



Fairfield School of Business

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Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy:

Programmes Leading to awards from Bath Spa University and Birmingham Newman University

Version	1.6 Public
Last updated	November 2025
Category	Regulations
Approved by	Board of Governors

Abstract:

This policy sets out how Fairfield School of Business (FSB) monitors and records students' engagement with their programmes of study, including their physical attendance in class. It also explains how FSB will respond if students do not actively participate, and the procedures to be followed if students are unable to attend their classes.

Related Policies:

- *Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures*
- *Student Support Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Mitigating ('Extenuating' or 'Exceptional') Circumstances Policy*

Applicability:

This policy applies to students enrolled on programmes leading to awards from **Bath Spa University (BSU)** and **Birmingham Newman University (BNU)**; it does not apply to students studying for awards from Ravensbourne University London.

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1. Principles

- 1.1. Fairfield School of Business (FSB) recognises that consistent attendance and active engagement are fundamentally linked to a student's capacity to achieve their academic potential and successfully complete their degree award. As a responsible academic institution, FSB has a duty to proactively monitor student engagement to identify and mitigate risks of underachievement. Interventions will be supportive, seeking to understand underlying reasons and exploring all viable options to help students re-engage fully with their studies.
- 1.2. This Engagement and Attendance Monitoring Policy is implemented as part of a broader strategy designed to support students in overcoming barriers to study and attain the best possible academic outcome from their studies.
- 1.3. Within this policy we refer to:
 - i. 'Attendance' meaning students' physical presence at timetabled classes connected to the course;
 - ii. 'Engagement' which is the level of involvement and commitment a student has towards their learning and covers a broader range of interactions with the course; indicators of 'meaningful engagement' would include assignment submissions, engagement with Personal Academic Tutors, recorded interactions with the virtual learning environment and accessing FSB libraries).
- 1.4. FSB records information about students' attendance in class and their overall engagement with their course. With this information, FSB identifies any students who may be at academic risk; 'academic risk' refers to the risk of a student not successfully achieving their degree award or achieving a lower level of attainment than they are capable of.
- 1.5. FSB delivers higher education programmes in partnership with awarding universities; the School's collaborative agreements with **Bath Spa University and Birmingham Newman University** permit FSB to set its own approaches in dealing with student attendance and engagement that are suited to our students' diverse needs. *A sperate policy is in place for students on courses leading to awards from Ravensbourne University London.*
- 1.6. It is FSB's policy to:
 - i. clearly communicate expectations around attendance and assignment submissions to students and the consequences of not meeting these,
 - ii. proactively identify and support students who are at academic risk and support them to engage with their course fully,

- 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 there is clear guidance in place for students to notify the School of any mitigating circumstances that have affected their ability to participate 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. withdraw students if their non-engagement raises serious concerns about their ability to continue on the course, and ensure that changes of circumstances are promptly reported to external awarding and funding bodies,
 - viii. ensure students are aware of their recourse to appeal a decision to suspend financial assistance or withdraw them from their programme.
- 1.7. Information about students' attendance and engagement is shared with the course's awarding body for quality assurance and monitoring purposes.
- 1.8. The awarding body may decide to withdraw students who are not attending their course on the basis of information FSB provides in 1.7; such decisions will be made at the discretion of the awarding body.
- 1.9. Any decisions that may affect a students' enrolment status or access to financial support will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the *FSB 14-Day Panel* or at the *Student Engagement and Academic Performance Meeting (SEAP)*, which consult all relevant stakeholders to ensure that decisions made are in the students' best interests and adhere to the academic regulations of FSB's awarding bodies.
- 1.10. 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.

2. Expectations around Attendance and Engagement (BSU and BNU Programmes)

- 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, FSB may deliver classes online using remote applications. Separate regulations and guidance on the management of online attendance will be published if this is required.
- 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 with evidence to excuse themselves before the class is scheduled to take place. They should also contact their lecturer or 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 summative assessment exercise (such as a group presentation or controlled exam), they should use the appropriate policy for considering [mitigating circumstances](#) (sometimes called 'Exceptional Circumstances').
- 2.6. Where a student cannot attend a lesson or other scheduled activity due to unforeseen circumstances, they should use the correct procedures for authorising periods of absence (see Appendix 1).
- 2.7. Students should also ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to receive any financial support available to them, as this is a common reason why students fail 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. How Attendance is Recorded

- 3.1. Attendance is calculated as an accumulative percentage from the beginning of the course.
- 3.2. The following convention is used to record students' attendance:
 - 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 student's academic performance.

