

Attendance and Engagement Policy



How will I be supported to succeed?

**What is this
policy for?**

At University of Staffordshire, we know that students are more likely to succeed when they attend and fully engage with all learning opportunities.

Being an engaged and successful student means actively participating in your learning and managing your commitments effectively. Regular attendance and engagement with your studies are essential for academic progress. Developing good time management and planning skills will help you stay on track, overcome challenges, and prepare you for the expectations of the workplace.

This policy outlines our expectations for how you will be expected to engage with your course, how we'll support you to meet those expectations, and what happens if you don't meet them.

The Importance of Attendance and Engagement

**What is
attendance and
engagement
and why is it
important?****Attendance**

We know that students succeed and achieve their best on their course when they attend lectures and engage with learning opportunities. Taught sessions give you the opportunity to learn in many different ways. Engaging with lectures and in session activities helps you to reinforce the knowledge you've learnt, supporting you to submit and achieve in your assessments.

We expect you to attend all of the sessions arranged as part of your course.

Engagement

In order to succeed on your course, you need to engage with the sessions, taught content, self-directed learning and assessments. You need to make sure that you have undertaken any pre-reading or pre-work that is required for the session.

It is important for your learning that you are actively engaged in sessions. This means actively participating in your learning and making consistent efforts to meet the expectations of your course.

This is more than just attending classes – it's about being involved in all aspects of your academic experience.

Being engaged helps you build knowledge, develop skills, and make the most of the opportunities available to you.

Why is it important?

If you don't attend or engage, this means that you are more likely to achieve lower marks or fail assessments. It can mean that you aren't able to achieve your full potential or progress through your course. If

your attendance and engagement levels drop below our expectations, it may mean that you have missed too much to be able to catch up.

Some courses will also have additional attendance requirements expected by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council or Social Work England.

As a provider of apprenticeship courses, we are also responsible for accurately tracking and documenting apprentices' attendance and engagement in both Off the Job training and any additional learning activities. This ensures compliance with the Department for Education.

If you are sponsored by the University to study as an international student on a Student Visa, monitoring of your attendance is required to ensure compliance with your visa.

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all students studying at University of Staffordshire at all levels; Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research, and includes both home and international students, as well as apprentices. This process will also apply to students at partner institutions, with local decision making by partner staff. The process for reviewing an Attendance Appeal decision process remains the same and will be conducted by the University.

Some courses have specific attendance requirements, because of expectations set by PSRBs or other regulatory requirements. There are also specific requirements if you are studying on an apprenticeship, including responsibilities through the training plan. There are also additional requirements set by the UKVI.

This means that the expectations within this policy are the University's minimum requirements, but if there are additional requirements which apply to you, you will be notified of these separately as part of your course.

Attendance & Engagement Requirements

What do I need to engage with?

We monitor your engagement in many ways, including attendance at taught sessions and through engagement with Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, Aptem and submission of your assignments. When submitting assessments, you need to submit at the first attempt, and on time.

Some courses have technical portfolio assessments where you will be expected to show continuous progress regularly. These help the course team to make sure that you are on track with completing your assessment. Not engaging with this means that you will have too much work to complete at the end of the module and so won't be able to submit your assessment.

Every course is delivered slightly differently, but some examples of elements that you will need to attend and engage with are:

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- Lectures, seminars and tutorials
 - Apprenticeship progress reviews
 - Laboratory work
 - Preparing for, completing and submitting essays and assignments on time and engaging with feedback
 - Examinations
 - Placements
 - Practical sessions
 - Scheduled self-led practical sessions
 - Ongoing evidencable engagement, such as online discussion boards or digital forums
 - Taking part in group work, research or fieldwork
 - Communicating with your tutors and seeking help when needed
 - Accessing and using learning materials provided by your tutors (for example, through Blackboard)

Course teams often organise additional sessions to further enhance your studies and experience on the course. Although these might be additional, we would strongly recommend that these are engaged with so that you can benefit from the extra learning and experience provided.

