Attendance Management and Engagement Policy

Effective from 2021-22

1 Introduction

1.1. This policy outlines the University's understanding of, and approach to, the management of student attendance and engagement with their programme of study. The University wants all students to be successful in their chosen programme of study and will endeavour, at both School and University level, to provide the opportunities and support to enable success. This includes support for students' academic achievement, progression through their programme and overall wellbeing.

1.2. For the purposes of this policy, attendance and engagement is understood to mean that students will be responsible for their learning and will pursue their studies conscientiously, making use of the resources and opportunities made available to them. This includes attending lectures, seminars and tutorials engaging with resources provided on Blackboard and lecture recordings, submitting assignments and undertaking examinations unless otherwise agreed with the University because of exceptional circumstances.

1.3. This policy sets expectations relating to student attendance and engagement and outlines approaches based on early intervention that precedes, and ideally avoids, the need for formal academic engagement procedures. However, the principles of this policy apply regardless of whether intervention is informal or has progressed to the formal procedures specified in the *Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study Policy*. Please refer to section 6 for further details.

1.4. The policy is applicable to University of Reading taught students, including undergraduate and post graduate taught students (including those studying at below degree level e.g. Foundation and Pres-sessional English programme), who are studying programmes that are based on University of Reading campuses in the UK and internationally, including Henley Business School postexperience qualification programmes and the University of Reading Malaysia. Also included are incoming students from partner organisations or on study abroad programmes for the duration of their studies at the University of Reading. The policy is not applicable to Executive Education participants or those doing not-for-credit Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Any references to Schools within this policy means all Schools based on Whiteknights and London Road campuses in Reading, Henley Business Schools and all Schools at the University of Reading Malaysia.

1.5. Apprenticeship programmes are governed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules, as well as the Institute of Apprenticeships, which set specific requirements in relation to student participation, and therefore this policy does not apply. Apprenticeship students should refer to the responsibilities as stated in their Learner Commitment Statement.

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1.6. Associated policies and documents include:

- Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study
- Statement of Learner Responsibilities
- Assessment Adjustments Policy

2 Purpose

2.1. The University is committed to supporting students to be successful in their studies and to achieve outcomes commensurate with their ability and potential. The policy draws on the recognition that there is a strong correlation between a student's attendance and engagement and the student achieving successful outcomes.

2.2. This policy sets out what attendance management and engagement means for undergraduate and post-graduate taught students, as set out in section 1.4, at the University of Reading and how the University approaches managing and supporting a student's attendance and engagement during their programme of study. The policy:

- Outlines expectations for attendance and engagement.
- Provides a level of transparency for students in relation to the types of data that might be used to help inform conversations around a student's attendance and engagement. ○ Outlines the approaches that may be used to intervene with a student where attendance and engagement with their programme of study might be a cause for concern.
- Outlines where attendance and engagement data is used to fulfil externally stipulated requirements placed on the University of Reading.

3 Attendance and Engagement Expectations

3.1. There is a strong correlation between attendance and engagement and students achieving successful outcomes. For this reason, it is expected that students attend teaching and learning events and engage in the learning opportunities provided as part of their programme of study.

3.2. Attendance at teaching and learning events is also an important part of integration and contribution to the University community and will enable students to take advantage of the academic support and resources available, as well as developing social networks with others studying the same programme and modules.

3.3. Students at the University of Reading are provided with many opportunities to access teaching and learning for their programme of study and students are encouraged to take responsibility for managing their own attendance and engagement.

3.4. In addition to the attendance and engagement expectations that are stipulated for specific academic activities, including attending lectures, seminars and tutorials, as well as submitting assignments and undertaking examinations, there are a wide range of other opportunities for students to engage with learning which will vary by School and programme. These include, but are not limited to, attending workshops, accessing library and online resources, accessing the appropriate virtual learning environment, and submitting formative as well as summative assessments. Lack of engagement with these activities, particularly when combined with nonengagement in academic activities that have stipulated expectations, may indicate a cause for concern and could be a prompt for intervention.

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4 Students Registering Attendance and Notifying Absences

4.1. Students are required to specifically register their attendance at timetabled teaching and learning sessions wherever attendance capture facilities are available. Attendance at any online teaching sessions will often be captured automatically and each student is required to access these sessions via their University account to register their attendance. Students are expected to behave in a professional manner and only register their own attendance. Attempting to register attendance for another student will be considered a breach of the *Regulations for Student Conduct* and therefore the *Student Disciplinary procedure* would apply. In the case of professionally regulated programmes, such behaviour could also lead to a *Fitness to Practice* investigation.

4.2. It is understood that there are certain circumstances, such as illness, which mean that it is not possible for students to attend their timetabled taught sessions. In such cases students should notify the university of their expected absences following the guidance set out. In most cases it is not expected that University staff will provide formal authorisation for absences unless this is a School, Department or Programme requirement. There are, however, some modules for which absences do require formal authorisation, for example when attendance is linked to accreditation or contributes to assessment (requested via the Assessment Adjustments process). Authorisations may also be required in exceptional circumstances such as extended absences or in relation to a student's Tier 4/Student Route visa. The School, Department or Programme will make requirements for authorised absences clear to their students and these will usually be included in programme handbooks or explained at welcome meetings.

