

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY

Introduction

1. This Policy is in the spirit of the University of Suffolk's commitment to be a supportive learning environment which enables all students who have chosen to study at the Institution to achieve their full potential. The University recognises the investment that students and their sponsors make when a student enrolls on a course and believes that it has a duty to monitor attendance, act on non-attendance and support students to complete their programme of study.
2. The purpose of the Policy is to provide clarity for students and staff on the expectations relating to student attendance.
3. This Policy applies to all enrolled students at the University of Suffolk and across Partner institutions.
4. This Policy recognises that courses may have different attendance requirements. These may be associated with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) regulations or be based on agreed academic practices. For courses where specific attendance and reporting mechanisms are required, such arrangements are approved at validation and will be published in the Student Course Handbook.
5. The institution also has a statutory duty to comply with the stipulations of the Home Office under its Tier 4 licence which requires the accurate tracking of attendance of students subject to visa restrictions, as outlined in paragraphs 24 to 25.

Policy statement

6. Attendance is a vital component in student retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who actively participate in their learning by attending classes regularly should: enjoy a rewarding experience in which knowledge, skills and abilities are developed; successfully complete their course; and achieve better results. Attendance monitoring allows timely intervention and to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between staff and students regarding success and progression.
7. Students **must attend all learning and teaching sessions** unless they have valid mitigating reasons for not doing so. The learning and teaching methods for each course and component modules are set out in the Student Course Handbook. Examples of learning and teaching sessions include, but are not limited to: lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops,

laboratory and practical sessions, professional placements, field trips and industrial visits, and in the case of research students, scheduled meetings with supervisors.

8. Students must arrive on time for classes and remain for the duration of the session. Late arrival at, and early departure from sessions is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other class members and tutors.

9. Students are part of the University of Suffolk academic community and as such are expected to contribute to their fellow students' learning experience. This is particularly the case when engaging in assessed group work where non-attendance at any stage in the learning process can impact adversely on others' experience.

10. Attendance will be measured formally through registration mechanisms including electronic swipe-in and/or paper sign-in registers.

Planned and unexpected absences

11. The University understands that students may face difficulty in attending all sessions, and as such recognises that there will be cases of both planned and unexpected absence, usually as a result of:

- short-term illness, accident or injury, or medical appointments where rearrangement is not possible;
- the death or serious illness of a close family member or dependent (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence in accordance with compassionate leave regulations);
- adverse personal or family circumstances directly affecting the student;
- interviews or associated opportunities to gain paid or voluntary work where these appointments cannot reasonably be rearranged;
- other significant exceptional factor.

As a matter of courtesy students are encouraged to make module leaders aware when they are unable to attend sessions due to the above. Wherever possible, advanced notice should be given of absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

12. Students are responsible for:

- Attending **all** learning and teaching sessions as outlined in paragraph 7;

- Engaging with the registration mechanisms in place within their location of study, including electronic swipe-in or sign-in where paper registers are used;
- Notifying their Course Administrator/Higher Education Administrator and Module Leader regarding any unavoidable absences prior to or as soon as is practicably possible after the event;
- Notifying the Infozone or their Higher Education Office in the Partner institutions of any concerns regarding recording attendance, such as failure of electronic systems;
- Making applications in good time for Extenuating Circumstances where absence is impacting their ability to study and submit work to prescribed deadlines. Evidence will be required as outlined in the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#);
- In addition to the above, students studying on programmes with professional practice placements must report absence from placement to the relevant team as outlined in the Student Course Handbook. In such cases, evidence will be required.

13. Academic staff:

- Are responsible for encouraging a culture of student attendance, including providing information, advice and guidance to students at Induction and key points throughout their programme of study;
- Are required to encourage students to engage with registration processes either via swipe-in or in the appropriate completion of paper registers, and that where used paper registers are passed to Course Administrators/Higher Education Administrators promptly after teaching events. This extends to include compliance with any back-up systems used in the event of electronic system failure;
- Have the opportunity to trigger the unsatisfactory attendance processes (as outlined in paragraph 18) in cases where concerns have been informally raised and/or when formal attendance triggers are hit;
- Should advise relevant Course Administrators/Higher Education Administrators of student absence when this is not confirmed by electronic records.

