



SECRETARIAT

ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	Student Engagement and Participation Policy
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	The policy applies to all students and academic staff.
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	Academic Board originally approved the policy on 15 October 2008 which was revised by Academic Board on 17 June 2009 to include FE student attendance requirements, updated on 16 June 2015 and on 17 August 2016 to reflect changes agreed by SMT in July 2016.
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	Academic Registrar
PERSONS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	The policy was originally developed by members of the Student Life Working Group and Academic College.
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board on 15 October 2008. Revised policy approved by Academic Board on 17 June 2009, 28 March 2012, 16 June 2015 and 26 June 2019.
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	15 October 2008 with subsequent revisions implemented following Academic Board approval.
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The policy was circulated to relevant staff in December 2008, 13 July 2009, 20 April 2012, October 2013, July 2015 and August 2019 and is available on the Secretariat's portal site.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	To be reviewed annually.
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to Education & Student Life Committee (ESLC)
DATE:	August 2019

**Student Engagement and Participation Policy –
Promoting Engagement and Participation for all
Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Programmes**



1. Aims

The purpose of the Student Engagement and Participation Policy (the Policy) is to reinforce the University's commitment to providing an excellent student experience by facilitating a supportive and collaborative learning environment, with all students actively engaged in their learning.

The Policy mirrors the requirements that are expected within an employment environment and in this way, supports the commitment of the University to developing the skills and behaviours needed by successful graduates.

The Policy recognises that the University's timetabled teaching sessions are a fundamental element of the on the student experience and provide a forum for debate and the exchange of ideas for which student engagement and participation is essential.

Also, the Policy is part of a wider University commitment to promoting and enhancing student engagement, consultation and participation across the University.

Finally, the Student Engagement and Participation Policy enables the University to support international students in meeting the attendance requirements of their Tier 4 Visas.

2. Engagement and Participation

Engagement and Participation includes, *inter alia*, attendance at the University's timetabled teaching sessions, contributing to group work sessions, the submission of course work, completing examinations, meeting with Personal Tutors and using the University's learning resources, including the University Library, online resources and Blackboard. The responsibilities of students, set out in the Student Charter, support the Student Engagement and Participation Policy. The Student Charter states that students should;

- Complete all scheduled learning, research and assessment activities
- Contribute to, and support others to contribute to, the academic exchange of ideas and interactions

For students undertaking exclusively online programmes, engagement and participation includes pro-active and regular engagement with module tutors and any other parties involved in programme delivery.

3. Student Attendance

The University expects all students to attend all of their timetabled teaching sessions, unless their absence is authorised by the School or the Student Visa Compliance Team. For absences due to ill health lasting longer than a week (a week is defined as 5 consecutive working days), students will be expected to provide supporting medical evidence, usually in the form of a sick or fit note issued by the General Practitioner or Hospital. More detail is available in the Authorised Absence Policy.

Student attendance is essential:

- In promoting greater understanding of the subject
- In engaging with other students on the course
- In providing an opportunity for both student and tutor to assess and monitor progress
- In developing time-management and team-working skills
- To keep up-to-date with any developments relating to the programme of study
- In developing skills essential for employment and/or self-employment

The Student Engagement and Participation Policy recognises that some programmes, including but not limited to those leading to a professional qualification, have course specific attendance requirements, over and above the requirements set in this Policy. These requirements will be clearly communicated to students from the start of the course via Programme Handbooks and during introductory meetings. The Policy also recognises that for Tier 4 Visa purposes, international students are required to maintain high levels of attendance and engagement, to meet the requirements of the Home Office.

4. Staff and Student Responsibilities

The Policy aims to place a corresponding set of shared obligations on both staff and student.

STAFF/UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITIES	STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
Ensure that students are made aware of the attendance requirements of their course.	Familiarise themselves with the particular attendance requirements of their course.
Give students reasonable notice of any timetabling changes.	Give reasonable notice of any planned or unavoidable absences and seek approval.
Ensure that information on any changes to timetabling is communicated effectively to students through Blackboard or any other appropriate means.	Check their course and subject notice boards, Blackboard and University email communications regularly for information on timetabling changes.
Arrive promptly for scheduled sessions, as well as ensuring that sessions end promptly.	Practice effective time management so as to ensure consistent attendance.
Facilitate such changes to a student's timetable as are appropriate and reasonable, having given due consideration to the student's circumstances and obligations	Give appropriate consideration to the logistical difficulties in making timetabling changes to seek such alterations under reasonable circumstances.
Arrange regular meetings or meeting opportunities between Personal Tutors and students and arrive promptly for scheduled sessions.	Attend and arrive promptly for scheduled meetings with Personal Tutors and attend for the whole session.
Encourage student attendance by regularly reviewing and improving upon the design of the course and the method of delivery.	Participate in feedback and consultation opportunities.
Monitor student attendance and respond to student absences in a supportive and timely fashion to facilitate student re engagement and success.	Register attendance in the appropriate timetabled teaching sessions and respond to any follow up from staff relating to absences in a positive way.

