

Student Attendance & Engagement Policy

**Policy on student attendance and engagement with
academic activities**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.** A Student Attendance & Engagement Policy is a critical framework for promoting student engagement, supporting academic success, and fostering a sense of community at De Montfort University.
- 1.2.** This policy is designed to enhance academic success, support student wellbeing, foster responsibility, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements; including but not limited to, sponsored Student Visa, Student Loan Company (SLC) requirements, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding requirements and promote inclusivity and sustainability.
- 1.3.** Consistent engagement with learning and teaching is crucial for student success. This policy takes a retention focused approach to support early intervention where students' attendance/engagement fall below expected thresholds and encourages students to raise any issues or challenges that may be impacting this. Non-attendance, without valid reason, may adversely impact a student's academic engagement, performance and progression.
- 1.4.** This policy reflects the university's commitment to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to benefit fully from their academic experience and reach their full potential while aligning with principles of equality, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and sustainability.

2. Scope

- 2.1.** This policy applies to all enrolled students at the university (Leicester and London campuses) across undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programmes, irrespective of mode of study (full-time, part-time, online, or hybrid).
- 2.2.** This policy encompasses academic staff and administrative teams responsible for recording, monitoring, and supporting attendance.

3. Glossary

- 3.1.** Absence Process: The formal university procedure by which students report their absences from scheduled learning activities. This includes notifying faculty or tutors and, where required, providing supporting evidence.

- 3.2.** Academic Engagement: Active participation in all aspects of a student's academic programme, including attending classes, submitting assessments, using learning platforms, and interacting with academic and support services.
- 3.3.** Apprenticeship Agreement: A formal agreement outlining the responsibilities and expectations of an apprentice student, the employer, and the university, including attendance obligations aligned with the Training Plan.
- 3.4.** Assessment Submission: The process of submitting coursework, assignments, or other academic work for evaluation within the deadlines set by the academic programme.
- 3.5.** Authorised Absence: A recorded absence from scheduled academic activity that has been accepted by the university as legitimate due to valid reasons (e.g., illness, bereavement, university events), with or without supporting evidence depending on duration.
- 3.6.** Consecutive Absences: A series of missed sessions without a break, which may trigger further monitoring, intervention, or reporting obligations, particularly for visa compliance.
- 3.7.** Debt Hold / Debt Exclusion: A status applied to a student's university record due to unpaid tuition or other fees, which may restrict access to services and contribute to non-attendance metrics.
- 3.8.** Engagement Monitoring: The process by which the university tracks and evaluates a student's academic involvement using tools like the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), library access, and assessment submissions.
- 3.9.** ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency): A UK government agency that funds education and skills training. Students in ESFA-funded programmes (including apprenticeships) are subject to specific attendance and engagement monitoring requirements.
- 3.10.** Extenuating Circumstances: Unexpected and unavoidable situations (e.g., serious illness, family emergency) that seriously impair a student's ability to attend or engage. These can be considered in appeals and assessment contexts.
- 3.11.** Formal Warning (Stage 1, 2, 3): A three-stage process used by the university to manage persistent non-attendance. It escalates from notification and evidence requests to potential dismissal from the programme.
- 3.12.** Leave of Absence: A formal, approved period away from studies requested in advance by the student due to valid personal or academic reasons. It may have implications for visa holders.

- 3.13.** Monitoring: The collection and analysis of attendance and engagement data to ensure student progress, identify at-risk students, and comply with regulatory obligations.
- 3.14.** Personal/Academic Tutor: An academic staff member assigned to support and advise students throughout their studies, especially regarding academic progress and personal development.
- 3.15.** PSRB (Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body): External bodies that accredit or regulate certain degree programmes and may impose specific attendance or engagement requirements.
- 3.16.** Registered Student: A student who is currently enrolled and attending classes in line with university requirements, retaining access to academic and support services.
- 3.17.** SLC (Student Loans Company): The UK government body responsible for providing student finance. DMU must report attendance and absence data for students receiving financial support from the SLC.
- 3.18.** Student Route Visa: A visa under the UK immigration system allowing international students to study in the UK. It requires consistent attendance and academic engagement to maintain legal status.
- 3.19.** Training Plan: A structured outline of an apprentice's learning schedule and requirements, forming part of the Apprenticeship Agreement.
- 3.20.** Unauthorised Absence: Any absence from scheduled academic activities not reported through the correct process or not accepted by the university as valid. It may impact academic standing and visa status.
- 3.21.** Virtual Learning Environment (VLE): An online platform (e.g., LearningZone) used to deliver teaching materials, assessments, and track student participation.
- 3.22.** Wellbeing or Disability Support: University services that provide advice and reasonable adjustments for students with long-term health conditions, disabilities, or mental health challenges.

