



Attendance & Engagement Policy

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| Next review due: | August 2023 |
| Responsible Committee: | Academic Board (AcB) |
| Approved by & date: | AcB Sep 2021 |
| Linked policies: | Admissions Policy Academic Appeals Procedure Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy Student Handbook |
| External reference : | UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [March 2018] Expectations for Quality Core Practice 5 <i>The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</i> Related QAA Advice and Guidance: Theme 6: Monitoring and Evaluation <i>Providers evaluate, analyse and use the information generated from monitoring to learn and improve.</i> |
| Audience: | Registrar, Head of Programme, Students, Tutors, Head of Student Services, Academic Support Officers, Student Support Officers |

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1. Introduction

Oxford Business College (“The College”) is aware that attendance and achievement are strongly linked, and it is our intention to support students who struggle with attendance rather than penalise them. The College is committed, therefore, not to monitoring student attendance but to identifying opportunities to support and engage students who are failing to meet the attendance expectations. It therefore expects students to exercise reasonable diligence in attending classes and offers support to students to ensure that they are able to. Good, predictable levels of attendance help the tutor in the planning and delivery of effective teaching and learning. Academic managers, tutors and supporting staff should emphasise the importance of attendance, engagement and punctuality to all students from induction onwards. They should point out to students the possibility that they may not succeed if they fail to maintain good attendance and engagement.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the College’s approach to ensuring student attendance and engagement on all courses is maintained. The policy explains how students are encouraged to attend, how their attendance and engagement is monitored and reported on and what steps the College takes when students do not attend or engage. The policy also provides students and staff with clear information on what to do when they cannot attend due to mitigating circumstances, including the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.

3. Scope

This attendance policy is applicable to all students attending courses in any of the College’s programmes.

Attendance refers to the joining of any OBC scheduled classes by students enrolled onto their respective course, whether the classes are being held online or in person.

Engagement has a broader meaning and applies to different contact points including attendance of in-person or online scheduled sessions, as well as accessing online learning resources and learning materials required for the course and the submission of formative or summative assessments. This policy covers attendance and student engagement for all College programmes.

4. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this policy and procedures is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders understand the importance of supporting student attendance and engagement and what they should do to ensure that the required level of attendance and engagement is maintained. This aim is achieved with the following objectives:

- All stakeholders know their role in ensuring that all students attend sessions and/or engage with their course Tutors and materials on the VLE and submit their assignments
- All students are fully and regularly informed and encouraged to attend their classes and engage with their course Tutors, materials on the VLE and submit their assignments
- All student attendance is accurately recorded by Tutors, checked and monitored by the relevant Attendance Officers on a daily basis
- The College Registrar has access to regular updates on student attendance and engagement and is able to provide the Head of Programme and Senior Management Team (SMT) with weekly updates on overall attendance and engagement on individual programmes
- Tutors and Attendance Officers are able to monitor the daily attendance and engagement of individual students
- Students receive regular reminders and subsequent warnings by email and/or text for unauthorised absences
- A risk register of all students is maintained so that students who are considered high risk are contacted by relevant staff in order to motivate and support them to attend their scheduled classes and to engage with course Tutors, materials on the course VLE and to submit their assignments by the deadlines.
- All students understand the potential consequences of failing to attend their scheduled classes, to engage with the course tutors, materials on the VLE or to submit their assignments
- All students understand what constitutes mitigating circumstances and know how to apply for authorised absences when they have genuine mitigating circumstances
- The College's attendance and engagement support policy and procedures are transparent and in line with the expectations of the College's franchise partners and awarding organisations as well as the UK Quality Code.

5. Informing Students

Any attendance and engagement requirement for a course is confirmed in the course information that is provided to students during the application and interview process, such as the Course Outline or the Student Handbook. The Head of Programme should familiarise students with the attendance and engagement requirements during induction. Tutors and other supporting staff should remind students regularly about the importance of attendance and engagement throughout the course. The attendance, engagement and punctuality pattern of individual students should be monitored by Tutors and Attendance Officers in risk assessments as part of the student support system. Tutors should inform students that poor attendance is likely to affect their achievement and they may fail assessments or examinations if they do not attend.

6. Hardship Fund

Meeting a course's attendance requirement is a condition of any assistance a student receives from the Hardship Fund or from Additional Learning Support (ALS). Failure to keep good attendance may lead to the withdrawal of either of these benefits. Students may also be asked to repay Hardship Funds received if they fail to attend classes.

