



**UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH**

Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy

Department of Student and Academic Administration

November 2018

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Summary

What is this document about?

Monitoring of engagement and attendance is an important aspect in supporting both student retention and achievement to minimise the risk of academic failure or withdrawal. This document outlines the University of Portsmouth's approach to identifying students who require additional support, evidenced by attendance records.

Who is this document for?

This document will be of most interest to our academic staff and students and Department of Student and Academic Administration (DSAA). It will also be of interest to the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Office for Students (OFS) and may also be of some interest to the wider public.

How does the University check this document is followed?

The document is checked intrinsically through the process it details, through consideration at University Education and Student Experience Committee (UESEC) and operationally through Department of Student and Academic Administration (DSAA).

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

If you have questions about this document please contact Department of Student and Academic Administration (DSAA). dsaa-admin@port.ac.uk

1 Introduction

Monitoring of engagement and attendance is recognised as an important aspect in supporting both student retention and achievement to minimise the risk of academic failure or withdrawal. This policy outlines the University of Portsmouth's approach to identifying students who may require additional support. Engagement is monitored through a student's attendance records, their use of the library, submission of coursework and examinations and use of the virtual learning environment, Moodle.

In line with the University of Portsmouth Student Charter all students are expected to attend all scheduled learning and teaching activities and engage with their relevant course of study.

The University of Portsmouth Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy aligns with the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Tier 4 General Student policy requirements on attendance monitoring, and reports on students accordingly. Supplementary to the standard Tier 4 attendance monitoring requirements, the University will report on Tier 4 students who fail to register, or are absent for a prolonged period without authorisation.

This policy provides Academic Schools/Departments and the Department of Student and Academic Administration (DSAA) with guidance to the administration of attendance monitoring and absence reporting procedures for all students. A process document is also available to underpin this Policy.

2 Recording of Attendance

The University currently captures attendance data when a student registers attendance onto their timetabled session using their Student Card at designated card readers across the University.

3 Absence Categories

For the purposes of operating this policy, where a student is not registering attendance, there are two types of absence categories, these are Absence or Authorised Absence:

i) Absence

- The student is not present at the timetabled session
- The student is present, but the session is not scheduled on their timetable
- The student is present but has not used the card reader and registered attendance at their timetabled session

In these situations, the student is automatically recorded as having an Absence on the Student Attendance Monitoring System (SAMS) and this is counted towards their absence record.

ii) Authorised Absence

- Where late registration has been approved by the Head of School/Department (www.port.ac.uk/lateregistration)
- Where approval from the Academic School/Department has been gained for exceptional evidenced absence, for example: medical appointments, police registration/visa compliance,

representing the University at sport or other learning/field trips. Guidance on how to obtain approval will be issued by the School/Department administrative office

In these situations, the student is manually recorded as having an Authorised Absence on the Student Attendance Monitoring System (SAMS) by the School/Department administrative office, and this absence will not count towards the absence record.

4 Intervention where poor attendance (absence) is recorded

To support a student in achieving the best outcome with their study, the University of Portsmouth expects students to attend all of their timetabled sessions. Where this falls short of expectation, students will be contacted on a weekly basis to inform them of their attendance level and remind them of the expectations the University has of them and their commitment as per the Student Charter.

As adult learners, students are responsible for their own attendance, and through the portal, students will be able to see their recorded level of attendance. Academic staff will also be able to see a students' level of attendance, and Course Leaders, Unit Coordinators and Lecturers etc may pick this up for discussion should it be felt intervention is required. Personal Tutors will also review attendance with students during tutorials.

5 Welfare/Pastoral Intervention

The attendance monitoring system will highlight students whose attendance has dramatically dropped (<50%) in the preceding week when compared to their average over the weeks leading up to that point, or where there is evidence of continuing decline in attendance. This pattern could indicate a student who is in trouble or needs some personal support. In these situations, where there is no prior knowledge of a problem being addressed, the School/Department office will arrange a meeting between the student and their Personal Tutor, so that appropriate support can be put in place to help the student return to appropriate levels of attendance.

