



Introduction

1. The Student Attendance, Engagement & Absence Policy has been developed as part of the University's commitment to provide a supportive learning environment in which encouragement is given to all students to develop a range of skills, and approaches to their studies.
2. The University defines attendance as the act of being physically present at scheduled academic sessions (held physically or online), placements, compulsory field and other trips, scheduled assessment and group work activities.
3. The University defines engagement as the act of a student participating in mandatory programme requirements, scheduled academic sessions (held physically or online), use of the virtual learning environment, use of study and library resources, and related opportunities which aim to help students to achieve their potential in their studies.
4. The University recognises the investment that students and their sponsors make when a student enrolls on a programme. As a responsible institution it has a duty to act on non-attendance or lack of engagement so that students can be supported to complete their programmes of study successfully
5. This policy applies to all enrolled students of the University.
6. It is intended to comply with relevant sections of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically *Chapter B3 – Learning and Teaching [2012] (2015)* and *Chapter B4 – Enabling Student Development and Achievement [2012] (2015)*.

Section 1

7. Attendance and engagement are key components in student retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who actively participate in their learning by attending classes regularly are more likely to:
 - a. enjoy a rewarding and collaborative experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed;
 - b. successfully complete their programme;
 - c. realise their full potential; and
 - d. achieve a higher grade.
8. The University expects students to attend and engage with learning and teaching sessions associated with the programme on which they are enrolled, unless exemption has been agreed with tutors. The University will work with students to support them to



ensure they are able to meet these expectations. The learning and teaching methods for each programme and component module are set out in the validated programme documentation. The University will keep attendance records for all taught lessons, lectures, tutorials or seminars (relevant to the course) whether held physically or online.

9. There will be circumstances occasionally where ill health or other legitimate reasons prevent students attending sessions. Students are responsible for informing the Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader of these circumstances. If students are on placement, then the host should also be notified. A list of authorised reasons for absence is given in Appendix A. The University will monitor attendance and absences. Students granted authorised absence will not be eligible for a refund of tuition fees.
10. Students should aim to arrive on time for classes (held physically or online) and remain for the duration of the session. Registers will be taken at the start of a session to record attendance.
11. Attendance on placement is monitored using Abyasa Pro through the creation of absence records by mentors/tutors or the Placements Team. Weekly meeting records are also submitted and monitored for QTS placements.
12. Unsatisfactory attendance includes, but is not exclusively confined to:
 - a. failure to attend regular learning and teaching sessions (including placements) without providing a satisfactorily reason to tutors for absence;
 - b. persistent late arrival or early departure from, learning and teaching sessions or placements; and
 - c. failure to attend tutorials and/or interviews with a member of academic staff.
13. Each student's engagement with the VLE (Blackboard) will be monitored on a weekly basis during weeks when teaching takes place. For engagement to be counted, students must access Blackboard content at Module level. Online activity which does not proceed beyond the logon/authentication stage will not be counted.
14. Students who fail to access any of their Blackboard modules for **one calendar week** will be considered absent and will be subject to the actions as detailed in Section 2 of this policy.
15. As outlined in the Student Charter, students should engage with teaching and learning activities and should take responsibility for their own learning. Students are responsible for:
 - a. attending learning and teaching sessions including scheduled tutorials associated with their programme of study notifying the Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader in advance (e.g., in person, by phone or email) that they expect to be absent from a



timetabled session;

- b. obtaining prior permission (e.g., in person, by phone or email) from the Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader regarding planned absences of two or more days; and
- c. notifying their Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader in respect of unplanned or unforeseen absences from learning and teaching sessions, normally within 24 hours and, if requested, providing a medical certificate or other corroborating evidence to explain their absence (see Appendix A).

16. Programme Leaders are responsible for:

- a. reminding students of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions;
- b. ensuring that attendance is recorded; and
- c. notifying the Faculty Administration Office of any authorised absences.

