

Attendance Monitoring Policy and Procedure

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ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy and associated Procedure provide an institutional framework for monitoring student attendance, and outline the expectations which the University has of all students, in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Regulations.
- 1.2 Effective attendance monitoring will accrue numerous benefits, including providing timely interventions for 'at risk' students in need of support, enhancing group dynamics within the learning environment, and supporting improvements in retention. A positive approach to attendance and engagement will prove invaluable as students enter the workplace and ensure that they are capable of sustainable success throughout their careers.
- 1.3 This Policy recognises that the monitoring of attendance and subsequent interventions are a holistic University activity, and require the expertise of Schools, Collaborative Partners and central Departments.
- 1.4 This Policy and associated Procedure is aligned with the Teesside 2020 vision through supporting the delivery of an outstanding student and learning experience.
- 1.5 The University is licenced by the Home Office (UK Visas and Immigration) to sponsor students under Tier 4. The terms of the licence impose a duty upon the University to monitor Tier 4 student attendance and engagement, and to report individual Tier 4 students for a number of attendance related matters.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 The aim of this Policy, and associated Procedure, is to support a consistent institutional approach to the monitoring of attendance, which ensures that the University is compliant with external regulatory requirements and supports the student and learning experience.
- 2.2 Robust attendance monitoring will support timely interventions to provide effective student support and maximise the potential for individual students to succeed.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy and associated Procedure apply to all students studying on Teesside University courses, including postgraduate research students. Students undertaking a University affiliated course at another institution (Collaborative Partner) may also be subject to the attendance monitoring process applicable at that institution. In such cases, any student who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Collaborative Partner has the right to submit an appeal to the University. Alternatively, where it has been determined that a

Collaborative Partner is following this Policy and Procedure, the relevant students will be informed in their Course Handbook and at induction.

- 3.2 This Policy recognises that some courses may have different attendance requirements due to, for example, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Regulations. Where variations have been agreed, these will be included within relevant Course Handbooks and communicated to students during induction.
- 3.3 Concerns relating to the operation of this process must be considered in accordance with the Appeal process outlined in paragraph 6. Concerns which fall under the remit of this process cannot be investigated using the University's Complaints Policy and Procedure.
- 3.4 Reference to a particular University role may include reference to an equivalent Collaborative Partner role.
- 3.5 The University will, wherever possible, seek to adhere to the time limits outlined in the accompanying Procedure. In cases where there are circumstances which require deviation from the specified time limits, students will be advised of the reasons for this by a relevant member of staff. Reference to timescales in the accompanying Procedure relate to calendar days, excluding the Christmas closure period of the University and statutory bank holidays.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 All Students

- 4.1.1 Students must attend all learning and teaching sessions, unless they have valid mitigating reasons for not doing so. Learning and teaching sessions may take a variety of forms, including lectures, seminars, workshops and laboratory sessions.
- 4.1.2 Students must engage with the attendance registration mechanisms in place within their location of study. Students must not register attendance on behalf of another student.
- 4.1.3 The University recognises that there may be a range of circumstances which impact upon the ability of a student to attend including, but not limited to, disability, illness, bereavement and adverse family circumstances. Students are responsible for reporting instances of non-attendance through the appropriate mechanisms in a timely manner. These mechanisms will be communicated to students through their Course Handbook and online via the VLE platform.
- 4.1.4 Where non-attendance due to illness extends over 5 days, a medical note will be required.

4.2 Taught Students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)

- 4.2.1 Attendance will be monitored on an ongoing basis, with particular emphasis placed on key review points, as outlined in paragraph 4.2.4.
- 4.2.2 Where a student misses all teaching activities within a week without explanation, they will be contacted by email to clarify the situation and offered advice and support.
- 4.2.3 If the student fails to respond to the email, and non-attendance persists for another week, an informal appropriate intervention involving the relevant Personal Tutor with support from the Retention Support Officer (or equivalent) will be operationalised. The purpose of the intervention will be to ensure that the student receives the appropriate support and guidance.
- 4.2.4 Formal reviews will be undertaken by a School/Collaborative Partner in Weeks 3, 6, 9 and 12 of each semester to monitor attendance on an ongoing basis.
- 4.2.5 Attendance patterns of less than 80% at each review point will trigger an intervention by the University/Collaborative Partner. Where appropriate, the intervention may be conducted in partnership with Student & Library Services.
- 4.2.6 In addition, a student may request support in addressing the reasons for non-attendance at any point via, for example, their Personal Tutor, Retention Support Officer or Student & Library Services.