7. Students Engagement

Engagement is expected of all students in every element of their course. This includes attendance of in-person and online sessions and engagement with online learning resources and learning materials relevant to their course. It also includes submission of summative and formative assessments.

If all students in **UWL** courses are not able to attend classes for any authorised reason, their engagement will be monitored through access to the online study materials on the virtual learning environment (Blackboard) and their use of library resources. For all other students including those in UWL courses, engagement is monitored through assessment activity such as the submission of summative assignments. The table below indicates how engagement is monitored in each programme:

7.1. Monitoring Engagement by Programme

| Programme | Attendance | VLE or Library Activity | Assessment Activity |
|-----------|------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| UWL | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| BNU | ✓ | x | ✓ |
| RUL | ✓ | x | ✓ |
| HND | ✓ | x | ✓ |

KEY

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| UWL | University of West London |
| BNU | Bucks New University |
| RUL | Ravensbourne university, London |
| HND | Higher National Diplomas |

8. Student Risk Register

The data on students' general engagement with the College and the learning resources, combined with attendance data and assignment submissions, is compiled in a Student Risk Register (See below). This is used to identify students who are at risk of failing on the course and are requiring further support. The Student Risk Register is also used to identify successful study behaviours, which enable students to succeed.

Attendance and engagement data in the Student Risk Register is also used to assess whether students are meeting attendance requirements for the Student Loans Company (SLC). Where a student is not attending or engaging adequately, they may be withdrawn, and this will be reported to the SLC who may end payments. This is explained in the section below on the Consequences of Unauthorised Absence.

Students who are not attending or engaging with online learning resources or failing to submit their assignments, will be contacted by Attendance Officers to re-engage them with their course. This is explained in the section below on Monitoring & Support Process below. The staff who are following up on student attendance and engagement will update the Student Risk Register accordingly.

Instances of illness or other mitigating circumstances that affect an assessment or examination should be reported to the College. Students who are undertaking assignments affected by illness or other factors may request extensions and mitigation in accordance with the Assessment Policy.

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 can be found in the Withdrawal Policy.

The College may withdraw students from a taught course if they are not attending, engaging and/or submitting assessments. This may have consequences for student loan funding liability. See the section below on Consequences of Unauthorised Absence.

Student Risk Register (Sample)

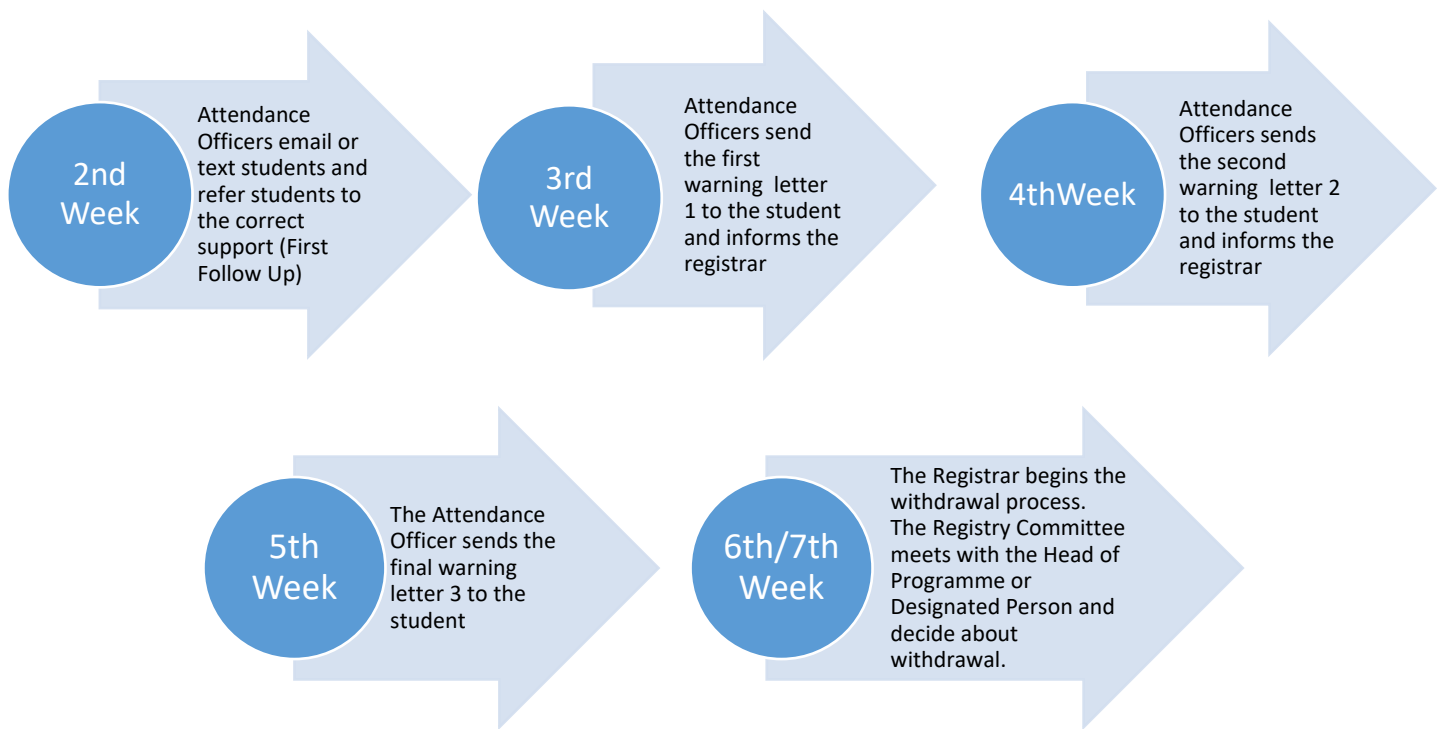
| Student Name | Student ID | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|-------|-----|
| Week | W2 | W3 | W4 | W5 | W6 | W7 | Green | Amber | Red |
| Attendance | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | x |
| VLE Activity | x | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | x | | x | |
| Submissions | ✓ | | | | | | x | | |
| Overall Risk | | | | | | | | x | |

