

# Student Attendance Monitoring Policy

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Responsibility of:	The University Secretary
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## STUDENT ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the regulations and processes employed by the University of West London to monitor student attendance on all pre-sessional, foundation, degree and research programmes, including programmes of study with placement. It needs to be read within the context of the University's efforts to enhance student success and retention, and the strategic initiatives deployed across the whole breadth of the student experience, both within and outside of the curriculum
- 1.2 The policy presents the reasons and methods behind attendance monitoring, and provides a further section for specific policies governing the attendance monitoring of students sponsored by the University under the UK Border Agency Tier 4 Points Based Sponsor Management scheme.
- 1.3 The processes presented are applicable for the entire student body and will be carried out and enforced by academic and administrative staff, as detailed. Although the policy sets to provide a uniform policy for attendance monitoring it is expected that the physical recording of student numbers may alter between Colleges and Schools of the University. However, the reasoning and objectives behind the policy underpin all programmes of study offered at The University of West London, or any of its franchises or partners based in the UK.
- 1.4 The objectives and methods of recording of data are presented below, parallel to the reporting processes employed by administrative and senior staff in the event of non-attendance. Whilst this is particularly relevant for UKBA Tier 4 sponsored students, this policy is applicable to the student body as a whole in the knowledge that attendance is a significant factor of success.
- 1.5 The University aims to improve the attendance of all students. Attendance in lectures, seminars and workshops provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete the course. Key skills and knowledge, and opportunities to practice, could be missed when attendance is low, which could subsequently result in re-sits and low grades. It is in the interests of every student to attend their scheduled sessions. Attendance monitoring is valued for its potential to indicate those students at risk of leaving their course early.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 Attendance refers to the expected attendance of all students on every element of their programme. This refers to lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions and any form of summative or formative assessment. Attendance also includes all activities defined in the Programme Handbooks as compulsory or expected.
- 2.2 Attendance requirements are inclusive of all sessions whether completed as a large group in lectures, small group for tutorials, or individual sessions (such as dissertation supervision or work placement).
- 2.3 Attendance is expected for all sessions whether they are run by University academics, or outside professional/trainers.
- 2.4 For students undertaking a year or period of time in industry or practice, this policy also dictates expected attendance during the placement. This may not be monitored by staff of the University, but the same objectives and monitoring reports and practices will oversee the placements, although to different timescales, as will be demonstrated below.
- 2.5 Monitoring refers to all recording of student attendance, whether electronic or paper-based, and whether completed locally in the College/School department, or centrally through administrative offices and systems.
- 2.6 All students should refer to their Module and Programme Study guides for information on lectures/seminars and all other expected attendance. Further information and timetables are distributed after enrolment onto the programme.
- 2.7 References made to the University or The University of West London is inclusive of all UK-based partners and franchises. They are also responsible for adhering to the Attendance Monitoring Policy, and recording and returning data as requested.
- 2.8 Tier 4 Sponsored students refers to all students sponsored by The University of West London, having been issued with a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study letter (CAS), currently undertaking a pre-sessional, foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate or research degree with The University. Any graduates currently sponsored through the Tier 1 Points Based system should refer to the University's Tier 1 Policy for information on their expected attendance, specific contact time and attendance monitoring.
- 2.9 Tier 4 students may be required to attend any pre-sessional English language or programme preparation courses. The attendance will be recorded by partner colleges and institutions carrying out the pre-sessional courses, and data will be returned to The University of West London regularly for review.
- 2.10 Tier 4 students demonstrating low levels of attendance, or non-attendance: these students are subject to the reporting processes detailed below, and dictated by the UK Border Agency polices over-seeing all sponsors. Continued non-attendance could result in withdrawal of sponsorship, and the reporting of the persons to the UK Border Agency, consequently affecting their visa and status in

the United Kingdom. This monitoring and reporting is a legal requirement of all sponsors.

### **3. Recording attendance at School/College level**

- 3.1 All students will have their attendance monitored at every lecture, seminar, workshop, clinical or practical session. These will be monitored through the use of registers. The policy does not dictate how the registers are to be taken, and this is at the discretion of the programme team.
- 3.2 The School and College teams are obliged to take registers, and these must remain for a minimum of three years beyond the completion date of the course. This is applicable to both paper and electronic records.
- 3.3 It is to be noted that the proposals for a fully electronic data collection system will eradicate the necessity for manual registers to be taken, as all attendance will be recorded through electronic data systems.
- 3.4 The registers are to be fed into the students' personal files by administrative staff in the College/School to enable an analysis and overview of each individual student's attendance. Data will be analysed and monitored by administrative staff in the University using in-house software. It is expected that academic members of staff will benefit from this information which will enable them to take positive actions towards absenteeism.
- 3.5 The University of West London intends to introduce scanners into lecture halls that will enable to electronic recording of College/School level attendance. The scanners will read every student card and record the data onto a centralised system. Once in place, this will eradicate the need for registers in lectures halls/rooms containing the scanners. It is proposed that this system will be in place fully for academic year 2013-14, but will be introduced in some areas during academic year 2012-13.
- 3.6 Any clinical or industry related placements of any kind are to be recorded by the body with which the student is undertaking the placement. Schools and Colleges are responsible for collecting these to feed the data into the student files.
- 3.7 All authorised and non-authorised absences must be recorded, and action taken where necessary (further information given in sections 5 and 6 below).
- 3.8 Students arriving 5 minutes after the start of class will have their attendance marked as late.

### **4. Recording attendance centrally**

- 4.1 Student attendance data is recorded centrally in two ways. The first is through data gathered through centralised systems, and the second from the data collated from the previously demonstrated College/School data.

