



UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA

ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY

2026/27

Academic Registry

This Policy is available on the University of Cumbria website, and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University of Cumbria (the University) is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every learner can thrive. Attendance and academic engagement are fundamental to academic success, personal development, and progression. This policy outlines the University's approach to monitoring attendance and engagement across all programmes, including apprenticeship and partner provision, and explains how this supports learners in achieving their goals.
- 1.2. The policy forms part of the University's commitment to sector-wide best practice and regulatory compliance. It sets clear expectations for participation in scheduled learning activities in line with the University of Cumbria's [Academic Regulations \(D5\)](#), whether delivered on campus, online, or in the workplace, and describes the processes for monitoring, intervention, and support.
- 1.3. By engaging fully with their studies, learners are believed to not only enhance their academic outcomes but also strengthen their sense of belonging within the University community. This policy ensures that attendance and academic engagement are monitored consistently and fairly, enabling timely support for those who may face challenges and providing the appropriate support.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The University is committed to providing an outstanding learning experience that supports all learners in achieving their full academic and professional potential. Active attendance and engagement with scheduled learning and teaching activities are viewed as being essential components of each learner's success, progression, and wellbeing.
- 2.2. This policy sets out the University's expectations for attendance and academic engagement, explains why monitoring is necessary, and outlines the responsibilities of learners in meeting these expectations. It also details the support mechanisms available to help learners achieve the required attendance and engagement thresholds, and the actions the University may take where engagement falls below acceptable levels.
- 2.3. Monitoring attendance and academic engagement enables the University to:
 - Promote a positive learning environment that fosters achievement and belonging.
 - Address poor attendance that adversely affects the learning experience of other students

- Promote engagement and completion of the required off-the-job training for apprentices which leads to academic achievement and subsequently develops opportunities for successful employment, promotion, and further study.
- Meet the expectation of employers who are sponsoring apprentices to be engaging with their learning.
- Fulfil statutory, regulatory and professional/regulatory obligations to external bodies, including Student Finance England, Student Loans Company (SLC), Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and apprenticeship funding agencies e.g. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- Use attendance and engagement data to identify learners at risk of disengagement or difficulties, enabling timely intervention and referral to appropriate wellbeing support to promote success and retention.
- Enhance student continuation, completion, and progression outcomes through timely, targeted interventions.
- Ensure attendance expectations support consumer protection and fairness, in line with Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration and government requirements.

2.4. The University recognises that studying at higher education level is a significant commitment. Across the sector it is considered to be that consistent attendance and active engagement correlate strongly with academic attainment, progression, and employability student outcomes. By adhering to this policy, learners can maximise the benefits of their learning opportunities and achieve the best possible results.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all learners enrolled on programmes awarded and delivered by the University, regardless of mode or location of study.

3.2. Learners in this policy refers to:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate taught learners – including full-time, part-time, and distance learning learners.
- Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs) – who are expected to maintain regular contact with their supervisors and engagement with research activities. Postgraduate Research students are not subject to standard attendance monitoring thresholds (see section 7.1 in procedure).
- Apprentices – subject to additional requirements under Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) rules, as outlined in individual training plans.
- Learners on placement or work-based learning – monitored in line with the University’s Placement Policy and any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.

- International learners on a student visa – monitored in accordance with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) sponsorship duties.
- Learners receiving financial support – including those funded by the Student Loans Company (SLC), where attendance and engagement monitoring is required to confirm eligibility for tuition and maintenance support, and learners funded by other external bodies.
- Distance learners – required to engage meaningfully with online learning activities and scheduled interactions.
- Learners studying through University-approved partnerships – partner institutions must operate attendance and engagement monitoring arrangements that meet or exceed the principles of this policy.

3.3. International College learners are monitored by Malvern International under a separate [Student Attendance Policy and Procedures](#).

3.4. 'Attendance' throughout this policy refers to the monitoring of timetabled learning activities as one indicator of academic engagement where such activities form part of the course structure as detailed in [D5 of University of Cumbria's Academic Regulations](#). However, 'academic engagement' may also be demonstrated through a range of other activities e.g. interaction with learning platforms, particularly where a course includes independent study, placements, research activity, or dissertation-based study. The University therefore distinguishes between attendance and academic engagement and applies monitoring mechanisms appropriate to the student's mode and stage of study.

3.5. This policy does not override external statutory frameworks or funding conditions, including those set by UKVI, OfS, Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), Research Councils, or PSRBs. While the principles apply to all learners, specific monitoring requirements may vary by programme type, mode of delivery, and regulatory obligations.

