



**Fairfield School of Business**

# Student Attendance Monitoring Policy and Procedures

Version 12.4

Approved by Approved by Board of Governors

Last Amendment: August 2020

The following sets out the School's approach to monitoring student attendance in classes and the steps it will take where it has concerns about a student's non-attendance. It should be read in conjunction with the Schools *Personal Academic Tutoring Policy* and *Student Support Policy*.

This policy has been developed with due regard for the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, and in particular the QAA's accompanying guidance on Enabling Student Achievement, and addressing Complaints, Concerns and Appeals.



## Document Information

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\*The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Fairfield School of Business (“the School, “FSB”) recognises that, as responsible institution, it has a duty to monitor students’ attendance and to intervene where a student is not on course to successfully complete their study programme. Such interventions will seek to determine the reasons for non-attendance and explore all options for getting students back into their studies in a way that gives them the greatest possible chance of success.
- 1.2. As a designated recipient of public funding in the form of student tuition fee loan support, the School is required to act transparently and accountability in its interactions with the funding agency and awarding bodies, and is obliged to report, in a timely manner, where students in receipt of student finance are suspended or withdraw from their studies.
- 1.3. The following is intended to clarify FSB’s procedural approach to recording and monitoring student attendance, and the stages of escalation that will be followed in the event of continued non-attendance. The procedures described are applicable to all students on all programmes delivered by FSB.

## 2. Our Approach to Attendance Monitoring

- 2.1. FSB’s approach to monitoring and managing students’ attendance will characterised by the following:
  - i. The School will establish systems that accurately and effectively monitor students’ attendance in their timetabled classes;
  - ii. Students will have an accessible means of excusing themselves from lessons they cannot attend for any reason, and will be reasonably supported in catching up with their studies;
  - iii. Students will be given sufficient means to explain and excuse instances of non-attendance where prior authorisation was not given, whether for medical, personal or other reasons. The School will ensure that such explanations are appropriately supported by reliable evidence and will investigate them fairly;
  - iv. The School will take a proactive approach to reengage students with deteriorating attendance at from an early stage; administrative teams in the Registry will liaise with Personal Academic Tutors and other School support departments to provide a coordinated approach to supporting a student in difficulty with their attendance;
  - v. Agreed support arrangements will be monitored until the School is satisfied that a student is no longer at academic risk;



- vi. The School will make every effort to support students who have valid reason for prolonged periods of absence which may, for example be due to medical issues or other personal crisis; in such instances the School will consult with the student and the awarding body to consider all possible alternatives to avoid a scenario of withdrawal from the programme;
- vii. The School will take prompt and decisive action where continued non-attendance requires the suspension or withdrawal of a student;
- viii. Students will be informed of their right to appeal any formal decision made by the School which affects their academic status, including a decision to withdraw a student on the basis of insufficient attendance;
- ix. Students will be made aware of any implications that persistent non-attendance may have on their eligibility to receive financial support, and any potential liability to repay maintenance payments in the event of withdrawal from studies following a suspension;
- x. The School will use information from attendance monitoring procedures as a key indicator by which it will benchmark the quality of its provision.

### 3. Expectations

- 3.1. Students are expected to attend all lectures, tutorials, seminars, projects, assessments and all other scheduled activities according to their timetable for their course of study.
- 3.2. Students are required to arrive for their classes on time and remain for the duration of the teaching session.
- 3.3. Where a student cannot attend a lesson or other scheduled activity, they should approach their Personal Academic Tutor to excuse themselves before the class is scheduled to take place and make arrangements to catch up on any lesson content missed. The PAT will guide them to any formal procedure that may need to be followed.
- 3.4. Where a student misses a lesson or other scheduled activity due to unforeseen circumstances, they should use the correct procedures for authorising periods of absence (see Appendix).



## 4. Recording Attendance

4.1. The following convention will be used by the School's Registry in recording students' attendance for the purposes of applying this policy:

- Students arriving up to 15 minutes after the start of the lesson will be marked 'in attendance';
- Students arriving between 15 and 45 minutes after the start of the lesson will be marked 'late'; attendance will still be recorded for the purposes of claiming student finance, however persistent lateness may result in a review of a student's academic performance by the School – see Section 5 below);
- Students arriving 45 minutes or more after the start of the lesson will be recorded as 'absent' for that lesson, but may enter the lesson at the discretion of the lecturer (students will be permitted entry to a lesson at any time where their lateness is owing to genuine extenuating circumstances).
- Students who depart the lesson before its scheduled end are recorded as 'early leavers'.

