

# Loughborough College Group

## *Higher Education Attendance and Engagement Policy*

### **1. Principles**

1.1 The college recognises that there is a strong link between student attendance and engagement and student success. Therefore, the college actively supports and encourages students to participate in learning sessions, arrive on time, and engage with learning activities. In order to do this, the college monitors levels of attendance, punctuality, and engagement.

1.2 Students are required to be in physical attendance during timetabled sessions, arrive punctually for all sessions and are required, encouraged, and supported to fully engage with their studies (including accessing online learning resources) so that they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.

1.3 Monitoring engagement, attendance, and punctuality can identify students at risk of withdrawing from, or failing, their course, and enable support mechanisms to be put in place.

1.4 The college wants to ensure that all students can receive the right support and guidance when they need it, which is why we need to have a good understanding of attendance, punctuality and engagement. An erratic pattern of attendance, punctuality, or engagement can be an early indication of issues that may lead to underachievement, failure to progress, or withdrawal. Early identification of, and timely intervention with such students enhances retention and wellbeing.

1.5 Attendance, engagement and punctuality at scheduled teaching and learning sessions is also an important part of integration and contribution to the college community, as well as developing social networks with others studying the same programme and modules and across the wider undergraduate community.

1.6 The college has a duty to monitor the attendance and engagement of its students to fulfil its legal obligation to inform relevant external agencies of their registration status. The college is required to notify the Student Loans Company and other organisations who pay tuition fees about periods of absence or unsatisfactory attendance. This may lead to financial support being reduced or suspended and it may also lead to students having to repay money that they have already received.

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1.7 If a student requires a visa to study in the UK, the college must report periods of absence or unsatisfactory attendance or engagement to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), which could result in visa withdrawal. The college has to meet obligations under the Data Protection Act to hold accurate data on student registration.

## 2. Applicability and Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate students, whether studying on campus or by blended learning.

2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following College policies and procedures:

- Loughborough College Higher Education Student Contract
- Loughborough College Higher Education Enrolment and Withdrawal Policy
- Loughborough College Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Loughborough College Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy (International Students).
- Loughborough College HE Extenuating Circumstances Policy

2.3 The scope of this policy covers attendance and punctuality at all timetabled teaching and learning sessions and engagement with learning activities and resources.

## 3. Responsibilities

3.1 Ownership of this policy lies with the Higher Education Student Registry.

## 4. Definitions

4.1 Attendance is defined as the physical presence of the student during the scheduled teaching and learning activity for the entire session (including remote attendance for online, live sessions). Scheduled teaching and learning activities include lectures, seminars and tutorials; project and dissertation supervision meetings; practical sessions, labs and workshops; presentations and performances; external trips and visits; online lectures, contact days for blended learning students; and placement hours.

4.2 Engagement is defined as active participation by the student with their studies (attendance or blended-based study) and use of resources, including online, to support their learning. This includes attendance at timetabled learning and teaching sessions and activities; active contribution in lectures and seminars; engagement with resources on HE Learnzone; use of library facilities and other learning resources; engagement with and submission of assessment tasks set; attendance at examinations or time-constrained assessment activities; completion

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of online lectures/seminars (blended learning courses); and responding in a timely manner to formal communications from the college.

4.3 Punctuality is defined as a student arriving at a scheduled teaching session at the designated start time, prepared and ready to participate. Persistent late arrival is considered when a student repeatedly fails to meet the scheduled start time for sessions, which may affect their learning, engagement, or assessment or that of others.

4.4 In the context of this policy, only activities stipulated as module/programme requirements will be defined as requiring either 'attendance' or 'engagement'.

## 5. Attendance and Engagement Expectations

5.1 The college expects students to attend and/or engage in all scheduled teaching and learning activities which form part of their programme of study, including those run by external professionals.

5.2 Students are expected to attend punctually (see Section 7) and for the full duration of all such activities and to make full use of the available resources to support their learning.