4.3 Research Students

- 4.3.1 Research students do not have a formally defined mode of attendance at learning and teaching sessions. Research students, whether full or part time must participate in at least one supervisory meeting per month. Each supervisory meeting counts as a 'formal structured interaction'.
- 4.3.2 Records will be used to capture formally structured interactions between students and supervisors. Records will be kept using the student's online E-Vision record. Each meeting between supervisor and students should be captured using an online E-Vision record. E-vision records permit meeting notes to be added to the dated event either in free-text or by uploading documents or scanned paper records.
- 4.3.3 A central programme of Induction will be provided for all newly-enrolled research students in the first year of their enrolment. The Induction programme of generic research training is mandatory. These components, including dates and times of required attendance, are specified in each student's offer letter. Failure to complete mandatory training in the first year of enrolment will result in academic progress being found unsatisfactory at Annual Review.

- 4.3.4 Research study on a distance learning basis is possible only in a few cases, especially when the distance study is undertaken internationally. Distance students are normally expected to attend the University for some periods during their first year, which should coincide with Induction training and Annual Review meeting attendance. In subsequent years, distance students should aim to visit the University in person at least once per year, to coincide with their Annual Review meeting.
- 4.3.5 Students admitted to full-time research degree study and, in particular, those on University funded scholarships, are normally expected to live within a reasonable travelling distance of the University campus in order for them to engage fully with supervision and training and to make a contribution to the research culture of the University.
- 4.3.6 Patterns of attendance and records of formal interaction with supervision will be reviewed and reported on a quarterly basis as part of each School's Quarterly Business Review with Research and Innovation Services. Associate Deans (Research and Innovation) will be provided with monthly reports when patterns of attendance may affect academic progress for research students in their Schools.

4.4 Online Learning Students

- 4.4.1 Students studying through online distance learning may be taught through synchronous and/or asynchronous modes of delivery. Whilst students should attend all scheduled online teaching activities, course engagement will also be monitored through other methods relating to activities on the VLE platform. Students will be advised of how their engagement will be monitored both during their induction and throughout their studies.

4.5 Students on Placement

- 4.5.1 Students undertaking placements or related work-based activities will be monitored by the University/Collaborative Partner and placement provider. Students are expected to report anticipated or actual absences to both the University/Collaborative Partner and provider.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

- 5.1 The student is responsible for:
- (a) Attending all learning and teaching activities, unless they have valid mitigating reasons for not doing so.
 - (b) Engaging fully with learning and teaching activities, including arriving punctually and remaining for the duration of the session.
 - (c) Notifying their School/Collaborative Partner Office, in a timely manner, of absence due to sickness, where possible and practical to do so.

- (d) Notifying their School/Collaborative Partner of other periods of anticipated absence. In some circumstances, this may constitute an interruption of studies.
- (e) Where a student is undertaking a work placement or internship, the student must notify both their School/Collaborative Partner and placement/internship provider in the event of absence.
- (f) If they are unable to attend due to religious observance, the student must liaise with the Module Leader at the earliest opportunity in advance of the religious observance to agree an alternative approach to engagement in the learning experience.
- (g) Familiarising themselves with the content of this Policy and Procedure. A copy can be found at www.tees.ac.uk/studentregulations.

5.2 All academic staff are responsible for encouraging a culture of student attendance, including providing appropriate information and guidance throughout the student journey and encouraging student engagement with appropriate attendance registration processes.

5.3 A student's Personal Tutor is responsible for monitoring the attendance of individual students and, in collaboration with other members of staff, identifying and implementing interventions, where required.

