

Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Purpose

1. This Policy sets out how Northeastern University London ('the University') supports students to engage fully with their studies, what the University expects of students in relation to engagement with their programmes, how it will monitor that engagement, and what it will do where students are not engaging.

Scope

2. This Policy applies to all undergraduate students registered on Northeastern University London approved programmes or courses, however overseas students studying on a Student Visa must follow the [Academic Engagement Policy](#), which supersedes this policy.
3. This Policy governs all mobility students studying at the University as part of a programme at Northeastern University, Boston, who are NOT on a study visa. Mobility students studying on a Student Visa must follow the Academic Engagement Policy.
4. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's [Terms and Conditions](#), the [Support to Study Policy and Procedure](#), the [Student Welfare Policy](#) and the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

General Principles

5. Students are expected to work independently and be responsible for their own decisions and actions. However, the University has a responsibility to its students and to external bodies to ensure that students are attending and studying, so as to comply with the relevant regulatory requirements, and the University's regulations.

Student Attendance

6. There is clear evidence to show that to achieve academic success most students need to attend and engage with timetabled teaching sessions, and also with the programme-related learning experiences and support activities available. In addition, students must meet the assessment requirements for their programme.
7. Timetabled teaching sessions are an essential part of the student learning experience on all programmes. Much of the curriculum content is conveyed through timetabled teaching sessions. Such sessions also give students opportunities to interact with faculty and other students about a variety of subjects and topics.

8. The University expects all students to attend all scheduled teaching events, which may include (but are not limited to) lectures, seminars, tutorials, dissertation supervisions, and revision sessions, and all summative examinations. The University expects students to engage fully with any attendance registration or monitoring methods that are put in place.
9. Students are required to be punctual. Lateness is disruptive and discourteous to the lecturer and to fellow students. Students arriving late may not have their attendance recorded.
10. The University has a responsibility to make clear to students that attendance is in their own professional and academic interest. This is done in, for example, Welcome and the 'Welcome Back' sessions, in regular meetings with faculty across their studies, and in communications with individual students who are absent from compulsory events.

Supporting Engagement

11. The University supports engagement through:
 - 11.1. Pre-entry and Welcome information, activities and processes that are designed to ensure that students are familiar with the requirements of their programme and know how to access facilities, services, and support.
 - 11.2. High quality teaching and learning experiences.
 - 11.3. Resources on the Virtual Learning Environment.
 - 11.4. A range of academic and welfare support services.

Attendance Monitoring

12. Attendance at scheduled teaching events is recorded using an attendance monitoring system. Students are required to comply with the attendance registration process for all timetabled teaching. Faculty will arrange an alternative registration process for non-classroom based teaching and co-curricular activities.
13. Students are alerted by an automated email when they are marked as absent for any scheduled teaching event. Students can also see their attendance percentage in the attendance monitoring system application.
14. Lateness at teaching may be noted and may form part of the information used to assess the student's general engagement. The University may impose a limit on how late students may arrive and still be counted as present.

15. In weeks 3, 6 and 10 of each semester, overall attendance data for every student will be reviewed. This will include the student's attendance for all courses for which they are registered. Engagement may be checked outside of these weeks where there are concerns regarding a student's engagement or welfare.
16. Academic Advisers will contact students with poor attendance to discuss any issues which may be impacting their attendance.
17. The attendance report will also be used by the Student Welfare Oversight Group to help identify students who are not engaging with their studies and may benefit from structured interventions as set out in the [Student Welfare Policy](#).
18. A Course Leader (CL), Faculty Director (FD), Head of Discipline (HoD), or Programme Director (PD) can check a student's overall attendance on the attendance monitoring system. If they become concerned about a student's attendance or engagement at any time, they may request that the student's Academic Adviser (AA) and/or Student Support and Development (SSD) contact the student to identify whether there is a welfare or academic concern. The AA and/or SSD will report back to the CL, FD, HoD, or PD.

Absence

19. If a student is unwell or is unable to attend scheduled events for any reason, they are required to provide a justification for their absence in the attendance monitoring system and provide evidence if necessary and to inform the faculty teaching the missed events by email.
20. Students reporting an absence will have their reason for absence taken into consideration during attendance monitoring, but action may still be taken as set out below should there be concerns about a student's overall attendance and engagement.
21. Students who need an extended period of absence (longer than one week) are strongly encouraged to speak to their Academic Adviser or a member of SSD in advance or as soon as possible once they realise they will be away for a long period. Depending on the length of absence students may be recommended or required to take a Break in Study (UK Degree) or Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) (Mobility Students).
22. Where an absence falls at a time of summative assessment or examination, a student must submit an application for Extenuating Circumstances in order to apply for the opportunity to sit the assessment at another time. Students should refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) for the requirements and seek advice from [Student Support and Development](#) or their Academic Adviser if required.

Action in the Event of Non-Attendance

23. Missed teaching events will not be rescheduled.
24. If a student falls below an average of 25% in one week or 70% attendance over all courses, and has not provided a reasonable explanation for their absences nor engaged with offers of support from SSD, Academic Advising or the Faculty, they will be contacted by their Academic Adviser. If low attendance persists students may be flagged to the Student Welfare Oversight Group.
25. Where there is persistent low attendance and/or poor academic engagement, the Student Welfare Oversight Group is authorised to refer students to a Student Attendance Panel.

