



# Student Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy for Taught Higher Education Programmes

---

**Version:** 1.1

Category: Policies - Student Support (HE)

Owner(s): Principal; Head of Registry

Approved by: The Board of Governors

Access: **Public** – Anyone can view this document

Scope: This policy applies to all Higher Education degree programmes and BTEC Higher National programmes awarded by Pearson, taught at Fairfield School of Business (FSB)

## Contents:

1. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy .....	2
2. Expectations for Attendance and Engagement.....	3
3. Recording Attendance.....	4
4. Late Arrival/Early Departure .....	5
5. Responding to Students' Non-attendance .....	5
6. The Student Attendance and Academic Engagement Panel (SAAEP) .....	7
7. Responsibilities .....	8
8. Storage of Attendance Records .....	8
9. Review of this Policy .....	9
Appendix: Procedures for Authorising Periods of Absence .....	10
1. Self-Certification for absences of up to 5 days:.....	10
2. Requesting a Leave of Absence for absences of over 5 days or multiple absences .	10
3. Maternity-related Absence.....	11
4. Paternity-related Absence .....	11
5. Student Academic Performance/Progress Review (SAPR).....	12

# 1. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy

- 1.1. Fairfield School of Business recognises that students are unlikely to achieve their degree award if they do not attend or engage with their programme of study. The school therefore has a duty to monitor students' overall engagement and to intervene if they stop attending their classes or submitting their assignments. Such interventions will seek to determine the reasons for the non-engagement and explore all options for supporting students to resume their studies in a way that gives them the best chance of success.
- 1.2. The school's pastoral database (SMS) monitors student's overall engagement with their programmes and flags up students who are at academic risk to the school's Registry and Student Support teams; by 'academic risk' we refer to students at risk of not completing their degree, or achieving a lower level of attainment than they are capable of because of non-engagement.
- 1.3. In managing students' attendance and engagement, FSB will:
  - i. clearly communicate the school's expectations around attendance and assignment submissions to students at their induction, and the consequences of not meeting these,
  - ii. proactively identify and support students who are at academic risk due to non-attendance, poor punctuality or non-submission of assignments,
  - iii. give students the opportunity to excuse themselves from lessons if they genuinely cannot attend and provide a reasonable opportunity for them to catch up with the programme content,
  - iv. ensure procedures are in place for students to notify the school of any mitigating circumstances that have affected their ability to participation in summative assessment,
  - v. direct 'at risk' students to internal and external support services that can help them overcome any impediment to study or assessment that they may be facing,
  - vi. ensure students have an opportunity to interrupt or defer their studies in the event of compelling personal circumstances that make continued study unfeasible,
  - vii. suspend students if their non-engagement raises serious concerns about their ability to continue on the programme, and ensure that changes of circumstances are promptly reported to external awarding and funding bodies,
  - viii. promptly withdraw students from a programme where there is no reengagement following a suspension,
  - ix. ensure students are aware of their recourse to appeal a decision to suspend or withdraw them from their programme.

- 1.4. FSB understands the impact that an undisclosed disability, learning need or mental health concern can have on a student's academic performance and wellbeing. Students will be encouraged to let us know if they have any specific learning, support or accessibility needs so that we can accommodate these in accordance with our *Reasonable Adjustments policy*.
- 1.5. All decisions that may affect a students' enrolment status are made on a case-by-case basis by the Student Attendance and Academic Engagement Panel (SAAEP), which consults all relevant stakeholders to ensure that decisions made are in the students' best interests and adhere to the academic regulations of awarding bodies.

*NB: Where FSB delivers programmes that are validated by an external awarding body, the procedures for withdrawing students and considering appeals may vary in accordance with that awarding body's regulations. Upon notifying students of their suspension from a programme for reasons of non-attendance or non-engagement, FSB will be inform them of any specific action they need to take.*

## 2. Expectations for Attendance and Engagement

- 2.1. Students are expected to attend all of their classes, tutorial sessions, seminars and scheduled activities in accordance with their timetable, and must submit their work on time.
- 2.2. All higher education programmes taught at FSB are delivered in-person and require students to be physically present in class for their attendance to be counted. In exceptional circumstances, the school may deliver classes online using webinar applications. Separate regulations and guidance on the management of online attendance will be published in this event.
- 2.3. Students are required to arrive for their classes on time and remain for the duration of the teaching session.
- 2.4. Where a student cannot attend a lesson or other scheduled activity, they should contact the attendance officer at [attendance@fairfield.ac](mailto:attendance@fairfield.ac) with evidence to excuse themselves before the class is scheduled to take place. They should also contact their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) to make suitable arrangements to catch up on any lesson content missed.
- 2.5. Where a student is unable to submit an assignment on time or attend a formative assessment exercise (such as a group presentation or controlled exam), they should use the school's *Mitigating Circumstances Policy*.