5.4 The School Registrar (or equivalent) has overall responsibility within each School/Collaborative Partner for implementing procedures for the monitoring of attendance and compliance with this Policy and associated Procedure.

6. Policy Enforcement

6.1 Upon enrolment, students accept the University's 'Student Terms and Conditions' for their year of entry. In doing so, students agree to conform to the University's Student Regulations, including the Student Disciplinary Regulations and the Student Code of Conduct.

6.2 Section 3.9 of the Student Code of Conduct states: '*Students must attend and fully engage in all learning activities and adhere to all external body requirements (e.g. attendance requirements set by UKVI)*'. (Available at <http://www.tees.ac.uk/studentregulations>)

6.3 Sections 3.16 of the Assessment Regulations – Foundation Degree Awards, Assessment Regulations – Undergraduate Degree Awards, and Assessment Regulations – Taught Masters Level Awards state: '*A student can withdraw from their course of study, or, where it is clear that he/she is no longer attending or engaging with their studies, arrangements will be made for their withdrawal from the award and their enrolment with the University terminated. A student must advise the University in writing if they wish to withdraw from their course of study. Students who withdraw from their course of study, or whose enrolment is terminated by the University, will be considered for an intermediate award at the next meeting of the course's Progression and Award Board.*' (Available at <http://www.tees.ac.uk/studentregulations>)

- 6.4 Deliberate misuse of attendance registration systems and processes with the aim of falsifying attendance records will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action, under the University's Student Disciplinary Regulations.
- 6.5 Wherever possible, the University will seek to understand the reasons for non-compliance with this Policy, and ensure appropriate support and guidance is put in place.
- 6.6 Failure to comply with the Attendance Monitoring Policy and associated Procedure may trigger the student being withdrawn due to their failure to comply.
- 6.7 A student's sponsor, including an employer or the Student Loan Company, may be informed about ongoing unsatisfactory attendance.
- 6.8 Should a student withdraw partway through this process, prior to any final outcome, the Dean of the relevant School/Collaborative Partner may choose not to proceed with the process outlined in the accompanying Procedure. The University may however place a note on the student's record, which may be referred to in any future engagement. Such information will be retained in line with the University's Record Retention Schedule.

7. Related Documents

- 7.1 The following documents should be read in conjunction with this Policy:
 - a) Teesside University Student Terms and Conditions;
 - b) Student Code of Conduct;
 - c) Student Disciplinary Regulations;
 - d) Religion and Belief: Supporting Inclusion of Staff and Students in Higher Education and Colleges.

8. Other

General principles in relation to this Policy and Procedure can be found at Appendix 1.

9. Dissemination

- 9.1 The Policy will be communicated to staff via University Update. It will also be embedded within appropriate training for Personal Tutors.
- 9.2 Students will be made aware of this Policy through their induction programme and associated communications.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROCEDURE

1. Structure of the Procedure

- 1.1 This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Monitoring Policy and sets out the process which will normally be followed in dealing with those cases where a student has been identified as having unsatisfactory attendance, academic performance and/or progress.
- 1.2 Any variations to this Procedure due to a course having specific attendance requirements for example, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements will be included in the relevant Course Handbook and communicated during induction.

2. Monitoring Process

The School Registrar (or equivalent) will ensure that procedures are in place for the monitoring of attendance and compliance with this Attendance Monitoring Policy and this Procedure.

3. Stages of the Procedure

Within this procedure, the Stages for dealing with a student identified as making unsatisfactory progress are as follows:

- Stage 1: Written Warning;
- Stage 2: Formal Meeting;
- Stage 3: Appeal.

4. Stage 1: Written Warning

If a student's academic progress is felt, in the judgement of the Dean's nominee (or equivalent), to be unsatisfactory as detailed in the Attendance Monitoring Policy, a student should be sent a written communication advising them to improve their academic attendance and/or progress. The written communication should also advise the student of:

- the Policy and Procedure which is being followed;
- the deficiencies in their attendance and/or progress;
- an appropriate time limit by which these deficiencies must be remedied;
- that failure to remedy the deficiencies by the specified date may result in their case progressing to Stage 2 of the Procedure, and may result in them being withdrawn from their course;
- where a student can obtain advice and support;
- in the case of international students, the visa implications of a withdrawal.