6 Students with 0% attendance

Where a student has 0% attendance, and no other engagement for a period of 20 working days, in discussion with the Course Leader, the School/Department administrative office may withdraw the student.

7 Outline of Responsibilities

A collaborative approach is required across the University to support the retention and achievement of students. Specific responsibility is outlined below:-

7.1 Students' Responsibility

Students must carry their Student Card whilst on campus. Students are expected to attend their timetabled sessions and must register attendance at that session using the card reader situated by the door of each room. Failure to attend a timetabled session will automatically result in an absence being recorded against a student. Students should only attend the actual sessions they are

timetabled to and not alternative sessions. Attendance at an alternative session that is not on a student's timetable will result in an absence being recorded against a student.

Information is provided to students on how to use their student card and the card reader to successfully record attendance and it is their responsibility to ensure they do so correctly. If a student has any questions regarding the operation of the card readers, or their record of attendance, they should contact their School/Department administrative office. Students will be able to view their attendance record through MyPort.

If a student loses their card, or it is damaged or forgotten, it is their responsibility to obtain a replacement student card, as a matter of urgency, from the Student IT Hub.

7.1.2 Student Card Misuse

The following is considered misuse of the card reader system:

- A student giving their student card to another student to record their attendance at a timetabled session when they are absent
- A student recording the attendance of an absent student by recording that student's card on their behalf when they are not present
- A student recording their attendance on the card reader, and then not attending the timetabled session

The behaviour outlined above is considered a disciplinary offence.

Card reader verification processes will be applied to identify the above behaviour.

Where a student has misused the card reader system, they will be subject to the following penalties:

First offence - a formal email warning will be issued.

Second offence - the student will be interviewed by their Head of Department or School or by anyone they have delegated the authority to deal with such matters to. The student will be expected to sign a contract of behaviour to ensure that they do not do this again. Failure to attend or sign the contract of behaviour will lead to disciplinary action being taken against them in line with the Code of Student Behaviour.

Further offences - these will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter through the Code of Student Behaviour. The repeated nature of the offences make it likely that it will be dealt with as Major Misconduct and could lead to the student being excluded from the University.

7.2 Department of Student and Academic Administration (DSAA)

It is the responsibility of the DSAA to ensure that the student engagement and attendance policy is fit for purpose and reviewed annually. The DSAA will ensure that there are robust processes in place to deliver this policy.

During induction, and at the start of both teaching blocks, DSAA Student Life (Student Administration) will send an explanatory email informing all students of the engagement and attendance monitoring policy, detailing how the card reader operates, and the University's expectations. This will be supported by Academic School/Department induction sessions.

DSAA Student Life will run the dataset recorded by the card readers on Mondays, for the preceding week, on a weekly basis during teaching blocks, and ensure automatic emails are sent out as appropriate.

In line with the University's regulations for withdrawal and suspension of studies, DSAA Student Life will report a Tier 4 (General) Student to the Home Office if they are no longer attending the University once they have been suspended or withdrawn from their studies on the University Student Management System. In accordance with this student engagement and attendance policy, where a Tier 4 student has zero attendance DSAA Student Life shall report the student to the Home Office and their Tier 4 leave shall be cancelled. At the point the University has reported the student to the Home Office, they are no longer sponsored by the University of Portsmouth on a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa.

7.3 DSAA School/Department administration office

The School/Department Administration office is the key contact for staff and students queries on the student engagement and attendance monitoring policy and process, running and disseminating reports to academic staff and monitoring for students where intervention is required.

The office is responsible for informing students how to apply for authorised absence and ensuring that all authorised absences have been input into SAMS by the Friday of each teaching week.

The office will arrange meetings for personal tutors and students where welfare/pastoral intervention is required as appropriate.

Where follow up action is required for International students, the office will inform the International Student Advice Centre.

The office will monitor exemptions as outlined in 8.5.

The office may withdraw students with 0% attendance.

The office will act as the liaison between students and the Central Timetabling Unit (CTU) regarding alternative seminar group requests.

