

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The University believes that community and engagement are vital components of a high quality learning experience, and that both are built most successfully through interactions with others. Building relationships and actively collaborating in our community contribute to subject knowledge, develop employability skills, improve wellbeing, and ultimately lead to academic success.
- 1.2 Driven by this purpose, the University's Attendance, Absence and Engagement Policy aims to ensure adherence to two key principles:¹
- Effective monitoring of attendance and engagement is key to supporting student and researcher wellbeing, by helping to identify those who are struggling and thus enabling the early provision of support where necessary; and
 - Attendance and effective engagement with teaching and research related activities are important for all learners to progress in their studies and realise their full potential.
- 1.3 This document is the sole policy governing matters of Attendance, Absence, and Engagement for taught students and postgraduate researchers (PGRs) at the University of Sussex. All relevant staff should ensure that their internal implementation and processing procedures are in accordance with this policy.
- 1.4 This policy is complementary to the University of Sussex Progression and Award Regulations and the Procedures on Research Degrees.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy does not supersede or override external statutory frameworks related to Student Visa sponsorship duties, Degree Apprenticeships, or the requirements of any student loan funders (i.e. U.S Department of Education who administer Federal Direct loans), other types of funders (including research councils) or Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

The underpinning principles of the University's approach to attendance and engagement apply to all taught students and all PGRs and all modes of delivery, including online distance

¹ Please see <https://student.sussex.ac.uk/attendance/why-attendance-matters> for a more comprehensive overview of the values and principles referenced here.

learning. However, the specific requirements for, and methods of, monitoring and recording attendance, absence and engagement differ for taught and research degrees, and for in person versus online distance learning and are enumerated in separate sections of this policy.

- 2.2 This policy applies to the following new and continuing students regardless of mode of attendance:
- Undergraduate students
 - Postgraduate taught students (PGTs)
 - Post Graduate Researchers undertaking a research degree
 - Students registered on formal pre-sessional courses
 - Students registered on the Intensive English module
 - Visiting students on an exchange or Study Abroad scheme
- 2.3 This policy excludes the following categories of new and continuing learners, for whom no attendance requirements are specified:
- Those taking voluntary English Language for Academic Study (ELAS) support
 - Those taking Summer at Sussex short courses or participating in an Undergraduate Summer School
 - Those taking modern language short courses
 - Those taking a single module for lifelong learning or continuing professional development purposes
- 2.4 New and continuing students on the following taught courses fall under different attendance and engagement monitoring requirements, set out in a specific section of this policy, or by the partner institution's policy:
- Students taking PGT online distance learning courses at Sussex
 - Students registered at affiliated partner institutions delivering University of Sussex awards
 - Students studying in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS)
 - Students studying on University of Sussex awards through Transnational Education partnerships
- 2.5 The University is permitted by the Home Office to utilise remote delivery of timetabled learning in certain circumstances and in compliance with the Home Office's Remote Delivery Policy. The University does not offer any courses at the higher threshold of 21-40% remote delivery. Students on courses where up to 20% of taught elements can be delivered remotely are required to adhere to this Policy, which continues to apply in full.
- 2.6 The University is not required to monitor attendance or engagement during vacation periods,² or, for students holding Student Visas, during the post-study period.³

² Term dates are available here: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/term-dates>

Vacation periods are defined here: <https://student.sussex.ac.uk/international/visas/during-studies/working-during-studies>

³ Student visas are issued for the length of the course, plus an additional four months after the course end date, known as the post study period or wrap up period.

2.7 For the purposes of this policy, the Institute of Development Studies is considered an academic school of the University of Sussex, and the policy applies in its entirety to all IDS staff and students.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Responsibility for the administration of this policy and any accompanying procedures lies in the main with the Faculties, with appropriate delegated authority vested in other key roles, identified below. The policy owner, from a governance perspective, is the Division of Student Experience.

3.2 Faculty-Level Responsibilities

3.2.1 The Associate Dean (Education and Students), with responsibility delegated to appropriate academic leads where relevant, have oversight of taught student attendance and engagement issues and are responsible for ensuring academic colleagues understand and work within this policy; they are also responsible, as Chairs for the Faculty/School Student Progress Panels (FSPP/FSPP/SSPPs), for decision-making in relation to taught students who have not met the requirements of this policy.