4. Responsibilities

Board of Governors

- 4.1.** The Board of Governors is involved in this responsibility.

Academic Board

- 4.2. Discuss and approve the policy.

University Leadership Board

- 4.3. No responsibility for the University Leadership Board.

Vice-Chancellor

- 4.4. No responsibility for the Vice-Chancellor.

Senior managers

- 4.5. Ownership of this policy is for the University Registrar and Director of Registry Services.

Line managers

- 4.6. To ensure accurate implementation and operationalise of the policy.

Employees

- 4.7. To implement and adhere to the policy and associated processes so attendance and engagement are captured consistently and robustly.

Students

- 4.8. To be familiar with and comply with the policy and provide feedback as and when necessary.

5. General principles/Policy statements

5.1. Attendance & Engagement Requirements

- 5.1.1. Students are expected to fully engage with all aspects of their formal study, including, but not limited to, attending and actively engaging in taught activities such as lectures, seminars, workshops, lab sessions, fieldwork, practical classes/studio work, supervised projects or dissertations (taught element), online taught content and any other activities within the programme; assessment submission and timetabled tutorial sessions.

- 5.1.2. Students are expected to attend all scheduled teaching and learning sessions as outlined in their programme timetables. However, as a minimum requirement they should attend at least **80%** of their timetabled classes.
- 5.1.3. Students are also expected to engage with the learning systems and learning environment of the university, including, but not limited to, the virtual learning environment (VLE), MS Teams, and facilities offered in faculties or the library.
- 5.1.4. Students on an Apprenticeship are required to attend all timetabled classes in line with the Training Plan and the Apprenticeship Agreement.
- 5.1.5. Individual programmes may set higher attendance requirements in relation, but not limited to, Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB), award or funding body requirements.
- 5.1.6. Attendance is recorded to monitor student attendance and engagement, identify those needing additional support, and comply with regulatory requirements.
- 5.1.7. Periods of suspension, debt hold or debt exclusion will contribute to measured periods of non-attendance.

5.2. Recording and Monitoring Attendance

- 5.2.1. Students must register their attendance within the first 15-minutes of each session using one of the following methods:
 - 5.2.1.1. Swiping their student ID card at designated card readers in rooms equipped with this facility.
 - 5.2.1.2. Where necessary, using the relevant attendance form provided by the academic/facilitator.

5.3. Monitoring Student Engagement

- 5.3.1. The university may monitor other forms of academic engagement to gain a more holistic picture of students' learning and teaching activity and to better understand and address the needs of students.
- 5.3.2. The monitoring of engagement may include but not be limited to learning platforms such as the virtual learning environment (VLE), MS Teams, library usage and onsite building access card readers as well as assessment submission and student results information. In sharing data across the university, we will abide by our Data Protection policies as detailed in [Chapter 5](#) of the general regulations.

- 5.3.3. Students experiencing difficulties affecting their engagement should contact their Personal/Academic Tutor, Faculty Student Advice Centre/Student Hub, or the nominated contact for attendance and engagement or relevant Student Services for advice and appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.

5.4. Students Receiving ESFA Funding

- 5.4.1. DMU is required to monitor attendance and engagement on a monthly basis for any programme receiving ESFA funding. This includes Apprenticeships and 16-19 year-old funded programmes.