A copy of the written communication should be placed on the student's file.

5. Stage 2: Formal Meeting

- 5.1 If the student's academic progress is still felt, in the judgement of the Dean's nominee (or equivalent), to be unsatisfactory as detailed in the Attendance Monitoring Policy, and the student should be considered to be withdrawn from their studies, the student should be invited to a meeting with the Dean's nominee (or equivalent). Normally, 5 days' notice of the meeting should be given. The purpose of the meeting is to establish why academic attendance and/or progress has been unsatisfactory, and in light of this, determine what action should be taken.
- 5.2 The invitation should provide the student with a copy of this Policy and Procedure and inform them of:
- The nature of their unsatisfactory academic attendance and/or progress, and any supporting evidence;
 - The constitution of the meeting;
 - The opportunity to submit, in advance of the meeting, any representations they wish to bring to the attention of the Dean's nominee (or equivalent).
 - Where the student can obtain advice and support;
 - Their right to be accompanied to the meeting by one friend (as defined in Appendix 1, paragraph 1.4);
 - That they will be given the opportunity during the meeting to report any extenuating circumstances, which they believe may have affected their academic attendance and/or progress;
 - The opportunity to request any adjustments to the process owing to a disability and/or specific learning difficulty;
- 5.3 The meeting will normally consist of:
- The Dean's nominee (who has had no prior involvement in the case);
 - The student (and friend, if applicable);
 - (A secretary may be in attendance).

The procedure for a meeting is as follows:

- 5.3.1 Those present must be introduced.
- 5.3.2 Confirmation of the Procedure to be followed, and that a record of the meeting will be made, which will be forwarded to the student, normally within 7 days of the meeting.
- 5.3.3 The nature of the unsatisfactory academic attendance and/or progress.
- 5.3.4 A period for general discussion must be allowed to take place, and the student must be given the opportunity to make any submissions and discuss any extenuating circumstances they feel should be taken into consideration. If, at any time, evidence is brought forward which

requires further investigation, the meeting may be adjourned and a time and date agreed by the Dean's nominee for it to be reconvened.

- 5.4 In consideration of the case, the Dean's nominee may reach one of the following outcomes:
 - 5.4.1 The student has provided an adequate explanation for their unsatisfactory academic attendance and/or progress, and the case will be dismissed.
 - 5.4.2 Refer the case to be considered under another more appropriate procedure, for example the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure.
 - 5.4.3 The student to complete an action plan within a set period of time (normally a maximum of three months), setting out actions to be taken with identified completion dates.
 - 5.4.4 Withdraw the student from their studies due to unsatisfactory academic attendance and/or progress.
- 5.5 Within 7 days, all relevant parties shall be informed, in writing, of the decision reached, including the reason for the finding, and the right to appeal the decision.
- 5.6 Where it has been found that the student should be withdrawn from their studies, the Assessment Board will formally record a student as being discontinued and consider the student's profile to recognise any achieved credits.
- 5.7 Where paragraph 5.4.3 applies, a Monitoring Officer should be appointed to oversee the completion of the student's action plan. At the conclusion of the specified time period, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Dean's nominee will determine whether:
 - 5.7.1 The student has completed the action plan and the case should be closed.
 - 5.7.2 Additional time is required for the student to complete their action plan (maximum of three months).
 - 5.7.3 The student failed to meet the requirements of the action plan and the student is withdrawn from their studies due to unsatisfactory academic progress.
- 5.8 Where the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Dean's nominee determines that paragraph 5.7.3 should be applied, the Monitoring Officer should inform the student of their decision, the right to appeal, and submit their findings to the relevant Assessment Board for consideration in accordance with paragraph 5.6.