3.2.2 Senior Education and Senior Research Managers, Education and Research Managers, and Assistant Education and Assistant Research Managers are responsible for ensuring Student Experience and Research and Enterprise professional services colleagues understand and can work within this policy.

3.2.3 All academic staff delivering teaching are responsible for accurate and timely completion of required attendance records; reporting concerns around individual student engagement to relevant staff.

3.2.4 Professional Services staff teams (both taught and research) are responsible for accurate collation and checking of attendance and engagement data, and for communicating formal concerns, and signposting to sources of support.

3.2.5 Associate Deans (Research and Innovation), with responsibility delegated to appropriate academic leads where relevant, are responsible for having oversight of PGR attendance and engagement issues and for ensuring supervisors understand and work within this policy; they are also responsible, as Chairs for the Faculty/School Student Progress Panels, for decision-making in relation to PGRs who have not met the requirements of this policy.

3.2.6 Supervisors of PGRs are responsible for meeting regularly with supervisees, advising researchers to record contacts per this policy, and reporting concerns around individual researcher engagement to relevant staff.

3.3 Divisional Responsibilities [Division of Student Experience]

3.3.1 The Student Advice and Guidance team is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance to students on non-academic issues. This includes advice around obstacles to engagement and informed decision-making, as well as disability advice, visa advice, and money advice.

- 3.3.2 The Student Records team is responsible for processing updates to registration status as a result of FSPP/SSPP decisions.
- 3.3.3 The UKVI Compliance team is responsible for providing UKVI compliance guidance and advice to staff and students, reporting changes to registration status to UKVI, and monitoring the general application and effectiveness of this Policy in relation to UKVI Compliance.
- 3.3.4 The Wellbeing, Therapeutic & Residential Life Service is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance to Faculty colleagues relating to student welfare related procedures outside of this policy that may need to be triggered, e.g. Fitness to Study/Cause for Concern/Imminent Risk.

3.4 **Students and Postgraduate Researchers**

- 3.4.1 All taught students are responsible for attending teaching and learning sessions as per this policy, engaging as fully as possible with their course, seeking help with issues affecting their attendance and engagement, and responding in a timely manner to contact from staff relating to attendance.
- 3.4.2 All PGRs are responsible for regularly meeting with supervisors per this policy, keeping records of these meetings, seeking help with issues affecting their engagement, and responding in a timely manner to contact from staff regarding attendance.

4. **DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 Unless a taught student is registered on an online distance learning course, teaching is primarily delivered in-person on campus. The expectation is that all students attend their timetabled teaching, whether that is delivered in-person or remotely. Sponsored students holding Student visas must attend their timetabled teaching from within the UK at all times, unless an authorised absence is in place (see sections 5.21-5.24), during which they are not expected to attend classes.
- 4.2 For PGRs, it is accepted that independent study will take place in a wider range of locations during the course of a research degree. However, the researcher's home base is the University of Sussex's campus at Falmer, and the researcher is expected to be present there on a consistent basis, unless they are registered on a distance learning mode or are away undertaking approved fieldwork.

PGRs holding Student visa sponsorship must be undertaking their research in the UK unless a change of study location has been recorded. If a PGR Student visa holder wants to be outside the UK at any other point, they need to request an authorised absence or annual leave.

- 4.3 **Attendance** is defined as:
 - a) in-person attendance at face-to-face teaching and learning scheduled as part of the course's teaching timetable and other learning events as required by the course (e.g. fieldtrips, placements and examinations, research degree supervision meetings, laboratory research), and

- b) remote attendance at live, synchronous teaching and learning scheduled as part of the course's teaching timetable or research degree supervision meetings, where remote supervision has been approved.