5.5. Authorised Absences

- 5.5.1. The university recognises that students may occasionally be prevented from attending timetabled activities. Students may be excused from attendance under the following circumstances, provided they inform their faculty or academic tutor in advance or within 5 working days of their absence:
- 5.5.1.1. Medical illness (evidence may be required).
 - 5.5.1.2. Bereavement or family emergency (e.g., serious illness or injury, hospitalisation of a family member, major accident, urgent caregiving).
 - 5.5.1.3. Reasonable adjustments for disabilities and/or long-term sickness.
 - 5.5.1.4. Participation in university-approved events (e.g., sports competitions, academic conferences, field work, research activities).
- 5.5.2. If a student is unable to attend a timetabled session, they must notify the university via the absence process. For consecutive absences of less than five working days evidence is not required. If the absence is not recorded it will be deemed unauthorised and count as a non-attendance.
- 5.5.3. For absences of five working days or more, the absence must be recorded via the absence process and must be accompanied with evidence. Students may seek advice on evidence from their Student Advice Centre/The Student Hub or the nominated contact for attendance and engagement. Authorisation of absence is subject to review. If the student wishes the illness to be taken into account in relation to assessment of work, they must follow the procedures set out in [Chapter 3](#) of the general regulations. Persistent absence from the university could result in a change to a variation in registration status.
- 5.5.4. Students may seek a period of authorised absence in advance. This will be considered in line with the reasons noted in authorised absence circumstances. Information on 'leave of absence' requests can be found [here](#).

Its approval is subject to faculty approval and for student route visa holders, where relevant, the university immigration compliance team. Where an absence may impact a student's academic progress or existing patterns of attendance/engagement are a cause for concern, the absence may not be authorised.

5.6. Consequences of Non-Attendance & Non-Engagement

- 5.6.1. Students who fail to register attendance will be marked as absent.
- 5.6.2. Non-attendance/non-engagement may trigger communications or interventions to explore the reasons for absence/non-engagement. This process is designed to support students to address any barriers to their attendance/engagement and to help to successfully re-engage with their studies.
- 5.6.3. A student with persistent non-attendance and/or non-engagement will receive a formal notification from the university. Continued non-attendance may result in further disciplinary measures, including dismissal from the programme. This process takes place in the following three stages:
 - 5.6.3.1. Formal warning Stage 1: On receipt of an absence notification, the student will be required to provide a reason for absence and any relevant evidence.
- 5.6.4. Formal warning Stage 2: If the absence continues without due cause, the student will receive a further notification and/or may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss their circumstances with either the Academic Tutor, Faculty Student Advice Centre/the Student Hub, or relevant Student Services for advice and appropriate support.
 - 5.6.4.1. Formal warning Stage 3: If the absence does not sufficiently improve and/or the student fails to attend the meeting and justify the reason(s) for non-attendance in stage 2, they will be considered for dismissal from the programme.
- 5.6.5. A Student who is de-registered for non-attendance will normally be unable to apply to re-join the university until a period of two years from the point of de-registration has elapsed.

5.7. International Students (Visa Holders)

- 5.7.1. International students on a Student Visa must maintain at least 80% attendance to comply with [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\) requirements](#).

- 5.7.2. For the purpose of monitoring attendance for students on a Student Route visa, any approved (authorised) absences will not be treated as time the student was absent without permission.
- 5.7.3. DMU is required to report visa-holding students with prolonged non-attendance to the UKVI, which may lead to visa curtailment.

5.8. Students Receiving Student Loans Company (SLC) Financial Support

- 5.8.1. DMU is required to report students in receipt of any SLC financial support any absences which are authorised or unauthorised (including longer term absences due to illness) which are recorded on our student records system to the SLC. Where absences are backdated, we will notify the SLC of your last date of attendance and funding eligibility will be calculated by the SLC accordingly.

5.9. Support for Students Facing Attendance Challenges

- 5.9.1. The university provides academic, financial, disability and mental health advice to help students manage challenges that may impact attendance where appropriate.
- 5.9.2. Students with long-standing conditions are encouraged to ensure they have engaged with the wellbeing or disability team so any reasonable adjustments required for attendance & engagement purposes are captured and can be considered in the enactment of this policy.

