



PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING THE POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AT TIMETABLED TEACHING EVENTS

Introduction

This document explains how the University's policy on attendance at timetabled teaching events should operate and outlines responsibilities in respect of:

- Attendance requirements at timetabled teaching events
- How students should register attendance at timetabled teaching events
- The processes for students to request permission to be absent from timetabled teaching events
- The University's decision-making process in respect of persistent non-attendance
- How students who have difficulties in attending can access support

1. Registering Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events

- 1.1. Attendance at timetabled teaching events is managed using the University's Attendance Management System (AMS).
- 1.2. At the start of each teaching session, all students are required to tap their student ID card at card readers placed at the entrance of teaching rooms. Students must tap in at the start of all timetabled sessions in order for their attendance to be registered.
- 1.3. Students who tap in more than 5 minutes after the start of a timetabled session will be marked as present but late. Students will not be penalised for late arrival, but if patterns of lateness are observed, programme teams may wish to explore the reasons for this with students.
- 1.4. Students who fail to tap the card reader at the start of their timetabled session will be marked as absent.
- 1.5. If a card scanner fails to register a student's attendance (i.e. does not turn green when a card is held against it), the student should, where practical, inform the member of staff delivering the teaching event so that attendance can be manually recorded if necessary.
- 1.6. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have their student ID cards with them at all times. Students should report issues with their ID card to the IT Help Zone in the David Wilson Library. If the card is confirmed to be malfunctioning, lost or stolen staff will direct students to obtain a new ID card from the Student Services Centre on the ground floor of the Charles Wilson Building.

- 1.7. In accordance with Senate Regulation 2.16, the use of a student ID card is personal to the individual to whom it is issued, and students must not allow their card to be used by any other individual. Students who are found to be fraudulently using the Attendance Management System, either by tapping in on others' behalf or allowing others to tap in on their behalf, will be subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the regulations on student misconduct set out in Senate Regulation 11.5.

2. Authorised Absences

- 2.1. In accordance with Senate Regulation 4, students may request permission from their programme team for short periods of absence for personal or religious reasons. Absences must be requested at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. Absences can be authorised up to 28 calendar days in advance of the scheduled teaching session.
- 2.4. Absences can be authorised up to 7 calendar days after the scheduled teaching session.
- 2.5. Programme teams retain the right not to authorise an absence if the grounds for requiring an absence are not sufficiently well established.
- 2.6. 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.
- 2.7. If a student's circumstances are such that they are likely to need time away from study on an ongoing basis, they are advised to discuss the possibility of a suspension of studies with their personal tutor or other programme contact. Tier 4 visa holders must obtain advice on the implications of suspension of study from the University's Student Immigration Advice and Compliance team, located in the Student Services Centre in the Charles Wilson Building.

3. Unauthorised Absences

- 3.1. The University proactively monitors student attendance and has a staged process for managing unauthorised absences from teaching sessions. A teaching week is defined as the period Monday to Sunday during the academic year where teaching events are scheduled.
- 3.2. Stage 0: Attendance is satisfactory. All new and continuing students will start each academic year at Stage 0.
- 3.3. Stage 1: Students who have been absent without authorisation for one teaching week will be contacted by email, reminded of the requirement to attend timetabled teaching sessions, and signposted to sources of support. Students who subsequently

start to attend timetabled teaching sessions will be reset to Stage 0. Students who continue to be absent without authorisation from timetabled teaching sessions will progress to Stage 2.