9. Monitoring & Support Process

Students are expected to attend all of their classes. Attendance is recorded daily by the Tutor on the College's student management system (Ksaspro). If a student has mitigating circumstances, they can be granted authorised absence. See the sections below on authorised absence and mitigating circumstances. If a student is consistently absent without being granted authorised absence for mitigating circumstances, the following steps should be followed:

- 8.1. **Two weeks:** If a student fails to attend their classes or submit assignments for two weeks consecutively without being granted mitigating circumstances, an Attendance Officer sends them a Follow up Letter in an email or a text to remind them that they need to attend classes (see Appendix 1). For UWL students their engagement can also be recorded through interaction with course materials on the VLE (Blackboard). If the student faces difficulties with engagement, the Attendance Officer may refer them to a relevant support service such as the Academic Support Officer or the College Counsellor. The Attendance Officer keeps a record of all attempts to contact a student in the Student Risk Register.
- 8.2. **Three weeks:** The Attendance Officer will repeat the process with a warning letter (see Appendix 2) in a second email or text in the third week of non-attendance if the student continues to miss classes and fails to engage without being granted authorised absence.
- 8.3. **Four weeks:** In the fourth week of non-attendance and non-engagement without authorised absence, the Attendance Officer informs the Head of Programme or designated person. The Attendance Officer also contacts the student to see what help the student may need. In the absence of any acceptable response, the Attendance Officer sends the student their second warning letter (Appendix 3). The Attendance Officer continues to follow up on the student about their attendance. The Attendance Officer updates the Student Risk Register (see below) and informs the Head of Programme or designated person and the College Registrar that the student has missed four weeks of classes and engagement opportunities consecutively.
- 8.4. **Five weeks:** The Attendance Officer continues to contact the student to follow up on their attendance. If there is still no attendance and no mitigating circumstances granted in the fifth consecutive week, the Attendance Officer sends a third (final) warning letter (Appendix 4) to the student, updates the Student Risk Register and informs the Head of Programme or designated person and the Registrar.
- 8.5. **Six or seven weeks:** After the sixth or seventh week, the Registrar begins the withdrawal process. The Registrar meets with the Head of Programme or designated person to check the Student Risk Register and make a final decision about whether or not to withdraw the student.
- 8.6. If a student attends, engages on Blackboard (UWL), or submits an assignment at any time during the above steps (e.g. in week 5), the monitoring and support process is reset to the beginning again for that student.