*NB:* Attendance monitoring procedures will predicate on actual attendance in class, as opposed to other 'contact points' (for example: inductions, exams, PAT sessions or any personal appointments with support services). Engagement with other contact points may however be considered as contextual information by the Appeals or Student Attendance Panel when reviewing a case of non-attendance.

## 5. Addressing Poor Punctuality

5.1. Students who arrive late (between 15 and 45 minutes after the start of the lesson) or leave early will be expected to make personal study commitments to make up for the missed lesson content. For the first and second instance of lateness, the lecturer will usually challenge the student directly on the matter.

5.2. Three successive instances of lateness and/or early departure will be reported by the Registry to the student's Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). PATs will consult with students who are persistently late or leave early to ascertain the reason for this and determine whether any further support can be provided by the School to improve their attendance. These sessions will inform the development of the student's Personal Development Plan (PDP).



- 5.3. Students who continue to arrive late for classes or leave them early in spite of any agreed conditions in their PDP will be referred to the next available Student Attendance Panel by their PAT.
- 5.4. The Student Attendance Panel will consider a referred student's pattern of attendance since their registration, along with any other contextual information and will agree an appropriate course of action, which may include a requirement to retake certain units, attend remedial activities, suspension from studies or, as a last resort, withdrawal from the programme.
- 5.5. A student may use the School's Appeals Policy to challenge the decision of the Student Attendance Panel, where they have grounds to do so; the notification of the Student Attendance Panel's outcome will inform them of this recourse.

## 6. Addressing Non-attendance

- 6.1. Attendance reminders and warnings are triggered by successive instances of absence at timetabled classes or arrival 45 minutes or more after the start of a lesson or by a pattern of irregular attendance or lateness which effectively constitute an inability to constructively engage with the course.
- 6.2. Students will automatically be sent an Attendance Reminder from the Registry for each week of unsatisfactory attendance **from the commencement of the semester**, urging them to contact Student Support or their Personal Academic Tutor to discuss their attendance. The School may also attempt to contact absentees by telephone during this period.
- 6.3. **On the second week of unsatisfactory attendance**, students will be sent a Formal Warning, as well as an invitation to attend a Review of Engagement and Academic Performance (REAP). The REAP meeting will conclude with an action plan tailored to the student's needs to help improve their attendance and academic performance. The student will have a maximum of 1 week from the date of this warning to contact their Personal Academic Tutor or the Student Support team, or face a suspension of any financial assistance they are in receipt of and potential withdrawal from the course.
- 6.4. If no response is received, no satisfactory attendance is recorded or Personal Tutors report no engagement with the student to the Registry, the student will be sent a **Notification of Suspension (Final Warning)**; this will inform the student of the School's decision to withdraw them at the next Student Attendance Panel, and the date that withdrawal will become effective unless a successful appeal is lodged.



- 6.5. At this stage the student will be considered **'On Notice of Impending Withdrawal'**; the Registry will move to suspend any further maintenance payments from the Student Loans Company (by submitting a Change of Circumstances notification to Student Loans Company to temporarily cease their payments).
- 6.6. Students will have the opportunity to make representations within 10 working days of the date of the Notification using the School's Appeals procedure in order to prevent the withdrawal from becoming effective.
- 6.7. The School may at its discretion, make reasonable expeditions to the Appeals procedure where external timeframes or service standards necessitate this. Any such changes and the reasons for them will be clearly indicated to the student; the School will ensure that sufficient time for the student to prepare a challenge is allowed.

*NBB:* Students on suspension will normally be restricted from accessing the School's classes and learning resources until a decision has been reached about their continuance on the programme.

