



University for the Common Good

Student Attendance Policy (Taught)

Prepared By	Registry
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V1.0	16.03.2013	Registry	First Published Version
V1.1	01.12.2014	Registry	9c added - Clarification re Tier4 Points of Conduct added.
V1.2	01.09.2017	Registry	Updated Dept and Post Titles

1 Introduction

Providing a student experience of the highest possible quality is something that GCU takes very seriously. Promoting and encouraging student engagement with all aspects of their learning experience is a key aspect of this.

This policy has been developed as part of the University's overall Student Attendance & Engagement Strategy which aims to provide a supportive learning environment of which student attendance is one aspect of overall engagement

The University needs to be able to monitor the attendance of students at timetabled teaching sessions for the following reasons:

- a. To aid the retention of students by allowing early identification of those students at risk and allow timely interventions to be made in terms of academic and personal support.
- b. To comply with the requirements of the UK Border Agency under our HTS Tier4 licence that requires us to monitor the attendance accurately of those students subject to visa restrictions so that an attendance return can be made within specified timescales required by the agency.
- c. To comply with the requirements of the Student Award Agency for Scotland (SAAS) who require attendance confirmation returns to be made on a regular basis for those students who are in receipt of SAAS financial support.
- d. To enable notifications of withdrawals/suspension to be made on time so that external stakeholders, (e.g. UKVI, SAAS) are informed in a timely manner.
- e. To meet the demand placed on The University to report absences to employers, Professional Statutory Bodies, or other sponsors where they are funding/co-funding course fees.

2 Key Principles

- a. Students are active participants in their learning experiences and must take responsibility for achieving their potential through successful completion of each stage of their studies.
- b. Monitoring attendance can provide an indication of student commitment, motivation and any difficulties which need to be addressed.
- c. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who regularly attend classes are more likely to enjoy a rewarding experience in which core skills and abilities, such as team-working, are developed.
- d. Attendance is a key component in student retention, progression and achievement.
- e. Developing employability attributes - e.g. workplace skills and professional ethos
- f. Schools will ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to both identify students considered to be at risk and offer appropriate support and guidance.
- g. The University has a dual duty of care for Tier4 sponsored students in terms of providing appropriate support to international students studying here in the UK and meeting our UKVI licence requirements.

3 Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- a. Attending all timetabled learning/teaching sessions associated with their programme of study and ensuring they have their attendance recorded.
- b. Notifying their School Programmes' Office in advance (e.g. in person, phone or email) that they expect to be absent from timetabled classes.
- c. Notifying their School Programmes' Office in respect of any unplanned or unforeseen absences from classes as soon as practically possible
- d. For absences lasting more than 5 days, submit a medical certificate to their School's Programmes Office.
- e. Ensuring that they check their GCU email account on a regular basis for any formal notifications/communications.

4 Academic Staff Responsibilities

Academic Staff are responsible for:

- a. Reminding students of the importance of attendance at learning and teaching sessions.
- b. Where necessary taking a manual note of attendance and passing this onto the appropriate School's Programme Office.
- c. Signposting "at risk" students to support services available within the School or University e.g. the Student's Personal Academic Advisor, School Learning Development Centre, Student Wellbeing and Visa & Immigration, Support and Advice Service (V.I.S.A).

- d. Where a student attending a class is unable to show a valid Student ID card, refer the student to the appropriate Programme Administrator. Any repeat of a student's inability to show a valid Id card should be reported to the Programme Administrator for further investigation

5 Programme Leaders & Heads of Programmes and Planning Responsibilities:

Programme Leaders & Heads of Programmes and Planning are responsible for ensuring that:

- a. Regular reviews are undertaken of attendance/absence data and communications are made to 'at risk' students in a timely manner.
- b. Appropriate systems are in place at School level for students to provide notification of planned absences or report any unexpected absences.
- c. Data is reviewed for patterns of student non-attendance and where appropriate referring students to their Personal Academic Advisor for discussions on reasons for pattern.
- d. Students are informed in writing of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions, and through Programme Handbooks, of any approved programme or module specific attendance requirements.
- e. All students have access to an Academic Advisor.
- f. There are regular reviews of students' progress on their programme, including attendance, completion of assessment requirements and academic achievement, and that appropriate action is taken either to help students' achieve their academic aims or, where students are failing to engage with the course, provide appropriate guidance.
- g. Students are advised of the support available to them, whether provided by the School or central support.
- h. In the case of the absence of a member of teaching staff, students are informed at the earliest opportunity of the alternative arrangements for the class.
- i. Heads of Programmes and Planning are responsible for ensuring that weekly random audits of card-swipe attendance recording are undertaken.