5. Monitoring

The Student Engagement and Participation Policy recognises the importance of monitoring levels of student engagement and participation. Monitoring is carried out via the Student Attendance System (SAS) which records attendance for all timetabled teaching sessions.

The SAS enables the University to maintain a comprehensive record of student attendance on all taught programmes. To enable students and the University to derive benefit from the SAS, where the attendance of students falls below the required level for their academic programme or where students have missed consecutive teaching days, interventions will be triggered. These interventions are not intended to be punitive and are focussed on ensuring the wellbeing of students, responding in an appropriate and supportive way when students are having personal or academic difficulties and raising the overall level of student attendance, engagement and success.

6. Intervention Process (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught study*)

The SAS will trigger an alert to the Student and their Personal Tutor through two different sets of attendance analyses. The first being the student's attendance percentage over a short period analysis of two weeks and whether this has fallen below the required threshold of

attendance and the second being the number of days the student has been absent from timetabled teaching.

Short Period Attendance Percentage Analysis (monitored over a 14 academic timetabled days rolling basis)

Stage 1

Where student attendance falls below the required level, initial intervention is via an automated, supportive e-mail from the University reminding the student about the importance of attending timetabled sessions and highlighting support services for students who may have difficulties.

Stage 2

Secondary intervention is through an automated supportive and personalised text message from the University reminding the student about the importance of attending timetabled teaching and highlighting support services for students who may have difficulties.

Stage 2a (Applicable to non-Tier 4 visa holders only)

Where a student has received the Stage 2 text message on three occasions, and their attendance over the short period percentage analysis has not improved, on the fourth occasion Stage 2a will be triggered. A final text message will be sent to the student and an automated task will be sent to the student's Personal Tutor to review the student's attendance and engagement. The task will be the same as that sent to a student's Personal Tutor where they have missed five consecutive days of teaching. (Please refer to the Stage 1 – Personal Tutor Intervention under the Consecutive Absence Analysis; the options open to the Personal Tutor will be the same as those under this Stage).

Where a student continues not to engage over the next analysis period, once an academic decision has been made, Stage 2a will trigger again. Where the Stage 2a trigger repeats, the only part of it that will repeat is the task sent to the Personal Tutor; the student will only receive the text message on the first occasion of Stage 2a being triggered.

*** The intervention process will be triggered by different attendance percentage levels depending on level, mode and course of study.**

Consecutive Absence Analysis

Stage 1 – Personal Tutor Intervention

1a

An email alert to the student's Personal Tutor will be triggered if the student has missed five consecutive teaching sessions.

The Personal Tutor will review the student's attendance and engagement and make one of the following decisions:

- No action (if the student's engagement and overall attendance is satisfactory)
- Establish contact and, if appropriate, arrange a meeting¹

¹ Student engagement with a scheduled meeting with a Personal Tutor involves discussion about their attendance/academic/welfare issues with support mechanisms signposted/put in place and targets set to improve attendance over the Short Period Attendance, if applicable. The calculation will be reset to zero if the student subsequently attends a timetabled session.

- Escalate to the final intervention (based on contextual and prior knowledge and whether they would be willing to withdraw the student, at this stage, for a lack of attendance and engagement)²

If a meeting is arranged and the student does not attend or engage and/or a further five days (equalling ten days in total) are missed and/or another trigger point occurs and attendance is below the required threshold, stage 2 is initiated.

If a meeting is arranged and there is no engagement from the student but they begin attending timetabled sessions, the calculation will be reset to zero from the date of attendance at a timetabled session. Reversion to stage 1a will take place if and when it is triggered.

1b

The calculation will be reset and start counting from 0 days if a student attends a timetabled session. If the student is absent from a further 5 consecutive teaching days, this will trigger an email alert to the Personal Tutor again (Stage 1a).

Stage 2 (excluding Tier 4 students, please refer to the Tier 4 Attendance Policy)

Where a student has missed ten consecutive teaching days and has failed to notify the School of the reason for their absence or if their absence was not authorised or the student has failed to engage at stage 1a, the SAS will trigger a further automated supportive text message.

