



# Policy on Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events

## Introduction

The University expects students to attend and participate at teaching events that are part of their programme of study. Attendance is an important aspect of learning and the student experience. Students who attend regularly and fully engage with all aspects of their programmes are more likely to succeed even if they face challenges during their studies. This policy is designed to support student achievement by encouraging high rates of attendance and engagement.

## 1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to all campus-based undergraduate and taught postgraduate teaching events scheduled through the University's timetabling system, CMIS. The policy:
  - articulates the University's expectations with respect to attendance at timetabled teaching events
  - explains how these are managed
  - explains action taken when the expectations are not met
  - complies with the regulatory requirements articulated in Senate Regulation 4: Regulations Governing Student Attendance
  - ensures that the University can meet the requirements of UKVI relating to Tier 4 sponsored students
- 1.2. Information on how the policy operates is published in the Procedures for Managing the Policy on Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1. This policy supports the aims of the University's Learning Strategy, which contains a commitment to deliver a student experience that engenders success, supported by a stronger focus on retention and engagement and on identifying and supporting students who may need support and guidance to help them succeed in their studies. The University believes that for campus-based students attendance at scheduled teaching events is an important factor for successful engagement with their studies and achieving the best possible outcomes.
- 2.2. It is recognised that attendance is not the only indicator of students' engagement with their programme. However, non-attendance can be an important indicator that students may be experiencing difficulties in engaging with their studies. It is therefore important that programme teams monitor student attendance in order to identify students who may have circumstances that are affecting their studies and provide support to them where appropriate.
- 2.3. This policy seeks to ensure that all students are treated equally and fairly in respect of their attendance at timetabled teaching, whilst recognising that students may face specific challenges during their studies.

- 2.4. The University is also committed to ensuring that students are provided with accurate information about their attendance in order to make informed decisions about the courses of action open to them.

### **3. Attendance Requirements**

- 3.1. In accordance with Senate Regulation 4, students are expected to attend all timetabled teaching events associated with their programme of study in order to achieve the maximum benefit from the learning opportunities offered to them.
- 3.2. Some programmes of study may contain modules for which attendance is designated as compulsory for all students. In such cases this will be stated in module specifications and communicated to students in programme handbooks and other programme information. Equally, where attendance at timetabled events is deemed by programme teams to be optional, students will be notified in programme handbooks and other programme information.
- 3.3. As a condition of its licence to sponsor students under Tier 4 of the UK Government's Points-Based Immigration Scheme (PBS), the University is required to place additional attendance requirements upon students who require immigration permission to study in the UK and to withdraw sponsorship from students who do not meet these attendance requirements.
- 3.4. Some Professional or Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) may set out attendance requirements for all students as a condition of accreditation which are more stringent than those set out in this policy. In such cases this will be stated in programme specifications and communicated to students by programme teams in programme handbooks and other programme information. This point relates particularly, but not necessarily exclusively, to programmes regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC).
- 3.5. As part of its commitment to the innovative use of learning technologies to support the student learning experience, the University uses lecture capture technology to record teaching events and make them available to students online. These recordings are intended to enhance the learning experience and not to replace teaching events which students are still expected to attend.

### **4. Registering Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events**

- 4.1. Attendance at timetabled teaching events is managed using the University's Attendance Management System (AMS). The details of how this operates are published in the Procedures for Managing the Policy on Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events.

### **5. Authorised Absences**

- 5.1. In accordance with Senate Regulation 4, students may request permission from their programme team for short periods of absence for personal or religious reasons.
- 5.2. Absences must be requested at the earliest possible opportunity. Absences of more than 7 calendar days must be made and authorised in writing and the student must take full responsibility for the completion of outstanding academic work.
- 5.3. In accordance with Senate Regulation 7, if a student has been unable to sit an examination or submit coursework for assessment as a result of circumstances which have caused them to be absent from scheduled teaching events, they should submit a mitigating circumstances claim.

- 5.4. If a student's circumstances are such that they are likely to need time away from study on an ongoing basis, students are advised to discuss the possibility of a suspension of studies with their personal tutor or other programme contact. Advice on the implications of suspension of study for Tier 4 visa holders must be sought from the University's Student Immigration Advice and Compliance team.

