



# Student Engagement and Attendance Policy

(INTERIM)

<b>Responsible Office</b>	Student and Registry Services
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Registrar
<b>Approving Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Date of Approval</b>	January 2022
<b>Effective Date</b>	January 2022
<b>Related Procedures</b>	
<b>Related University Policies</b>	Academic Regulation Mitigating Circumstances Policy Immigration Sponsorship Policy Academic Engagement Monitoring Policy for Student Visa/Tier 4 Visa holders 2021/22
<b>Amended (if applicable)</b>	December 2021
<b>Supersedes</b>	February 2017
<b>Next review due</b>	July 2022

# 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to offer guidance on the Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring system, and outline the expectations and responsibilities of both students and staff in regards to attendance and engagement.

# 2. Definitions

“The University” means Bath Spa University.

# 3. Policy

## 3.1 Introduction

Bath Spa University recognises that regular attendance and active engagement with teaching and learning is an essential component of successful student retention, progression, achievement and employability. The interim Student Attendance Monitoring system (Attendance Matters) has been developed as a useful tool for identifying problems at an early stage so that students can be signposted to, and offered appropriate support. This system supports the University’s commitment to provide a high quality student experience and to create a supportive learning environment which enables all students to successfully complete their studies and achieve their full potential.

## 3.2 Expectations

### **Student Responsibilities**

The University expects all students to engage fully with their studies and to attend all timetabled sessions associated with the course on which they are enrolled. Full, active and consistent participation provides students with opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge needed to successfully complete their course. To this end, students are expected to:

- organise their personal, social, work, residential and other arrangements to facilitate attendance and engagement, as required by their specific programme of study;
- attend all timetabled sessions, which may include lectures, tutorials, workshops, labs, placements, site visits, and in the case of research students, scheduled meetings with supervisors;
- carry a valid BSU Student ID card so they can tap-in to in person sessions at Newton Park, where electronic card readers are available and replace lost,

- stolen or damaged ID cards without delay;
- check in online at Locksbrook, Corsham Court and for all online, timetabled sessions
- arrive on time for sessions and remain for the duration of the session;
- participate fully in group work and group meetings, as required by their course of study;
- notify their module tutors in advance if they expect to be absent from any module event.

### **Staff Responsibilities (Student and Registry Services)**

Student and Registry Services staff, and in particular the Student Registration and Engagement Team, are expected to:

- remind students of the importance of attending all timetabled sessions;
- inform students and staff of how and why the University monitors attendance and engagement data;
- undertake regular reviews of attendance data and send timely communications to students deemed to have low engagement;
- signpost “at-risk” students to support services available across the University, e.g. Student Wellbeing Services, Academic Tutors, International Advice, Student Information Team, Library and Learning Services;
- ensure all students are aware of the support services available to them;

### **Staff Responsibilities (School//Subject)**

School staff, which may include module tutors, module leaders and school administrative staff, are expected to:

- encourage and remind students to tap-in at Newton Park or check into online sessions or at Locksbrook Road or Corsham Court;
- use the AppHub to record attendance and absences and/or keep accurate electronic or paper registers of student attendance and absences for non centrally timetabled courses at Sion Hill and Locksbrook Road;
- notify the Student Registration and Engagement Team of any student whose attendance patterns are of concern;
- ensure students are informed at the earliest possible opportunity of teaching staff absences, including communications relating to alternative arrangements for the class;
- where applicable for centrally timetabled courses, keep the central timetabling

team informed of any planned session changes, session cancellations, classroom changes, etc.

### 3.3 Monitoring

As part of its commitment to providing a supportive learning environment, the University has a centralised electronic Student Attendance Monitoring System so that we can proactively support our students learning journey

#### 3.3.1 Why We Monitor Student Engagement

It has been shown that students who regularly attend and engage with teaching and learning are more successful in their studies. Full attendance and engagement in learning and teaching is linked to student progression, retention, overall achievement and eventually employability and graduate outcomes. Monitoring attendance also helps the University to identify students who may be experiencing a range of difficulties and may need particular support.

The University also has a legal duty, for the majority of students, to monitor engagement with teaching and to act on non-attendance. This legal duty arises from the requirement to report attendance to UK student loan companies, as well as meeting the sponsorship requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for the monitoring of sponsored international students' attendance studying in the UK.

