

Student Engagement Policy



**Harper Adams
University**

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STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. What is the purpose of this policy?

Academic success is based on our students' proactive engagement with their timetabled learning and teaching events, course-related learning resources on the learning hub and in our Library, as well timely and proactive engagement with our academic and support staff. We take a whole-university approach to promoting student engagement, through:

- Welcome and induction programmes and other support for student transitions by course teams and our specialist professional services (student services, learner and disability support and academic guidance teams);
- 24/7 student support arrangements including out-of-hours and broader services provided through our Student Assistance Programme.
- Curation of our resources and learning opportunities through our virtual learning environment and library resources.
- The nature and quality of our courses that are practically-based and vocationally driven, supported by small teaching teams.
- Opportunities afforded by the size of university community that enable staff and students to get to know one another and work well together.

This policy sets out how we support our students to engage with their studies successfully and Annex A also provides information about how we support international students to remain compliant with the additional visa requirements set by the Home Office.

2. Who is this policy for?

This Policy applies to all registered students with the exception of Postgraduate Research students and those studying at the Harper and Keele Veterinary School.

3. What are our principles and our approach?

- We will monitor your engagement principally through attendance records of learning and teaching events and the submission of assignments and assessments. We may also review your engagement with the virtual learning environment and the library.
- Attendance is expected at all timetabled learning and teaching events and you are expected to contact the Course Tutor (copied to the relevant module leader) in advance via email if you are unable to attend a session, explaining why. If your absence was longer than five consecutive working days you should submit an Absence Form and you may be asked to provide medical or other evidence if appropriate. Attendance is recorded via our online [attendance capture system](#) and it is your responsibility to record your attendance at each event.
- You are required to submit assignments and other assessments by the specified date and time via Turnitin or PebblePad. Any extensions to the deadline need to be sought in advance of that deadline and with evidence to support an extension request under the provisions of our [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#).
- Postgraduate Major Project Supervisors for all Master's Degree students are responsible for maintaining records of student engagement in supervisory meetings, by posting the agreed and action notes of dated supervisory meetings on to a shared folder.
- Your course team will be monitoring your attendance and engagement and will ask to meet with you if you have persistently poor attendance at your studies. They will apply their professional and academic judgement to determine the impact of your engagement with your studies on your ability to successfully complete the year and your course. The nature of the course content and professional accreditation requirements will all form part of their judgement (see section 6 below).
- You will be offered support to help get you back on track with your studies. Support may include:
 - A special support package agreed with Student Services and Disability and Learner Support where applicable (according to the terms of our [Health and Wellbeing Policy](#) and/or
 - An offer of extra support by Learner and Disability Support or Academic Guidance team.

- In other circumstances outcomes may include postponement (an approved break in studies) or being withdrawn from the University. The latter is a last resort, which happens if you continue to not engage with your studies and fail to take the steps required of you by your course team.

4. Who is responsible and what are our responsibilities?

Role	Responsibilities
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend all learning and teaching events and submit assignments and assessments on time. • Contact us in advance if you are going to miss a class or need an extension of a hand-in deadline. • Speak to a member of your course team if you are having difficulties, respond promptly to their emails and take the steps they require of you to ensure you are fully engaged. • Seek help from your course team or Student Services, Learner and Disability Support or Academic Guidance, where appropriate. • Respond promptly to communications from the course team and support staff. You should check your university email account on a daily basis so that key communications are not missed.
Module Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to register attendance.
Course Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Module Tutors, monitor individual student attendance at learning and teaching events, engagement with the virtual learning environment and the timely submission of assignments and assessments. • Support students who are having difficulties engaging with their studies. • Approval of student postponements, working with Student Services.
Head of Department or nominee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of complex cases where there is pattern of poor or patch engagement. • Decisions concerning withdrawal of a student due to inadequate engagement.
Student Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of wellbeing and other support. • Work with Course Managers to agree support packages for individual students under the provisions of our Health and Wellbeing Policy.

5. How we deal with poor engagement

If you have two periods¹ of unauthorised absence within one term or a single period of absence for longer than 5 working days, you will be asked to meet with a member of your course team. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss any challenges you are facing and to agree actions (and timescales) you need to take, which may include accessing support from student services, and/or learner and disability support.