However, the School may, at its discretion, be flexible in lifting the suspension whilst the appeal process is ongoing where the student genuinely commits from thereon to attending their scheduled lessons and requires their maintenance payments to resume in order to do so. In such instances, temporary attendance and/or attainment requirements will be agreed between the Student, their Personal Academic Tutor, the Course Leader and the Registrar. These will be monitored by the student's Personal Academic Tutor. If agreed attendance requirements (or any other set conditions) are not met then the suspension will be re-imposed, and students' maintenance funding will once again cease.

Students should note that during any resumption of studies after a suspension they will still be considered 'On Notice of Impending Withdrawal' whilst their appeal is being considered, and that such a resumption does not guarantee a successful appeal outcome. A demonstrable commitment to study will however be considered favourably by the Appeal panel in reaching a decision about the student's continuance.

- 6.8. Where an appeal against impending withdrawal is upheld, the School will specify appropriate actions to reintegrate the student within the course, in such a way that gives them the best chance of success (this may include deferral to a new intake). A set of learning objectives, which include attendance requirements, will be included within the student's PDP with the understanding that these must be met in order for the student to continue on the programme.
- 6.9. If the student's appeal is rejected or the student does not appeal in accordance with the School's Appeals Policy, the withdrawal will be processed by the Registry at the next available Student Attendance Panel. Once the decision to withdraw the student is ratified by the Panel, the Registry will terminate the student's registration with the awarding body and move to withdraw any further financial support from the Student Loans Company (by submitting a Change of Circumstances notification to the Student Loans Company to withdraw financial support).



- 6.10. A final Notification of Withdrawal will be sent to the student, which will indicate any liability to repay student finance maintenance paid to them by the Student Loans Company from their last recorded attendance in class, up until the start of their suspension.
- 6.11. Where applicable, a transcript detailing the student's achievements on the programme will be claimed from the awarding body and sent to the address the student has provided.
- 6.12. No refund will be available to students whose registration is terminated for poor attendance, or who withdraw after receiving a suspension for unauthorised absence.

## 7. The Student Attendance Panel

- 7.1. The Student Attendance Panel convenes on a regular basis to review students whose academic status is considered 'at risk' owing to poor attendance and/or punctuality; the Panel is charged with making recommendations to the Principal, on a case by case basis, regarding the continuance or withdrawal of any students referred to it (as per sections 5 and 6 above).
- 7.2. The Panel is additionally responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, as well as compliance with any external reporting protocol or service standards (such those of awarding bodies or the Student Loans Company).
- 7.3. The Student Attendance Panel receives and considers reports from the Appeals Panel relating to students 'on notice of impending withdrawal'; its deliberations may additionally be informed by other relevant contextual information regarding an individual's academic achievements and personal circumstances.
- 7.4. At the conclusion of each Panel meeting, the Principal will review and ratify the Panel's recommendations, after which they will be carried out by the Registry.

## 8. Responsibilities

- 8.1. It is the responsibility of the lecturer/tutor to ensure that the School's electronic card system is working at the start of their lesson or that some form of paper register is taken and promptly submitted to Registry after the lesson.
- 8.2. The Tutor or lecturer will additionally be expected to
  - Start and finish classes on time;
  - Advise students of the School's Attendance Policy and Procedure;





- Accurately mark attendance, absence, lateness and early leavers if keeping a paper register, or ensure students use their card to clock-in when joining the lesson;
- Assist administration staff to make spot checks on attendance;
- Discuss punctuality with students if they are late for the first two occasions and refer the matter to the student's Personal Academic Tutor on the third occasion.

- 8.3. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure they have registered their attendance using their student ID cards or by signing a paper registrar on their arrival at that lesson. Attendance will be monitored through electronic card system.
- 8.4. The Registry will be responsible for maintaining the completeness and accuracy of student attendance records, monitoring instances of lateness and sending warnings and reminders to students, as well as notifying Personal Academic Tutors where students in their care are not attending classes of arriving late/leaving early.
- 8.5. Personal Academic Tutors will be responsible for attempting to reengage with students whose attendance is deteriorating and exploring all possible avenues to support them in reintegrating with their studies. Personal Academic Tutors will also be responsible reporting to the Registry and the Attendance Panel regarding a student's commitment to fulfilling agreed learning objectives within their Personal Development Plan.

