Student Academic Attendance and Engagement Policy

2019-2022

Edge Hill University

Contents

Summary

This policy provides guidance on the University's approach to managing attendance and engagement. It outlines how departments and faculties can establish student tracking procedures and how to respond when attendance and engagement levels become a cause for concern.

This policy is linked to [Appendix 26 of the Academic Regulations – Student Withdrawal Procedures.](#)

Glossary of terms

Attendance: this refers to physical attendance at scheduled academic taught sessions.

Department support meeting: meeting organised by a department to identify actions to help the student engage with their studies. For the purposes of this policy, this term includes similar meetings such as department progress meeting, departmental progress review meeting, progress support meeting or similar.

Disengaged: when a student has stopped participating in academic sessions, and the learning environment.

Engagement: this refers to active participation with academic sessions, learning environment, study and related opportunities including submission of coursework assessments. Refer to Appendix 26, 5.3 of the Academic Regulations for a full list of engagement activities.

Faculty-level support meeting: meeting organised to discuss a student's non-attendance or engagement with their studies. For the purposes of this policy, this includes meetings such as faculty progress support meeting, faculty progress meeting or similar.

Significant contact point: this will vary by department. Refer to Appendix 26, 5.3 of the Academic Regulations for a full list of engagement activities.

Significant non-attendance/engagement: the student has disengaged from their studies and is at risk of withdrawal.

Sustained non-attendance/engagement: continuous non-attendance or non-engagement.

Student Census: the University's official survey conducted to clarify the status of all registered students.

Unsatisfactory attendance or engagement: when attendance or engagement with the programme is irregular.

Withdrawal: the permanent cessation of study and termination of a student's registration with the University. This may be initiated by the University or the student.

Purpose

This policy provides a set of overarching principles for monitoring student attendance and engagement. Departments and faculties should use these principles when creating their own monitoring frameworks.

Please note, this policy does not cover Graduate School students who are subject to Graduate School progress review processes.

This is a staff policy. A student guide is available on the [Student Homepage.](#)

Student Academic Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

The University is committed to ensuring that all students gain the maximum benefit from their studies. We aim to optimise all students' potential and for each of our students to successfully complete their studies to the best of their ability.

We believe our students will have the most rewarding experience and greatest chance of success if they participate in all academic activities scheduled in their programme. That is why we encourage students to attend teaching sessions and fully engage in all programme-related learning activity.

This policy explains the University's approach to measuring student attendance and engagement. It supports staff to identify when a student's engagement may be cause for concern and sets out clear steps to help students re-engage. It applies to all Edge Hill students (with the exception of those based in the Graduate School), from the time they complete their initial course enrolment until the end of their University registration.

We are responsible for accurately reporting student registration status to external bodies (listed in the Annexe). For some programmes, students are also required to comply with specific attendance requirements, for example those set by professional and statutory regulating bodies, or employer sponsors. The University is also required to monitor attendance for those students we sponsor to enter the UK on a Tier 4 student visa.

The University will always support students to succeed on their programme but recognises this may not always be achievable. A University-led withdrawal may be instigated in the following circumstances:

  a. When interventions outlined in this policy have been exhausted and a student has failed to re-engage with their studies

b. If a student's lack of attendance means they will not be able to successfully complete the programme (where there are specified attendance requirements)

All academic staff must consult this policy before starting a University-led withdrawal. Full details of the withdrawal process are provided in [Appendix 26 of the Academic Regulations – Student Withdrawal Procedures.](#)

2. Attendance requirements

2.1 The University believes a student's chance of success is linked to their physical attendance at academic activities. We expect all departments and faculties to set their own criteria for minimum levels of physical attendance and to make these clear to students.

2.2 If a programme, module or student status has any specific attendance requirements or potential consequences for non-attendance, this must be made clear to students in their programme handbook.

2.3 Tier 4 students must also comply with the International Office's attendance monitoring policy and procedures. This must be made clear to students prior to their arrival.

2.4 Academic staff are responsible for monitoring student attendance and engagement in line with departmental or faculty protocols and for keeping accurate and auditable records.

3. Supporting student engagement

3.1   We know that engagement is directly linked to a student's academic success. The University expects all departments and faculties to set their own criteria for minimum levels of engagement and to make these clear to students.

3.2   While a student's physical attendance may fall below the minimum expected by their department or faculty, they may still be fully engaged with their programme. Academic staff know their students best and should use their professional judgement to decide whether a student's absence gives cause for concern.

3.3   To support this, departments and faculties must have procedures in place to monitor and support engagement. This is especially important for those students whose programmes cover more than one department or faculty, as practices may vary.

3.4   The University understands that occasional non-engagement will happen and will not intervene unless it becomes cause for concern.

4. Monitoring student attendance

4.1   Departments and faculties must identify a member of staff who has overall responsibility for reviewing student attendance and engagement records. This is so that any issues can be identified at an early stage.