4.4 **Engagement** is defined principally as participation in the other activities that support learning and research, including:

- independent learning/research as directed by academic staff (e.g. reading, keeping notes, seminar preparation, virtual learning environment/ Canvas activities)
- attendance at scheduled meetings with university staff (e.g. tutorials, meetings with academic advisors, supervisory sessions)
- completion and submission of assessments by the relevant deadlines
- keeping in touch with tutors, when a taught student or PGR is unable to participate for reasons of illness or other circumstances, and engaging with appropriate academic and wellbeing support as offered.

4.5 Attendance for all taught students will be formally and routinely monitored for the purposes of this policy. Engagement for taught students will not be routinely monitored but may be taken into consideration as part of any supportive interventions and decision-making. Engagement for PGRs will be the formally monitored requirement given the absence of scheduled teaching and learning.

5. **ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY FOR TAUGHT STUDENTS**

Core attendance requirements

- 5.1 The requirements expressed here apply to all taught provision, undergraduate and postgraduate, and all modes of delivery across all academic units unless an exception has been detailed.
- 5.2 Attendance requirements are measured by 'contact points' which are defined as any type of teaching and learning activity that is scheduled in a student's teaching timetable. Contact points will therefore include lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, workshops, or other types of formal teaching within the timetable.
- 5.3 Students must receive clear information as to how their attendance will be recorded for teaching and learning activities.
- 5.4 All formally scheduled teaching and learning will always have attendance recorded, and both staff and students must ensure they have completed the record keeping requirements.
- 5.5 In accordance with the values and principles guiding this policy, the University believes it is important that all students should attend all scheduled teaching and learning sessions, and engage as fully as possible, in order to reach their full academic potential, to help support their wellbeing, and develop skills that will benefit them in the transition to employment.
- 5.6 However, it is recognised that 100% attendance and engagement across every single element of teaching and learning is not always possible or realistic. The following thresholds

will be applied to the core attendance requirements in order to determine where action by Faculties/Schools may be needed to support students whose lack of attendance gives rise to concern:

Category	Thresholds	Definition	Summary
1	0 – 25%	at serious academic risk in relation to attendance	Attendance at this level indicates taking actions for a student's wellbeing is warranted, as well as for their academic progress.
2	26 – 49%	at elevated academic risk in relation to attendance	Attendance at this level is cause for concern.
3	50 – 69%	at some academic risk in relation to attendance	Attendance at this level suggests the student may need input to support their academic progress.
4	70 –100%	unlikely to be at academic risk in relation to attendance	Attendance at this level is not likely to be cause for concern.

5.7 Thresholds will be monitored by Faculties/Schools regularly throughout each term to allow for the timely escalation of actions (detailed within Process documentation for this policy).

5.8 In addition to the above, the attendance of postgraduate taught students taking year long, full time, masters courses will be monitored monthly via any one of the following core contact points during the period of their course when there are no timetabled teaching and learning activities:

- Dissertation supervision meeting
- Meeting with an academic advisor
- Attendance at any scheduled teaching and learning activity offered by the University

The majority of these are expected to take place in person, and no more than two remote contact points are permitted in a row.

5.9 The monthly core contact points will also be required for postgraduate taught students with deferred dissertation submissions but not those who remain registered with only resits left to take until the completion of their studies.⁴

Exceptions to core attendance requirements

5.10 Where a student has proactively contacted their Faculty/School to advise of a forthcoming period of absence (see sections 5.21-5.24), and support is already in place to ensure the

⁴ This latter group are not eligible for a continuing student CAS and so cannot remain in the UK during the months before they submit their re-sits. Attendance records are therefore not required.

absence will not adversely impact their studies, then the student does not need to be taken through the formal stages of this policy.

- 5.11 However, proactive contact to advise of a forthcoming period of absence does not preclude the application of the thresholds in section 5.6. The Associate Dean, or nominee(s), in each Faculty/School will have the authority to determine which series of actions detailed in this policy or the accompanying process guidance should apply in any given situation.