- 3.4. Stage 2: Students who have been absent without authorisation for two consecutive teaching weeks will be contacted to discuss the reasons for non-attendance and offered appropriate pastoral support where required in order to re-engage or suspend studies. Students who subsequently start to attend timetabled teaching sessions will be reset to Stage 0. Students who continue to be absent without authorisation from timetabled teaching sessions will progress to Stage 3.
- 3.5. Stage 3: Students who have been absent for three consecutive teaching weeks will be required to attend a face-to-face meeting with a personal tutor or member of their programme team to discuss the reasons for non-attendance, and offered appropriate pastoral support where required in order to re-engage or suspend studies. Students who subsequently start to attend timetabled teaching sessions will be reset to Stage 0. Students who continue to be absent without authorisation from timetabled teaching sessions will progress to Stage 4.
- 3.6. Stage 4: Students who have been absent for four consecutive teaching weeks will have their case reviewed by the Attendance Expert. In most cases this will lead to a referral to a departmental attendance panel for a decision on their registration status. Students will be advised of the outcome of the consideration of their case by the Attendance Expert.
- 3.7. Students who receive a notification of referral to a departmental attendance panel will have seven calendar days in which to submit their reasons for non-attendance, supported by third party documentary evidence and to demonstrate why they have not been able to respond to previous communications. Any such evidence will be taken into consideration by the departmental attendance panel.
- 3.8. Exceptions to the process outlined above are students on pre-sessional English language courses delivered by the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU), and students on programmes taught in the Medical School subject to General Medical Council (GMC) regulations. These courses are required to have more stringent attendance requirements and the timelines for managing non-attendance are shorter. The processes for managing ELTU and GMC non-attendance will be communicated to students by programme teams by means of handbooks and other programme information.

4. Unauthorised absences for Tier 4 Sponsored Students

- 4.1 The above stages apply to all students. However, as the University has to meet particular UKVI requirements with respect to Tier 4 sponsored students additional actions will be implemented with respect to students on Tier 4 visas as detailed in 4.2 – 4.6 below. Patterns and consistent low levels of attendance will be monitored by the Student Immigration Advice and Compliance team and appropriate action taken if it considers a student's visa to be at risk.

- 4.2 At Stage 1 all students, including those on a Tier 4 visa will be contacted by email, reminded of the requirement to attend timetabled teaching sessions, and signposted to sources of support.
- 4.3 At Stage 2, in addition to the action detailed in 3.4 above, Tier 4 sponsored students will also be contacted by their Department by telephone, reminded of their responsibilities under Tier 4 and advised that they are putting their visa at risk.
- 4.4 At Stage 3, in addition to the action detailed in 3.5 above, Tier 4 sponsored students will also be contacted by e-mail and telephone by the Student Immigration Advice and Compliance Team.
- 4.5 At Stage 4, in addition to the action detailed in 3.6 above, the Student Immigration Advice and Compliance Team will require the student to make immediate contact by telephone or in person to prevent the cancellation of their visa.
- 4.6 The Student Immigration and Advice Team has the authority to withdraw sponsorship at any point after Stage 2 if there is no acceptable reason for absence and in its view the UKVI would cancel a student's visa.

5. Attendance Experts and Panels

- 5.1. Attendance records will be considered by an Attendance Expert in the first instance to identify the cases that require discussion 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.
- 5.2. The Attendance Expert will determine which cases should be taken to a Panel. In most cases this will include all students who have reached Stage 4, unless acceptable evidence has been provided to the Attendance Expert to explain the absence and they are able to resolve the case without taking it to the Panel; students who are consistently absent from teaching events deemed by Departments/Schools to be compulsory; students who have repeated stage resets; and students whose pattern of attendance is sufficiently low as to cause concern that academic and/or compliance requirements are not being met.
- 5.3. Panel members will have detailed knowledge of the regulations, policy and process and will have access to a precedence database to support consistency of decision making.
- 5.4. Attendance Panels will be chaired by Senior Tutors or a member of academic staff nominated by the Head of Department and will comprise academic and professional services staff who have experience, knowledge and expertise in reviewing non-attendance cases. The panel should consist of at least three people including the Chair and Attendance Expert and representation drawn from relevant academic Departments/Schools.