- 2.6. Where a student misses a lesson or other scheduled activity due to unforeseen circumstances, they should use the correct procedures (Self-certification or Leave of Absence) for authorising periods of absence (see Appendix).
- 2.7. Students should also ensure that necessary arrangements are in place to receive their student finance, as this is a common reason why students cease to attend. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the Students Loans Company receive all the information they need to make timely payment of tuition fees and maintenance loans.

### 3. Recording Attendance

- 3.1. The following convention will be used to record students' attendance on our system:
  - Students arriving up to 15 minutes after the start of the lesson will be marked 'in attendance' or 'Y-Present'.
  - 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 – (see Appendix 5 [SAPR]).
  - 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 with advance notice of genuine extenuating circumstances).
  - Students who depart the lesson before its scheduled end are recorded as 'early leavers'.
  - Entry time is recorded from when the student taps their ID card on the classroom's electronic card reader. Attendance will not be recorded if the student's card is not available, or the card has been tapped before the start of the class. Additionally, failure to tap in at all may be recorded as an absence.
  - Where card readers are not available for any reason, the class lecturer will record attendance and lateness on a paper register, which will be submitted to the attendance officer immediately after the lesson.

*NBB: 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) when reviewing a case of non-attendance.*

## 4. Late Arrival/Early Departure

- 4.1. Students arriving late (between 15 to 45 mins after the start of the class) will be challenged by the class lecturer, who will receive the reason for lateness and remind the latecomers of the attendance requirement.
- 4.2. Three successive instances of lateness and/or early departure will be reported by the class lecturer to the Attendance Officer. The student will be contacted by the Attendance Officer to ascertain and record the reasons behind later arrival/early departure. The Attendance Officer will also forward this information to the Student Support who are trained to provide support to students with poor attendance & academic performance.
- 4.3. Students who continue to arrive late for classes or leave early will be referred to the next available SAAEP.
- 4.4. The SAAEP will consider a referred student's pattern of attendance along with any other contextual information and will agree on an appropriate course of action, which may include a requirement to attend remedial activities (support/catch-up sessions), up to suspension and withdrawal from the programme.
- 4.5. Students may appeal the decision of the SAAEP, where they have grounds to do so.

## 5. Responding to Students' Non-attendance

- 5.1. Attendance reminders and warnings will be triggered by successive instances of absence at timetabled classes or by a pattern of irregular attendance or lateness which may reflect poorly on the student's academic performance.
- 5.2. FSB has introduced the **Student Academic Performance Review system (SAPR)** (see Appendix 5). This proactive tripartite system (Red Amber Green) rates students based on a percentage of attendance 4 weeks after the start of the semester and alerts specified services to act and reach out to students with attendance below a set threshold.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. **On the second week of unsatisfactory attendance**, students will be sent a Formal Warning by post and email.

- 5.5. If no response is received, no satisfactory attendance is recorded or Personal Academic Tutors report no engagement with the student to the Registry, the student will be sent a **Suspension notice**; this will inform the student of the school's decision to temporarily suspend them from their studies, and the date that the suspension will become effective unless a successful appeal is lodged.
- 5.6. Students will have the opportunity to make representations within 10 calendar days to prevent being permanently withdrawn from their studies. If the student fails to respond to the notice of suspension, they will remain suspended and will be withdrawn from the course after the 10 calendar days. During the temporary suspension of studies, the school will notify the awarding body who will update the Student Loans Company about the suspension, and any finance and maintenance loan payments to the student will immediately cease.
- 5.7. The school may make reasonable expeditions to its 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 submit an appeal is allowed.

*NBBB: 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 appeals 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 suspended 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.*

- 5.8. Where an appeal against impending withdrawal is upheld, the school will specify necessary requirements for the student to continue their studies (this may include deferring their enrolment to a later intake). A set of personal objectives, which include attendance requirements, will be included within the student's Personal Development Plan with the understanding that these must be fulfilled for the student to continue the programme. The school will also update the awarding body so any temporary suspension on student funding is lifted and the student's loan payments can be released.

- 5.9. If the student's appeal is rejected, their status will change from 'suspended' to 'permanently withdrawn'. Once the decision to withdraw the student is ratified by the SAAEP, 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 withdraw financial support).
- 5.10. 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 date of their withdrawal.
- 5.11. 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.
- 5.12. No refund will be available to students whose registration is terminated for poor attendance, or who withdraw after receiving a suspension for unauthorised absence.

