



FINAL APPROVED VERSION

(Amended following TSEB comments 17/06/15)

Attendance Monitoring Taught Students Policy and Guidance

This document aims to provide schools with guidance on attendance monitoring and absence reporting for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. Guidance for postgraduate research students can be found at: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/rsa/policies.html> Monitoring of attendance is recognised as an important element in supporting both student retention and performance and has been a University requirement for many years. In addition, the document includes information on the requirements of the Home Office under the Points Based System applicable to international students. Schools must monitor all students' absence in an auditable way, taking appropriate action when students are absent without authorisation for a prolonged period.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Policy
3. Guidance
 - 3.1 Processes
 - a. Failure to register, including obtaining the Leeds Student ID Card
 - b. Leavers (temporary, permanent, presumed withdrawn)
 - c. Unsatisfactory student procedure
 - 3.2 Non-standard attendance
 - 3.3 Home Office reporting
4. Sources of support and guidance

1. Introduction

Attendance monitoring is recognised as an important element in supporting both student retention and performance. Regular and appropriate attendance has been a University requirement for many years as stipulated in the Curricular Ordinances and Regulations <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/ordinances.html>. Careful monitoring of attendance/absence and appropriate intervention where necessary is crucial in supporting both our pedagogy and duty of care to students.

For taught students, failure to attend and/or absence without permission can result in both the presumed withdrawn and unsatisfactory student procedures being triggered, with serious consequences for the student.

The University responds to the requirements of the Home Office's Points Based System, whereby it is required to report international students who fail to complete registration when expected or who are excluded due to absence. It is essential that our monitoring and associated reporting is accurate and that our records are accessible. As well as protecting our Home Office Sponsor Licence, this is required in order to meet the professional/statutory body requirements for certain programmes of study.

The following policy and guidance are intended to give staff greater clarity in relation to the University's expectations of an effective attendance monitoring process and to provide a co-ordinated approach to satisfying Home Office reporting requirements.

2. Policy

- a. Schools should have documented procedures which identify student absences and specify responsibilities for contacting students and appropriate escalation. These procedures should involve the Head of School and an appropriate member of Student Education Service staff and should be clearly stated in the faculty/school handbooks or on the website. Evidence of these activities will be required in the event of an audit so it is essential that accessible records are kept. Students' attendance must be monitored across all years and a standard, fair and auditable approach taken to ensure equity of treatment. On request, students are entitled to see the information held in relation to their absence record.
- b. The attendance of all taught students must be monitored by the parent school at least weekly throughout each semester. In the case of the dissertation period for taught postgraduates, where students are beginning to work more independently, monitored sessions should take place every three weeks. Attendance should be monitored where individual students can be identified e.g. tutorials, practical classes, lab sessions. The monitored attendance sessions must include personal tutorials. Records maintained by schools are expected to highlight absence. Schools should review and define annually the activities which should be monitored.
- c. Schools must have in place procedures for contacting students who have failed to attend without authorisation, where there is a pattern of absence which is affecting the student's work or where there may be concerns for the student's wellbeing. These procedures should involve the Head of School/Director of Student Education as appropriate and be clearly stated in the school handbooks or on the web site.
- d. Failure to attend for two weeks¹ without authorisation should always be identified and the student should be contacted without delay and encouraged to return to study immediately. Any student who has missed a two-week period without authorization should be closely monitored on their return to study to ensure their continued academic success. A subsequent failure to engage may then necessitate the instigation of the presumed

¹ A shorter timescale may be appropriate for short or intensive programmes of study. Failure to attend for three weeks should prompt action in contacting taught postgraduate dissertation students.

withdrawn or unsatisfactory student procedure.

- e. The responsibility for the management of the mechanism for appropriate recording will rest with the Dean of the Faculty, who may allocate the responsibility to schools or other appropriate units within the faculty.

The Dean is expected to ensure that members of the academic community understand their responsibilities in respect of attendance monitoring.

The Faculty Education Service Manager (FESM) should ensure that appropriate administrative processes are in place to ensure that data is recorded as required and follow-up action is taken as necessary. The FESM will usually be the first point of contact when information is required.

- f. The monitoring of attendance on modules taken outside the parent school must be undertaken systematically by the teaching school and absences without authorisation reported to the parent school for investigation.

3. Guidance

The following guidance is intended to provide schools with some clear principles of attendance monitoring and absence reporting for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students.

