

LTC13D077

**Title:** Procedures relating to Attendance, Engagement and Progress (General Regulation 13) for Students on Taught Programmes  
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**Date:** 10 June 2014  
**Circulation:** List of recipients on LTC  
**Agenda:** LTC13A006, Item A1  
**Version:** Final  
**Status:** Open

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### **Issue**

These procedures sets out how the University will act where there are concerns about a student's attendance, engagement and/or progress, in order to provide students with appropriate pastoral support and guidance. It is an updated version of the current procedure, to clarify the requirements to monitor attendance at teaching events and simplify the follow-up procedures in the event of non-attendance. These procedures relate to students studying on taught programmes only.

### **Recommendation**

Recipients are invited to:

1. Consider the procedures and associated flow-chart;
2. Resolve whether to approve the new procedures.

### **Resource Implications**

None

### **Risk Implications**

There are risks for the University if there are no procedures for monitoring student attendance in 2014-15, including risk to the University's Highly Trusted Sponsor Status for students requiring a Tier 4 visa to study.

### **Equality and Diversity**

It is not envisaged that the recommendations contained in the report will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

### **Timing of decisions**

The recommendation, if approved, would come into force for academic year 2014/5.

### **Further Information**

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## Background

General Regulation 13, [http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(gen\)/gen-regs-for-students/13-attendance,-engagement-and-progress](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(gen)/gen-regs-for-students/13-attendance,-engagement-and-progress), states *inter alia*, that 'A student on a taught programme is required ... to attend lectures and other classes as may be prescribed for the programme of study and to be available to undertake such work as prescribed'.

However, there is not a University-wide procedure setting out the minimum requirements for monitoring of attendance, which this revised procedure addresses. In addition, two recommendations have been made by the internal auditors, following their audit of UEA and its 'Tier 4 License and Highly Trusted Sponsor Status' (copy of the report attached). The recommendations of the auditors are:

1. "The University should implement a policy which sets out the minimum level of monitoring of attendance, which is applied to all schools within each of the University's four faculties at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate level taught courses.
2. When a standard minimum level of monitoring attendance is introduced, the University should assure itself that the standard is complied with, by regularly auditing the records."

## Discussion

Important points to discuss:

1. Proposed procedure allows the Head of School to issue one Formal Warning before the option to refer the student to the Senate Student Discipline Committee (SSDC). The flowchart shows that the HOS still has discretion not to refer students to SSDC, depending on the extenuating circumstances, but the process is shorter than the current one (and hopefully less frustrating as Schools would not have to count the number of warnings).
2. UUEAS was concerned about the monitoring of students and application of disciplinary procedures, particularly if students chose not to attend, for example because they did not find it useful or interesting. It is proposed that if there are concerns about teaching quality then this should be reported to HOS, but what should the University do with students who persistently miss a particular teaching session simply because they do not like it?

### Changes to Schools' practices

The procedures propose a minimum requirement of monitoring, i.e. at least one register being completed per week for all students registered for each of their modules, where teaching patterns permit.

For Schools that offer courses with PSRB requirements, the proposed procedures will have no resource implications because they already monitor students' attendance at every teaching session and could not opt for the minimum requirement only.

Some Schools currently operate above the minimum requirement, e.g. CMP, ECO, PHI. The procedures will not require them to lower their current level of monitoring to the minimum; they should be encouraged to maintain their current level of student monitoring, which would result in no resource implications.

The following Schools do not currently monitor student attendance/absence: ART (PG), BIO (PG), CHE (PG), ENV (PG). It is not anticipated that the new requirements would be significant in terms of staff resource required for register completion; it may take more effort and time to change the culture, and for academic colleagues to accept that they have to

proactively keep an eye on students' attendance and meet with students who have missed tuition etc.

As the proposal is that Schools operate their current "triggers" (the absence level at which the School would invite a student for a meeting) in 2014-15, the impact on workloads should not be significantly different. A pilot will be running in 2014-15, whereby LTS will have a look at the number of cases that would have resulted if a "standard" trigger is used, with the aim of: (a) assessing whether it will be possible to standardise triggers so that it is easier for students/staff to understand/implement and (b) collecting sufficient data so that the workload implications could be determined. A review of the procedures will therefore be carried out in March 2015 (see green box in Flow chart).

#### **Attachments**

1. Revised Procedures
2. Flowchart
3. Internal Audit Report

*Procedures relating to Attendance, Engagement and Progress (General Regulation 13) for Students on Taught Programmes*

1. *Introduction*

This document sets out how the University will act where there are concerns about a student's attendance, engagement and/or progress, in order to provide students with appropriate pastoral support and guidance, and the process that it would follow in the event that the student may have breached General Regulation 13.