4. Monitoring Attendance and Academic Engagement

4.1. The University monitors learners' attendance to ensure academic engagement in learning activities.

4.2. Minimum attendance thresholds apply as follows:

- Apprentices must maintain 100% attendance (including authorised absences).
- All other learners must maintain at least 90%.

4.3. Certain programmes may be subject to enhanced monitoring requirements and may operate beyond the University's prescribed minimum standards.

- 4.4. Attendance monitoring will commence immediately for apprentices and two weeks after the learner's programme start date for all other learners, allowing time for them to join their cohort.
- 4.5. If an apprentice's attendance drops below 100% after the first two weeks, this will be reported to the employer immediately so they can implement their appropriate procedures.
- 4.6. After two weeks where a learner's (non-apprentice) attendance falls below the applicable threshold for two consecutive weeks, the attendance and academic engagement procedure will commence.
- 4.7. Attendance is monitored using a rolling two-week period (starting two weeks after programme start), with each learner's percentage calculated across all scheduled sessions; performance in each period determines whether stages of the procedure are triggered, progressed or de-escalated. Attendance can also be reviewed cumulatively to identify patterns of inconsistent attendance.
- 4.8. Academic engagement is monitored through a range of indicators to establish whether a learner is actively engaged in their studies. Evidence may include activity on the University's virtual learning environment (Blackboard), submission of work, data from the [Student Engagement Dashboard](#), participation in Student Progress Reviews (SPRs), and information arising from disciplinary processes. Engagement may also be demonstrated through other activities, particularly where a course includes independent study, placements, research activity, or dissertation-based study. The University therefore distinguishes between attendance and academic engagement and applies monitoring mechanisms appropriate to the student's mode and stage of study. These indicators are also used collectively to determine a learner's last date of academic engagement for formal processes, including deregistration and application of the four-week rule. Further detail is set out in the Attendance and Engagement Procedure.

5. Absences

- 5.1. The University expects learners to attend all scheduled learning activities and to engage fully with their programme of study. Where absence is unavoidable, learners must follow the procedures outlined in the attendance and engagement procedure.

6. Lateness and Punctuality

- 6.1. The University expects all students to arrive punctually and stay for the full duration of the scheduled teaching sessions, upholding professional standards and supporting positive learning behaviours. This attendance and engagement procedure sets out the University's requirements

regarding lateness and punctuality.

7. Support for Learners with Poor or Sporadic Attendance

- 7.1. If a learner's attendance falls below expected standards, the procedure outlines the three attendance stages that can be initiated which includes a Student Progress Review (SPR) which can take place to discuss the underpinning reasons for the absence and identify any actions needed (and timescales) to support the learner to return to full engagement.
- 7.2. If, within the agreed timescale, there is no improvement in attendance this could result in implementing disciplinary proceedings on the basis of the breach of the Student Code of Conduct.
- 7.3. Additionally, the [university's 4-week rule](#) in Appendix 8 of the Academic Regulations, will be applied following a four working week period of continuous lack of engagement.
- 7.4. If an apprentice's attendance falls below the expected standards a tripartite review will take place. Their RAG rating will also change to reflect this. This review will include the employer as the partner in the apprenticeship. For employer funded apprentices concerns will be raised directly with the employer rather than through a tripartite review or RAG rating change.
- 7.5. Apprentices study period must comply with current apprenticeship funding rules.

8. Attendance Fraud

- 8.1. The University expects all learners to engage honestly and responsibly with attendance and engagement monitoring systems. Any attempt to falsify attendance or engagement records is considered a serious breach of university regulations and addressed under the university's [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- 8.2. Examples of Attendance Fraud include, but are not limited to:
 - Checking in for a class or activity without remaining for the full duration.
 - Sharing attendance codes or credentials with other learners or apprentices.
 - Using a code or method provided by another learner to register attendance without being present.
 - Logging attendance remotely for an in-person session without attending.
 - Registering attendance on another learner's behalf.
- 8.3. Consequences:

- Where attendance fraud is suspected, the University reserves the right to investigate and to amend attendance records.
- Repeated or serious instances may be treated as academic misconduct and addressed under the university's [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- Sanctions may include warnings, attendance marked as zero, or, in severe cases, deregistration.

8.4. Misuse of monitoring systems undermines academic integrity and may affect progression and funding eligibility.

9. Student Loans Company (SLC) Requirements

9.1. The University is required by the Student Loans Company (SLC) to confirm learners' ongoing attendance throughout their studies. For the purposes of this requirement, attendance means active and continuous engagement with the learning opportunities provided by the University, including scheduled teaching sessions and other programme-related activities.

9.2. Learners who fail to meet these attendance requirements and are subsequently withdrawn from their programme will be reported to the SLC as not in attendance. This may result in:

- Suspension or reduction of financial support.
- Requirement to repay funds already received.

