Disciplinary Policy and Procedures relating to Attendance, Engagement and Progress

A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

1 Introduction

The University sets out its expectations relating to student attendance, engagement and progress in its Student Charter and General Regulations (13). This document sets out how the University will investigate, examine and act where there are concerns that these expectations have not been met.

Where a student has been granted a visa under the Points-Based Scheme operated by the UK Border Agency (UK-BA) to study in the UK under the sponsorship of the University, failure to comply fully with some or all of the expectations set out in the Student Charter and General Regulations may be deemed to be a breach of the conditions of the visa requirements in accordance with UK-BA regulations and constitute unauthorised absence. The University is required to report such absences to the UK-BA, and will in addition take any further action(s) required under UK immigration law.

2 Expectations of students in relation to attendance, engagement and progress

The University's Student Charter sets out that it is a responsibility of all students to:
- engage fully with the educational opportunities provided by the University, including timetabled teaching sessions;

The University's General Regulation 13 sets out the following expectations of a student:
- to register/sign in at the beginning of the Autumn Semester and at such other times as required by the University;
- (in the case of students on taught programmes) 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 or (in the case of students registered for a research degree) to attend research training and undertake independent research as may be prescribed for the programme of study and to be available to undertake such work as is prescribed;
- in the case of students on taught programmes, to attend at least one meeting offered by his/her Adviser; and in the case of research students to attend the initial and formal supervisory team meetings as set out in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees;
- to attend and any meetings called by the Head of School, the Dean of Students, the University Disciplinary Officer and any Senate Student Disciplinary Panel;
- to inform the relevant Faculty Office at once of any change of circumstances which will be passed on to the Academic Adviser or the Primary Supervisor as appropriate;
- to report immediately to the relevant Faculty Office (which will inform the Head of School and Academic Adviser or Primary Supervisor as appropriate) any
absence from the University during a semester due to ill health;
- to seek the prior permission of the Head of his/her School of Studies for any
leave of absence during the period that a student is required to be attending
his/her studies (including periods of professional/work-based placement
required as part of a programme of study).

3. Permitted actions under the General Regulations

The University’s General Regulation 13 (7) permits the University at any time to
suspend or preclude from further study:
- (a) any student whose attendance and engagement is deemed to be
unsatisfactory;
- (b) any student who fails to make satisfactory progress in the programme of
study.

The processes by which the University formally considers the case for action against
a student in relation to their attendance, engagement and progress are set out in
Section B, below.

B. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH MATTERS RELATING TO
ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESS

1 Reporting of causes for concern about student attendance, engagement
and/or progress

Any member of staff who has concerns regarding the attendance, engagement
and/or progress of a student shall make a report of their concerns addressed to the
Head of the relevant School with a copy to the student’s Adviser or Primary
Supervisor.

If at any stage of the process the Head of School considers that a student’s case
would be more appropriately dealt with under the University’s policy relating to
fitness to study, he or she may suspend the investigation under these procedures
and instigate consideration under the policy relating to fitness to study.

2 Initial Meeting

Once a cause for concern about a student’s attendance, engagement or progress
has been notified to the Head of School by a member of staff, the Head of School will
invite the student to an initial meeting to explore the issues giving rise to concern.
The meeting will be informal with a view to establishing the causes leading to poor or
no attendance, engagement or progress. Following this initial meeting, the Head of
School will decide what kind of action should be taken.

The student will be informed in writing of:

(i) the concerns about his/her attendance, engagement and/or progress;
(ii) the date, time, place of the meeting
(iii) the right of the Head of School to take action (as set out below) in the
event that, having been properly notified, the student does not attend or request an appropriate alternative and there is no good cause to explain the absence.

The notification will be delivered to the student’s pigeon-hole in his or her Faculty/School of Studies and/or University email address and/or contact 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 initial meeting nor provides an explanation for the absence nor seeks an appropriate alternative, the Head of School will invoke the missing student procedure as there may now be serious concerns about the student’s general welfare. The missing student’s procedure 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

The Head of School will suspend the investigation pending the outcome of the missing student procedure. 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 reschedule the original initial meeting.