- a. Academic staff have a responsibility to ensure that absence is reported to school offices in a timely and efficient manner, to facilitate appropriate follow up procedures.
- b. Absence from examinations is covered by the University's policy on mitigating circumstances (see <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/gat/tsq/09-exams.html> - Illness and Mitigating Circumstances Section).
- c. In cases where students are away from the University as part of their degree programme (eg work placement, distance learners, students with extensions for study, project research, study abroad), the following examples of academic attendance are viewed as acceptable:
 - Emails and phone calls with the personal tutor;
 - Electronic submission of work.
- d. The University's definition of authorised absence is as follows:

Where a student is ill and unable to attend the University, if the absence is for five days or less, the online absence notification form should be completed. The form is accessible at: <http://portal.leeds.ac.uk>. Choose the 'Academic Admin' tab, then click 'Log me into Student Services' and select the relevant option. Students who are unwell for a period of more than five days must submit a doctors medical certificate to the parent school.

For any other absences, students must notify their parent school, in advance if possible or as soon as practical afterwards. Acceptable reasons for which absence may be authorised include health problems, disability, bereavement and serious personal difficulties.

Absence due to traffic delays, attending family celebrations, paid employment or extra-curricular sports activities are normally regarded as unauthorised.

- e. Staff who are required to monitor attendance, to undertake record keeping related to attendance, or to take actions in response to reported absences should have these activities clearly described in their job descriptions. Appropriate induction and training should be given to colleagues undertaking these responsibilities for the first time.
- f. The centrally provided attendance monitoring system, which is accessible via the Portal

(Web for Faculty), facilitates the recording of absence, both authorised and unauthorised, for agreed contact points for all students. This facilitates the pastoral support of students, and provides a basis for meeting the legal requirements of the Home Office. Where schools have their own system which they decide to maintain, the same level of monitoring capability must be in place. Leeds for Life, which is also accessible via the Portal, enables a tutor to record if a tutee attended the meeting, didn't attend but explained his/her absence, requested absence or simply didn't attend.

- g. Care should be taken to identify and act upon patterns of absence and failure to engage that present cause for concern, even where absence is explained or authorised. This may for example be a series of short absences or persistent absence that takes the student out of contact for more than a couple of weeks. In non-standard cases colleagues are welcome to contact Student Operations for advice.
- h. Notification to Student Operations of student leavers, presumed withdrawn etc. must be made without delay.

3.1 Processes

a. Failure to register, including obtaining the Leeds Student ID Card

School and Programmes and Assessment Team responsibilities regarding student registration are set out in a step-by-step process presented in **Annex A**.

b. Leavers

There are three types of leavers:

Temporary leaver - where a student is absent from their studies for more than two weeks but intends to continue their studies with the University agreeing an expected return date.

Permanent leaver - where a student informs the school of their intention to leave the University.

Presumed withdrawn leaver - where a school is aware that a student is not in attendance, the presumed leaver process provides the University with a means to exclude students who have an unsatisfactory attendance record.

Note: Permanent leavers may also be communicated to Programmes and Assessment via:

- Secretariat (Student Cases Team) as a result of the Unsatisfactory Students Procedure or Referred Students Procedure being followed;
- The Progression Exercise which is undertaken following School Examination Boards and will report those taught undergraduate students who have exhausted all resit examination attempts;
- Failure to register or obtain a student ID card as part of the registration process.

Schools and Programmes and Assessment Team responsibilities regarding students who leave are set out in a step-by-step process presented in **Annex B**.

c. Unsatisfactory student procedure

This procedure is applied to students whose work, progress or attendance is unsatisfactory. It does not apply to serious examination failure. This is dealt with by the Referred Students Procedure as part of the progression exercise.