14. Administrative staff:

- Are responsible for retaining student attendance records;
- Will liaise with students and staff to arrange meetings with Personal Tutors, Course Leaders and Deans of School regarding unsatisfactory attendance as required;
- Will provide formal attendance monitoring data on request to support the processes outlined in paragraph 18, and other relevant student success and progression monitoring processes.

15. All parties have additional responsibilities with regards to attendance of international students who are subject to visa restrictions. Refer to the [Admissions Policy](#) and paragraph 24 to 25 below.

Unsatisfactory attendance

16. Unless otherwise defined by PSRB requirements, unsatisfactory attendance is deemed to be when a student does not attend any scheduled sessions for a period of seven consecutive days, and does not have valid reasons for non-attendance.

17. Unsatisfactory attendance actions will be triggered by formal attendance registration data and in cases where other unsatisfactory behaviours are noted which may not be reflected in this data. This may include cases of late enrollers, persistent late arrival/early departure, or where there is other cause for concern.

Actions in case of unsatisfactory attendance

18. Where it is identified that attendance is unsatisfactory, the following actions will be taken:
- After 7 consecutive days of non-attendance, the Course Administrator/Higher Education Administrator will contact the student by email (sent to their institutional email address) to advise them of the trigger point, and to request they make contact with the module leader(s) to explain the absence.
 - If the student does not recommence attending and does not satisfactorily explain their absence, after a further 7 days of consecutive non-attendance (14 days in total) a further email will be sent requiring the student to make contact with their Personal Tutor. An explanation for their unsatisfactory attendance will be sought and information and advice regarding support services will be provided.
 - After a further 7 days of consecutive non-attendance (21 days in total), if the student fails to contact their Personal Tutor and/or fails to recommence attending, the student will be required to attend a meeting with the Course Leader to discuss how their attendance can be improved and to identify any further support that may be required. A formalised Attendance Agreement may be put in place.
 - After a further 7 days of consecutive non-attendance (28 days in total), and where the student has failed to engage with their Personal Tutor or Course Leader, or has failed to adhere to the Attendance Agreement the case will be escalated to the relevant Dean of School or Head of Higher Education in the Partner institution. If this is the first occasion of unsatisfactory attendance, the Dean of School may issue the student with a written letter of warning. If the student consistently fails to maintain satisfactory attendance levels and

does not engage with the processes outlined above, the student will be notified in writing that failure to make contact within 7 days will lead to their withdrawal from the course.

19. The student's sponsor, including an employer, the Local Authority, or the Student Loan Company may be informed about the ongoing unsatisfactory attendance.

20. Where School or Partner institution approaches have been developed to support retention strategies, additional arrangements may be put in place.

21. Attendance records will be considered in the following cases:

- At Assessment Boards when considering the opportunities made available to students to retake failed modules;
- At Assessment Boards when considering a student's eligibility to progress onto a sandwich year;
- When considering academic appeals, where this information is relevant to the case;
- When considering applications to the Access to Learning Fund (ALF);
- When calculating exact fee refunds due to those leaving early;
- When confirming eligibility to receive University of Suffolk bursaries;
- During or following study on receipt of an academic reference request.

22. Ongoing unsatisfactory attendance and non-engagement with the above processes will result in the student being removed from their programme of study. Where a student is withdrawn from their course due to unsatisfactory attendance, they will have the right to appeal via the Academic Appeals Procedure.

23. Deliberate misuse of electronic systems or paper registers with the aim of falsifying attendance records will be treated seriously and will result in disciplinary action.

Students subject to visa restrictions

24. All parties have additional responsibilities with regards to attendance of international students who are subject to visa restrictions as detailed in the [Admissions Policy](#).

25. In accordance with UK immigration law, a report will be made to the Home Office if an international student holding a visa is absent from the Institution for more than 10 scheduled interactions without authorisation.