[http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(gen\)/gen-regs-for-students/13-attendance,-engagement-and-progress](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(gen)/gen-regs-for-students/13-attendance,-engagement-and-progress)

These procedures relate to students studying on taught programmes.

In order to identify students who may be struggling with their studies and provide pastoral support and guidance at the earliest opportunity, all Schools shall monitor the attendance of their undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who are registered on award-bearing courses, as well as visiting students spending a semester/year at the University.

2. *Students' obligations in relation to attendance, engagement and progress*

Students' obligations are set out in General Regulation 13. Students are required to attend all teaching events; if they are unable to do so, they must report their absence to the Learning and Teaching Service. Guidance on this is available at:

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/learningandteaching/students/studying/Attendance+and+Absence+--+post+Sep+2013>

The guidance document also sets out the procedure for students who wish to ask for a period of absence in advance.

3. *A Module Organiser's obligations in relation to the monitoring of student attendance and engagement in timetabled teaching sessions*

Module Organisers (even if they do not teach all the timetabled sessions for that module) shall ensure that at least one register is completed per week for all students registered for each of their modules, where teaching patterns permit. Where module teaching is delivered less frequently, a register should be taken at each teaching event. It may not be practical for academic staff to complete a register to record attendance at large teaching events.

The academic member of staff delivering the teaching session should complete the register online, but the Module Organiser will retain responsibility to ensure that the records are complete.

Academic staff shall ensure that they complete the e-registers promptly (within 2 working days) after the teaching event.

4. *Monitoring of student attendance on placements*

Heads of Schools must ensure that student absences are reviewed by appropriate staff in the School at least twice per semester, and consider what support/ guidance/ action (if required) should follow.

Schools must liaise with LTS and send the placement address(es) for all student(s) on placement to the relevant Learning and Teaching Service Hub, so that these can be logged. For students with Tier 4 visas, LTS will forward the information to the University's Visa and Compliance Team. The Visa and Compliance Team may share the details with the Home Office in advance of student(s) going on placement.

A suitable monitoring method must be agreed between the School and the placement provider before the student commences placement. They should also agree on what records are retained, and by whom, to enable the University to confirm that a student was where s/he was expected to be and attending as required.

Schools must ensure that all courses open to international students with a placement element have clear and operational monitoring processes which are agreed between the placement provider and the Visa and Compliance team. The attendance monitoring process (for students while they are on placement) should be documented in the relevant Course Handbook and all students, academic staff and placement providers concerned should be made aware of it and have sufficient guidance to enable them to comply with it.

5. *Monitoring of students' attendance whilst studying abroad*

If the year or semester abroad is organised through the Study Abroad Office, it shall ensure that a suitable monitoring method has been agreed with the host institution. If the year abroad is organised by the School, the School shall ensure that it has an agreed monitoring method with the host institution.

6. *Monitoring of PGT students completing their dissertations*

In order to ensure that the University is able to demonstrate taught postgraduate students' attendance and engagement during their dissertation period, academic staff who act as dissertation supervisors should maintain a record after each meeting with the student. They should also make notes of any contact with the student (e.g. by email, phone, Skype.)

7. *Monitoring of students holding a Tier 4 Visa*

*Schools and the Learning and Teaching Services Hub will liaise with the Visa and Compliance Team regarding the attendance concerns of any student holding a Tier 4 Visa, in particular where students have missed ten consecutive teaching events across all the modules they are studying.*

*PGT students with a Tier 4 Visa must apply to the Head of their School for permission to complete their dissertation outside the UK. They must submit the request through their Learning and Teaching Services Hub.*

## *8. Procedures for dealing with concerns in relation to a student's attendance engagement and progress*

### *8.1. Review of a student's attendance, engagement and/or progress*

*Schools shall review the attendance records of students on credit-bearing taught programmes. As Advisers have access to their advisees' attendance records, they should monitor their advisees' attendance and provide support to those who have missed teaching events. A full review shall be carried out by a nominated academic colleague (e.g. Senior Adviser, Year Lead, etc.) on a regular basis, no less than twice per semester, to ensure that students receive relevant support; the attendance records will be provided by the Learning and Teaching Services Hubs for these reviews.*

*Where the School has concerns about a student's attendance record and/or his/her ability to engage or catch up with studies, the nominated colleague(s) shall invite the student to an initial meeting. In the event that the student has already reported the reasons for being absent, an initial meeting should still be offered so that the School can provide appropriate guidance and support. The initial meeting is an opportunity for the School to explore any reasons that may be affecting a student's attendance, engagement and/or progress, and provide pastoral care before issues develop further.*

### *8.2. Initial Meeting*

A nominated colleague(s) (e.g. the student's Academic Advisor, Senior Advisor, Year Lead, Engagement Officer, etc.) in the School shall invite the student to an initial meeting and explore what appropriate support could be provided.