If there is no response from the student, a subsequent follow up should be carried out by the School and alternative attempts should be made to contact the student. This intervention is designed to ensure that students who may be at risk are identified and urgent action taken to support the student.

Final Intervention – Student Attendance Hearing

Where all previous attempts to improve attendance have failed (in line with conversations and actions for improvement agreed with the student), or the student has failed to engage with the process, the Personal Tutor or the Student Visa Compliance Team can make the decision to escalate the issue to the final stage of the intervention process. The student will be invited to attend a formal hearing, chaired by the Head of School or nominee. The panel will normally comprise the Head of School or nominee, a representative from the Students' Union, the student's Personal Tutor (or another member of academic staff who knows the student) and a member of the Student Visa Compliance Team if the student holds a Tier 4 visa. Students should be given at least five working days' notice of the hearing and can be accompanied by a fellow student for support.

Hearings can proceed in the absence of a student who refuses or fails to attend. Formal hearings are the final point in the process and whilst they continue to offer the student an opportunity to explain why they have not been able to attend or seek support, they will usually be focussed on making a decision as to whether a student should be withdrawn from the University due to failure to attend.

Notes of the meeting should be taken and the student should receive confirmation of the outcome of the hearing within two working days, in line with Part O of the University General Regulations.

Appeal

Students may lodge an appeal against a decision taken to terminate their enrolment in line with Part O of the University General Regulations.

² The Personal Tutor may consult with a Senior Tutor in deciding whether to escalate to the final intervention stage.

Timing

It may take a few days to arrange a meeting between the Personal Tutor and the student, during which time the attendance of the student may not improve; the level of intervention should not be escalated by the School or Student Visa Compliance Team.

School Discretion

Where a Personal Tutor does not wish, on the basis of their knowledge of the performance and welfare of a student, to progress with a meeting with the student (even where a student may not have significantly improved their attendance) the reasons will be formally documented within the SAS as an audit record and there is no requirement for actions to be escalated.

Where a School wishes to progress more quickly in terms of the interventions (based on its knowledge of the student and previous responses to supportive interventions) Schools can decide to move directly to a Personal Tutor meeting or to the formal Student Attendance Hearing.

7. Students with Disabilities and long term health conditions

Students with disabilities and long term health conditions are, as far as possible, expected to attend all of their timetabled teaching sessions. Where a student with a disability or long term health condition finds they are unable to attend teaching sessions due to short term ill health, they should notify the School by completing the Authorised Absence Request Form so that the Authorised Absence Policy can be applied to the absence request and processed as appropriate.

Where a student with a disability or long term health condition is finding that their ability to fully attend timetabled teaching sessions is regularly impaired due to their disability or long term health condition, the student should be encouraged to seek support from the University's Student Wellbeing Centre and their Personal Tutor to enable appropriate review and action planning to take place.

The existence of a learning support plan which notes that "absences should be viewed sympathetically", or a diagnosis of a long term condition or disability, should not be viewed by students or staff as meaning that students have permanently authorised absence in place.

8. International Students with Tier 4 Visas

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Tier 4 Student Attendance Policy (Appendix 1) which sets out the specific requirements for attendance relevant to students who hold a Tier 4 Visa and the responsibilities of the University as Tier 4 Visa Sponsor.

Student Engagement and Participation Policy (Appendix 1)
Student Visa Engagement Policy

Commented [AM1]: Amendment of Appendix title in line with UKVI branding changes

Purpose

As a **Student Sponsor** Licence holder, the University has an obligation to comply with the rules laid out by the Home Office in relation to student engagement monitoring. The Student Visa Engagement Policy (the Policy) is an essential component to ensure the University, and students sponsored on a student visa, comply with Home Office requirements. It ensures the retention of the Student Sponsor Licence will allow the University to continue to sponsor students to study in the UK. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Student Engagement and Participation Policy, which applies to all students, as well as the Authorised Absence Policy.

Commented [AM2]: Removal of reference to the term 'Tier 4' throughout in line with UKVI branding changes.

Failure to comply with the Home Office sponsor guidance could result in the University's Student Sponsor Licence being revoked and therefore it is imperative that this policy is implemented consistently across all areas.

The policy aims to provide support and guidance to ensure that student visa holders have an excellent student experience at the University, whilst complying with the engagement conditions of their visa.

Scope

This policy applies to students studying a taught programme and who hold a Student Visa that is sponsored by the University of Lincoln. This extends to students who are on placement, undertaking a period of study abroad or where engaging with a postgraduate thesis module. Student visa holders studying on a research based programme should refer to the Student Engagement and Participation Policy for Postgraduate Research Programmes.