Where courses are delivered on the University's campus, the course content and delivery is designed around access to the University's spaces and resources. This means that it's not possible for you to engage with the course solely online, and you are expected to meet all in person attendance and engagement requirements.

If you are an apprentice, your attendance at training provider sessions and workplace learning is tracked through a combination of digital systems, manual records, and engagement with both your employer and the University.

If you are undertaking part of your course at a work placement, you will need to make sure that you attend in line with the placement agreement. Where this requires the recording of hours, you must ensure that this is done accurately and promptly. The University will regularly check in with the employer to make sure your attendance meets our expectations.

Can I work alongside my studies?

We advise full-time students not to undertake more than 20 hours of employed work per week. Balancing academic responsibilities with increased working hours can significantly impact on your attendance, engagement and academic performance. While many students find part-time work helpful, it is important to prioritise academic commitments to make the most of your university experience.

This guidance does not apply to employment that forms an assessed or required part of your course, such as placements or work-based learning components.

Can I study more or all of my on-campus

Our courses are designed to be delivered with the best possible learning experience. This means different courses will use different types of delivery for the material being taught and may use in person and online delivery techniques. Most of our courses are delivered on-campus.

**course
remotely?**

As a student, you are expected to attend all timetabled learning activities that are scheduled. You would not typically be permitted to join in-person sessions remotely. If you do not attend scheduled in-person sessions in-person, these will be recorded as absences. The University is also considerate of external guidance and compliance factors, including the UKVI's Student Sponsor Guidance on remote delivery.

This does not affect the University's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Levels of attendance and engagement

**What level of
attendance
and
engagement is
expected?**

We expect you to attend all sessions that are part of your course, but we also recognise that there may be times when this isn't possible. If you are studying a course with the University, the University's [Student Life](#) team have members who can help you with your difficulties, but the responsibility is on you to attend. If you have a health condition that's impacting on your ability to attend, we recommend you engage with the University's Student Life teams, who will be able to help you to access further support.

If you are studying at a partner institution, you should speak to your institution's support team for information on what is available.

As a student you are responsible for raising any circumstances that you may have, and for accessing support for these. This is to help you to prepare for the expectations of the workplace.

If you're an apprentice, you will have regular progress reviews with your Work Based Education Officer (WBEO). These will include a review to ensure that you are meeting the active learning requirements, and that you are attending and engaging in line with the expectations set out in your personalised Training Plan, reflective of funding rule requirements.

Please note that your ability to continue to access student loan funding, continue with a sponsorship for an International Student visa, or continue studying your apprenticeship will be dependent on consistent attendance and engagement. If you don't engage, you might lose access and be withdrawn.

When attendance and engagement expectations aren't met

**What happens
if I can't
attend or
engage?**

We recognise that sometimes there may be circumstances in your life which might make it more difficult for you to engage. If something happens that stops you from attending and engaging for a short amount of time you should contact your Academic Mentor as soon as

you can. They will be able to help you to re-engage with your studies quickly so that you don't miss too much of your course.

If you need support, you can contact our [Student Life team](#) for advice. If you're unsure how to navigate the University's processes, the [Students' Union Advice Team](#) can help you.

Having too long away from your studies will make it more difficult for you to return effectively. If you're not attending and engaging, you need to tell us why. If you have a sick note from your doctor, you may want to discuss this with your Academic Mentor. Either way, we don't consider this to be an authorised absence, and you will still be recorded as absent. It will help us to identify the best ways that we can support you, or signpost you to support outside the University, for example, your GP.

If you don't tell us about it, we won't know why you're not engaging, and we won't be able to help. If we notice your attendance and engagement levels are lower than we would expect, we will get in touch with you to try to understand and give you support. We will do what we can to help you to re-engage with your studies and get back on track.

As part of the apprenticeship agreement, apprentices are contracted to attend and engage with their course. If your attendance drops too low, your WBEO will discuss this in a tripartite review with yourself and your employer, and you'll agree how you're going to ensure that you re-engage and catch up on any missed learning.