- 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 or by using the in-class code system. 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 or the online code system is down, the class lecturer will record attendance and lateness on a paper register, which will be submitted to the attendance officer immediately after the lesson. When the paper register is in use all students are required to manually sign the register.

3.3. Misusing the attendance monitoring system constitutes a disciplinary violation and it will be referred to the "Non-academic Misconduct and Disciplinary Procedures".

3.4. Examples of misuse include:

- A student being recorded as present (for example, by another student) when they are actually absent.
- Using someone else's card to swipe on the attendance monitoring reader.
- Leaving class early without a valid reason and prior approval from the tutor.
- Forging documents to obtain an authorised absence.

NB: Students' attendance is confirmed by 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 noted and may be challenged by the class lecturer.

- 4.2. Persistent lateness and/or early departure will be reported by the class lecturer to the Campus Student Support team. This will be taken into account at the next attendance and engagement monitoring point and may contribute to a decision to suspend student finance or withdraw a student.

5. Review of attendance and Engagement during the first 14 days of study

- 5.1. It is a matter of public interest that higher education providers take appropriate steps to verify students' intention and ability to study, particularly where students are in receipt of financial support in the form of tuition fee and maintenance loans.
- 5.2. FSB will initially review students' attendance during for the first 14 days of their course start date. This is to ensure that they are genuinely committed to studying and have the means to undertake their course.
- 5.3. Where students have not shown satisfactory attendance and/or meaningful engagement within the first 14 days, and/or provided proof of eligibility for financial assistance (if required) and/or have not yet enrolled with the awarding body, then FSB will recommend to the awarding body that they are immediately withdrawn.
- 5.4. All cases of withdrawal at 14 days will be considered on their own merits; depending on the reason for non-engagement students may be offered an alternate start date.

6. Responding to Students' Non-attendance after 14-days

- 6.1. **Every 3 weeks from the start of the semester**, FSB will hold a Student Engagement and Academic Performance Meeting (SEAP) to monitor students whose attendance and/or engagement raises concerns about their ability to successfully complete their course. These meetings are to determine the appropriate courses of action.
- 6.2. At the conclusion of these monitoring meetings, FSB shall take reasonable and proportionate steps to address students with attendance and/or engagement issues, which may include sending notifications for them to attend, suspending students' financial support (where they receive maintenance loans from SLC), and ultimately withdrawing students from their course if attendance remains unsatisfactory.
- 6.3. The action taken following these meetings is based primarily on physical attendance in class (but may consider other relevant factors). The following will apply:
 - i. Students with attendance of **70% or greater (Green risk)** will not usually require any action or intervention unless there is any particular concern about the academic progression, or their engagement with a particular part of the course.

- ii. Students whose attendance drops to between **70% and 50% between monitoring intervals (Amber Risk)** will receive an '**Amber Warning Notification**' prompting them to improve their attendance.
 - iii. Students whose attendance drops to between **50% and 30% between monitoring intervals (Red Risk)** will receive '**Red Warning Notification**' that they are risk of being withdrawn due to poor attendance and/or engagement.
 - iv. A '**Withdrawal Warning and Notice of Finance Suspension**' will be issued to students with attendance **below 30%** who are at imminent risk of withdrawal. In this instance:
 - A **first Tactical Suspension (TS1)** may be imposed, whereby students' financial support will be effectively suspended until attendance resumes or some other meaningful engagement takes place; OR
 - A **second Tactical Suspension (TS2)** may be imposed if poor attendance or engagement reoccurs after the first tactical suspension has been lifted.
 - v. **If attendance remains below 30% for two consecutive monitoring points):** Students will be sent a Withdrawal Notification and will be withdrawn from the course.
- 6.4. These above steps will normally be actioned at the 3-weekly monitoring interval. However in exceptional circumstances, a decision to impose a tactical suspension, or to withdraw a student from their course may be taken at any time.
- 6.5. During a Tactical Suspension (whether first or second) the student will still be considered 'active' and can access FSB's facilities as normal.
- 6.6. A student shall be permitted a maximum of one TS1 or TS2 allocation during each semester.