4.3. Students are responsible for ensuring that an authorisation is received for any absences that are advised by the School, Department or Programme as requiring permission and, for Tier 4/Student Route international students', failure to notify an absence and obtain authorisation may put their visa status at risk. Where required, absence notifications should be submitted following the guidance set out by the School, Department or Programme. Such authorisations will be at the discretion of the School/Department Director of Teaching and Learning or the School/Department Director of Academic Tutoring. In considering whether an absence is permissible the potential impact of the absence on the student's studies and subsequent academic progression will be considered.

4.4. Notification of absence does not replace the need to submit an Assessment Adjustment request if a student's circumstances are such that they are impacting on academic performance. Please see the *Assessment Adjustment Policy* for more details.

5 Reviewing Attendance and Engagement Data

5.1. During the year, academic and support staff at the University have access to a range of data sets pertaining to enrolment, attendance at in-person and online timetabled taught sessions, usage of the virtual learning environment and submission of coursework, that help Schools to maintain oversight of academic engagement as well as to offer additional support where appropriate, to individual students, or module/programme cohorts.

5.2. Much of the attendance and engagement data that is used to give an indication of engagement is created as a natural result of student activity through their interface with University's systems, such as the student information system (RISIS) and the virtual learning environment. In accordance with data protection laws, use of attendance and engagement data must be transparent and will be explained to students within Privacy Notices (which are overseen by the IMPS team) and student communications. For further details on the use of attendance and

engagement data by academic and professional services staff at the University of Reading, please see *'Key Data Sets and Interventions*' included as an annex to this policy. For any queries relating to Privacy Notices, please contact imps@reading.ac.uk.

6 Interventions to Support Students' Attendance and Engagement

6.1. The University seeks to support students' academic progress and wellbeing. With this purpose, the data sets outlined in Section 5 are used throughout the academic year to identify students whose attendance and engagement with their studies may be a cause for concern. Interventions with students may be informal or formal. If formal interventions are instigated under the University's *Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study Policy*, students will be advised in writing that they are entering a formal process.

6.2. Schools have mechanisms in place during the course of the programmes, to take an overview of attendance and/or engagement levels across a programme/cohort, and to intervene where a potential cause for concern is identified. The following provisions apply across all Schools:

6.2.1. When a potential cause for concern is identified, students will be contacted to indicate the nature of the concern, identify what barriers they are experiencing and to identify how they can be supported to engage with their learning. In many cases, an initial informal intervention will be sufficient to clarify the situation and/or help the student to re-engage with their studies.

6.2.2. If a student's attendance and engagement do not improve or following an initial informal discussion it is considered by the University that a more formal approach is necessary, Schools will instigate formal interventions under the University's *Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study Policy*.

6.3. Academic success is achieved through a partnership between students and the University, in which students are also expected to take responsibility for seeking advice, support and guidance when they require it. The University would encourage students to get in touch with a member of staff if they are concerned about their ability to attend and engage with their programme. In the first instance, students should contact either their Academic Tutor or Student Support Coordinator (Programme Administrator in Henley Business School and ISLI). The Academic Tutor or Student Support Co-ordinator will offer to have an initial conversation with the student to discuss the concerns. If appropriate, the student should be facilitated to access another service or support.

7 Meeting External Requirements

7.1. There are some external bodies that stipulate attendance and/or engagement requirements as a condition of visas, sponsorship, or degree accreditation. Where this is the case, the University is required to provide information on attendance and engagement for individual students in accordance with stated reporting schedules.

7.1.1. *Accreditation*: Some taught programmes at the University have attendance and/or engagement requirements set by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Accreditation requirements vary by programme and Schools can advise students on the details, which are usually included in programme handbooks, for programmes where this applies.

7.1.2. *Sponsorships:* Funding bodies providing sponsorships for students may also have requirements relating to attendance and/or engagement. For further details, students who have a sponsorship to study need to check the agreement they have with their funding body.

7.1.3. *Tier 4/Student Route Visas:* The University has a legal obligation to monitor attendance and engagement for students who hold a Tier 4/Student Route visa, and the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements mean that failure to attend / academically engage satisfactorily may put a student's visa status at risk. The University must withdraw sponsorship for a student visa if the student does not meet the expected UKVI engagement requirements. It is the responsibility of all students who hold Tier 4/Student Route visas to ensure they are familiar with the Institutional Tier 4 Policy. Further advice and guidance for staff and students in relation to Tier 4/ Student Route visa requirements can be provided by the International Advisory and Home Office Compliance team (Carrington Building, Student Services) immigration@reading.ac.uk. It is important to note that there are higher expectations for engagement for students studying at below degree level (i.e. Foundation and Pre-sessional English levels)

7.2. Potential employers may also request information relating to attendance as part of a reference. This may involve being asked general questions regarding whether a student had satisfactory/unsatisfactory attendance. Responses relating to attendance data should only be provided in a reference if it is specifically requested. Where this is the case, you should provide a general comment regarding attendance. Full attendance reports should not be sent as standard. More advice on references can be found in the Academic Tutor Toolkit. This, and any other use of attendance and/or engagement data to meet external requirements, must be in accordance with data protection laws. In the event that full attendance reports are specifically requested, advice can be sought from imps@reading.ac.uk.