17. The Faculty Business Manager, in liaison with Heads of Programmes, is responsible for ensuring that:

- a. appropriate systems are in place for students to notify the Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader of planned and unexpected absences (see Appendix A);
- b. all teaching staff maintain an accurate record of student attendance via the University attendance monitoring systems;
- c. all students have access to a personal tutor;
- d. students are advised of the support available to them whether from the Faculty, Student Advice or Learning Development; and
- e. in the case of a tutor being absent, students are informed at the earliest opportunity of the alternative arrangements for the session.

Section 2

18. Where a student's attendance is unsatisfactory e.g. 3 consecutive sessions or an absence of 30% or more of scheduled sessions over a 3-week period have been missed with no valid reason and/or evidence has not been received, or significant intermittent unauthorised absence the following actions should be taken:

- a. The Faculty Administrative Team will contact the student to seek an explanation for the non-attendance.
- b. The Faculty Administration Office will notify the Programme Leader of those being



investigated for non-attendance. Students will be invited to discuss with their Personal Tutor how their attendance will be improved and any help that may be required. Even if a student has reported the reasons for being absent, an invitation to a meeting will still be offered to discuss appropriate support for the student.

- c. The Faculty Administration Office will keep a central record which will track student engagement and the monitoring that has taken place.
19. If there is no change in the student attendance, the following action may be taken:
- a. a second attempt at contact will be made. Following this, a formal report on the student's attendance may be made to the student's sponsor, including an employer and the Student Loan Company;
 - b. where a student's attendance on placement is unsatisfactory, a Placement Panel will be convened to consider further actions, including initiation of the University's *Fitness to Study Procedure*; or
 - c. students may be withdrawn from their programme if they fail to respond to any warning or breach attendance arrangements agreed with the Programme Leader.
20. In the event of no change in attendance despite a meeting being held between the Programme Leader (or nominee) and the student where appropriate support has been given to the student, staff writing references for students may refer to a student's record of attendance.
21. If an international student holding a student visa has missed 10 consecutive contact points without authorisation, the International Office must be notified by the Faculty Administration Manager. In accordance with UK Immigration Law, the International Office may report the student to the UK Visa and Immigration Directorate of the Home Office (UKVI). Further details are outlined in the Tier 4 Compliance Policy.



Appendix A

Authorised Absence

1) Acceptable reasons for absence (and the evidence that is normally required) are outlined below:

- Illness notified to the University. A student can self-certify for up to 5 days. For more than 5 days a doctor's note will be required;
- Illness or death of a close family member, for example spouse, parent, grandparent, guardian, sibling, son or daughter (official medical certification or death certificate);
- Maternity/Paternity leave (birth certificate or official medical certificate). Maximum absence for paternity reasons is 2 weeks. Absence for maternity reasons should be discussed with the Programme Leader and Faculty Administration Manager (SAO@bishopg.ac.uk);
- Appointments with a doctor, dentist or other recognised licenced/certified medical practitioner (medical note or certificate);
- Adoption leave;
- Serious personal difficulties (letter written by someone who has direct knowledge of the problem, for example a counsellor). Duration of absence to be discussed with Programme Leader and Faculty Administration Manager;
- Involvement in a significant/prestigious event (letter of invitation from the relevant organising body); or
- Jury Service (evidence of Jury Service to be supplied) if the applicant is unable to defer service to a later date.

If the absence would have an impact on the student's ability to progress, the Programme Leader and student will discuss with Faculty Administration Manager if an interruption of study should be considered as an alternative.

More than 3 instances of authorised absence in a semester will result in a meeting of the student with the Faculty Administration Manager and the Programme Leader to discuss assistance the University can provide to improve attendance.

2) Process for Requesting Authorised Absence

Students requesting authorised absence should complete an authorised absence request form. This is located on the VLE.

Where possible, requests for authorised absence should be submitted at least two weeks before the date of absence.

Evidence should be submitted with the request for authorised absence and should be translated into English where appropriate.

All requests for authorised absence should be submitted to the relevant Programme Leader for authorisation. Copies of the form and evidence supplied should be forwarded to the Faculty



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