7.4 Academic Staff

Academic staff are required to inform students of the engagement and attendance monitoring policy in induction sessions.

Academic staff are requested to remind students to use the card reader at each timetabled session to enable the capture of accurate data to support the process. Within timetabled sessions the academic should operate card reader verification as appropriate, and as detailed in the process document, and take appropriate action against any student found to be falsifying attendance (7.1.2).

Faculty resourcers are required to inform CTU in all cases where not all students need to attend a session. This should be done via the Timetable Request Form during the data collection stage of the timetabling process as events where student attendance is not compulsory must be added to the timetabling system with an appropriate event type (eg. Drop in).

Academic staff are required to inform CTU as soon as possible of planned changes to published timetabled sessions, via the timetable Modification Request Form. All changes must be communicated in a timely manner to students via the portal and Moodle, and via email to the School/Department administration office.

Academic staff are required to inform students via the portal and Moodle, and via email to the School/Department administration office and CTU of any unplanned cancellations or changes to timetable sessions caused by sickness or other unforeseeable circumstance.

Academic staff will be able to view all student's attendance data on MyPort.

7.5 Personal Tutor

In line with the Curriculum Framework it is recommended that tutorials support the monitoring of engagement and attendance. Personal tutors will have full access to all student attendance data on MyPort.

7.6 Central Timetabling Unit

CTU will ensure that when Faculty resourcers request changes to timetabled sessions they are made on the timetabling system prior to the teaching event being delivered, which will then update MyPort accordingly for staff and students. If it is not possible to make the change on the timetabling system prior to the session taking place (due to the timing of the request or CTU's workload), then CTU will ensure that the relevant steps are taken to nullify any events so that students are not unfairly recorded as absent.

8 Exemptions

The following guidance is provided in relation to exemptions:

8.1 Short Courses

Short course programmes require full attendance (100%) to obtain the relevant certificate. Student attendance on short courses is recorded and monitored at School/Departmental level via electronic registers in accordance with School/Departmental set requirements.

8.2 Pre-sessional Programmes

The pre-sessional programmes require full attendance (100%) to facilitate the student in meeting the English Language requirements to progress on to the main course of study, at the University. Pre-sessional student's attendance is recorded and managed in accordance with the School of Languages and Applied Linguistics (SLAL) requirements. Students whose absence exceeds the expected amount will be at risk of withdrawal from the course, subject to discussions with the Assistant Registrar (UKVI Compliance), SLAL Head of School and Course Leaders.

8.3 Degree Apprenticeships and other block teaching

Students are expected to engage with all scheduled learning and teaching activities. Engagement and attendance will be monitored by the School/Department administration office and will be

decided locally. Students must still register attendance through the card readers following guidance from the School/Department administration office.

Apprenticeship students will be asked to record regular learning engagement (off the job training) through use of Google. Students not logging learning activity will be contacted by the School/Department administration office to ensure they intend to remain on course.

8.4 Research

Postgraduate Research Students (PGRS) are expected to engage with their programme of research and regularly meet with their supervisor(s) as detailed in the University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students.

Attendance and engagement is also monitored through attendance at Graduate School Development Programme sessions and local faculty/Department research seminars or training events, along with engagement in the annual monitoring requirements of the Major Review and Annual Review.

The Faculty Research Degree Committee monitors the experience, registration and progression of PGRS, and can approve the withdrawal of PGRS who are not in attendance or engaging as appropriate.

8.5 Distance Learning

Two weeks after the start of the course, the School/Department administration office will run a report to monitor who has engaged in their programme. If a student has not logged into Moodle or viewed the induction information, the School/Department administration office will email the student and advise that if they do not begin to engage within two weeks, they will assume they are not commencing the course. If they do not receive a satisfactory response from the student within this two-week period, the student will be withdrawn from the start date; this will ensure no tuition fee debt is accrued.

For ongoing engagement monitoring, Moodle reports should be run monthly. If a student has not engaged in the programme for a period of two weeks or more, they should be contacted. If the School/Department administration office does not receive a satisfactory response from the student within two weeks from the date of email contact, the student will be withdrawn. This action will prevent a student incurring fees into the next liability period and receiving student loan payments they are not entitled to.

