

Student Engagement Policy for Undergraduate and Post Graduate Taught Students

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed as part of the University's commitment to provide a supportive learning environment in which encouragement is given to all students to develop a range of skills, abilities and approaches to their studies and other activities. This policy takes account of students' individual circumstances, whilst enabling the University to ensure that all students are fully engaged with their studies.

For students to achieve academic success there is a need to engage fully with all teaching and learning, as studying and attending lectures, seminars, tutorials, and practicals/workshops provides opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully achieve the outcomes of our taught courses.

The policy is designed to facilitate early intervention where a student's engagement is a cause for concern. It is designed to encourage students to report any factors they feel are impacting on their ability to attend or engage. **The guiding principle of this policy is that wherever possible, withdrawal from studies should be avoided.**

This policy, together with the additional information and guidance on the [engagement webpage](#), sets out how the University aims to support its student to engage fully with their studies and is intended to:

- improve the engagement of all students
- ensure a proactive approach to providing support when needed
- enable students to maximise their full potential, increasing success and achievement.
- avoid preventable student withdrawals

2. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Students can engage with their studies via a range of different means. Some of this will be via formal attendance at online or face-to-face teaching sessions, including practicals, fieldwork, work placements and study abroad, or peer-to-peer learning activities. Engagement is also demonstrated through the submission of coursework and sitting of assessments. Engagement with studying is also undertaken through the use of Moodle and library resources, and through meetings with personal tutors. Wider engagement with the University is through interactions with other services and activities such as those run by Careers, Volunteering, Student Life, CeDAS, and Wellbeing. As a university we may draw on evidence of engagement with any of these activities to best understand the specific patterns of engagement and needs of students. In sharing data across the University, we will abide by the Data Protection protocols set out at the end of this policy.

3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

3.1 To support and encourage students to achieve their full potential by engaging in all areas of their studies, and more generally with university services.

3.2 To intervene at an early stage and offer further support where it is apparent that students are not engaging with their studies and with university services and where students may benefit from additional help.

- 3.3 To unify the approach across the University to reviewing and supporting engagement to ensure parity of treatment, intervention and support is provided for students.
- 3.4 To ensure the University and its students who are sponsored by Royal Holloway for their Student Visa comply with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) legislation to maintain the University's Sponsor Licence and protect students' Student Visa status.

4. SCOPE

The policy applies to the following groups of students:

- All students registered with Royal Holloway, University of London, on taught modules delivered by Royal Holloway, University of London.
- All students registered on a taught dual degree course that is awarded by Royal Holloway while they are being taught at Royal Holloway.
- While students are attending other institutions as part of a study abroad year the hosting institution will be responsible for attendance and engagement under their policy and Royal Holloway should be informed as soon as possible.
- While students are attending work placements as part of their degree course, the University is responsible for monitoring regular engagement. The employer will inform the University of any unauthorised absence.
- For some qualifications which are accredited by a PSRB, alternative attendance and engagement guidelines may be required. These will be made clear to students via the degree course handbook.
- For students undertaking official roles as Students' Union sabbatical officers, the Student's Union will inform the University of any unauthorised absence.
- PGR students are covered by the PGR Code of Practice and thus this policy does not pertain to them.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 Undertaking a course of study indicates a willingness on the part of the student to adhere to the requirements and expectations contained in this policy and an ability to meet these requirements.

5.2 The University has a legal requirement as a Sponsor of the Student Visa route to monitor the attendance and engagement of its visa sponsored students and report to the UKVI any student who is found to be in breach of their visa conditions.

5.3 Reviewing and supporting engagement can highlight disengagement with studies and enables poor engagement to be identified early. The University can then offer appropriate support and, in the case of students who are sponsored by Royal Holloway for their Student Visa, warning of potential visa breaches if unauthorised poor engagement continues.

5.4 A student's engagement is one of the factors considered when reviewing academic progress as regular engagement is likely to support a student's ability to succeed and achieve learning outcomes.

5.5 A student's engagement record can also indicate challenges with their health and wellbeing, or complex personal circumstances and the University is committed to supporting students to enable them to succeed in their learning and helping them understand the importance of maintaining good wellbeing as part of their work towards academic success.

6. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

6.1 The University recognises that, occasionally, students may be unable to meet the University's engagement expectations due to unforeseen circumstances.

6.2 If a student is unable to attend, they must notify the University using the absence process; if this is not done, the absence will count as an unnotified and unauthorised absence.

6.3 For short term absences from study of **5 consecutive working days or less**, students should notify the University via the notification of absence process. Evidence is not required. Where possible notification should be submitted in advance and no later than by the end of the first day the absence occurred.