6 Action taken due to Unsatisfactory Student Attendance – Full Time Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate

- a. Where a student has failed to attend all expected learning/teaching sessions over 5 timetabled days, an electronic notification will be sent to the student informing them of this and reminding them of the various support mechanism available.
- b. Should a student be absent for more than 10 timetabled days, with no appropriate notification of the reason provided, the School will send a formal communication to the student (via email) inviting the student to attend a meeting to discuss their absence.
- c. Within 4 working days of sending the communications in 'b' above, should no satisfactory response (i.e. providing details for the absence/ non engagement and confirming that they will be resuming attendance) be provided by the student, the School will send a second communication (via email and posted to the student's term time address) informing them that unless the student provides a satisfactory reason (including medical certification if appropriate) within 4 working days then the student will be withdrawn from their programme of studies and relevant external stakeholders informed
- d. If no appropriate response to communication in "c" above is received within 4 working days then the School will send a notice of withdrawal from studies to Registry.
- e. The student's record is then updated on the Student Management Information System to reflect that they have been withdrawn, effective from their last date of attendance.
- f. Registry will then formally write to the student, via email and post to term time address informing them that due to continued absence with no appropriate explanation provided, the student has been withdrawn from their programme of studies. For Tier4 students, they will be informed that the University has withdrawn their sponsorship and informed UKVI and therefore they must make arrangements to return to their home country immediately, signposting them to V.I.S.A. for advice.
- g. Registry will inform relevant external stakeholders of the student withdrawal.
- h. All relevant communications and notes relating to attendance concerns must be maintained within the student's record.

7 Action taken due to Unsatisfactory Student Attendance – Part Time Undergraduate and Taught Post Graduate

- a. It is acknowledged that there is a wide variety of expected attendance patterns for students undertaking part time study, some of whom may only be expected to attend for one day every other week during a Trimester.
- b. Given the nature of PT programmes, attendance at expected learning/teaching events can be even more critical than for FT students.
- c. Where a PT Student misses 2 consecutive sessions, an email will be sent to the student informing them of this and reminding them of the various support mechanism available.

- d. Where a PT student has failed to attend 3 expected learning/teaching events, with no satisfactory notification of the reason provided, the School should send a formal letter (via email) requesting that they contact their Personal Academic Advisor to discuss their absence and continuation on the programme.
- e. If no appropriate response to communication sent in “d” above is received within 4 working days then the School will send a notice of withdrawal from studies to Registry.
- f. The student’s record is then updated on ISIS to reflect that they have been withdrawn, effective from their last date of attendance.
- g. REGISTRY will then formally write to the student, via email and post to term time address, informing them that due to continued absence with no appropriate explanation provided, the student has been withdrawn from their programme of studies.
- h. REGISTRY will inform relevant external stakeholders of the student withdrawal.
- i. All relevant communications and notes relating to attendance concerns must be maintained within the student’s record.

8 Programme Specific Requirements

- a. Due to the diversity of programmes delivered at GCU, there will be a number of Professional/Statutory body requirements with respect to attendance.
- b. Where programmes must conform to such requirements, these should be clearly communicated to students. Where Programmes implement their own timeframes, these cannot be longer than the ones within this policy.

9 Tier 4 Sponsored Students

- a. In addition to attending classes, International Students who are being sponsored by the University on a Tier4 visa must attend 2 attendance checkpoint events (normally held in November and March) where they will be required to present their current passport and visa documentation for checking. Failure to attend either of these checkpoints with no satisfactory reason will result in the student being withdrawn from their programme of study and reported to UKVI.
- b. When considering an application for a CAS extension, or a CAS in cases where international students with a non-Tier4 visa wishes to switch to Tier4, a student’s attendance record will be taken into account when a decision is made about whether a CAS will be issued or not.
- c. For Clarity, GCU considers a “Tier4 Point of Contact” to be a week when a student is expected to be in contact with the University. However the requirements of this attendance policy supersede the UKVI Tier4contact point requirements.

10 Placement Activities

- a. Students who undertake a placement as part of their programme are responsible for ensuring that their attendance matches the requirements of the placement provider. Placement providers will inform the University if a student is failing to maintain a good attendance record, which may lead to the student being withdrawn from the placement activity and potentially from their programme of study.

11 Formal Exams and Coursework

- a. Students are expected to attend all necessary formal examinations and submit coursework by published submission dates.
- b. Students who fail to attend an extended formal exam or submit a piece of coursework (where no approved extension has been granted), will be marked as a non-submission.

12 Student Fraud

- a. Students must only record **themselves** as present at a learning/teaching session. Where students are identified as having fraudulently recorded the attendance of another student in their absence, then both parties will be subject to the University’s student discipline procedure.
- b. For sessions where students “Swipe” in with their Student ID card, Schools will undertake a weekly random audit.