

Document Title	Partnerships Attendance and Engagement Policy
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Related policies	Leave of Absence Policy Refund Policy Withdrawal Policy Academic Regulations

St Mary's University is committed to improve student retention and maintain accurate student records for internal and external submissions.

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 The University maintains that attendance and engagement are essential for student success and students should endeavour to engage with all teaching, either in person or online. Students should also be aware that their engagement with online learning and electronic resources will be monitored via Moodle, Canvas, the Personal Tutoring Dashboard, STEP and any other related virtual learning platforms.

1.2 Student visa holders should refer to the [Student Visa Engagement Monitoring Policy](#).

1.3 The Attendance and Engagement Policy works in conjunction with the Withdrawal Policy and provides guidance for academic and professional services staff on processes and requirements for attendance and engagement.

1.4 This policy applies only to students enrolled onto programmes run by St Mary's University. Including students studying at collaborative partnership locations.

2. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

For the purpose of this policy and associated documents.

2.1 Student: any person registered onto a programme be it full-time, part-time or any mode of delivery, regardless of the number of modules or credits registered onto at one time

2.2 Attendance: active and continuous participation and engagement with learning opportunities, as part of a programme of study with the University

2.3 Engagement: active participation and application to learning, assessment and other academic activities

2.4 Absence: no presence in any teaching, assessment, placement or planned activity related to the learning experience of a module or programme

2.5 Authorised Absence: a short-term interruption of study from the programme, agreed with the relevant Academic and Professional Services authorities and that is not defined as a Leave of Absence

2.6 Unauthorised Absence: failure to attend any timetabled sessions requiring activity, without prior approval or a valid explanation in accordance with the University or institutional procedures

2.7 Leave of Absence: a long-term pause in studies when a student temporarily and formally, in agreement with the University authorities, disengages from their studies

3. INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES

An appropriate level of engagement of all students with their programme of study is important and has a direct impact on student success.

3.1 Sufficient attendance and relevant classes is a strong indicator of engagement and is also essential for international students on a Student Visa, to ensure compliance.

3.2 It is vital for the University and collaborative partnerships to undertake effective and efficient monitoring of student engagement and be able to produce and analyse accurate attendance data, in a timely manner.

3.3 Monitoring of student attendance is important for pedagogical and pastoral reasons, enabling the timely identification of students who may be at risk, in terms of progression and retention. Follow-up actions can then be taken to support students and encourage engagement with the programme.

3.4 Long periods of unauthorised absence, as monitored by student attendance records, could pose a risk to students' academic progression and may lead to academic failure and withdrawal from their programme of study.

4. AIMS OF THE POLICY

4.1 The Attendance and Engagement Policy outlines the University's approach to monitoring student attendance and supporting student engagement.

4.2 The policy applies to all students, Foundation to Level 7, not including students studying an online-only Postgraduate Taught or any mode of delivery for Postgraduate Research.

4.3 This policy is aligned with St Mary's University Academic Regulations Section B3: 3.1 *Students are expected to attend all the University classes and School experiences and to maintain an attendance level of at least 70% or that dictated at programme level (whichever is highest). Students who do not meet the required level of attendance may have their programme terminated.*

4.4 The University aims to improve the engagement and attendance of all students. The programme of study is designed to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete the programme.

4.5 The University holds the responsibility to oversee attendance at teaching and learning activities, for the whole student body and to respond to instances of non-attendance. This obligation arises from the necessity to report attendance to UK student loan agencies and both UK and international external sponsors and regulators. The obligation is captured by the Joint Higher Education Provider and Student Loans Company [Service Level Agreement](#) and begins with the process of Registration.

4.6 The University's obligation extends to collaborative partnerships and will be articulated within the relevant contract, operations manual and overseen by the relevant Joint Management Board.

5. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Students are autonomous learners and active participants in their education and expected to take responsibility for managing their learning and engagement, demonstrated in many ways including:

- Attending all prescribed lectures, seminars, classes, meetings with personal tutors/supervisors
- Preparing for and participating in classes or carrying out their own research
- Directing their own learning beyond that specified by their teachers
- Completing formative and summative assessment tasks
- Monitoring and reflecting on their own progress
- Taking the initiative in seeking support where/when necessary, from their department and wider institution

5.2 Attendance is expected for all sessions, whether run by university staff or external professionals/trainers hired by the University.

5.3 Students' attendance and engagement will be monitored, recorded, analysed and reported.

5.4 From the course start date, staff assigned to the management and services related to student attendance and engagement must contact students who do not meet the minimum attendance requirement of 70%, at least fortnightly.

5.5 It is advised that Faculty and Student Support staff members "check in" with students who report 0% attendance, without a record of authorised absence. This may also include contacting the relevant Course Lead or Lecturer, to confirm evidence of non-attendance.

6. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

6.1 All taught St Mary's University programmes are designed to ensure effective learning, engagement and success, as defined by the Programme Specification and mode of delivery.

6.2 Students are expected to attend all timetabled sessions and scheduled assessments for all registered modules.

6.3 Students are expected to attend all face-to-face and online classes, school experiences including placements and projects, with the expectation of 100% and a minimum of 70% maintained.