5.3 Students are expected to complete both formative and summative assessment tasks at the first opportunity and by deadlines outlined.

5.4 Students are expected to participate in their learning, take responsibility for their own development, and demonstrate a positive attitude to their studies through engagement.

## 6. Registering Attendance and Notifying Absences

6.1 Students are required to specifically register their attendance at timetabled teaching and learning sessions (e.g., lectures, seminars, practicals, labs, etc.) via an electronic system or paper register. Students are responsible for ensuring that their attendance has been registered and must not register attendance for another student.

6.2 Students should report any absence on the day it occurs using their ILP, prior to the start of the timetabled session. For any prolonged periods of absence (planned or otherwise), where practicable to do so, students should make their Course Leader / Subject Area Lead aware. Examples may include: religious festivals, family events, ill health, etc. Longer periods (more than one week) may require supporting evidence, and regular patterns of short-term absences may also require evidence.

6.3 Some modules require formal authorisation for absences, particularly where attendance affects accreditation or assessment. Students must follow College procedures and the Extenuating Circumstances Policy where applicable.

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6.4 Students may apply to pause their programme of study for personal or medical reasons via their Subject Area Lead/Course Leader or Curriculum Manager. Instances affecting assessment should be reported in line with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

6.5 Attendance of Tier 4 visa students is also subject to the Loughborough College Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy (International Students), and students must comply with any additional monitoring requirements to maintain visa compliance.

## 7. Student Punctuality

7.1 A student is considered late if they arrive after the scheduled start time of any timetabled session. Students will normally be permitted entry up to 15 minutes after the scheduled start time, although this will still be recorded as late.

7.1.1 When more than 15 minutes late, the lecturer may require the student to wait for an appropriate point to enter if immediate entry would cause disruption. Students should knock and wait to be invited into the session. Where late arrival disrupts the session, compromises health and safety, or prevents meaningful participation, the lecturer may deny entry. Repeated late arrival may result in engagement interventions or sanctions in line with the Student Behaviour Policy.

7.1.2. On occasions where a student is aware that they will be late to the session, students must inform the lecturer prior to the start of the session through MS Teams or Email, with the reason as to why they will be late.

7.1.3. In instances where a student is late, lecturers should establish the reason for this at an appropriate time within the session. This must then be reported on the Student's ILP, tagging in the Course Leader / Subject Area Lead to enable continuous review. For any instances whereby additional support is required, the HE Welfare and Academic Support Team should be informed.

7.2 Students are responsible for:

- i. Managing their time to ensure punctual arrival, taking into account factors that may affect attendance.
- ii. Contacting the module lecturer in advance if lateness is foreseeable.
- iii. Minimising disruption upon arrival and taking responsibility for catching up on any missed work, noting that lecturers are not required to pause, repeat, or delay the lesson.
- iv. Informing the Course Leader and Welfare Team or Academic Tutors if lateness is due to ongoing difficulties such as disability, wellbeing, caring or personal responsibilities.

## 8. Authorised Absence

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8.1 Students should report their absence using their ILP. Absences reported prior to the start of the lecture or seminar will be deemed an authorised absence. Short periods of absences are considered to be 1 week or less. A period longer than this will require evidence and completion of Extenuating Circumstances if assessments are likely to be affected.

8.2 Students may request authorisation for short periods of absence for personal or religious reasons from their Curriculum Manager. Wherever possible such absences should be requested in advance and at the earliest available opportunity. Requests for absences of more than five working days will be considered in exceptional circumstances due to the potential impact on a student's studies.

8.3 Students may request a period of absence for elite sporting activities, particularly where this will impact assessment. An application for elite athlete assessment flexibility must be made and approved by the Curriculum Manager prior to the period of absence, in line with the elite athlete assessment flexibility process.

8.4 Requests for authorised absence will be assessed on an individual basis, and where relevant, students may be advised to follow the Extenuating Circumstances or Pause of Studies procedures.

