

Faculty level – Academic Programme Engagement policy

Applies to: Faculty of Education

Policy owner: Head of Academic Services

Effective from: August 2021

Engagement requirements

In the Faculty of Education our vision is to work creatively with others to enhance life chances and within this we aim to aspire, inspire, innovate and transform. Our core aim is to provide you as our student, with the very best learning experience. This involves providing you with the opportunities to build a strong personal learning community. One which you can call upon to support your progress during your time with us.

Evidence and experience tell us that when students are fully engaged in their learning community and learning journey, they are far more likely to succeed in their studies and meet their potential. With that in mind, we are providing you with an overview of our definitions of engagement and an outline of the support mechanisms that are in place for you, should anything be preventing this.

What is engagement and why is it important?

Engagement for the Faculty of Education is you as a student making very best use of the opportunities presented to you on your programme. This could be attendance at an (present) in person lecture or seminar, contributing to (present) in person or on-line discussion groups, reading a blog posted by a tutor, presenting a summary after listening to a podcast uploaded by your module leader onto blackboard, submitting an assignment via Turnitin, or a meeting with your personal tutor either (present) in person or via Microsoft Teams. All these examples would demonstrate your full commitment to your studies and engagement with the curriculum on offer.

If you are registered for a programme recommending you for QTS, then attendance at placement will be a key element of our measurement of your engagement and there are procedures in place to track this with your placement school.

What will my programme look like?

In 2021-22 all our programmes will be delivered via a 'hybrid'/ blended model of teaching and learning, which offers both our students and staff the opportunity to engage in creative (present) in person sessions along with self-directed study and other high-quality online resources which will be available on demand.

All our 2021-22 programmes have been carefully designed for your benefit to maximise your learning experience. We expect you to commit fully to your learning journey so that

you can realise your potential, this means engaging with **all scheduled sessions and self-directed study**. This is because our experience shows us you are best able to meet your potential when you do so.

The information contained in this policy also applies to our pre-course Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses which you may be asked to complete as continued engagement is linked to funding that may be available to some applicants. Engagement monitoring will be in place during 2020-21 for our SKE trainees and interventions will be put in place, when course tutors feel there is a need to support you in improving your engagement.

Attendance/ Engagement monitoring patterns

We understand that for some very specific reasons, you may not be able to attend some of your (present) in person teaching and learning activities. If this is the case, you will have raised this with your programme tutors and personal tutors and you will need to engage instead with the relevant catch up event for that session.

Your tutors will be monitoring your engagement in all your scheduled teaching and learning activities. See below for more information on what this might mean.

Your engagement on your Academic Programme may be monitored weekly through mechanisms such as:

- attendance at (present) in person scheduled lectures
- meaningful self-directed study
- directed independent study
- attendance at synchronous face to face online sessions
- engagement with the virtual learning environment (Learning Edge).
- attendance at (present) in person scheduled seminar sessions
- submission of assignments
- engagement with individual or group tutorial sessions
- engagement with a personal tutor
- attendance at a professional practice or work-based learning placement either (present) in person or online (*see additional requirements below*).

Programme tutors and Personal Tutors will be monitoring your engagement looking specifically for any patterns of non-engagement. This is so that we can understand what those reasons might be and provide appropriate support to improve engagement, to help you be successful.

You must also tell us if your ability to engage with the programme is proving challenging as we will be able to offer support and advice. Your personal tutor should be your first port of call.

Attendance at professional practice or work-based learning placement

Studying on a programme which leads to registration with a Professional Body brings with it additional responsibilities around attendance and engagement. This is because any absence from the placement setting or lack of engagement with remote or online teaching (e.g. in roles such as recovery tutors) directly affects pupils or children in classes and playgroups as well as teachers and nursery managers. Sustained or significant non-engagement may lead to a consideration of trainee's fitness to practice as a high level of professionalism is expected throughout academic programmes [Academic Regulations - Documents \(edgehill.ac.uk\)](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/academic-regulations)

Our partnership agreement can be found here:

<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/educationpartnership/partnership-agreements/>

The process you must follow to report an inability to engage in professional practice is detailed below.

Trigger points for each non-engagement level

The following define the supportive interventions which will be initiated if your engagement is such that, in the opinion of your tutor, you be unable to meet your potential.

Level one – emerging concerns about attendance and/or engagement

Your engagement may be irregular or there is a pattern giving rise to concern.

A designated member of academic staff, personal tutor or their nominee will contact you for an informal discussion using any/all available channels of communication.

This is to:

- Inform you that your lack of engagement is a cause for concern
- Identify any underlying cause for concern for your non-engagement, this might be health and wellbeing related
- Provide support to help you resolve any issues
- Facilitate the setting of your learning goals
- Refer you to appropriate university support services
- Suggest that you consider university processes such as exceptional mitigating circumstances, interruption or repeat year

The designated staff member will email you, summarising the advice and guidance given and set a deadline for review.

Level two – sustained non-attendance and/or engagement

Your engagement is continuously below the expected level, or any milestones set at Level 1 of the process are continually missed.

Departmental Professional Support Teams will contact you by email, explaining that your non-engagement has been recorded as sustained and will:

- Be clear that a response from you to the communication is required
- Where appropriate, provide relevant support and/or refer you to university support services.

