Taught Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

This policy, and the systems that support our staff to deliver it, form part of our overarching commitment to helping our students engage with and get the most from their studies. Our Student Charter details the importance of attendance and engagement in student life in the wider context of City’s community. We ask all our students to ensure they have read and understood the expectations we set for ourselves and for them.

https://studenthub.city.ac.uk/student-administration/student-charter

Introduction

This policy sets out how we expect you to participate in your education through attendance at and engagement in all classroom-based activity and how we will support you in this. City monitors students’ attendance through a central system as one way to understand how you’re getting on. This helps us support you and work with you on any challenges you may face in your progress at City. To support this policy, and to make things as clear as possible to you, further detail on how attendance works specifically for each programme is covered in the Programme Handbook that you receive at the start of each year. You’ll also hear from staff on how attendance works at City in your induction.

Principles

We believe that engaging well in your studies helps you to succeed and develop to your best potential. On the whole, inconsistent attendance and engagement makes you less likely to succeed. If you don’t attend we will try and contact you to help. Further detail on this is provided below. If you do not respond to communications and continue to not attend, you may be withdrawn from your programme. Here’s what we think is important:

a) You are responsible for your participation with the learning and teaching on your programme. We’re responsible for providing a means to establish how well you are engaging.

b) Being part of a learning community of staff and students is a key aspect of your studies and is supported through your attendance and engagement.

c) You will most benefit by attending and engaging regularly, taking advantage of the learning, teaching and other activities available.

d) Engagement with academic staff teaching you is important. Our academics and their relationship with our students are central to what we do here and they are a really crucial source of support, working alongside members of staff across City.

e) Poor attendance and engagement doesn’t just affect you. It may also impact on others. For example, in group projects or other types of peer-learning where other students rely on you.

f) We think that identifying if you’re not attending early, and checking if you are having problems we can help with, is really important in helping you progress.

g) How you approach your studies is crucial in preparing you for your future career. Good attendance is therefore a key way for you to model professional behaviour during your time with us.

Your Responsibilities

a) Attendance includes every point of classroom engagement, including lectures, tutorials, workshops and lab sessions. Please get to know what your attendance
requirements are by reading your Programme Handbook. You are expected to attend. It’s your responsibility.

b) If you know you’re going to be away for a number of days or over a period of weeks, you are required to make contact with staff on your programme. You should ask at your course office if you are unsure who to contact. Together you should make arrangements to make sure you’re able to engage appropriately in your studies while you’re away from classes so you don’t miss out. There is an Authorised Absence Form for this, which can be found here https://www.city.ac.uk/_media/city-site/documents/about/education/quality-manual/student-support-and-information/Authorised-Absence-Form.docx.

c) City expects you to attend all sessions in your timetable and scheduled personal tutorials. We have systems and supporting technology in place to establish whether you’re doing so. We monitor your attendance so that we can provide any advice and support if you might be having any problems. You are required to ensure your attendance is noted either via the reporting system or by appropriate School staff.

d) If you are a part-time student or are engaged in distance learning, then the expectations and systems will be a little different. Your programme team has different arrangements that take account of how you are studying. These are explained in your Programme Handbook.

Although we know that there can sometimes be unexpected problems, particularly for those students who are commuting long distances, we do expect you to be on time to your classes. If you get in more than fifteen minutes late then you may be recorded as being absent. We’re aware that at times there may be exceptional circumstances or instances where you may need to be regularly absent. We seek to accommodate this wherever possible. You should raise any challenges you are having with staff in your course office who can advise on what is possible.

**External Requirements**

Regular attendance is also a requirement of a number of external bodies. For some programmes this may include attendance requirements set by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Certain funders also have requirements (e.g. U.S. Department of Education who administer Federal Direct Loans). It is a requirement of the UK Visas and Immigration department of the Home Office for Tier 4 sponsored students. This policy and the attendance systems used to make it happen cover all of our students.

**Tier 4 Sponsored Students**

If you are a Tier 4 student the steps we take and the support offered if your attendance becomes a concern is the same as for all of our students. Equally, any action we take off the back of poor attendance will be the same as for all students. However, there are additional requirements meaning that if you do not meet your attendance commitments it could lead to the withdrawal of sponsorship, or funding and/or you having to return to your home country.

If you are on a non-UK student studying with a Tier 4 student visa, please refer to the [Tier 4 Attendance Monitoring requirements](https://www.city.ac.uk/_media/city-site/documents/about/education/quality-manual/student-support-and-information/Authorised-Absence-Form.docx) for more details.