- 5.5. Departments/Schools should ensure that they have nominated staff who can be called upon to sit on panels on a weekly basis as and when required. Meetings will be scheduled by the Attendance Expert over the course of the academic year to ensure students receive prompt notification of decisions.
- 5.6. Students should be notified that their case is being submitted to an Attendance Panel for consideration and be given the opportunity to submit their reasons for non-attendance with supporting evidence within 5 working days. They should also be asked to explain why they have been unable respond to previous communications.
- 5.7. Only evidence written in English will be considered. It is a student's responsibility to obtain and submit a verified translation if the original evidence is in another language whilst still adhering to the deadlines laid out above.
- 5.8. A lost or faulty student ID card will not be accepted evidence for non-attendance as students are advised to take action at the time if they believe their ID card is not working by visiting the Help Zone in the David Wilson Library.
- 5.9. Attendance Panels will meet and consider evidence relating to student cases. If students do not submit evidence their cases will be considered on the basis of the information available to the panel at the time of its meeting.

6. Information Available to Attendance Panels

- 6.1. Attendance Panels will be provided with a data set which will consist of the following:
 - The student's attendance record for the academic year to date (including the number of times their attendance stage has been reset)
 - An audit trail of contact made with the student in regards to attendance, advice given, and outcomes
 - The student's module marks for their current programme of study to date
 - The dates of submission of coursework and/or exam sittings, where marking is still in progress
 - Evidence, where available and appropriate, of alternative forms of engagement
 - Evidence, where available and appropriate, from personal tutors, the Student Support Services and/or the Student Immigration Advice and Compliance team
 - Evidence, where available, from the student.

7. Attendance Panel Outcomes

- 7.1. An Attendance Panel may make the following decisions on student registration status. Such decisions must be made with a view to achieving the best possible outcome for a student in the context of the specific circumstances that the student may be facing.
- 7.2. **To allow the student to continue studying** where a student is to be permitted to continue studying, the student should be signposted to appropriate support and guidance where required.

- 7.3. **To suspend a student's registration** for the remainder of the academic year, permitting him or her to return to the same programme of study at the appropriate point in the next academic year.
- 7.4. **To suspend a student's registration** for the remainder of the academic year, permitting him or her to return to a different programme of study at the start of the next academic year. In such cases the student must have requested a course transfer him/herself and must meet the academic eligibility requirements for the new programme.
- 7.5. Where programmes are available through different modes of study and the student is in agreement, **to transfer the student's registration** to a part-time campus based or distance learning mode of delivery.
- 7.6. To **withdraw a student's registration** the decision to withdraw a student's registration should only be taken once all other possibilities have been exhausted. In cases where a withdrawn student has accrued enough credits for an award, the student's profile should be presented to the next Board of Examiners so that the award can be made. All decisions to withdraw a student's registration will be forwarded to the Student Records Team for review. Notification will then be issued to the student.
- 7.7. The Student Immigration Advice and Compliance team should be consulted in all cases involving tier 4 visa holders, in order to ensure that appropriate decisions are taken with regards to student immigration status.
- 7.8. Students will receive notification of the outcome of the Attendance Panel by email from their department, except in cases of withdrawal of registration.
- 7.9. Where a student's registration is withdrawn they will be notified of the appeals process.
- 7.10. Students whose registration is withdrawn for non-attendance will be reported, as appropriate, to the Student Loans Company (SLC), the UKVI, and other statutory bodies where relevant.

8. Appeals Against Attendance Panel Decisions

- 8.1. A student may only appeal against an Attendance Panel decision if there are or were circumstances materially affecting their 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
- 8.2. A student must submit an appeal on his or her own behalf, within 5 working days of the notification of withdrawal. Appeals should be made on the withdrawal of registration appeal form, with evidence attached, and submitted to AMappeals@le.ac.uk
- 8.3. Appeals will be considered by the Deputy Director of Academic Services or their nominee.

- 8.4. At the conclusion of the appeal process a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued and students will be notified that they may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education if they meet the eligibility criteria.