6. Stage 3: Appeal

- 6.1 A student may submit an Appeal in the event they are seeking a review of the decision to withdraw them from their course, as identified in paragraphs 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.
- 6.2 An Appeal must be submitted on an Attendance Monitoring Appeal Form available from the Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulations (OSCAR), or the University's website (www.tees.ac.uk/studentregulations). All sections of the Appeal Form must be completed as fully as possible, following the guidance in the Attendance Monitoring Appeal Application Pack. The Appeal must be submitted to OSCAR within 7 days of the date of the decision letter. Only in exceptional circumstances will late applications be considered. Late Appeals will normally be rejected as 'out of time'. If a student submits a late Appeal they must enclose, with their Appeal, a separate written explanation for the late submission. The decision of whether to accept a late Appeal will be at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor's nominee, and is not subject to further review and the student will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures' letter.
- 6.3 An Appeal may be based on the following grounds:
 - 6.3.1 That there was a procedural irregularity in the consideration of the case, which materially affected the outcome.
 - 6.3.2 That information that could not previously be made available and is materially relevant to the outcome has subsequently emerged.
- 6.4 An Appeal must clearly identify the relevant ground(s). If a student applies under the ground of 6.3.2 they should submit with their Appeal clear and legible documentary evidence. Where the submission of supporting documentary evidence is not possible at the time of submission, due to circumstances outside the student's control, the Appeal should be submitted together with a clear statement that evidence will follow. This should normally take place within 10 days. If no subsequent evidence is received, OSCAR will process the Appeal based on the available documentation.
- 6.5 OSCAR will acknowledge receipt of the Appeal, and seek clarification from the relevant School/Collaborative Partner on the case.
- 6.6 On receipt of the Appeal, OSCAR reserves the right to request further clarification and/or information from the student prior to referring the Appeal to the Vice-Chancellor's nominee.
- 6.7 OSCAR will liaise with the Vice-Chancellor's nominee if they believe that an Appeal is incomplete, or the student has failed to show why it was not reasonably practicable for them to submit the Appeal in the stipulated timescales. In such cases, the Vice-Chancellor's nominee shall have the power to dismiss the Appeal and the student will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures' letter.

6.8 Alternatively, if the case is applicable for consideration based on paragraph 6.7, OSCAR will circulate the Appeal to the relevant School/Collaborative Partner for initial consideration. If the relevant School/Collaborative Partner believes that there appears to be a case for the decision to be reviewed they may take Chair's Action and reinstate the student. The Dean's nominee must inform the student, in writing, explaining that Chair's Action has been taken and the decision has been revised. A copy of the decision should be sent to OSCAR. The Dean's nominee must advise the student of the right to continue to pursue their case through the Appeal Stage of the process and to contact OSCAR within 5 days if they remain dissatisfied with the decision.

6.9 If the decision is not reviewed, under paragraph 6.8 above, then the relevant School/Collaborative Partner must provide a written report to OSCAR within 10 days of receipt of the Appeal. The report must normally contain:

- A copy of all of the documentation relevant to the case;
- The communication to the student informing them of the decision at Stage 2;
- Minutes of the Stage 2 meeting;
- Any other information/statement, which may assist the Vice-Chancellor's nominee in reaching a decision.

6.10 OSCAR will forward all relevant documentation to the Vice-Chancellor's nominee who, after considering the case, believes that grounds permitted for an Appeal have been satisfied, they may:

6.10.1 Dismiss the Appeal; or

6.10.2 Uphold the Appeal and refer the case back to be reconsidered under paragraph 5 above or reach an alternative conclusion.

6.11 The student and the relevant School/Collaborative Partner will normally be informed within 10 days of the decision of the Vice-Chancellor's nominee and, where appropriate, the student will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures', letter which concludes the internal process of the University.

APPENDIX 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1 Advice and Guidance

- 1.1 Student & Library Services (SLS) can provide information and guidance to staff in implementing effective intervention. SLS can also offer tailored advice for students in supporting their attendance and engagement. Within SLS, care will be taken to avoid any potential conflict of interest that may arise.
- 1.2 Advisers in the Students' Union can provide students with advice independent of the University. Staff and students can seek advice and support on understanding of the Regulations from Academic Registry.
- 1.3 Students based at Collaborative Partners may contact their own Students' Union or equivalent.
- 1.4 Students who are considered under this process are entitled at any stage to be accompanied to any meeting by one 'friend' who may not act as a representative or attend in any legal capacity unless permitted to do so by the person conducting the proceedings.