#### 3.3.2 Types of Engagement Activities

There are a number of ways in which a student can engage with their studies, including:

- Full attendance at all timetabled activities, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, labs;
- Full participation in all group activities such as group presentations and rehearsals which relate to teaching modules;
- Active engagement with all learning tools including Minerva, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE);
- Regular checking of their BSU email account, to ensure receipt of University communications;
- Timely submission of all formative and summative assessments;
- Attendance at all timetabled tests and examinations;
- Attendance at any registration points, as required;
- Undertaking independent learning in support of teaching activities, as directed by academic staff;

- Undertaking self-directed project work as required by the course;
- Supervisory and/or status review meetings;

### **3.3.3. How We Monitor Engagement**

A variety of methods may be used to monitor the attendance and engagement of its students, including:

- Tap in of student ID cards at electronic readers at Newton Park and online check in at centrally timetabled sessions for online sessions and at Locksbrook Road and Corsham Court
- Attendance Registers for non-centrally timetabled sessions
- Monitoring non-submission of work
- Monitoring of extension requests
- Low or non-participation in any teaching or learning activity
- Use of library resources
- Use of the VLE and other online resources
- Engagement with Support Services

### **3.3.4. Misuse of Attendance Monitoring Systems**

Students found misusing the attendance monitoring system will be liable to disciplinary action. Examples of such misuse are:

- Attendance is registered via tap in or online check in , but the student does not remain for the entire duration of the event;
- An ID card is given to another student to tap-in;
- A student taps-in on behalf of another student;
- A paper register is used and a student signs for another.

Such behaviour will be treated seriously by the University.

### 3.4 Sources of support

To enable students to engage fully, the University provides a range of support services including:

<b>Academic Guidance &amp; Support</b>	<b>Student Wellbeing Services</b>	<b>Library/Writing and Learning Centre</b>
Course Leader Module Leader School Administration Team and the <a href="#">Student Information Hub</a> Personal Tutor / Academic Advisor	Medical Service Accessibility Service Mental Health Service Wellbeing Service (including Money Advice) Support for Care Leavers, Estranged students and Young Adult Carers Out of hours support services	Academic writing and referencing Digital literacy Academic reading Critical thinking Making the transition to university study Returning to study after a break
<b>English Language Unit</b>	<b>Careers and Employability</b>	<b>Student's Union</b>
Support with on-course English language Individual tutorials	Jobs & Placements The Bath Spa Award Mentoring	Student Advice Centre Student Advocacy Extra-Curricular Activities

### 3.5 Absence from the University

It is not normally expected that students pursuing Undergraduate programmes will be absent during term-time. Any leave or holiday must always be taken outside of term time – please visit the University’s published [term dates](#).

Students who have an unavoidable absence from their studies for any period of time must inform the University immediately by letting their course tutor know. While absence notifications may be taken into account when considering a student’s overall attendance profile, as the University expects all enrolled students to be fit to study, it does not guarantee that no further action will be taken.

If students are experiencing serious personal, financial or medical difficulties that are disrupting their attendance, they will normally be advised to take a break from their

studies.

For periods of absence between one and four weeks:

- Students should refer to the University's [Mitigating Circumstances policy](#)
- Students should speak with members of academic and/or support staff to negotiate an appropriate study plan

For period of absence longer than four weeks:

- It may be deemed in the best interest of the student to take a break from their studies and return at a specified time in the future, normally in the following academic year, that will enable the student to resume the programme appropriately
- Academic staff may seek advice and guidance from Student and Registry Services, including:
  - advice on personal matters if the student has given consent to discuss
  - advice on referrals to University services
- Advice may also be sought from the Student Information Hub

Note: Sponsored international students studying with a Student Visa or a Tier 4 Student Visa must additionally consult with the Immigration Compliance Team ([visacompliance@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:visacompliance@bathspa.ac.uk)) as absence during term time can have implications on immigration status in the UK.

### 3.6 Management of Non-Engagement

If a student has low attendance according to data from Attendance Matters, or informed by the Course team, they will be contacted by the Student Registration and Engagement team:

- **Engagement Notification 1:** Normally sent via email from [attendancematters@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:attendancematters@bathspa.ac.uk) to their BSU and personal accounts. This communication will notify the student of concerns regarding engagement, remind them of how to tap, or check in their attendance via the AppHub and signpost support services that may be of use, including information about mitigating circumstances and taking a study break process.
- **Engagement Notification 2:** If a student's engagement does not improve following Engagement Notification 1, they may receive a second communication from the University, normally via email to their BSU and personal email accounts. This communication will again include details of support available but will also inform the student of the next step in the process of continued low

engagement. Students will be asked to reply to this email.

- **Participation Meeting:** If the pattern of engagement does not show significant improvement after Engagement Notifications has been received, students may be required to attend a Progress meeting to discuss their situation with appropriate members of staff. At this meeting an action plan to re-engage them with their studies may be agreed.