7.3. Some taught programmes involve students undertaking a work placement either as a regulated, mandatory, or optional part of their course. It is expected that students will behave professionally in every respect whilst on placement, including with regard to their attendance and engagement. Failure to do so could lead to a *Fitness to Practice* investigation in the case of regulated placements or *Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study* procedures being instigated for other mandatory placements. For any specific requirements, such as who to notify in the case of absence and attendance reporting requirements for students holding a Tier 4/Student Route visa, students should refer to their School, placement handbook if available and the contract that is in place for their particular placement. If students are unsure about how to report an absence for a placement, they can contact the Placements Team in Student Services, placements@reading.ac.uk.

8 Document Control

Keeper	Reviewed	Approved By	Approval Date	Version
Student Services	Annually	UBTLSE	06.07.2021	1.0 – new policy
Student Services		UBTLSE (Chairs Action)	09.08.2021	2.0 – addition of section 3.4

Student Services	9 June 2026	UBTLSE	13.07.2026	3.0 - Document updated to reflect arrival of new attendance data

Annex A: Key Data Sets and Interventions

Data Set	Process	When	Intervention/Outcome
Enrolment & reenrolment data	Automated process of reminders to enrol and re-enrol. Manual intervention via Support Centres/HBS/ISLI for more complicated cases	Throughout the autumn and spring terms	Students with complicated cases are supported to resolve these to successfully complete enrolment/reenrolment. New Part 1 students who do not complete enrolment and where there is no evidence of them engaging with the University/School go through the RaTd (reverse applicant transfer) process around week 4. Students who have not re-enrolled and where there is evidence of them no longer wishing to study at the University will go into a withdrawal process. This is carried out by APVC review. Where a student has made clear their preference to suspend studies, their School can authorise this and the student will be suspended. Enrolment/re-enrolment data is used as evidence of attendance & engagement for the purposes of Home Office Compliance requirements for students holding a Tier 4/Student Route visa.
Module Selection Report	Support Centres/HBS/ISLI check reports highlighting students that have selected less (or more) than the required credits for their programme	Throughout the autumn and spring terms	Students who are highlighted as not having selected the required number of credits for their programme are initially contacted by email to guide them through the process. Following this, if a student fails to communicate with support staff, this will be escalated to the School to intervene. Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study processes may be initiated for students who do not complete module selection without agreement from their School.
Blackboard Login Data	Support Centres/HBS/ISLI can view a student's Blackboard login data	Throughout the academic year.	At the start of the autumn and spring term particular focus is placed on Blackboard login data especially for Part 1 students. Students who are showing as not accessing Blackboard are initially contacted by email to guide them towards wider University support services, including Blackboard support.

			Blackboard login data may subsequently be used throughout the term as one of the data sets supporting Academic Engagement and Fitness to Practice processes Blackboard login data is used as evidence of attendance & engagement for the purposes of Home Office Compliance requirements for students holding a Tier 4/Student Route visa.
Combined Attendance Data	Support Centres/HBS/UoRGA and Schools can view a student's attendance data for any in person or online taught sessions (where this data is recorded)	Throughout the academic year	During each term, this data is used to highlight students whose attendance may not be at a level deemed conducive to academic progress. A range of interventions may stem from use of this data including; invitation for the student to attend a meeting with their Academic Tutor/School or Department Director of Teaching & Learning/School or Department Director of Academic Tutoring to talk through their attendance and encourage improved attendance and engagement with their studies. Additional signposting to University support services such as Counselling & Wellbeing, Welfare, Student Financial Support and International Advisory may also form part of this discussion as appropriate to the student's situation. Combined attendance data may subsequently be used throughout the term as one of the data sets supporting Academic Engagement and Fitness to Practice processes. Combined attendance data is used as evidence of attendance & engagement for the purposes of Home Office Compliance requirements for students holding a Tier 4/Student Route visa.

Coursework Submission Report	Support Centres/HBS/ISLI and Schools can view a student's coursework submission data	Throughout the academic year	During each term, this data can be used to help build up a picture of a student's engagement, particularly where a cause for concern has already been raised. A range of interventions may stem from use of this data including; invitation for the student to attend a meeting with their Academic Tutor/School or Department Director of Teaching & Learning/School or Department Director of Academic Tutoring to review their outstanding coursework,

			particularly any missed summative assignments. Additional signposting to University support services such as Counselling & Wellbeing, Welfare, Student Financial Support, and International Advisory may also form part of this discussion as appropriate to the student's situation. Coursework submissions data may subsequently be used throughout the term as one of the data sets supporting Academic Engagement and Fitness to Practice processes. Coursework submissions data is used as evidence of attendance & engagement for the purposes of Home Office Compliance requirements for students holding a Tier 4/Student Route visa.