessions. If a student is identified as having fraudulently recorded attendance for another student or students, then all students involved will be dealt with in line with the relevant Policy outlined in section 6.2.
- 6.4 The following is a non-exhaustive list of what **may** constitute misuse and fraudulent activity:
- Where a student provides their personal IT credentials, or a time-limited attendance access code, to another student for the purpose of that student falsely recording their attendance at a scheduled activity;
  - Where a student provides their personal or University property (e.g. phone or ID card) to another student for the purpose of that student falsely recording their attendance at a scheduled activity;
  - Where a student may develop a pattern of behaviour for registering their attendance at scheduled activities but then absenting themselves from said activities before an appropriate time;
  - Where a student falsifies their reasons for non-attendance, or their reasons for not successfully registering attendance, in an attempt to claim an instance of authorised absence.



### 7. Equality and inclusivity

- 7.1 This Policy has been developed with full regard to the Equality Act 2010 and has undergone a full Equality Impact Assessment.
- 7.2 The University supports disabled students as part of its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, disabled students are protected against discrimination arising from their disability and any failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- 7.3 The University is committed to providing an inclusive environment which enables all students and staff to achieve their potential. Its Policy and Procedures Regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Support for Disabled Students outlines in detail how the University delivers on this commitment.

### 8. Data processing

- 8.1 The personal data that are collected and processed for the purposes of this Policy are done so in accordance with the University's legitimate interest to help students interact successfully with their study programme, and to support their welfare and success.
- 8.2 The University will hold and process students' personal data in compliance with its obligations as Data Controller under the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. It will not share students' data with third parties unless it holds an appropriate consent from the student, is under a statutory or regulatory obligation to do so, or is otherwise permitted to do so under the appropriate Acts of Parliament.
- 8.3 In the interests of transparency, the University maintains a series of Privacy Statements which outline in more detail how it collects, retains and processes students' personal data, which may be updated from time to time. These are available at [www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data\\_protection/privacy-notice/](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data_protection/privacy-notice/).

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## APPENDIX

### STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Students will:

- Ensure they are familiar with the terms and expectations contained within this Policy;
- Take responsibility for their own attendance;
- Attend all timetabled teaching and learning sessions associated with their programme of study, and ensure they have their attendance recorded correctly;
- Participate and engage in all modules and programmes in which they are registered, including all guided independent study, assessment and feedback;
- Self-report any absences which may occur during the course of their programme, in advance wherever possible, and/or by the deadline set by the relevant School;
- Ensure they submit the appropriate supporting evidence for absences lasting more than seven consecutive calendar days;
- Review their attendance and absence records on a regular basis and bring to the attention of their School any discrepancies in their timetable and/or their attendance/absence records in reasonable time after the scheduled event;
- Ensure that they check their University of Liverpool email account on a regular basis for any formal notifications/communications, and to act upon emails requiring their attention;
- Ensure, where applicable, that their attendance matches the requirements of their placement provider;
- Attend all necessary formal examinations and submit coursework by the published submission dates;
- Obtain a replacement student card as a matter of priority if it becomes lost, damaged or forgotten;
- Maintain regular contact with their Academic Advisor;
- Observe the University's Policy on Extenuating Circumstances as laid out in the Code of Practice on Assessment, and ensure they are aware of how, where and when to apply for consideration of extenuating circumstances;
- Attend any meetings with Academic Advisors, Student Experience staff, Programme Directors etc. which are called as the result of concerning patterns or rates of attendance.

#### The University will:

- Ensure that all students on taught programmes are aware of the University's expectations in relation to attendance;
- Ensure that accessible and convenient arrangements are in place for students to record and monitor their attendance and absence;
- Provide students with convenient access to their attendance records;
- Communicate regularly with students to update them on their levels of attendance;
- Support students' attendance by providing a range of professional and academic services;
- Ensure that all students, prior to and during their studies, have access to this Policy.