Recording and monitoring attendance

- 5.12 Relevant staff are required to record attendance at all timetabled teaching sessions as soon as practicably possible.
- 5.13 Attendance recording is still required when students are completing elements of their course off campus, including but not limited to:
- i. All types of placement activity. Different placements will have different requirements for attendance and engagement; these will apply over and above this policy. Recording and monitoring will be as specified by the University, and the placement provider/employer and Schools will have their own nominated personnel in place to ensure monitoring. Schools should refer to the Careers and Entrepreneurship team for guidance where required.
 - ii. On field work or field trips: Schools will have their own defined procedures and nominated personnel in place to ensure monitoring.
- 5.14 Sussex students spending a semester or a year studying abroad as part of either a visiting or exchange programme, a voluntary or integrated year or semester abroad must adhere to the host institution's attendance and engagement requirements. They will not be routinely monitored by their School unless they are a sponsored student holding a Student visa. For these students, their attendance will be monitored by the Sussex Abroad Office.
- 5.15 Sponsored students holding a Student visa who have been elected to a full time Students' Union Sabbatical Officer position can retain their sponsorship but, as they are not studying, they are exempt from the requirements of this policy.

Faculty/School Student Progress Panels (FSPP/SSPP)

- 5.16 The purpose of the FSPP/SSPP is to provide an appropriate in-year forum for considering concerns relating to an individual student's ability to progress on their registered award. Its primary function is to consider relevant information and evidence and agree an outcome in the best academic interests of the student. Its secondary function is to signpost the student to relevant support services, both academic and pastoral. The Terms of Reference for FSPP/SSPPs are provided in Appendix 1.

- 5.17 FSPP/SSPPs operate adjunct to the Progression and Award Regulations and are empowered to make withdrawal decisions if relevant criteria are met.⁵

Right of appeal

- 5.18 Per the Academic Appeal Regulations, all students have the right to appeal a decision of the FSPP/SSPP.

Absences

- 5.19 Core attendance requirements are specified in sections 5.1-5.9. Any student who will be absent and unable to meet these requirements should contact their tutor and/or Faculty/School Office in advance or as soon as possible after the fact, with notification of their absence.
- 5.20 Students who are absent on a prolonged basis without informing their tutor and/or Faculty/School Office will be assessed against the risk thresholds in section 5.6 and be referred to through the relevant stages outlined in the process guidance.

Absences for Student visa sponsored students

- 5.21 The Home Office's Student Sponsor Guidance (Document 2: Sponsorship Duties) sets out requirements for higher education providers in relation to absences of sponsored students. These must be adhered to, in addition to the rest of this policy.
- 5.22 Sponsored students may be absent during their course for exceptional reasons, and with advance permission from their Faculty/School, for up to 60 days whilst still being sponsored, so long as they can return from the absence and still complete their course within the existing course dates. If the length of the absence is such that they will not be able to complete within the original dates, then other options must be utilised, e.g. temporary withdrawal and the issuing of a new CAS.
- 5.23 If the student is not able to return from their absence and resume their studies within 60 days, the Faculty/School must support the student to take temporary withdrawal. This can either be student led, or an FSPP/SSPP decision. In either instance the temporary withdrawal will result in withdrawal of sponsorship.
- 5.24 New sponsored students that complete registration but then do not comply with core attendance requirements in the first month of their course and have not notified the Faculty/School of any reason for the absence should be referred immediately to an FSPP/SSPP as they fall into the highest risk compliance categories. This action will allow for referral, temporary or permanent withdrawal, appeal, and finally withdrawal of sponsorship to be completed within the required 60 day period.

⁵ See Appendix 1 for the FSPP/SSPP's Terms of Reference. Information on withdrawal from studies can be found here: <https://student.sussex.ac.uk/attendance/withdrawing>

6. ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY FOR PGRS

Core engagement requirements

- 6.1 Research degrees are expected to be undertaken in person, via regular attendance on campus. The only exception is for PGRs registered to a distance learning mode who must still meet the minimum requirements but are not required to do so in person.
- 6.2 The minimum requirement is one engagement point per month throughout the year for a full time PGR, and which must be in the form of a supervisory meeting (as expressed in section 4 of the Procedures on Research Degrees).
- 6.3 Part time PGR engagement requirements are pro-rata'd; they must meet a minimum requirement of one engagement point every two months throughout the year.
- 6.4 These requirements apply to all PGRs across all academic units and regardless of mode of attendance. It is recognised that different disciplines may require additional patterns of engagement. If relevant, these will be specified locally. Provided the minimum is met, the PGR is considered to be compliant with this Policy.
- 6.5 These requirements apply to all PGRs on all types of registration status up until the point of submission, including pre-submission periods and during any extensions. The only exception is for intermission (otherwise known as temporary withdrawal) where no engagements are required during the period of intermission.
- 6.6 Post submission (i.e. between submission and viva), there is no requirement for a monthly supervision meeting, though as per section 4 of the Policy on Research Degrees, the PGR can request them.
- 6.7 Post viva, in the event of an outcome of minor corrections, and as per section 4 of the Procedures on Research Degrees, the requirement is for supervision meetings to occur once within the three month corrections period (for full-time PGRs) or twice within the six month corrections period (for part-time PGRs).
- 6.8 Post viva, in the event of an outcome of major corrections, and as per section 4 of the Procedures on Research Degrees, the requirement is for supervision meetings to occur three times within the six month correction period (for full time PGRs) or six times within the twelve month corrections (for part time PGRs).
- 6.9 Post viva, in the event of a revise and resubmit outcome, the core requirement of a monthly supervision meeting resumes (bi-monthly for part time PGRs).
- 6.10 The exception to 6.6 and 6.7 applies only to PGRs on a Student visa, who will still need to remain in the UK and complete a monthly supervisory meeting for the duration of the sponsorship.
- 6.11 The requirement is expressed as engagement rather than attendance as there are no formal teaching and learning activities associated with the majority of research degrees which necessitate attendance. Where the research degree contains a taught component (e.g. the iPhD), the policy for taught students will apply to the taught component.
- 6.12 Formal supervision meetings are usually expected to take place in person, but where the PGR is undertaking research away from campus, and per section 16 of the Procedures on Research Degrees, the meeting can take place via video conferencing.

- 6.13 Per section 16 of the Procedures on Research Degrees, the ability of Student visa holding PGRs to undertake research away from campus may be limited by UKVI requirements, and the University cannot override these. Input should be sought from the UKVI Compliance team, and advice, as required, from the International Advice team prior to committing to undertake research away from campus.
- 6.14 Per section 16 of the Procedures on Research Degrees, for Student visa holding PGRs, undertaking a period of research at another academic institution will require a change of study location request. If approved, the PGR must continue to meet the requirements of this Policy.
- 6.15 A PGR who has been elected to the part time Students' Union Sabbatical Officer position is still required to meet the core engagement requirements.
- 6.16 In accordance with the values and principles guiding this policy, the University believes it is important that all PGRs should fulfil the specified requirement, and engage as fully as possible, in order to reach their full academic potential, to help support their wellbeing, and develop skills that will benefit them in future employment.
- 6.17 The following thresholds will be applied to the core engagement requirement in order to determine where action by Schools may be needed to support PGRs whose lack of engagement gives rise to concern.

Threshold	Definition	Summary
No missed engagements	No cause for concern in relation to academic progress	Engagement at this level is not cause for concern and does not require action
One missed engagement	Some cause for concern in relation to academic progress or wellbeing	Engagement at this level suggests the PGR may need input to establish whether there is any academic or wellbeing concern
Two missed engagements	Elevated cause for concern in relation to academic progress and wellbeing, and (if holding a Student visa) may be in breach of UKVI compliance requirements	Engagement at this level requires proactive action to communicate the risk to the ability to continue on the research degree. Rules relating to UKVI Compliance must also be followed without delay ⁶ .
Three missed engagements	Serious cause for concern in relation to academic progress and wellbeing, and (if holding a Student visa) may be in breach of UKVI compliance requirements	Engagement at this level requires taking immediate actions to check on the PGR's wellbeing. Rules relating to UKVI compliance must also be followed without delay.

Recording and monitoring engagement

- 6.18 In all instances, the content and dates of formal supervision meetings must be recorded via the appropriate University of Sussex central system by the PGR within one week of the meeting taking place and confirmed by the relevant supervisor.

⁶ There are various rules relating to UKVI Compliance. These are set out by the Home Office in the [Sponsorship Duties](#) and interpreted where necessary by institutions.