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

(a) invoke the Fitness to Study procedure in respect of a student whom the Head of School has identified as potentially being genuinely unfit. (The Fitness to Study procedure may be consulted at: https://www.uea.ac.uk/ltgo/)

or (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)

or (c) take no further action on the grounds that there is insufficient evidence to establish that the student has failed to meet the University’s requirements in relation to attendance, engagement and progress

or (d) determine that the student has committed a level 1 offence as there is sufficient evidence that the student has failed to meet the University’s requirements in relation to attendance, engagement and progress and issue the student with a first or second formal Head of School’s warning (as appropriate and in accordance with Section 4 Outcomes, below).

A written record of the meeting will be made which should contain clear action notes and obligations placed on the student to ensure that the situation and/or events leading to this initial meeting will be addressed. 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. The action plan will be reviewed within a set
period of time as determined by the Head of School. Should the concerns which led to the initial meeting persist or not be addressed or be insufficiently addressed within the time period, set, a formal attendance, engagement and progress meeting will be called by the Head of School.

3 Conduct of a formal attendance, engagement and progress meeting

Once it has been determined that actions or obligations placed on the student after the initial meeting may not have been followed or may have been insufficiently followed by the student, the Head of School, in consultation with the student's Adviser or Primary Supervisor as appropriate, may determine that further enquiries should be made to ascertain the facts and to assemble the documentary evidence available concerning the attendance, engagement and/or progress of the student concerned. The Head of School may nominate one or more members of staff (who may be the student’s Adviser or Primary Supervisor) to conduct these further enquiries on his or her behalf.

Once any further enquiries have been completed, the Head of School shall review the evidence assembled and determine either:

(1) that there is no prima facie evidence to merit the further consideration of the student's attendance, engagement and/or progress at this stage; or

(2) that there is prima facie evidence to give cause for concern regarding a student's attendance, engagement or progress at that a formal attendance, engagement and/or progress meeting should be arranged.

Indicative criteria for behaviour which might give sufficient evidence of cause for concern is set out below in Section 4: Outcomes.

If a Head of School determines that there is sufficient evidence to give cause for concern regarding a student’s attendance, engagement and/or progress, he/she will set up an attendance, engagement and/or progress meeting. The Head of School shall write to the student to:

1. outline the matters of concern;
2. enclose the documentary evidence available;
3. explain that, if proved, the matters of concern might lead to formal action against the student on the part of the University;
4. explain who in addition to the Head of School and student will be attending the meeting;
5. provide the student with at least 5 working days notice of the time and place of the meeting;
6. explain the policy relating to non-attendance at such meetings.

The notification will be delivered to the student's pigeon-hole in his or her Faculty/School of Studies and/or University email address and/or contact address at least 5 working days (Saturdays, Sundays and University closure days excepted)
before the meeting.

The Head of School shall in addition to the student concerned, invite the student's Adviser or Primary Supervisor as appropriate and other 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 as witnesses. The student may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or a representative, who may represent the student's case if the student so wishes. Neither the student nor the University shall normally 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.

If a student fails to attend at the scheduled time and does not show good cause, the Head of School may proceed to determine the case in the student's absence. 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 invoke disciplinary action as a breach against General Regulation 13 (1). A student may submit a written statement, but may not be represented by a third party if absent from a meeting.

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 personal or other circumstances which the student considers have impeded their attendance, engagement and/or progress ('extenuating circumstances'), should be supported by documentary evidence. The Head of School shall have an opportunity to ask questions concerning the information presented by the student.