If you continue to have periods of absence, fail to hand in your work on time and/or if you do not undertake the actions agreed with your course team, your case will be referred to your Course Tutor, who may meet with you to discuss your options. If you are suffering from ill health or a major life event, for example, you may be offered a break in studies (known as a postponement) or a special support arrangement within the provisions of our [Health and Wellbeing Policy](#). Your Course Tutor will work with Student Services to ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place.

If there is no good reason for your absence and/or you fail to undertake the action(s) (according to the timescales specified) agreed with your Course Tutor, your case may be referred to the Head of Department, who may require you to follow a closely monitored action plan or may make a decision to withdraw you from the University, based on their professional and academic judgement that you have not made sufficient academic progress to succeed.

The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager is kept informed of any engagement issues concerning overseas students with a UKVI sponsored visa and will contact students directly specifying what action they need to take. This postholder also has the authority to withdraw any sponsored student from the University if their engagement does not meet the requirements set out by the Home Office.

¹ Your course team will determine what a period of absence entails, for example, it may be two key learning and teaching sessions or a number of days. The judgement will be based on the potential impact of a student missing learning and teaching events.

6. Relationship with other policies

Action relating to:	Is Dealt with via:	Possible referrals:	External
Request for extensions	Arrangements for claiming Mitigating Circumstances	N/A	
Changes to your registration and therefore visa sponsorship	Student Visa Sponsorship Policy	Home Office	
Refunds of fees as a result of being withdrawn from the University	Refunds and Compensation Policy	Student Finance England Other funders/sponsors	
Cases where your engagement calls into question your ability to meet the professional standards of your course (for those with professional accreditation)	Fitness to Practice Policy	N/A	

7. Redress

You will be able to appeal the decision made by either your Course Tutor, your Head of Department or the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager to withdraw you from the University. You will need to submit a Student Withdrawal Appeals Form within 7 working days of the date of the Withdrawal Letter. You will need to provide evidence that suggests one or more of the following criteria apply:

- Procedural Irregularity in the operation of this Policy
- Bias or failure to reach a reasonable decision in handling the process
- Evidence of material circumstances not available when the decision was made but that may have affected the decision taken.

Your appeal will be reviewed by the Head of Registration, Assessment Records and Awards and normally you will receive an outcome within 15 working days.

ANNEX A

Additional Engagement Monitoring – Visa Sponsored Students

The Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance>) states that ‘a student is academically engaging if they are actively and consistently following their course of study’. While the main policy to which this annex is attached outlines the monitoring of all students the University, and the action it will take where a student is not engaging with their course, additional contact points for visa sponsored students have been added for both administrative and student welfare reasons.

Undergraduate Students on campus

Visa-sponsored undergraduate students based on campus are subject to a full-time teaching timetable where their attendance in scheduled sessions is monitored in line with all other students as outlined in this policy document. In addition, these students have a number of set engagement points throughout the academic year, which they must meet. These are to ensure that records are kept up to date and that the student has a point of contact for any concerns which they may have.

Undergraduate Students on placement

As students on placement are largely independent of interaction with the University, to ensure a genuine workplace experience, formal attendance monitoring does not take place, although should a student be absent from their place of work without their employer’s permission, the employer is required to contact the University. Prior to a student starting placement their placement employer will be informed of our Visa Compliance obligations and the student will be required to confirm their understanding of their responsibilities to maintain engagement points set out below.

Given that placement students start and finish their placement at slightly different times in the academic year, a sequence of engagement points have been developed whereby the student is in contact with the University approximately on a monthly basis as outlined in the table below. The months by which engagement points are listed are indicative and may vary. Records of these engagement points will be held within the PIMS system and their completion monitored by the Placement Officer.

Taught Postgraduate Students

Taught postgraduate students are based on campus and their attendance in scheduled sessions is monitored in line with all other students as outlined in this document.