Any student whose work (including failure to submit work on time), attendance or progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the school will be warned at an early stage by the Head of the Parent School. Initially this may be informal but if there is no immediate improvement or no satisfactory explanation from the student, the Head of School may instigate the following procedure:

- Where, after investigation, the case is judged sufficiently serious, the Head of School or their nominee will interview the student. If there is no satisfactory explanation the student will be issued with a First Formal Written Warning. This First Formal Written Warning will be copied to the Student Cases Team for the student's file.
- Where the student's work/attendance/progress does not reach a satisfactory standard, the parent school will issue a Second Formal Written Warning. This will be copied to the Student Cases Team. The school will supply a list of dates of absences (including those that led to the First Formal Warning), copies of correspondence in which warnings, both formal and informal, have been given, notes of meetings in the school with the student and a list of any work outstanding.
- The student will be interviewed by the Head of Student Complaints and Appeals or their nominee.
- The next course of action will be decided on the basis of the interview and what information has been provided by the student and school. This will usually be one of the two following possibilities:
 - The case is submitted to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to act in excluding the student permanently from the University or
 - The second formal warning is enforced with a final warning that if the student does not make a serious attempt to recover the position, then the case will proceed to the Pro-Vice Chancellor with a recommendation for exclusion.
- Where the case proceeds to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor the decision is final.

3.2 Non-standard attendance

In some instances, the above policy may need to be adapted according to the student's mode of study. The following guidance is provided in relation to these scenarios.

Language Centre – English language pre-sessional courses

See Language Centre guidance

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125008/english_language/2470/policies

Joint programmes

In the case of jointly taught programmes, the student's Tier 4 sponsor will have overall responsibility for Home Office reporting. In cases where the student is taught at Leeds but sponsored by another institution, the partner institution must be notified of unauthorised absence.

Short fat modules

Students on short fat modules, such as those delivered by the Executive MBA and Civil Engineering MSc programmes, will be monitored in the usual way when participating in taught sessions. During project or dissertation work, students are not expected to attend classes, but are allocated a supervisor with whom contact must be maintained. Absence should be followed up in accordance with the guidance.

Work placements (including clinical placements)

Students must inform the school and placement provider if they are unable to attend their placement. Students on work placement must be monitored by the placement provider and the University notified of any unauthorised absence. Agreements with placement providers must reflect this expectation.

Study abroad

Outgoing study abroad students should remain in contact with their year abroad tutor/personal tutor. Parent schools will be responsible for monitoring the attendance of incoming study abroad students.

Study abroad for Tier 4 students

Responsibilities for attendance monitoring continue during a period of study abroad. Schools

with a Tier 4 student going overseas should contact the Study Abroad Office for guidance.

UK fieldwork

Students participating in field work away from the University will be monitored by the fieldwork tutor and any absence followed up through the briefings and progress meetings that students undertake as part of the normal activity.

Overseas fieldwork

If international students undertake fieldwork overseas for a period of six weeks or more, schools are responsible for:

- a. informing Student Operations of the dates and location of fieldwork for Home Office reporting purposes, by completion of the Change of Study Location Form (currently in development); and
- b. continuing to record their academic attendance and progress. This may take place by skype, telephone, email or a combination. Auditable records of supervision must be kept.

If for any reason it is not possible to maintain contact at an appropriate level during a period of fieldwork, Student Operations will notify the Home Office of a withdrawal of sponsorship under the Tier 4 General Student Visa route for the duration, and a new CAS will be issued when the student is ready to return to the UK.

Please note that the presumed withdrawn procedure outlined in 3.1b should be implemented within the same timeframe if contact is lost with a student on fieldwork.

3.3 Home Office reporting for international students

Where students are withdrawn from the University, the Home Office will be notified and the student will receive a letter from Student Operations. Students must then return home with immediate effect (forwarding their flight details to pbs@leeds.ac.uk) unless they can remain in the UK for another purpose. Their visa will be cancelled and they should contact the International Student Office for immigration advice.

4. Sources of support and Guidance

- Timeline of Events - Programmes and Assessment
http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/21600/programme_support/1017/timelines_for_programmes_and_assessment
- Taught Student Guide
http://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/103552/taught_student_policies_and_procedures/956/taught_student_guide
- Secretariat – Policies and Procedures
http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/student_cases.html
- Leavers information
http://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/10104/making_changes/662/leaving_the_university
- Details of Record Keeping training (required to access the Leavers Form on Banner)
<http://iss.leeds.ac.uk/info/231/sims-training>
- Postgraduate Research Attendance Monitoring Policy
http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22172/research_degrees/1030/regulations_codes_policies_and_procedures_for_postgraduate_research
- Student Support
http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/21800/student_support

If you have a query about the processes contained in this document, please contact Programmes and Assessment at studentrecords@adm.leeds.ac.uk.

If you have a specific enquiry related to student immigration under the Points Based System please contact the International Student Office internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk.