10. Attendance Flow Chart



11. Punctuality

It is important that students attend their classes punctually both for their own learning and so as the learning of others is not disrupted. Students who are late for practical sessions may be excluded from the session if there are health and safety issues involved.

12. Authorised Absence

Short-term absences (one week) due to illness or any other reason do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that students contact their Tutor or Attendance Officer to inform them if they are not able to attend scheduled sessions, or individual meetings that have been prearranged.

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 can be found in the Withdrawal and Suspension Policy.

Authorised absence is granted to a student who is able to provide an adequate reason for not attending scheduled classes for more than one week. If a student fails to attend without being granted authorised absence, their records are affected. The College actively monitors all applications for authorised absence based on mitigating circumstances and updates the Student Risk Register accordingly.

If a student is expecting to be absent for more than one week or has been unexpectedly absent for more than one week, for example in the case of illness, he/she must inform their Attendance Officer. The Attendance Office maintains a record of attendance for all students and a record of authorised absences.

When they send the email or text to their Attendance Officer, students should provide the reason for their absence, which will be noted in the student records by the Attendance Officer as mitigating circumstances. See the next section below for examples of mitigating circumstances. The student may be asked to produce evidence for their mitigating circumstances such as a note from their doctor. The Attendance Officers need to get approval for authorised absence that are more than two weeks from one of the following senior staff members:

- Programme Coordinator
- Head of Programme or Designated Person
- Registrar

If a senior member of staff is not satisfied with the reasons or evidence for absence provided by the student, the absence will be treated as unauthorised, and this will count against the student's attendance record. This process is made clear to all students on induction and is included in the student declaration and the Student Handbook. On induction every student is provided with the following:

- Phone numbers and emails of Attendance Officers
- Contact hours for their campus
- Out of hours contact for their campus
- Email addresses for all other relevant staff

13. Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances refer to situations that genuinely affect a student's ability to attend their lessons, engage with College materials or submit their assignments by deadline. The list below is intended as a guide for staff and students on what may be considered a mitigating circumstance that may justify authorising student absence.

- Medical appointments that could not be made outside College hours
- Attendance at a funeral
- Wedding of a close family member (but only for one day and students must not schedule their own wedding during term time)
- Driving test
- A meeting with a solicitor
- Genuine family emergencies
- Religious holidays
- Illness (evidenced by a medical certificate)

The following will normally be considered unacceptable as reasons for authorising absence:

- Holidays during term time
- Work related activities
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or family celebrations
- Babysitting
- Driving lessons

The list is not exhaustive and each request for authorised absence must be considered on its merits by one or more of the following staff, depending upon the circumstances:

- Registrar
- Head of Programme
- Programme Coordinator
- Academic Support Officer
- Student Support Officer
- Attendance Officer

14. Consequences of Unauthorised Absence

Students are responsible for maintaining satisfactory attendance and/or engagement throughout their course. Attendance and engagement data is used to assess whether students are meeting attendance requirements for the Student Loans Company (SLC). Students may be withdrawn if they fail to attend and/or engage with their studies in any meaningful way, which includes submitting assignments. See the **Withdrawal and Suspension Policy** for more details. Where a student is not attending or engaging at the point of a census, they may be withdrawn, and this will be reported to the SLC who will end payments.

If a student has been withdrawn from their course, they may become liable for repayment of any student loan they have received. They may be liable for maintenance payments and for the fees that have been paid to their university or college, regardless of whether they finish their course or gain a qualification.

Fees for tuition are paid to the university or college in the following instalments:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| At the start of term 1 | 25% of Tuition fee |
| At the start of term 2 | 25% of Tuition fee |
| At the start of term 3 | 50% of Tuition fee |

Based on government regulations, Student Loans Company (SLC) has a legal responsibility to recover any loan overpayments. In some cases, loan overpayments for a student who has been withdrawn can be recovered from student funding that a student may receive in future. Loan overpayments are not subject to the normal repayment terms and conditions.

15. Appendices

15.1. First follow up letter

**Oxford**

65 George Street,
Oxford,
OX1 2BQ

Nottingham

Carlton Rd,
Nottingham,
NG3 2NR

Slough

Meridian House,
2-4 The Grove
Slough,
Berkshire
SL1 1QP

London

Windermere House,
Kendal Ave,
London,
W3 0XA

Date

Student Id number:

Dear X

Attendance

Re: First Follow up Attendance

I am writing to inform you that you are missing your classes.