Students studying on an international visa who want to take a period of leave must apply to do so in accordance with the University's authorised leave process.

What about if I am on a placement?

If you are on a placement and unable to attend, it's your responsibility to tell us and the placement provider straight away, just like if you were in employment.

What happens if I don't attend or engage enough?

The University also must ensure that our courses and awards maintain appropriate standards, and we have obligations to others to ensure we do so. This can include PSRBs, financial bodies such as Student Finance, or your sponsor or employer.

A lack of attendance and engagement means lost learning, impacting on your knowledge and your ability to meet assessment requirements. If your attendance and engagement drop too low, you may have missed too much to be able to catch up. For apprentices, if you don't attend or engage enough, you'll be unable to pass through Gateway, and therefore can't achieve your apprenticeship.

If we notice that your attendance and engagement has dropped, we will get in touch with you to see if there's any support we can offer to help you to re-engage. If your attendance and engagement continue to be low, we'll arrange to meet with you to discuss what you and we can do to support you back to your studies. We'll agree an action plan with you, which will set expectations and timeframes on what you need to do.

If you do not engage with your course and the interventions and services available to support your engagement, this may result in your withdrawal from your course.

If you don't engage with the action plan, or your attendance and engagement levels continue to drop, you will be unable to complete your course within the [registration period](#) and we may need to withdraw you from your course. If you are not able to re-engage, you may wish to speak to our Student Life teams about whether taking a break would enable you to re-engage after some time away from the course.

Attendance Withdrawal Appeal

What if I don't agree with an attendance decision?

If you are withdrawn due to failure to follow this process, you can submit an appeal, although the grounds for doing so are limited. When you are informed of the decision to withdraw you, you will be given details of how to submit an appeal if you wish to do so.

The appeal process is evidence based, and so any appeal must include independent, relevant evidence to explain your lack of engagement. The [Student Guide to Providing Evidence](#) gives more guidance about the type of evidence that might be appropriate.

Appeals must be submitted within two weeks. Please note that timelines exclude bank holidays and University closures. After that, an appeal will only be accepted if you have demonstrated that there was nothing that you could have done to submit it on time. For example, that you were in hospital at the time that the appeal needed to be submitted.

The following constitute the only grounds on which you may appeal an attendance withdrawal. These must be made clear in the appeal:

- a. That there was a material procedural error or irregularity which has significantly impacted on the outcome. This means that there was a demonstrable procedural problem that compromised the integrity of the process, or that the process took a significant deviation from the written policy without good reason.
- b. That the decision was manifestly perverse. This means that the decision was blatantly unreasonable, unjust, or illogical to the point of being obviously flawed, or deviated significantly from fairness or established principles in an unmistakable way.
- c. That you have new evidence about your circumstances which demonstrates why you could not have engaged with your studies and notified us of this at the time. You will also need to provide an explanation and supporting proof demonstrating why you could not reasonably have provided this evidence earlier in the process.

We will check that the appeal is:

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- On time, within two weeks.
 - Meets one of the reasons to appeal.
- and
- Is supported by evidence.

If the appeal does not meet all the above, we will not consider it and we will write to you explaining the reason why.

If you are an International Student sponsored on a student visa, please see the “Withdrawal of Sponsorship” section of the International Student Appendix at the end of the policy for more information on how appeals relate to withdrawal of sponsorship.

What happens if my appeal is considered?

Eligible appeals are considered by a senior manager within your School with no connection to you or your case. Some examples of outcomes are

- That you have met the reasons for appeal and can return to your studies now.
- That you have met the reasons for appeal but you have missed too much study, and so you will need to take a break in studies and return at the next appropriate point.
- That you have not met the reasons for appeal and the original decision stands.

We will respond to your appeal as soon as we are able to. Where cases take more than two weeks, we will normally provide updates every four weeks so that you know more about the progress of your appeal.

What if I disagree with the appeal decision?