If a student does not attend or rearrange the Participation Meeting, or if an action plan is put in place but not adhered to, the student's case may be referred to the Head of School and Head of Student and Registry Services for consideration of further action. In the case of students where responsibility is shared between Schools, the Schools and the Student Registration and Engagement Team will liaise with each other in any processes relating to this policy.

If the University has concerns for the wellbeing of a student, every effort will be made by Student and Registry Services to put in place appropriate support mechanisms.

Note: Students who are repeating the year have been granted the opportunity to do so on the basis that they are 'fit to study' and engage fully with their course. If repeat year students are not engaging as expected, they may more quickly progress to the Participation Meeting stage with their named contact within Student and Registry Services.

### 3.7 Course or Student Specific Requirements

Due to the diversity of courses offered at Bath Spa University, there will be a number of professional and/or statutory body requirements with respect to attendance. Where programmes must conform to such requirements, these should be clearly communicated to students. Where programmes implement their own timeframes, these cannot be longer or more lenient than those outlined in this policy.

#### 3.7.1 Sponsored International Students

As a sponsor, Bath Spa University has a responsibility to make sure that Student Visa or Tier 4 Student Visa holders meet the terms of their visa in respect of engaging with their studies.

As a sponsor, Bath Spa University has a legal obligation to monitor Student Visa and Tier 4 Student Visa holder's engagement with their studies, and report any changes to the Home Office.

This section of the policy has been developed in line with the Student Sponsor Duties as set out in the UKVI Sponsor Guidance.

Sponsored international students are expected to attend and engage actively and

consistently with their course throughout the academic year. Failure to meet satisfactory attendance levels will result in withdrawal action being taken in line with the University's International Sponsorship Duties issued by UK Visas and Immigration. Full information relating to responsibilities of international students can be found on the [University's Visas and Immigration webpages](#).

### **UKVI Band 1 - Pre-Sessional English Students (RQF Level 5) and below**

The Home Office requirements of Pre-Sessional English students are as follows:

Students studying at RQF level 5 and below must attend a minimum of 15 hours of daytime (08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday) classroom-based study per week.

Where the student has not reached 85% attendance of their classroom-based study in any given month, the sponsor must review the reason for the student's absence.

The student's record must then be annotated with the reason for the non-attendance and the steps being taken to improve the student's attendance.

Where a student's attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the sponsor must withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for the non-attendance (e.g. illness).

The expectation for students following the intensive Pre-Sessional English courses, delivered by the English Unit (ELU), is that daily attendance is required.

The ELU will record and retain that record of student attendance and engagement on their courses. Any absence or non-engagement on part of the student will result in intervention by the ELU. Absences and the reasons for them will be recorded and retained. Any serious concerns regarding a student's attendance or engagement will be escalated to the Immigration Compliance Team.

### **UKVI Band 2 - Study at RQF Level 6 (Undergraduate) and**

### **RQF Level 7 (Taught and Research Postgraduate degrees)**

Academic engagement in band 2 is indicated by activities such as:

- Attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials
- Undertaking required laboratory work
- Undertaking research or fieldwork
  
- Submitting essays, assignments and attending examinations

Postgraduate Taught students undertaking dissertations are not required to attend scheduled classes, therefore active and consistent engagement is determined by engagement with dissertation supervisors.

In this case a sponsored student's supervisor will be required to establish a programme of contact points with a minimum of one academic contact every four weeks, though more frequently if required.

Every four weeks, the Immigration Compliance Team will contact dissertation supervisors to confirm engagement.

Further interventions will be required where there is little to no engagement in the 4 week period.

### **Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Interventions (Sponsored Students)**

Engagement below 40% of scheduled events

Stage 1: After two consecutive weeks of attending less than 40% of their scheduled classes (online and in-person) the student will be sent an email reading their poor engagement.

Stage 2: After four consecutive weeks of attending less than 40% of their scheduled classes (online and in-person) the student will be sent an email regarding their poor engagement. The course leader will be included in this email to add any relevant information.

Stage 3: After six consecutive weeks of attending less than 40% of their scheduled classes (online and in-person) the student will be required to attend a mandatory meeting with the Immigration Compliance Team to discuss their poor engagement.

A written summary of the meeting will be agreed by all parties and attached to the student record within SITS

Stage 4: After 8 consecutive weeks of attending less than 40% of their scheduled classes (online and in-person) the Immigration Compliance Team will conduct an in-depth assessment of the students engagement with the University taking into consideration the following factors:

- Previous levels of engagement on the course
- Course leader/module tutors feedback on student's engagement
- Assignments submitted
- Engagement meeting attendance
- Engagement with the Immigration Compliance Team
- Any other relevant factors relating to the student's engagement

At stage 4, the student will be notified that we are conducting the further assessment and the possible consequences of this.