In addition, students with visa sponsorship have a number of set engagement points throughout the academic year which they must meet. These are to ensure that records are kept up to date and that the student has a point of contact for any concerns which they may have. Students are also required to attend a number of supervisory meetings regarding their project in the latter half of the academic year.

Research Students

As Research students do not attend timetabled classes in the same way as taught students, their engagement with their course is monitored through normal course progression and the meeting of key reporting milestones as detailed in the Postgraduate Research Students’ Handbook.

In addition to this, students are required to attend a specific meeting with their Supervisor/Director of Studies on at least a monthly basis to discuss their progress on the course. Records of these meetings, including meeting notes and action plans are sent to the Postgraduate Research Students Administrator to collate and store. Where meetings are missed, action will be taken by the Supervisor and Research Postgraduate Programmes Manager which is detailed in the Postgraduate Research Students' Handbook.

In addition to the monthly supervisory meetings, the students are required to complete administrative sign-ins on a termly basis with the Postgraduate Research Students Administrator to share any detail changes, confirm any working hours and for any key messages to be passed on to the student.

Indicative table of engagement points for Visa Sponsored Students outside of routine attendance monitoring for all students

Month	Postgraduate Research	Postgraduate Taught	Undergraduate on campus	Undergraduate on placement
August	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	n/a – vacation period	n/a – vacation period	Confirmation of acknowledgement of placement responsibilities (AVC)
September	Supervisory meeting (DoS) (Re)Enrolment/ Right to Study check/ Administrative sign-in (PRSA)	(Re)Enrolment (SR) Right to Study check/ Administrative sign-in (RARA)	(Re)Enrolment (SR) Right to Study check/ Administrative sign-in (AMC)	Re-enrolment/registration for the year of study (RARA)
October	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	First Review of placement – shortly after commencement (PT)
November	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Welfare meeting* – 1 st Term (IO)	Welfare meeting* – 1 st Term (IO)	Welfare call – 1 st Term (approx. Nov) (IO)
December	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Administrative sign-in (RARA)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Email check in (end of term 1) (PO)
January	Supervisory meeting (DoS) Administrative sign-in (PRSA)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Administrative sign-in (AMC)	Visa Student Placement check in (beginning of term 2) (PT)
February	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Welfare meeting* – 2 nd Term (IO)	Welfare meeting* – 2 nd Term (IO)	Welfare call – 2 nd Term (IO)
March	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress	Email check in (end of term 2) (PO)
April	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Administrative sign-in (RARA)	Administrative sign-in (AMC)	Visa Student Placement check in

	Administrative sign-in (PRSA)			(beginning of term 3) (PT)
May	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Welfare meeting* – 3 rd Term (IO)	Welfare meeting* – 3 rd Term (IO)	Welfare call – 3 rd Term (IO)
June	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Normal engagement monitoring in progress (exam period)	2 nd Review of placement – prior to completion (PT)
July	Supervisory meeting (DoS)	Administrative sign-in (RARA)	n/a – end of academic year	Call to confirm that placement has been completed (PO)

*for independent students, these will take place on an individual basis, for those students in groups, such as on TNE courses, these will be a group session.

Welfare meetings for students based on campus will take place face to face wherever possible while those off campus will take place by video or voice call.

Key to staff responsible for each engagement point:

AVC – Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager

DoS – Director of Studies/Supervisor

IO – International Officer

PO – Placement Officer

PRSA – Postgraduate Research Students Administrator

PT – Placement Tutor

RARA – Registration, Assessments, Records and Awards Office

Monitoring of engagement points

Visa sponsored students will be made aware of their required attendance at the engagement points listed at the start of each academic year and the relevant member of staff will contact the students to make appointments where necessary. The Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager will make monthly checks with the relevant staff responsible for the above engagement points to ensure that these have taken place.

Where staff have been unable to contact students, they should raise this with the Admissions and Visa Compliance Manager who will take steps to contact the student, including contacting the Course Tutor to see if there is any wider non-engagement with academic studies, (as outlined in the main policy), and will follow the unauthorised absence process where necessary. Where a student does not engage, and the unauthorised absence process is followed, there is a maximum limit of 60 days non-engagement for visa sponsored students so any actions, including action plans will take this into account.