School/Programmes and Assessment (P&A) responsibilities regarding student registration

Step 1: Early Warning

After Week 2 of teaching:

- P&A emails all taught students who have registration status EL (Eligible to Register) advising them of the registration deadline (end of teaching of Week 4) and sends lists of these students to schools.
- P&A emails all registered students who have not yet obtained a Student ID Card advising them to collect a card by the final registration deadline (end of teaching Week 6). P&A sends lists of these students to schools.
- Schools advise P&A of new students who did not commence their studies.
- P&A updates student's registration status in Banner.
- Schools contact all students who they consider to be active on programme advising them of the need to now register urgently before the deadline or collect their Student ID Card.

Step 2: Final Warning/Registration Hold

After Week 4 of teaching:

- P&A applies registration holds on EL records.
- P&A sends letter to returning EL students to give them a final registration deadline (end of teaching Week 6) and sends lists of these students to schools.
- P&A emails all registered students who have not yet obtained a Student ID Card advising them to collect a card by the final registration deadline (end of teaching Week 6). P&A sends lists of these students to schools.
- Schools advise P&A of students who are active on programme in order for registration hold to be removed.
- Schools contact all students who they consider to be active on programme advising them of the need to now register urgently before the deadline or collect their Student ID Card.

Step 3: Registration Deadline

After Week 6 of teaching:

- P&A updates registration status in Banner for students who have failed to register; returners become WD (Withdrawn) and new students become NS (No Show).
- P&A emails, to schools, lists of students who have been withdrawn due to failure to register.
- P&A updates Banner for RE (Registered) new students who have failed to obtain a Student ID Card to NS (No Show).
- P&A emails schools with lists of students who have been withdrawn for failure to obtain a Student ID Card (fully register).
- Schools contact all students concerned and where necessary submit a Reinstatement Form (within 5 working days of the Registration Deadline) supporting the case for reinstatement, endorsed by the School.

Step 4: Reinstatement

After Week 7 of teaching:

- P&A/Fees Teams consider Reinstatement Forms.
- Where approval given, P&A updates the Banner student record to allow the student to register.
- P&A emails school with revised registration deadline (5 working days given) to be communicated to the student via the school.

School/Programmes and Assessment (P&A) responsibilities regarding students who leave

Temporary/permanent leavers

Step 1: School arranges to meet with student to advise on student's decision. Meeting to include discussion on possible impact and sources of information e.g. financial, visa implications.

Step 2: School completes leavers form (and agrees return to study date where student is a temporary leaver) which must be signed by both the student and school.

Step 3: During term time, school submits the leavers form via Banner (SWATSLF) if the student is registered for the relevant academic term. Out of term time, school sends completed leavers form directly to P&A.

Step 4: School informs P&A of the leaving date within two weeks of the date the student left the University. If notification is not received within two weeks, the date the school signed the form will be recorded, in Banner, as the leaving date.

Presumed leaver

Step 1: School contacts the student in writing (letter/email), advising them to contact the school.

Step 2: Where no response is received, school makes a further attempt to contact the student in writing.

Step 3: School instigates the Presumed Leaver process where no response is received. School contacts P&A via email, attaches the two written communications from school to student, clearly stating the Student ID Number and requests the commencement of the Presumed Leaver process.

Step 4: P&A writes to student informing them that they are now presumed to have permanently left the University.

Step 5: P&A updates the Banner student record to a permanent leaver 2 weeks after the letter is sent.

Step 6: Where a student queries the letter, P&A will liaise with the school.

Step 7: Where a student has failed to return from temporary leave by their expected return date, the presumed leaver process will be instigated by P&A unless, following communication with the School, an update has been provided.

NB School can only authorise one year of temporary leave; any extension to this must be agreed by the Head of Student Complaints and Appeals

NB The leaving date in Banner will be used to notify external organisations e.g. Home Office and Student Finance England. To ensure consistency of this information only Counter Services (ssc@leeds.ac.uk) can provide verification of the leaving date.

NB International students who are presumed leavers should seek immigration advice immediately from International Student Office and will be advised of this on the letter which is sent to them.

NB The leaving date in Banner will be used to notify external organisations e.g. Home Office and Student Finance England. To ensure consistency of this information only Counter Services (ssc@leeds.ac.uk) can provide verification of the leaving date.