

Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

This policy details Lancaster University's approach to monitoring attendance and student engagement.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Clarify the University's requirements in terms of student engagement and attendance
- Support academic attainment and students' health and wellbeing
- Satisfy external reporting/accreditation requirements and legal obligations concerning attendance

1.2 Scope

This policy:

- Applies across all departments and all years of study and applies to both undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.
- Does not apply to postgraduate research students. For postgraduate research students attendance requirements are documented within section SR 3.4.11 of the Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP)
- Does not apply to students who are studying towards an award of the University that is delivered by a partner institution, except where it is expressly stated in that institution's regulations that this Policy is applicable.
- Is aligned with the University regulations contained within MARP, in particular section SR 3 that states students should be fully engaged with their studies for the full period of each term and/or for such other periods as may be stated in the regulations for particular courses.

Beyond the information outlined in this policy, further expectations regarding engagement with learning and teaching materials, attendance at learning and teaching events and assessments, and the timely submission of in-course assessments will be set-out in programme and module documentation.

2. Policy

2.1 Overview

The University is committed to supporting students to achieve their full potential. The University recognises that regular engagement in, and attendance at, teaching and learning activities are key components of successful student retention, progression and academic achievement. Lack of engagement can indicate that a student may be experiencing difficulties and need additional support. Monitoring attendance and engagement enables the University to offer additional support and guidance to those students who may require it.

The University recognises that many factors affect students' engagement with their academic studies. This policy details expectations of how students will engage with their academic studies and how the University will monitor and support that engagement.

2.2 Definitions

For this policy the terms 'student' or 'students' refer to all those currently registered on an undergraduate or taught postgraduate programme and who are not intercalating or otherwise excused from attending teaching and learning events, examinations or submitting in-course assessments on time.

For this policy, 'engagement' encompasses engaging with, and participating in, guided independent or group study, assessment and feedback or any other activity that supports learning and development. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Attending timetabled teaching or learning events
- Submitting assessments within defined deadlines
- Accessing and/or interacting with online learning materials (e.g. lecture recordings or learning materials)
- Utilising infrastructure in place to support student learning (i.e. the Library and University VLE, Moodle)
- Attending meetings with Academic Tutors or other staff

Attendance is one component of engagement. For this policy, 'attendance' is defined as being present at timetabled learning, teaching and other activities required by modules and/or programmes. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical attendance at face-to-face scheduled teaching and or other learning activities as required by the module and/or programme (e.g. lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, workshops, tutorials, field trips and examinations)
- Virtual attendance at scheduled synchronous online teaching and/or other learning events as required by the module and/or programme

2.3 Monitoring Student Attendance

The University has a duty to monitor attendance at teaching and learning activities and to act on non-attendance.¹ This duty includes but is not limited to, compliance requirements of UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) for students studying in the UK on a student visa and reporting requirements for the Student Loans Company and other oversight bodies.

Certain programmes, such as those accredited by professional or statutory regulatory bodies (PSRBs), may have specific attendance requirements that should be met to fulfil the standards of those awards. Where these are more rigorous than those set by the University in this policy the requirements of the PSRB shall prevail.

The University has additional compliance responsibilities concerning students studying at the University on a student visa. These students are required to be in regular attendance as part of

¹ The University is required to abide by Sponsor Licence duties set out by UKVI in the context of the Student Sponsor route. Attendance data is also used to assess whether students are meeting attendance requirements for the Student Loans Company (SLC).

the ongoing conditions of their visa. As the students' immigration sponsor the University is required to closely monitor attendance at scheduled teaching events and take appropriate, timely action where attendance does not meet the requirements specified by UKVI. In the context of this policy, should the requirements of UKVI be more rigorous those requirements will prevail where a student is holding a student visa. Specific attendance requirements for student visa students are detailed within MARP SR 3.4.12 – 3.4.15 which details circumstances where a student visa may be terminated due to non-attendance.

Departments are responsible for monitoring student attendance. Departments are expected to engage with students concerning attendance where it falls below an acceptable level. At that point, Departments will contact the student to check if they are well, signpost them to sources of support and recommend that they return to their timetabled teaching events. For students registered on programmes accredited by professional or statutory regulatory bodies (PSRBs) that have specific requirements regarding attendance, contact may begin before this point and/or at a different attendance threshold in line with the specific PSRB requirements regarding attendance.

