Student Attendance Monitoring and Engagement Policy and Procedure

February 2017

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Student attendance monitoring and engagement policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the policy and procedure employed by the University of West London to monitor student attendance and engagement on all University courses, including while on assessed placements. It also outlines the activities the University undertakes to encourage students to attend scheduled classes and also engage with the full range of learning opportunities and, thereby, increase their success.

1.2 The Policy also sets out how the University monitors of students sponsored by the University under the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Tier 4 Sponsorship scheme in accordance with the University’s statutory obligations under its UKVI Tier 4 license.

1.3 The Policy is set in the context of research which demonstrates that student attendance correlates strongly with student performance. While this is not the case for all students, the University believes that monitoring and encouraging attendance is important to support students in their academic studies as such has the potential to indicate those students at risk of leaving their course early or of failure.

1.4 The University aims to improve the attendance and engagement of all students. Attendance in lectures, seminars and workshops provides students with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete the course. It is therefore in the interests of every student to attend their scheduled sessions. Engagement with the available learning resources and with assessment is also key.

1.4 Attendance Monitoring and engagement is central to the work being undertaken in Learning Analytics which aims to support student success. This aspect of the Attendance Monitoring and Engagement Policy should be read in conjunction with the University’s Learning Analytics Policy.

2 Attendance Requirements

2.1 Attendance is expected of all students on every element of their course. This refers to lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions and any form of summative or formative assessment. Attendance also includes all activities defined in the Course Handbooks as compulsory.

2.2 For students undertaking a period of time on an assessed placement in industry or practice, this policy also outlines expected attendance during the
For some courses, such as Nursing and Midwifery, there are compulsory attendance requirements which, if a student does not meet them, they will not be able to pass the course. These requirements will be clearly outlined in the student handbook.

3 UKVI Attendance Requirements

3.1 The University has a particular duty to ensure that UKVI Tier 4 students are in attendance, including during any placement, as a condition of its UKVI License. Non-attendance could result in withdrawal of sponsorship, which will be reported to the UKVI, consequently affecting the student’s status in the UK. This monitoring and reporting is a legal requirement for all sponsors.

3.2 The additional requirements for UKVI students are set out in section 11 below.

4 Attendance monitoring in scheduled classes

4.1 Monitoring refers to all recording of student attendance, whether through Student Attendance Monitoring system (SAM) or paper-based. Students are required to touch in to all scheduled classes including lectures, workshops, seminars etc. at the beginning of the class using their University Student ID Card. Where taken, students are also required to sign any manual registers.

5 Collection and use of data for engagement

5.1 Touch-in data is recorded every time students use their ID card to enter a University building, recording the time and date that this occurred. Monitoring engagement with study is also undertaken by monitoring blackboard usage and submissions to assessment.

5.2 This data is used as part of the University’s Learning Analytics project to support student success. The data on a student’s general engagement with the University and the learning resources, combined with SAM data, is used to model the successful study behaviours which enable students to succeed. It is also used to predict which students might require further support.

5.4 Students who are not attending or engaged will be contacted to re-engage them with their course.

6 Use of attendance data for reporting

6.1 SAM data is used to assess whether students are meeting attendance requirements for the Student Loans Company (SLC).

6.2 Where a student is not attending at the point of a census, they may be withdrawn and this will be reported to the SLC who will end payments.
7 Authorised absence

7.1 Short-term absences due to illness do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that students contacts a member of staff to inform them if they are not able to attend scheduled sessions, or individual meetings that have been pre-arranged.

7.2 Students should not normally be absent, unless as agreed with tutors, for a period of more than 5 working days.

7.3 Instances of illness or other extenuating circumstances that affect an assessment or examination should be reported to the University. Students who are undertaking assignments affected by illness or other factors may request extensions. Following the two week extension period or for any missed examinations, students should complete a Mitigating Circumstances application completed with the relevant evidence (doctors or hospital note). Further details are found in the Mitigating Circumstances Regulations (http://www.uwl.ac.uk/students/current-students/extensions-and-mitigating-circumstances).

7.4 Students are permitted to apply for temporary leave, suspension of studies, or deferral of their course of study for personal or medical reasons. Guidance and advice on these processes is found in the Student Handbook, from personal tutors or Student Administration (http://www.uwl.ac.uk/students/current-students/student-handbook).

8 Research students

8.1 Research students must be in regular contact with supervisors and be able to provide evidence of continued research and progress in their research topic.

8.2 Non-demonstration of research progress and non-attendance to planned supervision sessions by research students will be investigated by the supervisor, and a determination of the reasons for it sought.

9 Withdrawal for non-attendance and/or engagement

9.1 The University may withdraw a student from their Course if they are not attending and submitting assignments or in the case of research students are not attending supervisory sessions or engaging with their research.

10 Placements

10.1 Students who are on assessed placements must attend them as required by the employer. At the end of the placement, students will be required to demonstrate that they have undertaken the required hours at their placement in addition to any assessment.
10.2 The attendance of students on Tier 4 visas on placement will be monitored by the Placement Office fortnightly as set out below.

11 Non-attendance by Tier 4 sponsored students

11.1 The University is required to abide by the Tier 4 License Sponsorship duties outlined by the UKVI. Under these duties the University of West London is legally required to monitor all Tier 4 sponsored students and to maintain attendance records, reporting non-attendance when necessary.

11.2 A student who has been issued with a CAS to begin either a pre-sessional course, or other course, will be provided with a start date. If the student does not attend within two weeks of the enrolment period or start date, their non-attendance will be reported to the UKVI, and their sponsorship will be withdrawn.

11.3 Students are expected to attend all sessions scheduled by the University. Students' attendance within the University will be monitored through the SAM system. Any student who fails to attend for one week will be sent an email warning them of the consequences. The School Office will contact the student and ask them for evidence of why they were not in attendance. If the student is still not in attendance after a second week a second email will be sent and again attempts to re-engage them will be made.

11.4 Any pre-sessional courses being undertaken are compulsory.

11.5 In addition to the expected attendance, students must attend for all enrolment, induction and re-enrolment sessions and any census checks.

11.6 When a student is on an assessed placement their attendance is also compulsory, and attendance will be monitored by the placement team on a fortnightly basis. Where a student is absent without authorisation, attempts will be made to re-engage but if this does not occur the student will be liable to be reported to the UKVI to have their sponsorship withdrawn.

11.7 Tier 4 sponsored students may choose to defer their studies due to personal or medical reasons. Students must apply for this option, and provide evidence. However, the University will need to stop sponsoring the student when they defer. On deferral of a course of study, the Tier 4 sponsorship will be withdrawn and this will be reported to the UKVI. When the student wishes to return to study, a new visa must be applied for.

11.8 The University will normally support this student in their return but it will need to issue a new CAS. This is dependent on the length of time of deferral, and will be clarified on an individual basis with each student concerned.

11.9 If a student elects to finish a course early, either by taking an exit award, or leaving the course, the University will report this to the UKVI and the student’s visa will be curtailed. The student will be required to return home, as stipulated in the UKVI regulations.