7. Appealing a Decision to Impose a Tactical Suspension or Withdraw a Student

- 7.1. Students have a right of appeal in the event that a second Tactical Suspension (TS2) is imposed or if they are withdrawn from their course for low attendance and/or poor engagement. The following outlines the circumstances under which an appeal may be submitted and the procedures for submitting and considering appeals in these instances.
- 7.2. Further to 7.1; students may only appeal once. This means that students who have used their right of appeal to challenge a second Tactical Suspension (TS2) will not be able to appeal again if they are subsequently withdrawn.

When to submit an appeal:

- 7.3. An appeal under this policy may be submitted if:
- i. there is good evidence that attendance or engagement has not been properly recorded by FSB;
 - ii. there is good evidence that the procedures in Section 6 have not been followed;
 - iii. The student can produce new evidence excusing their poor attendance or engagement with a valid reason why this evidence could not have been produced at a prior stage.

NB: FSB shall send warning notifications (as per 6.3) using the latest contact details provided by students and shall make reasonable efforts to ensure these communications are received and understood. No appeal will be considered on the basis that the student was unaware of these notifications or the risk of funding suspension/withdrawal, unless it can be shown that invalid contact details were mistakenly used by FSB.

- 7.4. The appeal may only be submitted after a student has received the official notification of a Second Tactical Suspension (TS2) or that they are being withdrawn from their programme of study for reasons of non-attendance and poor engagement.
- 7.5. Upon receiving the notification, students have **10 working days** to submit an appeal. The appeal will be reviewed by an appeals panel and the student notified of the outcome within 2 working days. Appeals submitted after this deadline will be deemed 'out of time' and rejected unless a student can demonstrate why they were unable to appeal within the 10 working day window provided.

How to submit an appeal:

- 7.6. To lodge an appeal, students must request the FSB **Non-Academic Appeal Form** from the Student Support team at their campus and complete all sections of the form accurately and in full.
- 7.7. Students should additionally provide **supporting evidence** to substantiate their appeal; this evidence must be relevant to the circumstances and might include (for example):
- Medical certificates,
 - Official letters or appointments,
 - A death certificate
- 7.8. Appeals submitted without supporting evidence will be considered incomplete and may not be accepted.

- 7.9. Once the form is completed and evidence attached, the appeal must be submitted to the **Registry Department** via email at registry@fairfield.ac; this must be done by the student and not on their behalf. Students may also submit an appeal form to their student support department on campus.

How appeals are considered:

- 7.10. Upon receiving an appeal the Registry will convene an Appeal Panel to consider whether the substance of the appeal merits a change to the original decision to impose a TS2 or withdraw the student from their course.
- 7.11. Based on the information provided, the Panel will decide to either:
- Uphold the appeal (reversing the original decision), or
 - Not uphold the appeal (confirming the original decision).
- 7.12. Students will receive a formal communication of the outcome within 2 days of the Appeals Panel taking place.
- 7.13. Where an appeal is upheld, the student will be reinstated on the course and FSB may specify time-based conditions of attendance and/or engagement that must be met for the student to continue. Any such special conditions will be monitored by Personal Academic Tutors and the Registry as part of the student's Personal Development Plan. If these conditions are not met within the determined timeframe then the suspension and/or withdrawal will be reinstated, and students' maintenance funding will once again cease.
- 7.14. All decisions made by the Appeals Panel are final and conclude FSB's internal processes. FSB and Ravensbourne University subscribe to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints; students who are concerned about the way their appeal has been handled may contact the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#). In order to do this, the student must request a **Completion of Procedures Letter** from Ravensbourne University London; FSB will provide guidance on how to do this if requested.

More information about how to complain to the OIA and their rules for conducting investigations can be read here: [How to complain to us - OIAHE](#)

8. Responsibilities under this policy

The Student Engagement and Academic Performance Meeting (SEAP)

- 8.1. SEAP meetings are held every three weeks to review information about the engagement, attendance and the academic performance of students who are considered at academic risk, and to determine the most appropriate intervention.

- 8.2. The SEAP meeting's membership is composed of stakeholders within FSB with responsibility for students' success, including Academic Support, Student Support and Welfare and the Associate Deans; these meetings are facilitated by the Registry who consolidate information on 'at-risk' cases and maintain records of cases under review.
- 8.3. In exceptional circumstances decisions may be made outside of these panels where it is deemed necessary. An example of this may be to protect the student from incurring additional loan debt.
- 8.4. The SEAP meeting will prioritise **all cases where students' academic risk is in the RED category**, as well as **cases in the AMBER category that have not shown improvement**. The meeting members will use information on attendance, instances of meaningful engagement and other contextual information from support teams to make a holistic evaluation of each case.