- 6.19 The thresholds expressed in 6.16 will be monitored by Faculties/Schools every month. Any PGR not meeting the required thresholds will be flagged with the Associate Dean, or nominee(s), by relevant professional services staff, allowing for the timely escalation of actions (detailed within the procedural documentation supporting this policy).
- 6.20 The Associate Dean, or nominee(s), is responsible for reviewing those engagement records and, if engagement points are missed, must determine the appropriate course of action from those listed in the accompanying process documentation up to and including the temporary or permanent withdrawal of the PGR (for former referred to as intermission in relation to PGRs).

School Student Progress Panels (FSPP/SSPP)

- 6.21 The purpose of the FSPP/SSPP is to provide an appropriate in-year forum for considering concerns relating to an individual PGR's ability to progress on their registered award as a direct result of missed engagements. Its primary function is to consider relevant information and evidence and agree an outcome in the best academic interests of the PGR. Its secondary function is to signpost the PGR to relevant support services, both academic and pastoral. The Terms of Reference for FSPP/SSPPs are provided in Appendix 1.
- 6.22 FSPP/SSPPs operate adjunct to the Procedures on Research Degrees and are empowered to make withdrawal decisions.⁷

Right of appeal

- 6.23 Per the Academic Appeal Regulations, all students have the right to appeal a decision of the FSPP/SSPP.

Exceptions to core engagement requirements

- 6.24 The only permitted exception to the core requirement applies to Student visa holding PGRs with an Authorised Absence⁸ in place. Whether or not the exception is granted is discretionary depending on the individual PGR's circumstances and reason for the Authorised Absence. The Associate Dean, or nominee(s), is responsible for determining exceptions, with appropriate input from the UKVI Compliance team.

Absences

- 6.25 PGRs must meet the requirements expressed in sections 6.1-6.16 of this policy, regardless of any planned or unplanned absences.
- 6.26 Any absence necessitating missed engagements will be considered a failure to meet the engagement requirements. The Associate Dean, or nominee(s), will refer to 6.19 of this policy and proceed accordingly.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for the FSPP/SSPP's Terms of Reference. Information on withdrawal from studies can be found here: <https://student.sussex.ac.uk/attendance/withdrawing>

⁸ As defined by the Home Office's Sponsorship Duties, Section 7, p67 (row F of the Changes of Circumstance table)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ad5955d20749000ff29bf8/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2023-07-17.pdf [accessed 03.07.24]

Absences for Student visa sponsored students

- 6.27 The Home Office's Student Sponsor Guidance (Document 2: Sponsorship Duties)⁹ sets out requirements for higher education providers in relation to absences of sponsored students. These must be adhered to, in addition to the rest of this policy.
- 6.28 Sponsored PGRs may be absent during their course for exceptional reasons, and with advance permission from their Faculty/School, for up to 60 days whilst still being sponsored, so long as they can return from the absence and still complete their course within the existing course dates. If the length of the absence is such that they will not be able to complete within the original dates, then other options must be utilised, e.g. intermission and the issuing of a new CAS.
- 6.29 If the PGR is not able to return from their absence and resume their studies within 60 days, the Faculty/School must support the student to take temporary or permanent withdrawal. This can either be PGR led, or a decision of the FSPP/SSPP. In either instance the withdrawal from studies will result in withdrawal of sponsorship.

7. ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY FOR PGT ONLINE DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS

- 7.1 This section of the policy applies only to postgraduate taught students taking online distance learning (ODL) courses. Such courses are delivered entirely remotely with no in person teaching and learning activities at all.
- 7.2 There are no additional attendance requirements for Student visa sponsored students as they are not eligible to register for ODL courses.
- 7.3 Responsibility for the attendance, absence and engagement of these students sits with the University's Student Success team (based in Educational Enhancement, in the Division of Student Experience) working in collaboration with Schools and Faculties.
- 7.4 The engagement of students is measured through their communication with the Student Success team and their adherence to agreed set dates for study.
- 7.5 Where students fail to recommence with their studies by an agreed date, or take an undisclosed/unapproved break in study, an eight-week grace period will be offered from the agreed return to study date before triggering the relevant processes (as set out in the accompanying process guidance).
- 7.6 Per the Academic Appeal Regulations, all students have the right to appeal a decision of the FSPP/SSPP.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ad5955d20749000ff29bf8/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2023-07-17.pdf [accessed 15.05.24]