Following this assessment, if it has been concluded by the Immigration Compliance Team that the student has not been **actively and consistently** engaging with their course of

study, sponsorship will be withdrawn and the student will not be permitted to continue studying at Bath Spa University.

Possible outcomes of Stage 4:

**Outcome 1:** Following a positive outcome of the assessment, the student will be notified that the University will not be withdrawing sponsorship of their visa. Intervention will return to stage 1 in this situation and move through the stages again.

**Outcome 2:** Following a negative outcome of the assessment, the student will be notified that the University will be withdrawing sponsorship of their visa.

Students who are deemed to be not engaging with their studies will have the right to appeal the decision by contacting the Student Complaints Team.

### **UKVI Band 2 - Study at RQF Level 8 - Research Postgraduate degrees**

As there is no requirement for research degree students to attend taught sessions, academic engagement is monitored by establishing a programme of contact points with their research supervisor.

Academic engagement for PGR students is managed by the Graduate School. Non-engagement is escalated to the Immigration Compliance Team.

Sponsorship will be withdrawn from those students who have not demonstrated active and consistent engagement over a consecutive 3 month period.

All students who are deemed to be not engaging with their studies will have the right to appeal the decision by contacting the Student Complaints Team

### **Work Placements - Sponsored students**

There is a requirement for sponsored students on work placements to be actively and consistently engaging whilst on work placements that are integral and assessed part of their degree programme.

Students failing to engage with their work placement will be subject to a similar level of checking to those students who are undertaking the taught element of their course.

It is the duty of the Professional Placements Team to notify the Immigration Compliance Team of the following:

- Sponsored students who are due to go on a work placement
- Location of the work placement, including full address and postcode,
- Duration of the work placement, including early completion,
- Changes to the work placement,
- When a student is not engaging with the work placement.

### **PGCE Work Placements**

It is the responsibility of the School of Education to notify the Immigration Compliance Team of the following:

- Sponsored students who are due to go on a PGCE placement
- Location of the placement, including full address and postcode,
- Duration of the placement, including early completion,
- Changes to the placement,
- When a student is not engaging with the placement.

### **Study Abroad (Outward mobility)**

Continued sponsorship of sponsored students who study on a Study Abroad programme will be permissible, providing that:

- The host institution accepts the responsibility to inform Bath Spa University where a student is not engaging with the Study Abroad programme.
- An agreement is signed between the host institution and Bath Spa University for each student on the Study Abroad programme. The agreement is to be shared with the Immigration Compliance Team for audit purposes.

### **Covid-19 and academic engagement (Sponsored students)**

Absences related to Covid-19 will not be considered as non-engagement if the absence is authorised by the University.

Due to the on-going Covid-19 situation, some sponsored students have been permitted to study online, in line with the UKVI Covid-19 Concessions.

Sponsored students who are studying online only, must adhere to the rules set out by the UKVI at all times.

Online attendance must be at least 40% of their expected attendance over a 2 consecutive week period. Engagement below this threshold will be followed up by the Immigration Compliance Team via email.

In line with the current UKVI guidance (as of December 2021), sponsorship will be withdrawn after 30 days of continued non-engagement.

### **3.7.2 Placement Students**

Students undertaking a placement as part of their course are responsible for ensuring that their attendance matches the requirements set out by the course and their placement provider. Placement providers will inform the University if a student is failing to maintain a good attendance record, which may lead to the student being withdrawn from the

placement activity and potentially from their programme of study.

### **3.7.3 Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students**

Because of the nature of the teaching and learning requirements for Research students, the following will be considered unsatisfactory engagement with studies:

- The student regularly misses or cancels supervision meetings;
- The student does not have satisfactory attendance at other activities deemed by the supervisor to be essential to the student's studies;
- The student is deemed by the supervisor not to be engaging appropriately with their research.

If a PGR student is found not to be engaging with their studies, the supervisor will inform the Graduate College team who will take the appropriate steps to ascertain the reason for non-engagement. This will normally include the student being interviewed by members of academic and support staff, as appropriate. If the School does not receive a satisfactory explanation:

- The School will issue a written warning to the student that the non-engagement will feature in the student's annual review and may influence the outcome of the review, possibly with the result that the student's programme will be terminated;
- In the case of continued inadequate engagement following a warning the School may also consider bringing forward the annual review;
- The School will then notify the Head of Student and Registry Services and Student and Registry Services of any action agreed.