

Attendance & Engagement

Policy

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External reference:	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [May 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: <i>Core practice 9: The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.</i>
Audience:	Students Registrar, Head of Programme, Students, Tutors, Head of Student Services, Academic Support Officers, Student Support Officers

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Scope	3
4. Aim and Objectives	4
5. Informing Students	5
6. Scholarship Bursary and Hardship Fund	5
7. Students Engagement	5
8. Student Risk Register	6
9. Punctuality	7
10. Authorised Absence	7
11. Mitigating Circumstances	8
12. Consequences of Unauthorised Absence	9
13. Monitoring & Support Process	9
Appendix 1 First Warning Letter	12
Appendix 2 Second Warning Letter	13
Appendix 3 Final Warning Letter	14

1. Introduction

Oxford Business College (“The College”) is aware that attendance and achievement are strongly linked to successful outcomes for students, 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 can succeed. 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: The presence of the student during the scheduled teaching or learning activity for the entire session (including remote attendance for online, live sessions);

Scheduled Learning activity includes:

- Lectures, seminars and tutorials
- Project and dissertation supervision meetings
- Practical classes, demonstrations and workshops
- Presentations and performances
- External visits
- Distance learning activities

Engagement Active participation by the student with their studies and use of resources to support their learning, including: Attendance of scheduled learning and teaching sessions and activities;

- Active contribution to personal and group tutorials, lectures and seminars;
- Use of library facilities and other learning resources;
- Engagement with and submission of assessment tasks set;
- Attendance at examinations or time-constrained assessment activities;
- Responding in a timely manner to formal communications from the College,
- such as letters, emails, text messages and telephone calls.

4. Aim and Objectives

4.1. Aim:

The aim of this policy and procedures is to ensure that students and 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.

4.2. 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 Student Support 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 Student Support or Student Support or 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 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 Student Support or Student Support 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. Scholarship Bursary and Hardship Fund

Meeting a course's attendance requirement is a condition of any assistance a student receives from the Scholarship, Bursary, or Hardship Fund. 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 all elements defined above in section 3 above.

If students in **BNU UWL & RUL** 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 can be monitored in each programme (This table is non exhaustive):

7.1. Monitoring Engagement by Programme

Programme	Attendance	VLE or Library Activity	Assessment Activity
UWL ¹	✓	✓	✓
BNU ²	✓	✓	✓
RUL ³	✓	✓	✓
HND ⁴	✓	✓	✓

8. Student Risk Register

The data on students' attendance and engagement with the College and the learning resources, combined with attendance data and assignment submissions, is compiled in a Student Risk Register. 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 12 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 Student Support Officers to re-engage them with their course. This is explained section 13 Monitoring & Support Process. The staff who are following up on student attendance and engagement will update the Student Risk Register accordingly.

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 Interruption, Withdrawal & Study Break 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 section 12 Consequences of Unauthorised Absence.

¹ University of West London

² Bucks New University

³ Ravensbourne university, London

⁴ Higher National Diplomas

9. 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.

10. 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 Student Support 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 Interruption, Withdrawal & Study Break 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 Student Support or 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 Student Support or Attendance Officer, students should provide the reason for their absence, which will be noted in the student records by the Student Support or 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 Student Support or 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 Student Support or Attendance Officers
- Contact hours for their campus
- Out of hours contact for their campus
- Email addresses for all other relevant staff

11. 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
- Student Support or Attendance Officer

12. 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 **Interruption, Withdrawal & Study Break 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.

13. 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 Tribal EBS. If a student has mitigating circumstances, they can be granted authorised absence. See sections on authorised absence and mitigating circumstances. If a student is consistently absent without being granted authorised absence or mitigating circumstances, the following steps should be followed:

- **Step 1 Two weeks:** If a student fails to attend their scheduled teaching for two weeks consecutively without being granted authorised absence, a Student Support Officer sends them a Follow up phone call and a SMS to remind them that they need to attend classes. If the student faces difficulties with engagement, the Student Support Officer may refer them to a relevant support service or the College Counsellor. The Student Support Officer completes the registry held central record of all attempts to contact a student in the Student Risk Register.
- **Step 2 Three weeks:** The Student Support will repeat the process monitoring for improvements in attendance to scheduled teaching. If the student fails to attend on the third week without being granted authorised absence, the Student Support Officer should instruct registry to send the first warning letter (see Appendix 2) in an email.
- **Step 3 Four weeks:** In the fourth week of non-attendance to scheduled teaching without authorised absence, the Student Support Officer, will liaise with the Programme to Coordinator to establish if the student is engaging with the course through the means identified in section 3;
 - If the student is still engaging with the course, they should be written [appendix 3] to explain the importance of attending Scheduled Teaching, and the risks to achieving an successful outcome and their continuation on the programme and their status is reset in relation to the monitoring and support process.
 - If the student is not engaging with the programme the Student Support Officer contacts the student by phone to see what help the student may need. In the absence of any acceptable response, the Student Support Officer request the registry to sends the student their second warning letter (Appendix 4).. The Student Support Officer updates the Student Risk Register 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.
- **Five weeks:** The Student Support 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 Student Support Officer sends a third (final) warning letter (Appendix 4) to the student CC to the Program Coordinator, Head of Programme and Registrar. Student Support Officer updates the Student Risk Register.

- **Six or seven weeks:** After the sixth or seventh week, the Registrar begins the withdrawal process. The Registrar communicates with the Head of Programme to make a final decision about whether to withdraw the student. The registrar will convene a student status panel with the Head of programme and other relevant staff members, where considering all available evidence the will make a decision about the student status. If the student is withdrawn, the student record will be updated by the registrar with the date of last attendance.

If a student attends, engages as per the definition in Section 3 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.

Appendix 1 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:

RE: Attendance- First Warning

Dear [Student Name]X

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.

Please email attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Please take this warning seriously and take immediate steps to improve your attendance. Failure to do so will result in further disciplinary action.

Yours truly,

Registry

Appendix 2 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:

RE: Attendance Second Warning

Dear [Student Name],

This is a second written warning regarding your attendance at the College. Your repeated non-compliance with the attendance requirements is a serious matter, and it has been brought to our attention that you have not attended classes since <Date of last attendance>, which is at least three weeks ago.

Despite our previous attempts to contact you and offer support, you have not responded to any of our messages or shown any effort to improve your attendance. Please be aware that non-attendance and failure to comply with the College's attendance policy can have severe consequences on your academic progress and Student Finance.

We urge you to take this warning seriously and take immediate steps to improve your attendance. Contact us using the details below as soon as possible, so that our student support team can offer you the assistance you need to get back on track.

Please email attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Please note that further non-compliance with the attendance policy will result in further disciplinary action, which may have serious consequences on your academic and financial standing. We are here to support you, but we cannot help you if you do not engage with us.

Please contact me on the details below to arrange an appointment to discuss your absence from classes.

Yours truly,

Registry

Appendix 3 Re-Engagement 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:

RE: Attendance Update and Reinforcement of Importance

Dear [Student Name],

We are writing to acknowledge that you have reengaged with your learning at the College. We are pleased to see that you have taken steps to improve your attendance and have been participating in classes since <Date of resumed attendance>. We appreciate your efforts and believe that a consistent attendance record is crucial to your success in the programme.

However, we would like to take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of maintaining regular attendance at the College. Your previous non-compliance with the attendance requirements was a matter of concern, and we want to ensure that you understand the potential impact of poor attendance on your academic progress and Student Finance.

As you continue on your academic journey, we encourage you to maintain open communication with us and seek support when needed. Our student support team is always available to provide assistance to help you stay on track.

Please email attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk if you have any concerns or require assistance related to your attendance.

We trust that you will continue to prioritise your attendance and engagement with the programme, as this is vital to your overall success. If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

Wishing you continued success in your studies.

Yours sincerely,

Registry

Appendix 4 Final 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:

RE: Attendance -**Third and Final Warning Letter**

Dear Student Name,

This letter is in response to the previous two warning letters regarding your lack of engagement and poor attendance at Oxford Business College. We regret to inform you that this is the third and final warning letter that we will send you, and it may have serious consequences for your academic progress and student finance.

Despite our previous attempts to contact you and offer support, you have not attended classes or communicated with us to discuss any problems related to your attendance. We cannot stress enough the importance of regular attendance in achieving academic success and meeting the requirements of your student finance.

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 the deadline specified below. Please be aware that your student finance support will also be removed, and you may be required to repay any overpayments back to the Student Loans Company.

We urge you to take this final warning seriously and respond to us as soon as possible. If you wish to discuss your time at Oxford Business College or the possibility of returning to study with us in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below.

Contact by date:{DDMMYY}

Email: attendance@oxfordbusinesscollege.ac.uk

Please note that we will 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. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours truly,

Syed Zaidi,

Registrar.

CC: Head of Programme/Campus Principal