Review / Contacts / References

Policy title:	Attendance, Absence, and Engagement Policy
Date approved:	July 2025
Approving body:	Senate
Last review date:	2025
Revision history:	August 2024 (approval of newly combined policy)
Next review date:	2027-28 academic year (3 years, unless otherwise required)
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	Procedures on Research Degrees Academic Appeal Regulations Student facing guidance Staff facing procedural information
Division:	Division of Student Experience
Policy Owner:	Director for the Student Experience
Point of Contact:	Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) Head of Student Administration

Appendix 1: Faculty/School Student Progress Panel Terms of Reference

The purpose of the FSPP/SSPP is to provide an appropriate in-year forum for considering concerns relating to an individual student's¹⁰ ability to progress on their course as a consequence of their attendance and engagement. Its primary function is to consider relevant information and evidence and agree an outcome in the best academic interests of the student. Its secondary function is to signpost the student to relevant support services, both academic and pastoral. It is empowered to enact the attendance and engagement requirements stipulated within the University's Attendance, Absence and Engagement Policy, and operates adjunct to the Progression and Award Regulations and the Policy on Research Degrees.

The FSPP/SSPP is required:

- (a) to consider the registration status of students whose lack of attendance or engagement has met the criteria defined by the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy, and which has not improved after appropriate actions (as set out in the process guidance accompany the Policy) have been taken.
- (b) to facilitate a fast track route to consider the status of students whose lack of attendance or engagement gives rise to cause for concern over and above the criteria defined by the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy, or where it is not considered appropriate to delay a review whilst the student is taken through every process step.
- (c) to determine an outcome in accordance with the University's regulations, frameworks and policies. Specifically, to confirm one of three standard outcomes, having reviewed all the available information, and communicate the outcome and the rationale in writing to the student:
 - i. To require the permanent withdrawal of the student
 - ii. To require the temporary withdrawal of the student (referred to as intermission in relation to PGRs)
 - iii. To confirm there is no requirement for any change in status of the student
- (d) Where iii is the outcome, the FSPP/SSPP is empowered to set a range of conditions designed to support the student to achieve an improved level of attendance and engagement. Should those conditions not be met by the specified deadlines, the status of the student will be reviewed at a future FSPP/SSPP.
- (e) Where the student indicates they will take voluntary temporary or permanent withdrawal, the FSPP/SSPP can record this outcome instead. However, if the voluntary withdrawal is not actioned in a timely manner the Chair of the FSPP/SSPP is empowered to amend the outcome to require withdrawal.
- (f) Where an outcome is deemed in the best academic interests of the student but is not permitted within the University's regulations, policies and frameworks (e.g. a TWD that would prevent an undergraduate student from completing the award within the maximum period of registration) the Chair must ask the relevant Exam Board to consider recommending said outcome (known as an Individual Inequitable Outcome) to the PVC Education and Students or the Dean of the Sussex Researcher School for approval.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this document, 'student' includes all taught students and all postgraduate researchers (PGRs)

- (g) To agree what actions the Chair, or any approved sub-group, may take on behalf of a Panel.
- (h) To consider any requests for informal resolution (IR) or any formal academic appeals arising from an outcome (per the [Academic Appeal Regulations](#)). Where decisions on IR or appeals cannot wait until the next scheduled Panel, Chair's Action can be taken, and the outcome reported at the subsequent meeting.
- (i) To monitor students with a Learning Agreement to ensure that the conditions are being adhered to; where they are not the student can expect to be considered by a future FSPP/SSPP for review.
- (j) To meet as and when required according to caseload.

Composition of Membership

FSPP/SSPPs will be convened as required to consider cases. A Chair and at least two members will be drawn from a wider pool of appropriate academic and professional services staff. Members will be appointed by Faculty/School Education Committees, normally for a term of three years.