6.4 The University recognises that absences may occur from time to time due to external and emergency factors and that many students may have other commitments. Where unavoidable circumstances prevent students from full attendance, students should raise their concerns with the relevant Support staff.

6.5 Each mode of delivery for Undergraduate taught, on-site programmes has a minimal threshold of attendance and face-to-face delivery:

- Full-time: a minimum of 65% timetabled face-to-face delivery
- Part-time: a minimum of 35% timetabled face-to-face delivery or pro-rotta equivalent to full-time
- Blended learning: up to 60% timetabled face-to-face delivery

6.5 Some modules and programmes may have a higher minimal threshold of attendance and face-to-face delivery, where whichever threshold is higher, is the expected attendance for students.

7. ATTENDANCE AND DATA MANAGEMENT

7.1 Data captured by staff recording and managing attendance will be used to monitor students' attendance. Collection and use of the data should be in accordance with data protection regulations and clearly communicated to students, throughout their studies.

7.2 The utilisation of student attendance and engagement data must adhere to Data Protection regulations, including UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

7.3 Student attendance and engagement should be monitored against all timetabled sessions, whether face-to-face, online or via any virtual learning platform. Students must be made aware of their timetable, teaching and tutorials from the point of their course start date, including any assessment periods and submission deadlines.

7.4 Teams responsible for capturing and recording attendance must be able to provide clear and accurate evidence of student attendance and absence, upon request by the Deputy Academic Registrar, within a timely manner.

8. MANAGEMENT OF ABSENCE

8.1 Planned Absences: A student who knows in advance that they will be absent from their timetabled sessions or scheduled assessments, should inform the relevant Academic Lead and/or Professional Services staff. This allows for appropriate discussions to take place regarding the impact of absence and any necessary support or adjustments.

8.2 Unplanned Absences: In the event of an unplanned absence, a student should notify the relevant Academic Lead and/or Professional Services, as soon as possible. This enables timely discussions about the situation and any implications for students' studies.

8.3 Discussion and Support: Academic and Professional Services staff should discuss expected duration of approved absences and assess any potential impact on the student's ability to engage with the programme, in addition to any other implications including financial.

8.4 Where absence is due to genuine extenuating circumstances such as illness, family bereavement or unforeseen events with adverse consequences, where possible, Support staff should adopt a flexible and supportive approach to meet the individual need of the student.

9. EXTENDED ABSENCES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

9.1 If a student's absence extends beyond two weeks and is deemed significant by the Programme, the student may be advised to opt for an Interruption of Studies. In such cases, the [Leave of Absence Policy](#) will apply and students should be advised to submit a request via the Student Portal.

9.2 In recommendation of a Leave of Absence, an appropriate return date will be agreed upon ensuring the students can resume their studies effectively.

9.3 Approved Leave of Absences must be notified to SMU Registry within a timely manner and include:

- The student's agreed date of return
- Confirmation of marks for any assessments completed before the start date
- Modules and assessments including re-sits the student will be required to take upon return to study

10. MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

10.1 It is the initial responsibility of the Academic teaching and support staff within the School or Faculty to monitor student attendance and engagement.

10.2 Any concerns with a student's attendance and engagement should be addressed to the student as soon as possible, before being referred to the relevant support staff within Professional Services.

10.3 Any interventions for poor records of attendance and/or engagement should be recorded and updated frequently onto the relevant logs. For example, any "At Risk" logs shared between Registry services at both St Mary's and the Partner.

10.4 If a student's attendance and/or engagement falls below 50% or they have absences from teaching sessions for five consecutive days without notifying Academic support or teaching staff, services managing attendance and engagement should aim to:

- a. Understand the reason for the student's absence
- b. Check on the student's wellbeing
- c. Check for any requests for absences
- d. Signpost the student to the appropriate services
- e. Ensure that an accurate record of absence is recorded and logged. E.g. student is added to an "At Risk" log

10.5 If a student's attendance and engagement continues to fall below expected levels despite support or lack of correspondence with support staff, the University may issue a formal warning of withdrawal, due to non-attendance and/or lack of engagement.

10.6 In a case where a student has been absent for all timetabled sessions or a record of 0% attendance, the Programme or Partner should escalate to SMU Registry Services for further action.

11. TERMINATION OF STUDIES

11.1 In exceptional cases and only after appropriate support and two formal non-attendance/engagement warnings have been issued, the University may decide to terminate a student's registration from the programme, in line with St Mary's [Student Withdrawal Policy](#).

11.2 Following the issuance of formal warnings regarding non-attendance and/or non-engagement, students may be subject to a forced withdrawal/termination. Except in cases of a self-withdrawal, a student may be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- Academic failure
- Absence from five or more consecutive teaching sessions
- Non-submission of two or more assessments
- Failure to enrol or re-enrol by the published deadline
- Failure to pay tuition fees within the liability period or provide evidence of eligibility for financial support

11.3 Students who wish to appeal a withdrawal decision should contact the relevant Professional services staff or Registry equivalent at their campus of study, in the first instance. A second stage of appeal should be referred to the University.

11.4 Any decision to reinstate a student's record following withdrawal must be approved by the Deputy Academic Registrar.