**Our Responsibilities**

We want to give our students every chance and proper support to succeed. Programme Teams are expected to:
a) Support your personal tutors in meeting their responsibilities outlined in this policy and our Personal Tutoring Policy which supports and complements this one.
b) Ensure all students, but particularly new students who are transitioning into life at City, are supported and made aware of the support available.
c) Ensure attendance requirements are made clear to you at induction. Compulsory attendance requirements are detailed in the Programme Handbook.
d) Determine method(s) of recording attendance and engagement in classroom setting, make these easy to use and make students aware of this provision.
e) Publish how students report an absence from compulsory teaching.
f) Provide a system of support for students we identify as having poor attendance and who might need additional help. Programme teams want to help you at an early point, before a problem increases the risk of you withdrawing from your studies.
g) When required, actively signpost you to the services offered by City and by external agencies to support you if you are experiencing issues that are impacting on attendance.

Attendance Records
School course office staff are responsible for recording and monitoring attendance. You are responsible for engaging with the methods used. We are responsible for making these as easy to use as possible. Attendance points cover timetabled classes (lectures, tutorials, labs, workshops). It also includes assessment and coursework submission. Assessment activities that will be monitored are set out in your Programme Handbook.

Attendance and engagement is monitored from the day you begin your programme. Each School has a process to review attendance and get in touch with you, check you are ok and discuss any issues and available support if needed. Your programme team will record attendance and engagement. They will also keep any documents and communications with you on file. Schools will produce reports showing the frequency of student attendance.

You are required to ensure your attendance is noted either via the reporting system or by appropriate School staff. Where it is up to academic staff to ensure attendance and engagement records are complete, School administrative staff flag any incomplete or incorrect records to academic staff so they can be completed.

In the interests of consistency and fairness, all students have similar contact points. If you are on placement or outgoing Study Abroad there will be appropriate alternatives agreed with your Programme Director and programme team.

Identifying Poor Attendance and Engagement
Programme teams will check your attendance a minimum of once a week. They then run regular reports during each term to identify students who have not been attending. You will be contacted if there are concerns about your attendance or if the reasons for absence are not known. When a member of staff becomes aware of an absence or cause for concern, there are a series of steps they may take to contact you and offer support. Depending on what happens after that there is a series of steps they will take (see below).

Contact, Reporting and Withdrawal
If the reports show that you haven’t been attending your timetabled sessions your programme team will contact you. They will do this in stages, as follows:
For the first time they get in touch, the programme team will:
- Let you know they are concerned.
- Figure out how to help.
- Offer a meeting with your Personal Tutor.

If you don’t respond and/or if attendance remains low the team will contact you again. They will ask you to meet with your Programme Director or Personal Tutor to discuss whether you need support.

If your attendance drops or continues to be low the Programme Director will ask for a meeting to discuss how your attendance can be improved and whether you need support.

If your attendance does not improve a formal letter will be issued outlining what you have to do in order to demonstrate that you are engaging and should stay on your programme.

A student with unexplained or persistently poor attendance will be contacted and advised that they may be withdrawn from their programme if no explanation is given.

All students will be signposted to appropriate support services at City.

**Authorised Absences**

Sometimes you may know you are going to be away for a period of time. We know that, and can take it into account. If you need to be away:

- **a)** Programme teams will provide clear information on how you can report an absence.
- **b)** The maximum period of absence which can be granted without suspending studies is 20 consecutive working days, subject to School/Visa Compliance approval. In exceptional circumstances, where appropriate evidence has been provided, City may consider authorising an absence up to maximum of 60 days although we wouldn’t expect this to happen very often. If you need to take a longer absence there is a process to do this [here](#).
- **c)** Students who receive an authorised absence will not usually receive a refund of tuition fees. The date you are expected to complete your studies won’t usually be changed to reflect the time away.
- **d)** If an absence is expected to prevent you from progressing on your programme, the School must decide on the best course of action. This may include whether you will be temporarily or permanently withdrawn from the programme or any support that will be made available to you while you are away.

**Fees and Refunds**

Depending on when a student is withdrawn, you may be entitled to a full or partial tuition fee refund. If your programme team does get in touch with you with concerns about your attendance and if there is a possibility that you may be withdrawn (or choose to withdraw) this will be made clear so you are aware of your options.
It is the responsibility of the Deans of Schools (or nominee) to ensure everything is in place to make this policy happen. City's Professional Services will work with Schools to provide support to colleagues and the means of enacting this policy.

We are continually seeking to improve our services and support for students. Relevant support schemes are available to academic staff (e.g. Personal Tutors) and support staff (e.g. Course Officers) to ensure that we are able to help you make the most of your time with us and help if your attendance suggests you may be experiencing difficulty.
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<td>Emily Thornton <a href="mailto:emily.thornton.2@city.ac.uk">emily.thornton.2@city.ac.uk</a> Student Experience &amp; Engagement Department Student &amp; Academic Services</td>
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