Student Attendance Panel (StAP) Procedure

26. The StAP will normally consist of the Director for Student Engagement and two others from a group of staff selected by the Academic Registrar. The Director for Student Engagement will chair the StAP and appoint a Secretary.¹
27. All panel members must participate in the whole process for the final decision to be valid.

Notification and Procedures of the Panel meeting

28. The Secretary to the panel shall:
 - 28.1. Invite the student to the meeting in writing, giving a minimum of seven calendar days' notice. The student's University email address will be used. Students will be advised of the date and time of the meeting and will be requested to acknowledge receipt of this notification within four calendar days. If a student does not respond within this period, the case may be considered in the student's absence.
 - 28.2. Invite the student to submit a written response.
 - 28.3. Inform the student of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a friend, who will normally be another student or a staff member of the University.

¹ The panel members should be free of any bias or any reasonable perception of bias and will normally include a member of faculty. For mobility students, a member of Northeastern's GEO Programme Management Team will be part of the panel.

- 28.4. Inform the student that they may seek advice and support from the Students' Union. Students are able to contact the Student Union should they require their support. The University is not able to make contact on a student's behalf; it is up to the student to contact the Student Union themselves.
29. The Secretary of the StAP will keep a note of the meeting, the decision of the panel, and any action taken.
30. The StAP will consider all the evidence presented and consider whether poor attendance is likely to have a negative impact upon the academic success of the student and/or whether the student is able to continue to study at the University. The Secretary of the StAP will inform the student in writing within seven calendar days of the decision of the panel:
- 30.1. If the StAP considers both that the student has a realistic chance of progressing, and that the student, having been made aware of the options available to them, wishes to remain on programme, the panel may decide the student should remain on programme. The decision will be recorded on the student's permanent record for the duration of their registration.
- 30.2. If the StAP considers that the student may be able to progress if their engagement improves, the Panel may delay their final decision and put in place attendance and engagement requirements and support arrangements. The StAP would then monitor the student for a set period, which will not be longer than 8 weeks. At the end of this period the StAP will reach a decision about the student's likely ability to progress.
- 30.3. If the StAP considers that the student has a realistic change of progressing/re-engaging with their studies if given time to address the circumstances preventing their engagement the panel may decide that the student should be required to take a Break in Study. If the StAP considers that the student has no realistic chance of progressing/re engaging with their studies and/or that it would be decidedly against the student's interest to remain on the programme, then the panel may decide that the student should be withdrawn from the programme. For students on mobility courses, progression meetings with the GEO Programme Management Team will be held.
- 30.4. If the StAP considers that the [Support to Study Policy and Procedure](#) is more appropriate for the student, it will refer the case to SSD.
31. The student will have the right to appeal.

32. Attendance is recalculated at the beginning of each semester. Therefore, failure to reach 70% attendance at any time, in any given semester, is not carried over into subsequent semesters. However, attendance records are maintained and can be referred to, by StAP and the Progression and Award Board, if needed.

Appeals Procedure

33. A student may appeal against a decision of the StAP. The appeal must be made using the [Appeal Form for Students](#), sent to the Student Regulatory Resolution Office, within 14 calendar days of the written notification of the panel's decision.
34. The student may only appeal on one or more of the following grounds, which must be specified in the appeal form:
 - 34.1. There has been a significant procedural flaw or irregularity that compromised the fairness of the process.
 - 34.2. New material evidence, which must be supported by explanation of why it is being submitted at this late stage.
 - 34.3. That there is a bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure.
 - 34.4. An outcome, decision and/or penalty, being unreasonable or disproportionate.
35. Following submission of an appeal, the Academic Registrar or their nominee will undertake a review of the appeal.
36. Where the review identifies that the appeal does not have substance within the accepted grounds for appeal stipulated in paragraph 34, the student shall be informed of the decision in writing and the University will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter advising that the process has been completed.
37. Where the preliminary review identifies that the grounds for appeal are accepted as valid, the appeal will be considered by the Academic Registrar (or their nominee). The consideration will be limited to the grounds stated in the student's appeal form and will not take the form of a rehearing of the original matter. The Academic Registrar will be provided with the documentation and the meeting record from the StAP.
38. After considering the report from the StAP, the Academic Registrar may:
 - 38.1. Reject the appeal, in which case the original decision will stand.
 - 38.2. Uphold the appeal and impose a new decision, which will stand.

39. The SSRO shall notify the appellant of the decision within seven calendar days.
40. The decision of the Academic Registrar shall be final, and no further appeal may be permitted. The University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter advising that the process has been completed. This letter will include the contact details of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

41. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is an independent body that was set up, following the passing of the Higher Education Act (2004), to run a student complaints scheme. Membership of the OIA is a requirement of the Higher Education and Research Act (2017) and the Office for Students.
42. At the end of the University procedures, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. At this point, if the student remains dissatisfied, they have the right to refer the decision to the [OIA](#) within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

Reporting, Monitoring, and Reviewing

43. The Academic Registrar will report to Academic Board statistical information relating to attendance on an annual basis.
44. Academic Board will monitor the data and make recommendations as appropriate.
45. Academic Board will review the Policy and the procedures for their effectiveness.

Version History

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