When you join your class late or do not attend, you miss out on essential instructions and teaching given at the beginning of the lesson and during the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Absences can add up quickly and this in turn may affect your student finance payments.

At Oxford Business College, we want to provide you with the best academic support that we can. If you require any ongoing support and assistance, please let me know and our student support team can contact you. If you would like to discuss your attendance and your classes, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Nottingham students

Please email Nottingham.attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Oxford, London and Slough students

Please email attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,
Attendance Officer
Oxford Business College

(V2-MC-Jul-22)

15.2. First Warning Letter

**Oxford**

65 George Street,
Oxford,
OX1 2BQ

Nottingham

Carlton Rd,
Nottingham,
NG3 2NR

Slough

Meridian House,
2-4 The Grove
Slough,
Berkshire
SL1 1QP

London

Windermere House,
Kendal Ave,
London,
W3 0XA

Date

Student Id number:

Dear X

Attendance

RE: First Warning

This is to inform you that you have been issued with a first warning due to missing classes at the College without authorisation: <Date they missed the class>.

I have tried to contact you by phone and email with regards to this issue and I have not received a satisfactory explanation or justification in response from you.

You have been made aware of the attendance requirements at the College and also the consequences of poor attendance. It is vital for your success on the course that you attend classes, and if you do not, it may affect your student finance payments.

Please contact me using the details below as soon as possible to discuss your absence. Please note that at Oxford Business College we provide student welfare support should you need it.

Nottingham students

Please email Nottingham.attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Oxford, London and Slough students

Please email attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Yours truly,
Attendance Officer

(VC-MC-Jul-22)

15.3. Second Warning Letter

**Oxford**

65 George Street,
Oxford,
OX1 2BQ

Nottingham

Carlton Rd,
Nottingham,
NG3 2NR

Slough

Meridian House,
2-4 The Grove
Slough,
Berkshire
SL1 1QP

London

Windermere House,
Kendal Ave,
London,
W3 0XA

Date

Student Id number:

Dear X,

URGENT

RE: Second Warning

This is a second written warning sent to you and this means that your attendance is now a serious matter. You have not been attending classes at the College since **XXX**. It has now been at least three weeks since you last attended your classes and you do not have authorised absence.

I wrote to you regarding your attendance on **XXX** asking you to contact me so that we could give you the support you need. **However, you have not contacted me or returned any of my phone calls or emails.**

Please be warned failure to contact with the College and missing your classes may affect your academic progress and your student finance.

If you need any support, we are here to help. We urge you to contact us so that our student support team can assist you as soon as possible.

Please contact me on the details below as a matter of urgency to arrange an appointment to discuss your absence from classes.

Nottingham students

Please email Nottingham.attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Oxford, London and Slough students

Please email attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Yours truly,
Attendance Officer

(V2-MC-Jul-22)

15.4. Third Warning Letter

**Oxford**

65 George Street,
Oxford,
OX1 2BQ

Nottingham

Carlton Rd,
Nottingham,
NG3 2NR

Slough

Meridian House,
2-4 The Grove
Slough,
Berkshire
SL1 1QP

London

Windermere House,
Kendal Ave,
London,
W3 0XA

Student Id number:

UWL ID:

BNU ID:

Campus:

Student Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Date:

Dear Student Name,

Attendance

RE: Third & Final Warning Letter

This third warning letter follows the second warning letter regarding your lack of engagement with the College. It is regrettable that you have not taken the opportunity to attend your classes or communicate with the attendance team to discuss any problems related to your attendance. **There may be serious consequences for your student finance if you do not respond to me by the deadline written below.**

This letter serves as notice that we will withdraw you from your course, and you will no longer be a registered student at Oxford Business College if you do not respond to this letter by **Date and Time**. As you have been informed in previous warning letters, it is vital for your success on the course that you attend your classes regularly.

It is unfortunate that you have not been able to attend your classes and that we are now forced to withdraw you from the course. Please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below if you wish to discuss your time at Oxford Business College, or the possibility of returning to study with us in the future. If I do not hear from you, I wish you all the best for the future.

Please note that we shall not attempt to contact you again about your attendance and if you do not get in touch with us, we will automatically withdraw you from the course.

Yours truly,

Attendance and Compliance team

Email : attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

(V2-MC-Jul-22)