What if I don't agree?

If you disagree with the decision that we have reached on your attendance appeal, you can request that the decision is reviewed. When you are informed of the decision, you will be given details of how to submit a request a review if you wish to do so.

A review is not a reconsideration of an appeal. It is to check that policy has been followed and that a reasonable outcome has been reached.

As with the appeal stage, this process is evidence based, and so any appeal must include independent, relevant evidence which supports your reasons for requesting a review. The [Student Guide to Providing Evidence](#) gives more guidance about the type of evidence that might be appropriate.

Reviews must be submitted within two weeks of the decision. Please note that timelines exclude bank holidays and University closures. After that, an appeal will only be accepted if you have demonstrated that there was nothing that you could have done to submit it on time. For example, that you were in hospital at the time that the appeal needed to be submitted.

The following constitute the only grounds on which you may appeal a student suspension decision. These must be made clear in the appeal:

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- a. That there was a material procedural error or irregularity in the appeal process which has significantly impacted on the outcome. This means that there was a demonstrable procedural problem that compromised the integrity of the process, or that the process took a significant deviation from the written policy without good reason.
 - b. That the appeal decision was manifestly perverse. This means that the decision was blatantly unreasonable, unjust, or illogical to the point of being obviously flawed, or deviated significantly from fairness or established principles in an unmistakable way.
 - c. That you have new evidence about your circumstances which demonstrates why you could not have engaged with your studies and notified us of this at the time. You will also need to provide an explanation and supporting proof demonstrating why you could not reasonably have provided this evidence earlier in the process, including at the appeal stage.

We will check that the appeal is:

- On time, within two weeks of the appeal decision.
 - Meets one of the reasons to request a review.
- and
- Is supported by evidence.

If the appeal does not meet all the above, we will not consider it and we will write to you explaining the reason why.

The decision will be reviewed by a senior member of staff outside your School.

The review will apply one of the outcomes which could have been applied in your original appeal. We will respond to your review as soon as we are able to. Where applicable, this will be a Completion of Polycys letter.

What if I still disagree with the outcome?

If you disagree with the decision on your appeal, you have the right to make a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#) within one year of the decision.

Attendance and Engagement Policy- International Students Appendix

What is this appendix for?	University of Staffordshire is required to monitor and demonstrate the attendance and engagement of all its registered Student visa holders, in line with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations. As a Sponsor with a record of compliance, University of Staffordshire is committed to meeting all its duties under its sponsor licence. This appendix includes more detail about the attendance monitoring policies which are in place.
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How does the University define what an International Student is?	The Attendance and Engagement policy applies to all students, including International Student Visa holders who are currently registered on a programme of study with University of Staffordshire. Where we refer to an International Student, we mean: • Students who hold a Student visa (introduced on 05 October 2020) • Students who have made an application for Student permission to stay within the UK using a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) number from University of Staffordshire and a decision on the application is outstanding • Students who have made an application for Tier 4 or Student permission to stay within the UK using a CAS number from University of Staffordshire, have had their application refused and are currently undergoing an administrative review
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If you are an international student studying on a Taught course, the Attendance and Engagement policy will apply until the end of your studies on your student record, or the expiry date of your visa, whichever is the earliest of the two dates. If you are studying on a Research course, this policy will apply until the end of your research programme on your student record or the expiry date of your visa, whichever is the earliest of the two dates.

Expectations for attendance and engagement

What are the expectations for Undergraduate Taught students?	All International Students sponsored on a student visa are required to have their attendance on their award monitored for the period of their visa sponsorship. Recording of attendance and engagement will be via a number of means. For attendance, this will include key contact events, which are defined as timetabled teaching activities. For engagement, this will include reviewing engagement, such as through frequency of engagement in virtual learning environments and digital library services. By attending and engaging, students will demonstrate satisfactory attendance and engagement with the course to support successful completion of the award. Examples of key events are as set out in (but not limited to);
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- Lectures, seminars and tutorials
 - Laboratory work
 - Examinations
 - Practical sessions
 - Use of Library Services.