The nominated colleague(s) should note down a record of the discussion at the meeting. (A template is available from the Learning and Teaching Services hub for colleagues' reference.)

In the event that a student had concerns about the quality of teaching or content of the course, and therefore chose not to attend, the nominated colleague(s) shall report the reasons to the Head of School for appropriate action.

Following the initial meeting, the nominated academic colleague(s) may decide the following action(s):

- a. take no further action. As it is important for students not to miss teaching events, however, the nominated colleague(s) should continue to monitor the student's attendance, engagement and/or progress;
- b. refer the student to appropriate student support services at UEA such as the University Medical Centre, the Dean of Students' Office or the University Counselling Service where the Head of School/nominated academic colleague(s) considers that a student would benefit from the support service(s);
- c. invoke the Fitness to Study procedure in respect of a student whom the Head of School/nominated academic colleague(s) has identified as potentially being unfit. (The Fitness to Study procedure may be consulted at: [http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(gen\)/gen-regs-for-students/5-fitness-to-study](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(gen)/gen-regs-for-students/5-fitness-to-study))

If a student does not attend the initial meeting nor provides an explanation for the absence nor seeks an appropriate alternative time to meet, the nominated academic colleague(s) shall ask the Head of School to consider whether the student has demonstrated that s/he was engaging with the process (e.g. by reporting absences online, meeting with Module Organisers to catch up with missed work, etc.). If the student has already reported absences online and appears to have caught up with missed work, no further formal action is required. If, on the other hand, the Head of School has concerns that a student may not be engaging with the University's processes, s/he shall ask the Learning and Teaching Services Hub to issue an invitation to a formal meeting as described below.

### **8.3. Formal Meeting**

The nominated academic colleague in the School shall ask the Learning and Teaching Services hub to invite the student to a Formal Meeting in the event that:

- the student's attendance, engagement or progress continues to be a cause for concern;
- the student did not attend the initial meeting, has not reported absences and appears not to be engaging with the University's processes.

The appropriate Learning and Teaching Services hub will inform the student of the following:

- (a) to express its concerns for the student's welfare/progress on the course, and the wish to provide the student with guidance and support;
- (b) a record of his/her attendance, engagement and/or progress and any concerns;
- (c) a copy of the notes from the discussions held at the initial meeting (where available);
- (d) an explanation of whom, in addition to the Head of School and student, will be attending the meeting;
- (e) the date, time, place of the Formal Meeting;
- (f) the right of the Head of School (or another nominated colleague) to take action (as set out below) in the event that, having been properly notified, the student does not attend nor request an appropriate alternative and there is no good cause to explain the absence.

The student will also be advised to bring along any supporting documentation, including any extenuating circumstances.

The Head of School may delegate the task of meeting with the student to an academic colleague in his/her School.

The notification will be delivered to the student's University email address at least 5 working days (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted) before the meeting. If, having been duly notified, a student does not attend the Formal Meeting nor provides an explanation for the absence nor seeks an appropriate alternative, the Head of School shall consider the information available and take one of the actions in paragraph 8.4.2 in the student's absence. A student may submit a written statement but may not be represented by a third party if absent from a meeting.

The Head of School may agree to rearrange the scheduling of a meeting if requested by the student but will not normally do so without good cause or on more than one occasion. If a student does not attend a scheduled meeting and cannot demonstrate good cause for so doing, the Head of School may issue a Formal Warning (if appropriate).

The Head of School shall invite such members of staff as are required to determine the facts concerning the cause for concern either to submit written statements or to attend part of the meeting. The student may, if s/he wishes, bring an accompanying person who shall not take an active part in the proceedings. In all cases the student shall answer any questions raised at the meeting. Neither the student nor the University shall be represented by a legal practitioner. The student should notify the Head of School at least one working day in advance of the meeting (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted) if they intend to be accompanied and the identity of their

supporter.