5.10. Absence Appeals

- 5.10.1. Students who believe their absences have been inaccurately recorded or who face extenuating circumstances may submit an appeal through the university's official [appeals process](#).
- 5.10.2. Periods of suspension, debt hold or debt exclusion are not grounds for seeking to appeal a decision to terminate registration on the grounds of non-attendance.
- 5.10.3. Student Route visa Students who wish to appeal a faculty's decision to terminate registration must show initial intent to appeal within five University working days of formal notification of the decision through completing this [form](#). If no intent is shown within the five University working days, the university will begin processes of notifying UKVI. Should a student lodge an appeal, their student status reverts to that of a registered student until the outcome of the appeal is known. Student Route visa Students will then have a further five University working days to submit a formal appeal.

- 5.10.4. Students on the Foundation in Art & Design (FIAD) Programme who wish to appeal the Technology, Arts and Culture decision to terminate registration must show initial intent to appeal within 5 University working days of formal notification of the decision. FIAD Students will then have a further five University working days to submit a formal appeal.
- 5.10.5. All other Students who wish to appeal a faculty's decision to terminate registration must do so within 10 University working days of formal notification of the decision. Click [here](#) to access appeal form. (insert hyperlink).
- 5.10.6. The Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or nominee) will review the case to ensure proper procedure (as outlined above) is followed. Extenuating circumstances may be considered. Extenuating Circumstances are genuine circumstances beyond a student's control or ability to foresee, and which seriously impair their ability to engage with/attend their teaching and learning. The Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or nominee)'s decision is final and not subject to review by any other University body.

5.11. Review

- 5.11.1. This policy is subject to review every three academic years to ensure compliance with academic and regulatory standards.

5.12. Contact Information

- 5.12.1. For queries regarding attendance, students should contact their respective faculty, Academic Tutor, or Student Services.

6. Monitoring and review

- 6.1. This Policy should be reviewed at least every three years of its operation.
- 6.2. The implementation of this policy should be monitored by the Academic Registrar and Director of Registry Services. Any disputes should be arbitrated by the Director of Registry services.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This policy aims to be as fair and accessible as possible to the university's students. Here are the key EDI factors to consider when implementing the policy:

- 7.1. Accessibility:** Ensure attendance monitoring methods are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or learning differences in line with agreed reasonable adjustments.
- 7.2. Cultural sensitivity:** Respect cultural and religious practices by providing flexible attendance arrangements for students observing specific traditions or holidays, where possible.
- 7.3. Support for individual needs:** Reasonably accommodate students with caring responsibilities, health issues and disabilities; including mental health conditions or other personal circumstances that may impact attendance.
- 7.4. Transparent communication:** Clearly outline attendance requirements, expectations and support mechanisms to avoid misunderstandings and ensure inclusivity.
- 7.5. Data privacy:** Maintain confidentiality and ethical use of attendance data to protect students' privacy and comply with GDPR.

8. Sustainability

This attendance policy ensures the university fosters a supportive, inclusive, and environmentally responsible learning environment while maintaining high academic standards. The policy considers the following sustainability factors:

- 8.1. The attendance policy should contribute to the university's sustainability goals by:**
 - 8.1.1. Digital attendance recording:** Minimise paper usage by implementing electronic systems for tracking attendance, such as ID card swiping, mobile apps or online platforms.
 - 8.1.2. Efficient resource allocation:** Use attendance data to optimise the scheduling and use of campus facilities, reducing energy and resource waste.
 - 8.1.3. Awareness campaigns:** Incorporate sustainability messaging in attendance-related communications to promote environmentally responsible behaviours among students and staff.
 - 8.1.4. Energy conservation:** Align attendance schedules with efficient building usage to minimise the carbon footprint of heating, cooling, and lighting.

9. Related policies and standards/documentation

- 9.1. Student Appeal Policy.**
- 9.2. Deferral Policy.**
- 9.3. Student personal data: capture, retention and disposal.**

9.4. Student Disciplinary Policy.

9.5. Prevent Policy.

9.6. Room Booking Policy.

9.7. Timetabling Policy.

9.8. Health and Safety Policy.

9.9. Safeguarding Policy.

10. Appendices

11. Document and version control information:

Version control information heading	Details
Policy number	PRAB07
Owner	Director of Registry Services
Author	Director of Registry Services
Approved by	Academic Board Education Committee
Date of approval of this version	7 th May 2025 (Academic Board) 27 th March 2025 (Education Committee)
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