## 9. Storage of Attendance Records

- 9.1. Electronic records of students' attendance will be maintained within the Registry for six years after the completion of the programme of study.
- 9.2. Minutes of the Attendance Panel's deliberations and recommendations will be maintained within the Registry Department for six years.
- 9.3. Any evidence of extenuating personal or medical circumstances submitted to authorise a period of absence will be held securely within the Registry in accordance with the School's *Data Protection Policy*.

## 10. Review of this Policy

- 10.1. This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in external regulations. Changes to it will be reviewed by the School's Executive Committee and ratified by the Board of Governors.



## Appendix: Procedures for Authorising Periods of Absence

### 1. Self-Certification for absences of up to 5 days:

- 1.1. For illness-related absences of up to 5 days, no supporting evidence is required. Students should complete a Self-Certification Form and submit it to the Registry using the following email address: [attendance@fairfield.ac](mailto:attendance@fairfield.ac)
- 1.2. Self-Certification can be used during any one term. Further absences will need to be requested through the Leave of Absence procedure (see below).

### 2. Requesting a Leave of Absence for absences of over 5 days or multiple absences in a term:

- 2.1. A Leave of Absence covers both medical and non-medical circumstances. For non-medical Leave of Absence requests, students are required to state the type of leave they are applying for. A student wishing to request a leave of absence will need to complete a Leave of Absence Form and submit/email it to the Attendance Officer. If a request is submitted without the form or the supporting evidence, the absence will not be authorised.
- 2.2. Suitable medical documentary evidence includes:
  - A medical certificate,
  - A medical report,
  - A note from a hospital,
  - A formal notification of a hospital or clinic appointment
- 2.3. In case of illness, the note from the GP or a Hospital should also state the period during which the student will not be able to attend classes.
- 2.4. Other acceptable documentary evidence for excusing absence includes:
  - A court letter,
  - A police crime report,
  - A death certificate or order of service (absence due to a funeral),
  - A death certificate in case of bereavement (only grandparents, parents, siblings, offspring or long-term partners will be included as a close member of family and not aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces or friends),
- 2.5. Statements from family, friends or a landlord will not be acceptable as the sole supporting evidence.



- 2.6. All evidence must be in English, or accompanied by an English translation from an accredited translator. The School cannot seek evidence on a student's behalf from a third party.
- 2.7. Where the absence falls at a time of assessment (assignment submissions, presentation deadlines or examinations) and the student wishes to request mitigating circumstances, the 'Mitigating Circumstances Request Form' should be used. Please refer to the School's *Mitigating Circumstances Policy* for more information.
- 2.8. The maximum length of compassionate leave is four weeks.
- 2.9. Students will be expected to liaise with their Personal Academic Tutor to make arrangements to catch up with any work missed during their absence.
- 2.10. In certain cases, where this is considered to be in the best interests of the student (e.g. long-term illness preventing the student from attending the classes), the School reserves the right to withdraw the student from the course or transfer them to a different mode of study until their circumstances allow them to return to studies.

### **3. Maternity-related Absence**

- 3.1. Students are advised to inform the Registry of the date they wish to start their maternity-related absence before the baby is due. This will allow sufficient time for the School to liaise with the student and make any necessary arrangements.
- 3.2. In line with the *Equality Challenge Unit's* recommendation, students are required to take at least two weeks compulsory maternity-related absence.
- 3.3. Students are allowed to decide when they start their maternity-related absence in agreement with the School. If students wish to, they will not be prevented from studying up to their due date.
- 3.4. The maximum length of maternity-related absence is four weeks. In exceptional circumstances, students may need to extend the length of maternity leave that they take beyond the standard time allowed, for example in cases of postnatal depression, serious illness or loss of a baby. The extended maternity-related leave would be processed as the Leave of Absence procedure described above.

### **4. Paternity-related Absence**

- 4.1. If a student wants to take paternity-related absence, they are required to inform the Registry of their partner's pregnancy before the baby is due.
- 4.2. Students are allowed to take a maximum of two weeks paternity-related absence.



## Version History

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Original author(s): Principal  
Head of Registry

Reviewed by: Executive Committee

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**Version** 12.0 – 12.2

Principal  
Head of Registry  
Revised by: Quality Audit Manager

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Approved by:

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Head of Registry  
Revised by: Quality Audit Manager

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