6.4 Where multiple notifications of absences are submitted that may have a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress, or where engagement is already a concern, authorisation for absence may not be given. Students with long-standing conditions, or in need of health and wellbeing support, should ensure that they have engaged or registered with the Wellbeing department team. This may include appropriate reasonable adjustments via the Disability & Neurodiversity team.

6.5 For absences of **more than 5 consecutive working days**, or where a student has been unable to notify the University of an absence of five working days or less by the end of the first day it occurred, students should request an authorised absence via the notification of absence process with appropriate evidence. Where possible, requests for authorised absence **of more than 5 consecutive working days** should be submitted in advance. Authorisation for unplanned absences may be submitted up to 5 working days after the last day of absence, and be accompanied by appropriate evidence. Requests for authorised absence submitted after 5 working days may not be considered.

6.6 The University will consider requests for authorised absence sensitively and will try to accommodate all reasonable requests up to 10 working days. Where an authorised absence request may have a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress, or where engagement levels are already of concern, such requests may not be granted.

7. REVIEWING AND EVALUATING ENGAGEMENT

7.1 All Schools are required to use the University's designated attendance record system for students on taught courses of study to ensure a consistent approach and robust record keeping.

7.2 All Schools must communicate engagement expectations clearly, by referring students to the [engagement webpage](#) or via Student Handbooks. For the avoidance of doubt a student's engagement will be reviewed and evaluated based on their attendance record, submission of assessments, and use of Moodle. All Schools must also communicate clearly in Student Handbooks or by reference to the [engagement webpage](#), the engagement escalation process and support available to students.

7.3 The University expects students to attend scheduled learning sessions in the way they are designed to be delivered (online or in person), for example but not limited to, lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, field trips, orals, laboratory sessions, PC Labs and practicals. The University also expects students to undertake all set coursework and examinations and play an active role within classes. Participation in learning through the use of Moodle and other learning resources is also expected. It is also recommended that students engage with other services on offer by the University which are aimed at supporting the further careers, learning or mental health and wellbeing of students.

7.4 It is a student's responsibility to ensure their attendance is recorded accurately through the

University's attendance record system.

- 7.5 An integrated approach must be adopted between Schools, Wellbeing and Student Administration which will provide all students with the appropriate structure for support when dealing with poor engagement. This must be timely, collaborative, and designed to re-engage and support the student towards academic achievement. Recommendations and guidance on implementing this integrated approach is provided to Schools.
- 7.6 In evaluating whether the School engagement requirements have been met consideration will be given to the whole contextual circumstances of a student and their engagement activities as shown on the Student Dashboard. This will include consideration of attendance records, submission of assessments, and use of Moodle, (and, potentially, new data sets as they become available), records in Banner and, for example, circumstances where ill health or other legitimate reasons prevent students from fully engaging with their studies. Students are responsible for informing their School of any absences through the University's notification of absence process and providing appropriate documentary evidence.
- 7.7 Schools are responsible in the first instance for reviewing and evaluating student engagement and for providing and recommending support for non-engaged students from a range of academic and/or professional services staff, including Wellbeing. This support is intended to constructively re-engage students and must be clearly documented for auditing purposes. University requirements and guidance for the review and evaluation of student engagement and documentation of interventions and support are provided to Schools.
- 7.8 In those instances where initial support proves ineffective and students persistently fail to engage with their studies and the University, Schools should consider a range of options with the student, e.g., interruption, commencement of the Support to Study programme, or disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.
- 7.9 In cases of persistent non-engagement where support has not been taken up, disciplinary procedures as described in the Academic Regulations can be applied as above and may ultimately lead to the ending of the student's registration (see Undergraduate Regulations Sections 23/24 and Postgraduate Taught Sections 16/17).
- 7.10 Students studying on degree courses and modules with PSRB accreditation are obliged to meet any additional engagement requirements set by the accrediting body. These requirements are in addition to the process set out in 7.8-7.9 above and will be monitored by the relevant School.
- 7.11 Students who are sponsored by Royal Holloway for their Student Visa are obliged to meet the engagement requirements in line with their visa conditions and this supersedes the process set out in 7.8-7.9 above. Student Administration will monitor those on a Student Visa and identify any engagement concerns or issues. If a student's engagement falls below acceptable levels and is considered to have breached their visa conditions they will be reported to the UKVI and their Student Visa will be withdrawn. In line with the University's obligations to UKVI, the University may terminate a student's registration for failure to engage at an acceptable level without following the disciplinary procedures outlined in the Academic Regulations, as the University's UKVI responsibilities supersede this.

Use of Data

Use of Data

The University is committed to handling student data with care and ensuring compliance with the GDPR

and Data Protection Act 2018, which set out the legislative framework for managing personal data. The University's Data Protection Policy is available to read online [here](#). For more information about your personal data that we collect and use, please see the [Student Data Collection Notice](#).

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