- 4.2 The centrally acquired data is derived from the electronic swipe systems in place throughout the University. This is present on every campus, and throughout different areas of The University of West London.
- 4.3 Swipe data is recorded every time a student uses their Unique card to enter a University building, recording the time and date that this occurred. Entry to the Students' Union, library, main entrances, and specific corridors and confined areas is recorded and stored on the centralised computer system.
- 4.4 This data is used to collate information on a student's general attendance, and when combined with the College/School data is able to present an accurate picture of students' individual attendance records and time spent in university, and overall aids the Universities considerations on student retention strategies.
- 4.5 The data is further used to return required information to the funding council for England (HEFCE), and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), as well as retained under the UK Border Agency requirements, found [here](#).

## **5. Authorised absence**

- 5.1 Short-term absences due to illness do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that the student contacts a member of staff to inform them if they are not able to attend a fixed seminar/tutorial/practical/clinical session, or individual supervision meeting that has been pre-arranged.
- 5.2 Instances of illness that affect an assessment must be reported to the University, and where relevant, a Mitigating Circumstances form completed with the relevant evidence (doctors or hospital note). The same is applicable for other extenuating circumstances. Further details are found in the Mitigating Circumstances Regulations in the Student Handbook.
- 5.3 Students should not normally be absent, unless as agreed with tutors, for a period of more than 5 working days.
- 5.4 Research students must be in regular contact with supervisors and be able to provide evidence of continued research and progress in their research topic.
- 5.5 Students are permitted to apply for temporary leave, suspension of studies, or deferral of their programme of study for personal or medical reasons. Guidance and advice on these processes is found in the Student Handbook, or can be sought from tutors and members of the One Stop Shop.

## **6 Unauthorised absence**

- 6.1 Unauthorised absences, such as non-attendance due to undocumented medical, personal or other extenuating circumstances are not permitted if no evidence is presented, or the absence is not agreed in advance.

- 6.2 Students are not permitted to be absent from scheduled classes or practical/clinical sessions due to employment, unless agreed with the tutor or module leader.
- 6.3 Unless otherwise agreed with the tutor or from agreed Mitigating Circumstances regulations (normally through Academic Registry), students are expected to be in attendance for every scheduled session, whether a group, or individual meeting.
- 6.4 All examinations and assessments must be attended and completed on time (and within any pre-agreed extensions already granted), unless approved through the Mitigating Circumstances Board.
- 6.5 Unauthorised absences by students will result in a warning letter being sent by central administrators.
- 6.6 Following from the initial letter, if a student's absence is still of concern, they will be invited to a meeting in the School/College to discuss the reasons behind their absence.
- 6.7 All students are at risk of withdrawal from their programme after consistent and continued periods of absence are recorded. This may result in an exit award and removal from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol on the programme.
- 6.8 Tier 4 students are at risk of withdrawal from the programme after consistent unauthorised absences, and will have their withdrawal reported to the UK Border Agency, who may subsequently revoke their student visa, requiring them to leave the UK and return to their home country.
- 6.9 No extended period of absence is permitted unless authorised through application for temporary leave, suspension of study or deferral (as detailed in the Student Handbook, further information of which can also be sought from the Academic Registry).

## **7 Non-attendance**

- 7.1 As detailed above, students demonstrating non-attendance on a programme of study will be asked to attend a meeting in the School/College with the programme leader or tutor. Should a student choose at that point to suspend or defer their studies, documentation must be completed to confirm this, and this would become effective as soon as the information is received centrally.
- 7.2 Students also have the option to leave the course prematurely and take an exit award, if substantial credits have been obtained and the exit award is a viable award route for their programme of study. Exit awards are only available for students studying on an undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme. Foundation degrees do not have this option.
- 7.3 In instances where a student does not attend the scheduled meeting in the School/College and no viable reason is given for non-attendance at the meeting;

the programme team must discuss their reasons for retaining a student on the programme of study, or choose to exit them at the next exam board.

- 7.4 Should the decision be to withdraw a student from a course, the reasons for the decision must be sent in writing, prior to withdrawal. At the exam board, the reasons will be documented and the student shall be sent a certificate of any exit award they may have been eligible for. In cases where no award is available, the student may choose to transfer to another university with the credits obtained at The University of West London, which are detailed on the student transcript.
- 7.5 Non-attendance by students on a Foundation degree would result in the student being withdrawn from the programme of study with no exit award available, and only the achieved credits being transferable to another programme of study.
- 7.6 Non-demonstration of research progress and non attendance to planned supervision sessions by research students should be investigated by the supervisor, and a determination of the reasons for it sought. Should the student select to leave the course of study, they may be eligible for an exit award. This would only be applicable where an option of an exit award is available, and where the supervisor feels that adequate research has been completed that would allow a student to apply for an exit award. However, the outcome would be dependent on a successful VIVA being carried out, and any subsequent recommended amendments or changes being completed and the thesis being passed (as per the Research Degree regulations)
- 7.7 Non-attendance by Tier 4 students are covered by the above guidelines, but are also subject to more stringent checks, as detailed in the Tier 4 Attendance Monitoring Policy found through the Policy pages on The University of West London website.
- 7.8 In all instances of non-attendance, a warning will be sent to students to require them to attend a meeting in the School/College where their attendance, academic progression and any other personal circumstances can be discussed.
- 7.9 In cases where students do not attend for the meeting, a further letter will be sent. If no communications are then received from the student, or indeed in cases where students attended the preliminary attendance meeting but no improvements in attendance or submission for assessment are seen; the student could then be exited from the programme as detailed in the above points and section 6.
- 7.10 Timescales for warnings and withdrawal from programmes will differ between courses, due to different modes of study and programme requirements. For further advice, please contact the School/College administration teams.

**For more information on attendance monitoring and student responsibilities, please contact the One Stop Shop**