Students will be asked to record regular learning engagement through use of Google. Students not logging learning activity will be contacted by the School/Department administration office to ensure they intend to remain on course.

8.6 Work Placements

A contract between the University and the work placement provider stipulates that a student on a work placement will be monitored in conjunction with the placement provider and the University work placement contact. The provider is obliged to inform the University if there is unexpected absence in accordance with the contract. If a Tier 4 General Student is undertaking a work placement or a work based learning unit, the University is required to inform the Home Office of the work placement location.

8.7 Study Abroad

For study abroad courses students gain credit from the partner institution. The study abroad agreement outlines the University's expectation for attendance to be monitored robustly. Students on a study abroad course for a full year should expect contact with their Personal Tutor at least twice a year, or once if abroad for one term. Hosting Departments will be responsible for monitoring the attendance of incoming study abroad students.

8.8 Fieldwork

The fieldwork leader will monitor the attendance of students participating in fieldwork, and absences will be followed up through the briefings and progress meetings that students undertake as part of normal activity.

8.9 International College Portsmouth (ICP)

For ICP students studying on a Standard Delivery Model (SDM) course, the University of Portsmouth delegate responsibility to ICP for the attendance monitoring of this cohort. ICP monitor their attendance in line with the Navitas attendance policy, which is reviewed on an annual basis by the Head of Compliance.

For ICP students studying on an Integrated Delivery Model (IDM) course, the University of Portsmouth monitors their attendance on their core units and ICP monitor their attendance for the ICP tutorial and study skills modules. The relevant Schools from the University of Portsmouth provide a weekly update to ICP for all integrated students and their attendance on programme.

8.10 Collaborative Courses

The University collaborates with a wide network of UK and international academic partners in which students enrol on a course delivered by the partner institution and gain a University of Portsmouth award. All partnership agreements will outline that all students on such collaborative courses will be expected to meet the University's attendance requirements. In instances where a collaborative partner institution has its own student engagement and attendance policy, the partner's policy will apply instead. If a student is studying a percentage of their studies overseas and at the University of Portsmouth on a Tier 4 General Student Visa, Tier 4 attendance monitoring obligations must be met.

8.11 Professional body requirements

Some programmes carry a professional accreditation. This can bring with it a specific minimum attendance requirement which differs from the level set out in this policy. Where such a requirement exists, students will be made aware of this via the appropriate course or unit handbook and will be expected to adhere to this localised rule.

9 Equality Analysis and review and monitoring of this policy

The University's Equality Impact Assessment procedure was used in the development of this policy and is available on request. Student needs relating to protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) will be taken into account as far as possible in the application of this Policy. Consideration of arrangements for students to meet privately will be made and confidentiality assured. This Policy will be reviewed annually. The University's internal monitoring process is an important way of determining whether measures taken by the University to combat harassment, discrimination and

ensure inclusion are effective, and plays an important part in ensuring equality and diversity are properly promoted and protected within the University.

10 Reasonable adjustments for Disabled Students

The University supports disabled students as part of its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, disabled students are protected against discrimination arising from their disability and any failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC) will make a reasonable adjustment to the engagement and attendance monitoring process if appropriate and in consultation with the disabled student and academic Department. This is carried out on a case-by-case basis with the adjustment recorded on the ASDAC confidential database.

12 Data processing statement

The personal data that is collected for the purposes of this engagement and attendance monitoring policy will be processed in compliance with the relevant data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018). We believe it is within the University's legitimate interests to collect, use, and store this data, to help students maintain engagement with their course. The personal data collected will be stored securely on University systems and will not be shared with any third parties. Students have the right to see this, or any other personal data, held about them by the University. Students can exercise this right in the first place by contacting personal tutors, or alternatively, the University's Data Protection Officer who can be contacted on information-matters@port.ac.uk, to whom any further queries about the processing of your personal data can be directed.