8.5 Authorised absence for International students on a Tier 4 visa is subject to the Attendance Monitoring and Reporting (International Students) Procedure and must be reviewed by the Curriculum Manager alongside the International Department.

8.6 For absences over a prolonged period of time that will cause a significant impact on learning and / or assessments, students should seek advice from their Course Leader and/or Curriculum Manager and consider pausing their studies.

8.7 Curriculum Managers or appointed representatives are responsible for approving all initial requests for periods of absence and for informing relevant teaching and administrative colleagues.

8.8 The college reserves the right to refuse any request for authorised absence where the student's pattern of attendance and engagement already gives cause for concern; reasons for the decision will be given.

## 9. Monitoring and Recording Attendance

9.1 The college will monitor student attendance and engagement and may draw upon the following records to inform an overall profile for a student:

- i. Student registers taken during lectures, seminars, practical sessions and similar activities, or during formal examinations
- ii. Submission and completion of assessments

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- iii. Engagement with the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Learnzone, e.g., accessing of materials and participation in online tasks on Learnzone
- iv. Usage of the College Library and other learning resources, e.g. borrowing of books, and accessing e-books or journal articles
- v. Swiping of the Student ID card to gain access to College premises

9.2 All data will be held and processed in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

9.3 The college will monitor students to identify those whose attendance and engagement may be an indication of difficulties or challenges. Attendance of Tier 4 students is subject to additional monitoring to meet the requirements of the UKVI.

9.4 Where attendance and/or engagement levels raise concerns, the college will take appropriate steps to provide support. The initial focus will be on support and wellbeing for the student.

9.5 Continued attendance and/or engagement issues will trigger communications designed to encourage and support students to re-engage with their studies.

## **10. Interventions to Support Students' Attendance and Engagement**

10.1 The college seeks to support students' academic progress and wellbeing. Data from registers, assessment submissions, VLE engagement, and library usage will be used throughout the academic year to identify students whose attendance and engagement may be a cause for concern and require intervention.

10.2 Interventions with students may be informal or formal, depending on the severity of the concern. The initial focus is on support and wellbeing for the student.

10.3 Interventions may include:

- i. Automated e-mails to encourage re-engagement and signposting to appropriate student services
- ii. Emails from Course Leaders/Subject Area Lead requiring an explanation for absence and guidance on support
- iii. Meetings with the Course Leader/Subject Area Lead, HE Welfare and Academic Support Team to plan catch-up and re-engagement strategies
- iv. Escalation to formal attendance monitoring in line with the Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure, if absence patterns continue
- v. Safe and well checks coordinated by the HE Welfare Team, including contacting emergency contacts and/or authorities if necessary

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## 11. Communicating with Students

11.1 Communication with students may be through the student's college email account, personal email account, MS Teams or by phone.

11.2 A letter, if required, will be sent to the student's registered term-time or home address as recorded on the College's Student Records System alongside email communication.

11.3 It is the student's responsibility to ensure all contact information held on their student record is kept up to date.

11.4 Decisions taken under this policy will be made on a case-by-case basis to ensure that students are offered support according to their needs (e.g. learning disability or other protected characteristics).

11.6 Any deliberate attempt to circumvent this policy, such as registering attendance for another student, will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

## 12. Consequences of Non-Attendance, Non-Engagement, and Persistent Lateness

12.1 Persistent non-attendance, lateness or non-engagement is a pattern of repeated instances over a module, semester, or teaching block, affecting learning, engagement, or assessment.

12.2 Students who do not attend or engage with learning activities, or who demonstrate persistent lateness, may be subject to the following:

- i. Informal discussions and reminders
- ii. Referral to HE Welfare and Academic Support Team or Course Leader/Subject Area Lead
- iii. Formal attendance monitoring
- iv. Non-admittance to sessions if lateness disrupts learning
- v. Ineligibility for assessment if regulatory or professional standards are not met
- vi. Formal Written Warning or communication regarding non-attendance, non-engagement or persistent lateness.
- vii. Referral under the Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- viii. Referral under the Fitness to Study Policy
- ix. Withdrawal from the programme under the HE Enrolment and Withdrawal Policy

12.2 Students are responsible for engaging with support offered, attending follow-up meetings, and taking steps to improve attendance, engagement, and punctuality.