4.2   While departments and faculties operate their own criteria for defining specific stages of non-attendance/engagement, the following stages are provided as a guide:

- o Stage one - unsatisfactory. Student attendance or engagement is irregular. At this stage, academic staff must contact the student - using any/all available channels of communication - for an initial informal discussion
- o Stage two – sustained. Student attendance and engagement are continuously below the expected criteria, or a significant contact point is missed. Students must be invited to a departmental support meeting (or equivalent)
- o Stage three – significant. The student has disengaged from their studies and is at risk of withdrawal. A faculty-level support meeting is required

Paragraphs 4.5 - 4.15 below provide further details of the appropriate actions at each stage.

4.3 We recognise there may be exceptions to the actions outlined in these stages. For example, where there is a phased return, stage two may not be initiated. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the department or faculty.

4.4 Academic staff must inform the International Office when any concerns are raised about attendance or engagement related to international students.

4.5 For meetings at all stages, staff must take notes and provide the student with a written summary of the discussion. A copy of the summary should be held centrally in the department. The summary should
- o confirm the action plan and/or key milestones agreed
- o summarise details of any specific support arranged
- o include referrals to support services where appropriate and advise the student of the importance of engaging with the support available to them
- o highlight that the student will be monitored by a designated member of staff in line with the agreed action plan

o   advise the student that failure to engage with the agreed action plan may lead to withdrawal from their programme.

Stage one - unsatisfactory attendance or engagement

4.6   Where attendance or engagement is unsatisfactory, an informal discussion with the student is required. The purpose of this discussion is to identify any underlying causes for non-attendance/engagement and to support the student to resolve any issues. This includes using support channels such as

o   providing direct advice

o   suggesting University processes such as Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances, Interruption or Repeat Year

o   referral to appropriate University support services

4.7   Where appropriate, staff should also ensure that the student is aware of the department or faculty procedures for sustained non-attendance/ engagement.

Stage two - sustained non-attendance/engagement

4.8   At stage two, the head of department (or their nominee) must begin the formal student tracking process. To do this, they must

o   contact the student in writing, explaining that their non-attendance/ engagement has been recorded as sustained

o   be clear that a response to the communication is required

o   where appropriate, provide relevant support or referral to University support services

o   where appropriate, invite students to attend a progress support meeting or similar

4.9   At the meeting, academic staff should explore any issues preventing the student from attending or engaging and offer academic or personal support. The meeting should

o   establish an action plan for future attendance/engagement requirements

o   set out the consequences of failure to adhere to the plan

4.10   If a student fails to attend a progress support meeting, it should still go ahead. A summary letter must be issued in line with the guidance above.

Stage three – significant non-attendance/engagement

4.11   Where a student has disengaged from their studies and is at risk of withdrawal, the steps for stage two above should be followed, but at a faculty level.

4.12   A direct discussion with the student is essential at this stage and may be conducted face to face, by telephone, Skype or another suitable channel.

4.13   While attendees at stage three meetings will vary they will normally comprise head of department or faculty associate dean (or their nominee), personal tutor and relevant academic or University support services. The student has the right to be accompanied by a friend. Details can be found in [Appendix 23 of the Academic Regulations – The Role of a Student's Friend in Academic Conduct Procedures.](#)

4.14   If a student fails to attend a stage three meeting, the meeting should still go ahead. A summary letter must be issued in line with the guidance above.

4.15   If a student's non-attendance/engagement persists after a stage three meeting, the head of department or Pro Vice-Chancellor and dean of faculty (or their nominee) must issue a final letter to the student. This letter should clearly state that if the student fails to meaningfully re-engage with their studies by a specific date, they will be withdrawn from the University.

4.16   In some cases, stage three may apply directly to a student without following stages one and two. Criteria for this will vary by department.

5. Instigating the withdrawal process

5.1 A University-led withdrawal may be instigated if attempts to support student engagement have been exhausted without a satisfactory outcome.

5.2 A department must initiate a University-led withdrawal, if a student has never attended or when in their view
   o a student has completely disengaged
   o a student's lack of attendance or engagement means that they could not realistically recover their position.

5.3 Once it is established that a student should be withdrawn, the department must action this no later than 10 working days after the decision. It is important to adhere to this timing so that the correct tuition fee can be calculated, and students do not receive funding they are not entitled to.

5.4 The full procedure for initiating a University-led withdrawal is available in Appendix 26 of the Academic Regulations – Student Withdrawal Procedures.

5.5 The University undertakes census checks at designated points in the academic year to ensure that central records remain accurate. The University Census complements the ongoing work of departments to monitor attendance and does not replace local systems for tracking student engagement. If students have 'never attended' they should be reported as such in the student census.

Key to relevant documents

This policy is linked to:

[Appendix 7 of the Academic Regulations – Procedures for the Submission of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances](#)

[Appendix 9 of the Academic Regulations - Interruption Policy](#)

[Appendix 10 of the Academic Regulations – Repeat Year Policy](#)

[Appendix 23 of the Academic Regulations – Role of a Student's Friend in Academic Conduction Procedures](#)

[Appendix 26 of the Academic Regulations – Student Withdrawal Procedures.](#)

Annexe

External bodies to whom the University is responsible for accurately reporting student registration status.

- Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Home Office - UK Visas and Immigration
- NHS Business Services
- Office for Students
- Student Loans Company
- Teacher Regulation Agency

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