Additional Responsibilities

- 8.5. It is the responsibility of students to adhere to the FSB's expectations around attendance and engagement and to ensure they register their attendance using their student ID cards or by signing a paper register on their arrival at the lesson.
- 8.6. It is the responsibility of FSB's lecturers to 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.
- 8.7. Lecturers are additionally 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.

- 8.8. The FSB Attendance Officer is 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.
- 8.9. The FSB Exams Department is responsible for accurately providing information to the registry department regarding student academic performance.
- 8.10. The FSB Student Finance team 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.

9. Retention of Attendance Records

- 9.1. 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.
- 9.2. 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.
- 9.3. Electronic records of students' attendance will be retained within the Registry for a period of six years.
- 9.4. All personal data used by the SEAP, an Appeals Panel or when authorising a period of absence shall be processed securely and in accordance with our Data Protection Policies and Data retention schedules.

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 ratified by the Board of Governors.

Appendix 1: Procedures for Authorising Periods of Absence: Bath Spa University and Birmingham Newman University Programmes

1. Requesting a Notification of Absence form

- 1.1. A notification of Absence from covers both medical and non-medical circumstances. A student wishing to request an absence will need to complete this form and submit/email it to the Student Support of their campus. The form should clearly explain why the absences is required, the length of the absence and any associated evidence to support the student's form.
- 1.2. Requests for one or more authorised leaves of absence may not exceed a total of two weeks per term.
- 1.3. If a leave of absence exceeds two weeks, the request will be escalated to the Associate (Campus) Dean for review and final determination.
- 1.4. In cases where multiple leave requests cumulatively exceed the two-week limit, the matter will also be referred to the Campus Dean for a final decision.
- 1.5. No leave of Absence will be authorised during any induction period.
- 1.6. No leave of Absence will be authorised during the first 2 weeks of any term at any level of study.
- 1.7. 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
- 1.8. 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.
- 1.9. 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),

- 1.10. Statements from family, friends or a landlord will not be accepted as the sole supporting evidence.
- 1.11. 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.
- 1.12. 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.
- 1.13. The maximum length of compassionate leave is two weeks.
- 1.14. Students will be expected to liaise with their Personal Academic Tutor to make arrangements to catch up with any work missed during their absence.
- 1.15. 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.

2. Maternity-related Absence

- 2.1. Maternity and paternity related absences are dealt with under FSB's Pregnancy and Maternity Policy.

Appendix 2: Student Academic Performance/Progress Review (SAPR) Framework

Rating Colour	Criteria	Key Staff	Action attendance	Action Submission
RED = HIGH RISK Multiple complexity	Serious concerns: Attendance zero or Amber showing no improvement, non-responsive to the School communication and previously offered support. Poor overall performance Does not engage	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.
Amber = MEDIUM RISK Some complexity	Some concerns: Attendance below 70%. moderate response to support offered and showing improvement 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	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
GREEN = LOW RISK	Good: Attendance above 70 %, responsive to support offered and to communication from the School. Takes opportunities to re-sit and do achieve results. Low Risk and on Track	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

Document governance

Document owner*	Registry Lead
Consulted parties**	Principal, Vice Principal, Quality Manager
Next update due	September 2026
Classification	Public – anyone can view this document

**Responsible for updates to this content.*

*** To be consulted on updates to this content.*

Versions

Version no.	Description of Changes	Approved by	Date
1.0	Differentiated attendance policy for taught higher education provision under franchise – replaces the Student Attendance Policy and Procedures.	Board of Governors	Sep 2022
1.11	Re-written introduction and reference to external documents; procedural changes relating to student suspension updated.	Board of Governors	Oct 2023
1.1 – 1.2	Additional changes to suspension procedure and rules relating to leave of absence.	Board of Governors	Oct 2024
1.3 – 1.4	Procedural updates. Information about 14-day cooling-off period updated. RUL programmes have been excluded and are subject to separate policy. New formatting applied.	Board of Governors	Oct 2025
1.5 – 1.6	Revision to introduction section. Updated appeals process. Addition of information about OIA review. Addition of information about partnerships.	Board of Governors (c.a.)	Dec 2025