

Bath Spa University

Student Engagement and Attendance Policy

V4 Revised 12 Dec 2016

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 new Student Attendance Monitoring system has been developed as a useful tool for identifying problems at an early stage so that students can be 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 complete their studies and achieve their full potential.

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 and active 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 program 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 sessions where electronic card readers are available, and replace lost, stolen or damaged ID cards without delay;
- 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 Services)

Student Services staff, and in particular the Student 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 Support, Academic Tutors, International Advice;
- ensure systems are in place for students to notify the University of planned absences and report any unexpected absences, in particular long-term absences;
- ensure all students are aware of the support services available to them;

Staff Responsibilities (School/Colleges/Institute level)

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

- encourage students to tap-in where electronic card readers are available;
- use AppHub to record attendance and absences and/or keep accurate electronic or paper registers of student attendance and absences where electronic card readers are not available;
- notify the Student 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, keep the central timetabling team informed of any planned session changes, session cancellations, classroom changes, etc.

3. Monitoring

As part of its commitment to providing a supportive learning environment, the University is implementing a new centralised electronic Student Attendance Monitoring System.

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. Good attendance is linked to student progression, retention, overall achievement and eventually employability. 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 international students' attendance studying in the UK on a Tier 4 visa.

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 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 How We Monitor Engagement

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

- Presentation of student ID cards at electronic readers
- Attendance Registers
- Monitoring non-submission of work
- 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

3.4 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 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.

4. Sources of Support

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

Academic Guidance & Support	Student Support	Library/ Writing and Learning Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Leader • Module Leader • School Administration Team • Personal Tutor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Service • Disability & Dyslexia • Emotional & Mental Health Support • Money Advice • Peer Mentor Scheme • Care Leavers Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic writing and referencing • Digital literacy • Academic reading • Critical thinking • Making the transition to university study • Returning to study after a break
English Language Unit	Careers & Employability	Students' Union
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with on-course English language • Individual tutorials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs & Placements • The Bath Spa Award • Mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Advice Centre • Student Advocacy • Extra-Curricular Activities

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 using the '[Absence Reporting Form](#)' available from the Attendance Matters webpage. 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 intercalate (that is, 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 absences longer than 7 days, a student must also submit to attendancematters@bathspa.ac.uk a medical certificate or other third part evidence in support of their absence

For period of absence longer than four weeks:

- It may be deemed in the best interest of the student to intercalate 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 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 Students' Union.

Note: International students studying under a Tier 4 visa must additionally consult with the International Student Advice Team (internationaladvice@bathspa.ac.uk) as absence during term time can have implications on immigration status in the UK.

6. Management of Non-Engagement

If it is considered that a student is not engaging with their studies or not undertaking the requisite assessments, they will enter an escalation process. The student will receive the following notifications from the Student Engagement team:

- **Engagement Notification 1:** Normally sent via email to their BSU and personal accounts, this communication will notify the student of concerns regarding engagement with studies and will signpost support facilities that may be of use and information about mitigating circumstance and intercalation processes.
- **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, outlining the next steps in the process. This communication will again include details of support available but will also inform the student that a continued lack of participation may result in consideration of a range of options, including intercalation, withdrawal, suspension or even exclusion. Students will be asked to reply to this email within a set timeframe.
- **Participation Meeting:** If the pattern of engagement does not show significant improvement after *Engagement Notification* has been received, students may be required to attend a 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 will be referred to the Dean of School and Registrar for consideration of further action. In the case of students where responsibility is shared between Schools, the Schools and the Student 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 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 Services.

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 requirement, 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.

7.1 International Students Studying on Tier 4 Visas

Tier 4 students are expected to attend all classes and engage fully with their course throughout the academic year. Failure to meet satisfactory attendance levels for Tier 4 will result in withdrawal action being taken in line with the University's Tier 4 Sponsorship Duties issued by UK Visas and Immigration. Full information relating to responsibilities of international students can be found on the University's [Tier 4 Visa webpages](#).

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.

Note: All Tier 4 students commencing a placement must liaise with the Visa Compliance Team (visacompliance@bathspa.ac.uk) prior to the placement start date as the University must notify UKVI of placement details. Failure to make this notification will result in Illegal Working.

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 Registrar and Student Services of any action agreed.