## **6. Unauthorised Absences**

- 6.1. The University proactively monitors student attendance and has a staged process for managing unauthorised absences from teaching sessions.
- 6.2. There are five stages. All new and continuing students will start each academic year at Stage 0. Full information on each stage and actions taken are detailed in the Procedures for Managing the Policy on Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events.

## **7. Patterns of Attendance**

- 7.1. For the purposes of understanding student engagement, Departments/Schools will also look at patterns of attendance at regular intervals during term time. If patterns of attendance give cause for concern that a student may be experiencing difficulty in engaging with their studies, then the reasons for this will be explored directly with the student.
- 7.2. Examples of patterns of attendance that may be explored with students include:
- Patterns of non-attendance at events which the Department/School has stated are compulsory
  - Patterns of non-attendance at events scheduled in specific locations, days or timeslots
  - Patterns of non-attendance at specific event types, such as tutorials
  - Patterns of non-attendance on specific modules
  - For tier 4 visa holders: patterns of attendance which suggest that the student is in danger of breaching the conditions of their visa
- 7.3. Students may be referred to an Attendance Panel where they have repeated stage resets.

## **8. Attendance Experts and Panels**

- 8.1. Attendance records will be reviewed by an Attendance Expert in the first instance to identify cases that require consideration by an Attendance Panel. The Attendance Expert will be a member of the Department/School's professional services team with sufficient seniority and experience to undertake the role effectively. The Attendance Expert will be trained and have access to all relevant information and systems to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to refer a student to a Panel.
- 8.2. The Attendance Expert will determine the cases which should be taken to a Panel. These will normally include all students who have reached Stage 4 unless clear evidence has been provided to account for the unauthorised absences; students who are consistently absent from teaching events deemed by Departments/Schools to be compulsory; and students whose pattern of attendance is sufficiently low as to cause concern that academic and/or compliance requirements are not being met.
- 8.3. Attendance Panels will be chaired by the Senior Tutor, or another member of academic staff nominated by the Head of Department, and will comprise at least three academic and professional services staff who have experience, knowledge and expertise in reviewing non-attendance cases.
- 8.4. The Procedures for Managing the Policy on Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events outline how Attendance Panels should be operated and the possible outcomes that may result from the consideration of student cases.

## **9. Appeals Against Attendance Panel Decisions**

- 9.1. A student may only appeal against an Attendance Panel decision if there are or were circumstances materially affecting the student's ability to attend timetabled teaching events, for which supporting evidence exists, which were not known to the Attendance Panel at the time its decision was taken, and which it was not reasonably practical for the student to make known beforehand
- 9.2. A student must submit an appeal on his or her own behalf, within five working days of the notification of their withdrawal of registration. Appeals should be made on the withdrawal of registration appeal form, with evidence attached, and submitted to [AMappeals@le.ac.uk](mailto:AMappeals@le.ac.uk).
- 9.3. Appeals will be considered by the Deputy Director of Academic Services or their nominee.
- 9.4. Notification of the outcome of the appeal will complete the University's procedures and students will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter which will include information on the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

## **10. Tier 4 Sponsored Students**

- 10.1 The University holds a Tier 4 Sponsor Licence which permits it to sponsor international students who wish to undertake full-time study at Leicester under the UKVI Tier 4 Points Based System. As a Tier 4 Sponsor the University has specific responsibility to act in accordance with the Tier 4 Immigration Rules and Sponsor Guidance.
- 10.2 The UKVI has clear expectations with respect to monitoring attendance and engagement and expects the University to withdraw sponsorship for students who miss 10 consecutive contact points. Consequently, further action will be taken from Stage 2 onwards as outlined

in the Procedures for Managing the Policy on Attendance at Timetables Teaching Events to ensure the University continues to fulfil its obligations under the Tier 4 Sponsor Licence.

- 10.3 In the case of a Tier 4 sponsored student the UKVI expects the University to monitor patterns of attendance to ensure that students are fully engaged with their studies and not missing particular sessions/days on a regular basis. Where attendance falls below 50% they will be called for interview by the Student Immigration Advice and Compliance Team to address concern that their visa conditions are not being met.

## **11. Data Protection**

- 11.1. All student records in relation to student attendance and decisions taken in relation to student registration status will be subject to the University's Data Protection code of practice and data retention schedule.