## 6. The Student Attendance and Academic Engagement Panel (SAAEP)

- 6.1. The SAAEP convenes on a regular basis to review students whose enrolment status is considered at risk owing to poor attendance/punctuality, assignment submission or non-payment of tuition fees. The Panel is responsible for making recommendations to the Principal on a case-by-case basis concerning the continuance or withdrawal of any students referred to it.
- 6.2. It is the Registry's responsibility to share the list of the students to be discussed in the panel with the deans and the Student Support team to have a holistic picture of all the students being considered in the SAAEP.
- 6.3. The Panel comprises representatives from the following teams: Registry, Exams, Finance, Student Support and the campus deans.
- 6.4. The Panel is additionally responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, as well as ensuring FSB adheres to any external reporting protocol or service standards (such as those of awarding bodies or the Student Loans Company).
- 6.5. 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.



## 7. Responsibilities

- 7.1. FSBs lecturers will ensure that the school's electronic card system is working at the start of their lesson or that some form of a paper register is taken and promptly submitted to the Attendance Officer after the lesson.
- 7.2. The lecturer will additionally be expected to:
- start and finish classes on time and inform the students and Registry staff promptly of any changes (i.e. classroom move),
  - advise students regarding the school's procedures for monitoring attendance and requesting authorisation for absence, described herein
  - 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 in class or on SMS,
  - 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,
  - discuss any instances of non-submission of their work (either formative or summative) with the Registry
- 7.3. It is students' responsibility to adhere to the school's expectations around attendance and engagement and to ensure they have registered their attendance using their student ID cards or by signing a paper register on their arrival at that lesson.
- 7.4. The Attendance Officer will be responsible for 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 or arriving late/leaving early.
- 7.5. The exams department will be responsible for accurately providing information to the registry department regarding student academic performance.
- 7.6. The Student Finance department will be responsible for accurately providing information to the Registry regarding any outstanding balances students have on their account due to non-payment of tuition fee.

## 8. Storage of Attendance Records

- 8.1. The hard copy of paper registers will be kept securely within the registry until the end of the term. After the end of term, electronic data will be maintained on SMS in the form of attendance with comments.

- 8.2. Detailed daily records of students' attendance and comments will remain electronically on the system for the duration of the course year. After this time has expired, detailed records will be archived and only the overall percentage of attendance will be immediately accessible on the system; archived records may be requested from the Head of Registry.
- 8.3. Electronic records of students' attendance and minutes of the SAAEP's meetings will be retained within the Registry for a period of six years.
- 8.4. 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*.

## 9. Review of this Policy

- 9.1. 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 accepted 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.

## 5. Student Academic Performance/Progress Review (SAPR)

Rating Colour	Criteria	Key Staff	Action attendance	Action Submission
<b>RED = HIGH RISK</b> <b>Multiple complexity</b>	<p>Serious concerns: Attendance below 30%, non-responsive to the school communication and previously offered support.</p> <p>Poor overall performance</p> <p>Does not engage</p>	Student Engagement Team (SET) /Campus Course Coordinators Head of Student Lifecycle	SET liaise with the student and review attendance and academic performance through assisting them with their personal development plan (PDP) and completing Student Academic Performance review (SAPR) on Student Management System (SMS).	Check to see if any mitigating circumstances apply. Campus Course Coordinators send non-submission lists to SET will then liaise with the student and determine if any mitigating circumstances apply. SET/Head of Student Cycle determine if student should be referred for withdrawal.
<b>Amber = MEDIUM RISK</b> <b>Some complexity</b>	<p>Some concerns: Attendance in the ranges of 30-55%, moderate response to support offered by attempting some of the assessments and re-sits opportunity. May require pastoral and skills guide. Responds to the school communication but might have time management /engagement issues Broadly on track</p>	Academic Support Centre (ASC) and PAT	Academic Support follow-up on absent students and refer to Personal Academic Tutor to review academic performance through assisting them with their personal development plan (PDP) and completing student academic performance review (SAPR) on SMS.	Academic support and lecturers provide academic support for student. Personal tutor to support student with submissions liaising with lecturers. Students to be advised of 10-day late submission policy. Check if Mitigating Circumstances apply
<b>GREEN = LOW RISK</b>	<p>Good: Attendance above 55%, responsive to support offered and to communication from the school. Takes opportunities to re-sit and do achieve results. Low Risk and on Track</p>	Personal Academic Tutor (PAT)/lecturer	Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) liaises with the student and reviews academic performance through assisting them with their personal development plan (PDP) and completing student academic performance, review (SAPR) on SMS.	Monitor progress



## Version Tracking:

Version	Author / revisions by	Changes summary	Approved by	Date
1.0	Principal Head of Registry	Differentiated attendance policy for taught higher education provision under franchise – replaces the Student Attendance Policy and Procedures (version numbering reset).	Board of Governors	Sep 2022
1.1	Head of Registry Quality Manager	Re-written introduction and reference to external documents; procedural changes relating to student suspension updated.	TBC	Oct 2023

**Date of next review:** September 2024