These events and engagement opportunities will be spread across the academic year to allow monitoring consistently throughout the study period.

The recording of these interactions will be undertaken through appropriate mechanisms, normally via Beacon. During each timetabled session, we will make sure that you have access to the code required to record your attendance.

What are the expectations for Postgraduate Taught students?

If you are studying full time on a Postgraduate Taught course, we will follow the same process for the recording of your attendance and engagement during Semester 1 and Semester 2 of your studies as outlined above for Undergraduate Taught students.

The final project, dissertation or equivalent stage of your course is an independent, self-led stage. During this stage, you will be required to attend a minimum of one formal supervision session once a month, every month. Formal supervisory sessions are not scheduled as a timetabled event and so are arranged on an individual basis between yourself and your supervisor. Your supervisor will keep a record of each of these meetings as they happen. This will include evidence of interactions and other activity.

If you miss an interaction, or there are patterns of behaviour or non-attendance which are cause for concern, your supervisor will report this through the Attendance and Engagement monitoring process.

What are the expectations for Postgraduate Research students?

As with the final project or dissertation stage of a Postgraduate Taught course, Postgraduate Research is independent in nature, and there are limited numbers of timetabled sessions. During this stage, you will be required to attend a minimum of one formal supervision session once a month, every month. Formal supervisory sessions are not scheduled as a timetabled event and so are arranged on an individual basis between yourself and your supervisor. Your supervisor will keep a record of each of these meetings as they happen. This will include evidence of interactions and other activity.

If you miss an interaction, or there are patterns of behaviour or non-attendance which are cause for concern, your supervisor will report this through the Attendance and Engagement monitoring process.

In addition, you will need to demonstrate that you are making sufficient progress in your research to meet the requirements of the Postgraduate Research regulations.

If you are studying on a Professional Doctorate course, we will follow the Postgraduate Taught monitoring arrangements until you reach the research stage, at which point, we will follow the Postgraduate Research arrangements.

What are expectations

If you are on a Student Route visa and are undertaking a work placement which forms an integral and assessed part of your programme, or are undertaking a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer

for work placements, or Students' Union Sabbatical Officers?

role, you will be subject to attendance monitoring in accordance with UKVI regulations.

All students studying on a student visa who are on placement or in a Sabbatical Officer role will be monitored on a monthly basis. Your placement tutor or co-ordinator will ensure that you are contacted monthly and will keep a record of each contact. We will also contact the placement provider on a monthly basis to request an update on your attendance and engagement with your placement.

If you miss a contact session, there are patterns of behaviour or non-attendance which are cause for concern, or employer feedback indicates poor attendance and engagement, this will be reported through the Attendance and Engagement monitoring process.

These requirements will remain in place until the end of your work placement period or sabbatical officer role, at which point you will revert to the attendance requirements for your programme of study outlined above.

Withdrawal of Sponsorship

If you do not appropriately follow the Attendance and Engagement Policy, this is likely to lead to your withdrawal from your course, as outlined in the main Policy. This would mean that you have failed to meet the conditions of your visa, and so sponsorship of this visa will also be withdrawn.

In line with the University's sponsorship duties, the University is required to notify the UKVI of a student's withdrawal from their course within 10 working days of the withdrawal taking place.

If a student's withdrawal is due to non-engagement or a breach of the attendance policy, they may appeal the decision through the University's established appeals process. However, it is important to note that:

- The appeal must be submitted within two weeks (14 calendar days) of the decision being issued.
- Regardless of an appeal being submitted, the University must meet its legal obligation to report the student's withdrawal to the UKVI within the required timeframe.
- As a result, even if an appeal is later upheld, it may not be possible for the student to resume their studies within the same academic year due to immigration constraints and course delivery schedules.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek advice from the University's [Student Life Student Advice Team](#) and/or the [Students' Union Advice team](#) as early as possible if they are at risk of withdrawal.