This policy will be implemented by the Student Visa Compliance team with support from professional and academic staff based in the Schools. The University will monitor engagement, in line with Home Office requirements, to identify student visa holders that are not adequately engaging with studies and take appropriate action to support students to re-engage. Where a student does not re-engage, or has breached a Home Office engagement threshold, the University may withdraw sponsorship of a student's visa.

Monitoring

Student attendance at all timetabled face to face sessions are monitored via the Student Attendance Monitoring System (SAMS). Students are required to sign in via a secure server using their University credentials and enter a unique verification code provided by the academic, within a time-specified window. The system has the facility to enable academics to check the number of attendances against the number of students within the session.

Commented [AM3]: Clarification on types of engagement that will be monitored and the new method in place to do this.

Students should not share their personal credentials with any other student and must not share the unique verification code with other students. Students are also expected to stay for the whole duration of the timetabled class. If a student is found to have left the session before it has finished, or arrives more than fifteen minutes after the session begins, they will be marked as absent. Finally,

students must not attend alternative sessions to those shown on their timetable as they will be unable to register their attendance via the attendance portal.

If a student is found to have shared their credentials or the unique verification code, it will be considered as misconduct and students may face disciplinary actions as set out under Part C of the University General Regulations.

In addition to attendance at timetabled face to face sessions, students are expected to submit all assessments by the specified deadline unless an extension has been agreed in advance. Where failure to submit work results in a recorded non-submission, the Student Visa Compliance team may intervene as a result of the non-engagement. In these cases the Student Visa Compliance team will take into account a student's full profile including attendance at sessions, other submissions, personal tutor meetings and online engagement (where available).

PGT Thesis Module

Most postgraduate taught programmes include a thesis module where there are no timetabled teaching sessions to attend. During this period, students are expected to devote as much time to their thesis as would be spent in full-time employment to comply with the full time study conditions of the student visa.

The School will be responsible for monitoring the engagement of student visa holders during this period and this is usually in the form of regular supervisory meetings, but can also include regular submission of work. Where supervisory meetings are occurring, a record of the meeting must be completed to ensure both the student and supervisor are clear of the progress being made, as well as providing an auditable record for the Home Office. At a minimum, a monthly engagement record must be kept. Where a student does not engage the Student Visa Compliance team should be made aware within five working days and the School should attempt to engage with the student.

Where a student intends to leave the UK during the thesis period they must apply for a Change of Circumstances (Change of Study Location). If approved, the School must continue to monitor the student's engagement with the thesis module in same way as if they were in the UK. **In line with Home Office rules, where a student is on an approved Change of Study Location and does not engage for a period of 30 days the University must withdraw sponsorship of the student's visa. The School should inform the Student Visa Compliance Team one week before the 30 day threshold is reached to ensure the student is given the opportunity to make contact. Where the student does not re-engage the University must withdraw sponsorship of the student's visa.**

Commented [AM4]: Additional monitoring requirement for Schools to comply with in line with new UKVI rules regarding distance learning.

Vacation Period for Postgraduate Taught Programmes

Most postgraduate taught programmes do not have a scheduled vacation period and students are expected to study all year around, with the exception of when the University is closed.

Where a School has a formal vacation period they are not expected to monitor the student's engagement during this time.

Intervention Process

All students will follow the same intervention process noted in the Student Engagement and Participation Policy. Where student attendance does not improve following Stage 1 or 2 interventions noted in the Student Engagement and Participation Policy, student visa holders will be

invited to meet with a member of the Student Visa Compliance Team to discuss any problems they may have and the potential compliance breach of their study visa.

The Student Visa Compliance Team will ensure that the students leave these meetings with an agreed action plan, focussed on the outcomes of the discussion that took place.

Where all attempts to improve attendance have failed, or the student has failed to engage with the Student Visa Compliance Team, it will be considered a breach of Student Visa compliance responsibilities. The Student Visa Compliance team will recommend that the student is invited to a formal hearing, chaired by the Head of School or nominee. The meeting reflects the Formal Hearing in the Intervention Process noted in the Student Engagement and Participation Policy.

Withdrawal of Student Visa

If a student fails to comply with the Student Engagement and Participation Policy, the decision will be made by the University to either withdraw their student status, withdraw their visa sponsorship or both.

In cases where a student's enrolment status is withdrawn they will be given 10 working days to lodge an appeal from the date of the withdrawal letter. During the 10 working days, students may continue to attend classes. If an appeal is submitted in-time against the withdrawal decision, the student can continue to attend classes and submit work whilst the appeal decision is pending.