#### 8.4. *Conduct of a formal attendance, engagement and progress meeting*

8.4.1. The meeting shall proceed in the following order:

1. the Head of School shall set out the concerns and evidence regarding the attendance, engagement and/or progress of the student. The student shall have an opportunity to ask questions about the concerns and supporting evidence.
2. The student shall have an opportunity to present information relevant to the matters of concern raised. Wherever possible, information presented, in particular relating to any mitigating circumstances which the student considers have impeded their attendance, engagement and/or progress should be supported by appropriate documentation. The Head of School shall have an opportunity to ask questions concerning the information presented by the student.

8.4.2. *Following the formal meeting, the Head of School may decide the following action(s):*

- a. take no further formal action. As it is important for students not to miss teaching events, however, the nominated colleague(s) should continue to monitor the student's attendance, engagement and/or progress;
- b. refer the student to appropriate student support services at UEA such as the University Medical Centre, the Dean of Students' Office or the University Counselling Service where the Head of School considers that a student would benefit from the support service(s);
- c. determine that the student has committed an offence as the student has failed to meet the University's requirements in relation to attendance, engagement and progress and issue the student with a Formal Head of School's warning;
- d. invoke the Fitness to Study procedure in respect of a student whom the Head of School has identified as potentially being unfit. (The Fitness to Study procedure may be consulted at: [http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(gen\)/gen-regs-for-students/5-fitness-to-study](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(gen)/gen-regs-for-students/5-fitness-to-study).)

In determining whether a Formal Head of School's Warning should be issued, the Head of School may take into account any information presented by the student in explanation of his or her actions. However, in determining whether such information should be taken into account the Head of School must consider whether such information was, or could have been, presented to the University in a timely manner, noting that the General Regulations state that a student must inform the

relevant University Services Office at once of any change of circumstances and whether the non-disclosure of this information is further evidence of the student's failure to engage with their studies.

The Head of School should confirm his/her decision in writing to the student within five working days (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted).

8.4.3. A written record of the meeting will be made by the Learning and Teaching Services Hub which should contain clear action notes and the student's responsibilities, to ensure that the situation and/or events leading to this formal meeting will be addressed. To ensure consistency, a template may be used by the Learning and Teaching Services Hub. A copy of this record will be given to the student and also placed on the student's file for the duration of the student's period of registration with the University. If an action plan was discussed and agreed then it will be reviewed within a set period of time as determined by the Head of School. Should the concerns which led to the formal meeting persist or not be addressed or be insufficiently addressed within the time period, a further formal meeting will be called by the Head of School.

#### 8.5. *Second Formal Meeting*

*In the event that a student's attendance, engagement and progress continue to cause concern, a Second Formal Meeting will be arranged as described in Paragraph 8.3 above. In addition to the actions available above, the Head of School may refer the student to a Senate Student Discipline Committee to determine action in accordance with General Regulation 13:*  
[http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs\(gen\)/disciplinary-procedures/sectionc](http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar/section3/regs(gen)/disciplinary-procedures/sectionc)

*For students registered on courses leading to registration/accreditation with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies, the Head of School should liaise with the Chair of the School's Fitness to Study Board (where available) before a referral is made to the Senate Student Discipline Committee.*

#### 9. *Missing Students*

In the event that the School has serious concerns about the student's general welfare or thinks that the student may be missing, the Head of School shall invoke the Missing Student's procedure, which is owned and actioned by the Dean of Students Office and may be consulted at:

[https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.113490!Missing%20students.pdf](https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.113490!Missing%20students.pdf)

If the student is located after the missing student procedure has been invoked and it has been established that he/she has not officially withdrawn from the University, the Head of School will schedule a meeting as described above.

## *10. Appeals*

There is no right of appeal against the outcome of an Initial Meeting with nominated colleague(s), or the Head of School's decision following a Formal Meeting.

## *11. Confidentiality*

A copy of the formal record of an attendance, engagement and/or progress meeting and of any formal written warnings will be retained on the student's file during their period of study and registration with the University. Where appropriate, this information may be retained in a more secure format, for example where highly personal or sensitive material is disclosed and discussed. These records will be removed from the file in accordance with normal records retention processes once the student has completed their studies.

Information relating to actions taken under these procedures will remain confidential to the Head of School, the Student's Adviser and such other members of University staff as are involved in the process. This information may also be used to inform relevant professional, statutory and regulatory and funding bodies.

The University is required to inform the Home Office when a Tier 4 student visa holder has been withdrawn from the University for non-attendance as part of its statutory reporting duties.

## *12. Reporting the outcomes of attendance and progress meetings*

Heads of Schools shall complete an annual report of the outcomes of attendance, engagement and/or progress meetings to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate.

APPENDIX 1 – flow chart of the policy and general notes