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12.3 Students who are withdrawn for non-attendance will be reported, as appropriate, to the Student Loans Company, UKVI, employers or sponsors, and/or Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

12.4 Students have the right to appeal their withdrawal and should refer to the Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure for details.

### **13. Higher Education Student Probation Board**

13.1 If attendance and engagement remain unsatisfactory after initial contact, support interventions/ Behaviour Policy interventions during the first 6 weeks of enrolment, the case will be referred to the Probation Board for formal review. The Board will review attendance and engagement and intervention records, any extenuating circumstances and feedback from staff, both academic and support teams.

13.2 Following review, the Board may determine one of the following outcomes:

- i) Continued Monitoring with Support Conditions: The student remains on programme with attendance expectations clearly articulated and monitored.
- ii) Formal Monitoring with Conditions: The student continues on programme with formal expectations and targets set in relation to attendance and engagement and regular review points in line with the Student Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- iii) Withdrawal Recommendation: Where attendance and engagement are judged to be persistently unsatisfactory despite support and engagement opportunities, the Board may recommend withdrawal from the programme.

13.3 Should the Probation Board determine that withdrawal is the appropriate outcome:

- i) A formal letter of withdrawal will be issued to the student outlining the decision and its effective date.
- ii) The letter will explain the consequences of withdrawal, including the impact on continued enrolment, access to facilities, tuition fees, student funding, and, where applicable, visa sponsorship obligations.
- iii) Students will be informed of their right to appeal in line with the appeals procedures.

Withdrawal decisions due to non-attendance and engagement are consistent with sector practices, where failure to demonstrate adequate participation over sustained periods can lead to termination of registration.

### **14. Probation Board Appeals**

14.1. Students are given the right to appeal their withdrawal following a Probation Board.

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14.2. All appeals must be made by email to the Director of Governance & Legal Services (appeals@loucoll.ac.uk) and must state the grounds for the appeal (e.g. new evidence not considered by the probation board panel, conduct or fairness of the original procedure, disagreement over sanction applied). Any appeal must be made within 10 working days of receiving the outcome letter.

14.3. The Director of Governance & Legal Services or nominated representative will review the appeal submitted to ensure that it includes grounds of appeal. The Director of Governance & Legal Services may request further information from the person appealing. Where an appeal is submitted without valid grounds of appeal, the Director of Governance & Legal Services may dismiss the appeal without further review. In exceptional circumstances, the Director of Governance & Legal Services in consultation with the relevant College Principal can uphold the appeal without further review. In all other cases where a valid appeal has been submitted and acknowledged, an Appeal Meeting will be convened. This will be recorded as an "Appeal Meeting." on Pro-Monitor.

14.4. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director of Governance & Legal Services or nominated representative will acknowledge the appeal in writing via email and log it for review. All probationary appeals will then be referred to a senior manager and a member of the Wider Management Team (WMT) who has had no prior involvement in the matter.

14.5. The appeals panel will undertake a desk-based review within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. There is no opportunity for the learner or their parent/carer to attend the desk-based review; however, the panel may contact them if further information or clarification is required. An outcome letter will be sent within 5 working days and logged onto ProMonitor. The letter will normally be sent by email to the student's personal account and to the parent/carer for learners under the age of 18. Requests can be made for the letter in other formats.

14.6. Following the desk-based review, the appeal can be upheld or dismissed. If the appeal is upheld, the staff member can amend the sanction applied at the original Probationary Panel meeting.

14.7. The decision of the appeal panel is final and the end of the Learner Probationary Period appeal process. No further right of appeal will be granted

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