The student's visa sponsorship will not be withdrawn until either the appeal deadline has passed or, if the student submits an appeal, until after the appeal decision has been made (if appropriate). In cases where a student decides not to appeal the withdrawal decision, the Student Visa will be reported to the Home Office for curtailment within 10 working days of the appeal deadline passing.

Where a student's visa is reported for curtailment, the Home Office will contact the student, by post or email, to confirm the action that will be taken. In most cases a shortened visa expiry date will be given and students should make arrangements to either return home, make an alternative application for leave in the UK, or find a new Sponsor.

Distance Learning- Covid-19 Concession

Where a student visa holder is studying via distance learning, they must engage with all online elements of their study. The School is responsible for monitoring the engagement of students studying via distance learning as the SAS system does not have the facility to do this. The UKVI stipulate that where a student does not engage with distance learning for a period of 30 calendar days that visa sponsorship must be withdrawn. The School is required to notify the Student Visa Compliance team if a student has not engaged over a period of 14 calendar days to ensure there is a period of time to intervene and engage with the student. Where a student does not re-engage following these attempts their visa sponsorship shall be withdrawn.

Where a student's visa sponsorship is withdrawn, they will have 10 calendar days to submit an appeal to the Student Visa Compliance team against the withdrawal of sponsorship. These appeals can be submitted by email to tier4attendance@lincoln.ac.uk

Withdrawal of visa sponsorship does not mean that the student has been withdrawn from the course. In these cases the School may wish to take forward additional interventions in line with the

Commented [AM5]: Additional section regarding new UKVI guidelines for distance learners who are sponsored on a visa.

Student Engagement and Participation Policy to conduct a Formal Hearing if the student continues not to engage. The Student Visa Compliance team will not need to sit on the panel where the student's visa sponsorship has been withdrawn.

Student Engagement and Participation Policy (Appendix 2) Programmes with External Professional Requirements

Purpose

Students studying specific courses at the University may have external professional body requirements in terms of attendance that they need to meet. In some cases, for students to register with professional bodies following graduation they must have met certain attendance standards. Students on these courses are subject to an alternative set of triggers for the School to monitor attendance on a more regular basis to ensure that students will be eligible to meet these additional requirements. The courses within the School of Health and Social Care that has external attendance requirements includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- DipHE Nursing Associate
- BSc (Hons) Nursing (Registered Nurse - Adult)
- BSc (Hons) Nursing (Registered Nurse - Child)
- BSc (Hons) Nursing (Registered Nurse - Mental Health)
- BSc (Hons) Midwifery
- BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
- BSc (Hons) Applied Social Science
- BSc (Hons) Health & Social Care
- BSc (Hons) Social Work
- MSc Social Work
- MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-Registration)
- MSc Occupational Therapy (Pre-Registration)
- MSc Nursing (Pre-Registration - Adult)
- MSc Nursing (Pre-registration - Child)
- MSc Nursing (Pre-Registration - Mental Health)

Please note this is a non-exhaustive list and is subject to change.

Students enrolled on the BSc (Hons) in Health and Social Care do not have external professional body requirements but to ensure consistency for student experience within the School they are subject to the same intervention process.

Intervention Process

Short Period Analysis Percentage Analysis (monitored over a 14 academic timetabled days rolling basis)

Stage 1

Where student attendance falls below the required level, initial intervention is via an automated, supportive email from the University reminding the student about the importance of attending timetabled sessions and highlighting support services for students who may have difficulties.

Stage 2

Secondary intervention is through an automated supportive and personalised text messages from the University, reminding the student about the importance of attending timetabled teaching and highlighting support services for students who may have difficulties.

Stage 3

Where student attendance continues to fall below the required threshold over the analysis period, following stage 2, an alert is sent to the School Office. This alert highlights key attendance information about the student and will give the School the opportunity to arrange a supportive meeting between the student and the personal tutor. *

Stage 4

Following stage 3, if student attendance continues to fall below the required threshold in the next analysis period a further alert is sent to the School Office. This alert will indicate to the School Office that a Student Attendance Hearing should be arranged following the same set up as within the Student Engagement and Participation Policy. *

****The School can apply discretion in whether to action the alerts and can choose to de-escalate, or escalate, the student to other stages based on prior knowledge of the performance and welfare of a student.***

Appeal

Students may lodge an appeal against a decision taken to terminate their enrolment in line with Part O of the University General Regulations.