The email will invite you to a Departmental Progress Support Meeting (DPM) with your programme leader or their nominee, attendees may also include:

- Your personal tutor
- Other representative(s) from your department(s)

At the meeting, academic staff will explore any issues preventing you from engaging and offer academic and personal support. The meeting should:

- Establish an action plan for your future engagement requirements
- Set out the consequences of failure to adhere to the plan and a deadline for review
- Refer you to appropriate university support services
- Consider supportive university processes and procedures, such as exceptional mitigating circumstances, interruption or repeat year

If you fail to engage with the meeting, it will proceed in your absence. A summary email will be sent to you within five working days of the meeting taking place.

Level three – significant non-attendance and/or engagement

You have disengaged from your studies or the action plan (agreed at level 2) has not been adhered to.

You are at risk of being withdrawn from your programme and the university, so a further Level 3 Departmental Progress Support meeting (DPM) will be convened. Attendees may include:

- Head(s) of department(s) or senior academic (or their nominee), who will act as Chair
- Your Personal tutor
- Representative(s) from the department(s)

Where the Chair feels it appropriate, relevant University support services may also be invited to attend the meeting. This may include, but is not limited to, an appropriate representative from:

- Inclusion (Student Services)
- Transitions (Student Services)
- Wellbeing (Student Services)
- Specific Learning Difficulty Support (Learning Services)
- Academic Registry

The following information will be provided to you in writing:

- The date, time and location of the meeting
- A summary of the concerns raised about your engagement with your studies
- Details of who will attend the meeting
- Information about your right to be accompanied by a friend, as detailed in Appendix 23 of the academic regulations – the role of a student's friend in academic conduct procedures.
- A copy of this document – The Faculty academic programme engagement policy

If you fail to engage with this meeting, it will go ahead in your absence. You should make all reasonable endeavours to engage with the meeting. If, for good reason, you cannot attend, the meeting may be rearranged (once) subject to approval by the Chair.

The meeting will consider all relevant information, including, but not limited to

- Your engagement records
- Any individual circumstances related to you
- Any Student support requirements
- The impact of your non-engagement on your studies

In deciding the outcome, the meeting will consider the circumstances and context in each case. The list of outcomes below is not exhaustive:

- Agree what you and the University will do to bring engagement to an acceptable level
- Establish an action plan for future engagement requirements, with a deadline for review
- Refer you to appropriate University support services
- Consider University processes and procedures to support you, such as Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances, Interruption or Repeat Year
- Refer you to Student Services under the Fitness to Study or Fitness to Practice Procedures
- Recommend you receive a final warning from the head of department
- Recommend to the head of department to withdraw you from the programme, this may be instigated if
 - You have never engaged

- You have completely disengaged
- Your lack of engagement means that you could not realistically recover your position.

You will be notified in writing of the decision within five working days of the meeting taking place.

If it has been established that you should be withdrawn, the department will action this no later than 10 working days after the decision. This will ensure the University charge the correct tuition fee, and that you do not receive funding you are not entitled to.

Process for students reporting an inability to engage

The expectation is that you will take ownership of your learning journey, which means that you will always inform your personal tutor or module tutor at least 1 week in advance if you are unable to engage with any aspect of your programme. This is particularly important if your absence means that you won't be able to take part in a scheduled activity that might affect others (e.g. giving a group presentation or taking part in assessed group work). If you need to get in touch with your personal tutor or module tutor with less than 1 weeks' notice you are expected to email them before 9am on the first day of absence.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students

ITE students must also request permission for absence in advance from their placement school stating the reasons for the request. If the request for absence cannot be made in advance the trainee must contact the school prior to the commencement of the school day and their personal tutor and visiting tutor.

As you have committed to a higher education programme you will have already considered how you will balance the demands and requirements to get the most out of your time at Edge Hill University. For this reason, the following are not accepted as an excuse for the lack of engagement in learning and teaching activities:

- Part-time employment
- Routine childcare responsibilities
- Going on holiday
- Routine doctors and dentists' appointments

Permission for single incidences to short periods of non-engagement may be granted for:

- Medical reasons (self-certified up to and including 7 calendar days*)
- Compassionate grounds
- Jury service
- Serious and unexpected transport problems to attend (present) in person
- Personal or family emergency that could not have been dealt with outside of university hours
- Attendance at a faith-based event

*Non-engagement which total more than seven successive days due to illness may require a medical/doctors' certificate.

Permission for non-engagement in scheduled sessions requires an appropriate reason, permission may be requested by e-mail to your module tutor.

Do not assume that permission is automatically granted, tutors reserve the right to reject permission for non-engagement including the self-certification of sickness, if there are concerns about your overall pattern of engagement. Such cases will be recorded as incidents of non-engagement and will count towards the trigger points above.

If you have a Tier 4 or Student visa, any engagement concerns will be shared with the Compliance and Immigration Manager. Lack of engagement can be reported to the UKVI and can lead to your visa being cancelled. For more details please contact international@edgehill.ac.uk

All assessment deadlines are set such that they factor in and allow you to plan around potential short-term disruptions to your engagement. Note that requesting permission for non-engagement does not excuse you from submitting any coursework due by the specified deadline unless an extension or an EMC has been approved.

If you are unable to engage with your programme for a sustained period of time you may want to consider interrupting your studies. Please talk to your personal tutor about this if you think this may help. There are financial implications for this so you must speak to advisors in Student Services or Academic Registry.

Covid-19

We recognise that the Covid-19 pandemic may mean that students have to self-isolate at home due to having symptoms, testing positive or being a close contact with someone who is infected. If this applies to you please ensure you let the University know by completing our online Covid-19 reporting form which can be found at ehu.ac.uk/sscovid19. It is important that you follow all Public Health advice and guidance around self-isolation and if you are well enough to do so, you can engage with your studies online via the virtual learning environment until you are able to return to the campus.