Following this initial contact, Departments will continue to monitor and offer support to students whose attendance remains below the required levels. This support may include invitations to meet with academic and/or professional service staff to discuss reasons for absence and any support required. Should a student's attendance remain below required levels the University may decide to issue either one or two formal non-engagement warnings to the student.

Where the University determines that student engagement has fallen below acceptable levels without good cause, over a period of time it may refer the student to Standing Academic Committee (SAC). SAC is responsible for consideration of academic misconduct, including failure to engage with your studies, and has the authority to impose penalties on students including temporary or even permanent exclusion.

Full information on the application of this policy, including signposting to support and escalation processes is detailed in the accompanying [Procedures for Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement](#).

2.4 Student Data

The University collects individual student data and datasets that cover groups of students (e.g. cohorts, programmes, levels of study). We are legally required to collect information about the attendance and engagement of international students on behalf of the UK Visas and Immigration authority, and about students on certain programmes that are accredited or funded by one or more professional, statutory, or regulatory bodies (PSRB).

The University collects data about student attendance and engagement including:

- Attendance at timetabled classes (online or in-person)
- Submission of assessments
- Accessing digital resources available via the University Library
- Engagement with the virtual learning environment(s)

In accordance with our [Student Privacy Notice](#), we use the data we collect to:

- Comply with our reporting obligations to external agencies

- Identify opportunities to support students, at the point of need, through the provision of additional education and wellbeing services.

Use of student engagement data complies with Data Protection legislation (including the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any supplemental legislation) and is handled in accordance with University Information Governance Policies.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Monitoring Student Attendance

Departments are responsible for monitoring student attendance in accordance with this policy and the accompanying [Procedures for Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement](#) and ensuring, where appropriate, support is offered.

3.2 Expectations of Students

In accordance with MARP student should be fully engaged with their studies for the full period of each term and/or for such other periods as may be stated in the regulations for particular courses. The University expects all students will:

- Attend and actively engage with all scheduled teaching and learning events, whether they are delivered online or in person;
- Participate in learning activities outside of timetabled events, as specified by a module and/or programme including but not limited to, reading/reviewing materials available through the VLE, preparing for timetabled events, undertaking practical exercises);
- Prepare for and attend/submit all assessments;
- Engage with the University Library's resources, digitally and/or physically, and with the virtual learning environments (e.g. Moodle) as directed by your programme;

Students are responsible for recording their attendance at teaching sessions. Students must register attendance at taught sessions using the iLancaster app or by reporting to their department should iLancaster be unavailable. Students must also inform the University of any planned or unexpected absences.

The University expects students to act honestly in relation to their records of attendance. Any attempt by a student to falsify their attendance records will be addressed in line with the [University's Student Discipline Procedure](#).

Students are expected to submit all required assessments. If a student has an exceptional circumstance, such as a personal difficulty or health problem, which has a negative impact on their ability to participate in assessment, they should follow the [Exceptional Circumstances Process](#).

A student may wish to consider interrupting their studies if there are valid reasons that may impact their ability to engage and/or result in their needing additional time to complete their degree programme. Students should discuss their circumstances with their Department and Student and Programme Administration will be able to advise the student on academic and possible financial implications, such as the availability of the course and particular modules when they return and their ability to progress to the next level of study with their peers. Further information can be found in the [Intercalation process](#).

3.3 Policy Oversight

Strategic oversight of this policy is provided by the Academic Registrar and Head of Student and Programme Administration. Summary data relating to student attendance and engagement will be reviewed by Academic Standards and Quality Committee to evaluate the impact of the policy in supporting student success and trends in institutional performance.

4. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy is aligned with the University Regulations contained within MARP SR 3.2.

Use of attendance and engagement data complies with Data Protection legislation (including the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any supplemental legislation) and is handled in accordance with [University Information Governance Policies](#).

Data on student engagement is managed in accordance with the [Student Privacy Notice](#).

Detailed information on the process for monitoring of student attendance can be found in the [Procedures for Monitoring Student Attendance and Engagement](#). Further operational guidance for staff undertaking attendance monitoring available via the [intranet](#).

Information for students on managing attendance via iLancaster can be found on the iLancaster App pages.