Once all the evidence has been heard, the Head of School shall determine a course of action as set out in Section 2 above. In addition, the following courses of action shall also be available to the Head of School:

- (e) determine that the student has committed a level 2 offence as there is sufficient evidence that the student has failed to meet the University's requirements in relation to attendance, engagement and/or progress and issue the student with a second formal Head of School's warning;

- or

- (f) determine that the student had committed a level 3 offence as there is sufficient evidence that the student has failed to meet the University's requirements in relation to attendance, engagement and/or progress and, because a second formal warning has already been issued, the matter should be referred to the Senate Student Discipline Committee for consideration;

- or

- (g) the case is sufficiently serious that it would be inappropriate to issue a
formal warning, but that the matter should be referred directly to the Senate Student Discipline Committee

In determining whether a Formal 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 in the course of this process. 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 Faculty 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. A written record of the meeting including any formal warning issued shall be retained on a student’s file for the duration of the period of the student’s registration with the University. A copy of the outcome of the meeting shall also be given to the student.

4 Outcomes

In determining the outcome of an initial meeting and the formal attendance, engagement and/or progress meeting, the Head of School shall have regard for the following principles:

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<th>Level of offence</th>
<th>Cause for concern demonstrated</th>
<th>Action (by Head of School)</th>
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| Initial meeting Level 1 | The cause/s for concern demonstrated include some or all of the following:  
- Failure to register/sign in at the beginning of the Autumn Semester or at other times as required by the University; failure on two or more occasions to attend a meeting with the student’s Adviser or Primary Supervisor, without good cause; taking leave of absence during a period when the student is expected to be in attendance which is unauthorised as prior approval from the Head of School has not been obtained or failure promptly to report absence due to ill health; and/or  
- a persistent pattern of non-attendance at lectures, seminars and/or other scheduled activities within programmes of study; and/or  
- a persistent failure to engage in study, in contravention of the Student Charter (this might include persistent evidence of attendance at scheduled activities but failure to work between these activities). | No action or First Formal Warning |
| Formal Attendance, | As for Level 1, but causes for concern persist or additional causes for concern emerge after initial meeting with the Head of School and/or first Formal Warning has already | First or Second Formal Warning |


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<tr>
<th>Engagement and Progress meeting Level 2</th>
<th>been issued to the student during their current period of registration with the University.*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Attendance, Engagement and Progress Meeting Level 3</td>
<td>As for Level 1, but causes for concern persist or additional causes for concern emerge after initial meeting and a Second Formal Warning may have been already been issued to the student during their current period of registration with the University.</td>
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<td>Second Formal Warning or direct Referral to Student Senate Discipline Committee to determine action in accordance with General Regulations**</td>
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Notes:

* A Second Formal Warning should normally follow a First Formal Warning for attendance, engagement and/or progress, even when the causes for the warnings may be different and/or occurred in different academic years. However, a Head of School may, exceptionally, determine to issue a second First Formal Warning if he or she determines that this fits the circumstances of the case. Where the same behaviour which led to a First Formal Warning has not been reformed, a Second Formal Warning should normally be issued.

** Under General Regulations, the Senate Student Discipline Committee has the power to suspend or preclude from further study:
(a) any student whose attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory;
(b) any student who fails to make satisfactory progress in the programme of study.

See the policies and procedures for the Senate Student Discipline Committee

6 Appeals

There is no appeal against the outcome of an initial or formal meeting with a Head of School. A student who is referred to a Senate Student Discipline Committee may appeal to the Senate Student Appeals Committee provided one or more grounds for appeal are met. This appeals procedure is published under the University Disciplinary Procedures. (See the Calendar 2010-11 at: https://www.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/calendar)

7 Confidentiality

As noted above, 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 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 Academic Adviser/Primary Supervisor and such other members of University staff as are involved in the process.

Information relating to actions taken under these procedures will not be shared with prospective employers through references or with others external to the University without the explicit prior consent of the student.

8 Reporting the outcomes of attendance and progress meetings

Heads of Schools shall complete an annual monitoring report to the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate of the outcomes of attendance, engagement and/or progress meetings (including the outcomes of Faculty-level appeals) which should include equality monitoring data.