2. Documentation/Data Protection

- 2.1 Where a student has declared a disability, the University/Collaborative Partner will endeavor to ensure that information is available to students in appropriate formats and, where required, reasonable adjustments, will be made
- 2.2 Any documentation obtained, or produced as part of this process will be retained in accordance with the University's Classification Scheme and Retention Schedule.
- 2.3 Students are advised to retain a copy of any documentation submitted to the University. Documents supplied as part of this process will not normally be returned. Where photocopies of documents are submitted, the student may be required to provide sight of the original documents in order to verify their authenticity. If evidence is provided in a language other than English, it is the student's responsibility to have it independently translated.
- 2.5 Where a student submits a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) relevant information shall be disclosed to the OIA in order for the review to take place.
- 2.6 The University reserves the right to disclose the outcome of any action taken under this process to external agencies for example, the Students Loan Company, the Home Office UK Visa and Immigration Service, any applicable Professional Standards and Regulatory Body or the Police.
- 2.7 All processing of personal data is undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and the University guidance around data protection and confidentiality.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.1 On an annual basis, Academic Registry shall write a report to relevant University Committees/Boards. The Report shall provide anonymous statistical data, identify any trends or wider issues, and make any observations and/or recommendations which may assist the University to further good practice in the management of this process. The report will analyse formal records retained in accordance with the University's Classification Scheme and Retention Schedule.

4. Communication

For the purpose of this process, written communication with a student can be in paper or electronic format. Students are expected to regularly check their University e-mail account. Written communications may also be sent to the current term-time address (during term-time) or home address (out of term-time) as recorded on the University's student record system. Students are responsible for ensuring that these contact details are kept up to date. Non-receipt of properly addressed and dispatched correspondence will not be accepted as valid grounds for delay or annulment of procedures or outcomes under this process, nor will it be accepted as grounds for Appeal.

5. Students with Health Conditions

Diagnosed health difficulties do not necessarily mitigate the imposition of this process. Where a student is deemed to be in a state of mind or health which is perceived to affect their health and welfare, the University reserves the right to refer the student for consideration under the University's Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure. Any such action will comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

6. Fair Treatment

Where a student has declared a disability, the University/Collaborative Partner will endeavor to ensure that information is available to the student at all stages of the process in appropriate formats, and where necessary reasonable adjustments will be made.

7. Attendance at Meetings

Students will be given the opportunity to attend any meeting in person. In the event that the student declines the invitation or does not attend, the meeting will proceed in the student's absence and a decision will be reached based on the evidence available.

All participants at meetings are expected to behave in an orderly and non-confrontational manner. If it is felt appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned or halted, if it is felt that the progress of the meeting is being hampered by the participant's behavior.

If a student and/or friend has a disability and requires additional facilities or adjustments, those requirements should be made known to the University/Collaborative Partner prior to the meeting in order that, if possible, appropriate arrangements can be made.

8. Recording of Proceedings

A written record shall be kept of any meetings held under this process, and may be used as part of proceedings. The audio recording of a meeting held under this process is prohibited subject to such reasonable adjustments as may be agreed by the University where required under the Equality Act 2010.

9. Location of Meetings

Any meeting will normally be held at the University's Middlesbrough or Darlington campuses, or at a Collaborative Partner's campus. Students and staff based in other locations may either attend the relevant campus or participate in the meeting electronically for example, via Skype. Those who wish to do so must inform the School/Collaborative Partner prior to the meeting.

10. External Review

At the conclusion of the University's internal processes, the student shall be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures' letter in the manner prescribed by the OIA. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome may submit a Complaint to the OIA under the rules of its scheme within 12 months of the issue of the 'Completion of Procedures' letter. Information on the process may be obtained directly from the OIA at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.