9.3. It is therefore essential that learners maintain satisfactory attendance and engagement to avoid any impact on their funding and financial obligations.

10. Student Visa Holders

10.1. Individuals from EU/EEA, Swiss, and other international students that come to the UK for more than six months must obtain a Student Route visa. The University, as a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) sponsor, is required to monitor attendance and academic engagement. Failure to register and engage/attend regularly and consistently will result in withdrawal of sponsorship and notification to UKVI.

10.2. The process for monitoring attendance and academic engagement for undergraduate, postgraduate (taught and research) learners can be found in the attendance and academic engagement procedure.

11. Placements

11.1. Learners completing a placement as part of their course must ensure their attendance meets the PSRB programme requirements set by both the course and the placement provider, available in the relevant

placement handbook. Further details regarding the process for monitoring this can be found in the attendance and academic engagement procedure.

12. Postgraduate Research

12.1. Postgraduate research students are expected to maintain active academic engagement with their research programme and supervisory team throughout their period of study. This includes regular supervisory meetings. These meetings enable supervisors to confirm satisfactory academic engagement and progression. Further details can be found in the attendance and academic engagement procedure.

13. Partnership Learners

13.1. Learner engagement and attendance for programmes delivered in partnership adhere to the principles set out in this policy; however, the operational processes for recording, monitoring, and reporting attendance may vary in certain aspects.

13.2. For instance, the partner institution will manage all engagement and attendance processes through its own administrative teams, using procedures that are consistent with and compliant with this policy. This is overseen by the University.

13.3. International College are required to send or allow access to attendance and monitoring reports which are analysed and discussed in fortnightly meetings between University of Cumbria and International College.

13.4. Partners may advise the University to deregister or withdraw learners who fail to meet the required attendance and engagement standards. The University will review such recommendations and make the final decision, with particular consideration given to cases involving student visa holders by the University Compliance Manager.

14. Safeguarding

14.1. All staff must be vigilant to safeguarding issues and concerns, particularly when managing learner or apprentice performance linked to attendance. Where there are safeguarding concerns, this can be reported to specialist student support services including the Student Wellbeing Team or via the Student Enquiry Point.

15. Equality and Diversity

15.1. The University is committed to providing an inclusive environment and meeting our Equality Act 2010 responsibilities in the delivery and

application of this Attendance and Academic Engagement Policy. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate and students will be supported equitably to ensure that no student is disadvantaged with due regard to individual needs. Students will be supported through appropriate procedures, inclusive practices and tailored support in line with the University Inclusivity Statement and legal obligations.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

16.1. Learner Responsibilities:

16.2. As active partners in their learning, all learners at the University are expected to consistently and proactively engage with all aspects of their programme of study. This includes both in-person and online learning activities. To support academic success and adhere to this policy, learners must:

- Attend all mandatory timetabled teaching sessions (in-person or online), arrive on time, stay for the full duration, and participate actively in learning activities.
- Record attendance at every session using the University's designated system and never falsify attendance or assist others in doing so.
- Notify personal tutor and/or academic staff of absences in advance where possible, self-certify short absences, provide evidence for longer absences, and follow placement-specific reporting procedures.
- Use online learning platforms, access materials, complete preparatory tasks, and engage with digital resources as required.
- Check University email at least once a week, respond as required and the Student Hub for important information.
- Attend any meetings related to attendance or engagement concerns.
- Keep contact details up to date.
- Seek support promptly if personal circumstances affect attendance or engagement.
- Follow any programme-specific or PSRB attendance requirements.
- Comply with additional obligations linked to visas or funding.

16.3. Deans of Faculty Responsibilities:

- Champion the importance of proactive attendance and engagement monitoring across all staff, including adherence to expectations set by the university, external agencies and PSRBs.

16.4. Programme Leader Responsibilities:

- Take overall responsibility for ensuring that learner attendance and engagement are recorded accurately and consistently across the programme.

- Promote a culture that values strong attendance by encouraging teaching staff to reinforce its importance to learners.
- Ensure all programme staff are fully aware of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements and any expectations set by external agencies relating to attendance and engagement.
- Make certain that staff understand the attendance thresholds, intervention stages, and the required actions at each stage.
- Oversee the appropriate academic or procedural outcome for learners who continue to demonstrate non-attendance.
- Be responsible for understanding and having awareness of learners with a disability support plan in place.
- Liaise with the Student Procedures Manager to ensure effective coordination of the appeals procedure for the 4-week rule and student disciplinary process.
- Report any safeguarding concerns through the online Student Enquiry form (StEP).

16.5. Personal Tutor and Post Graduate Research Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Monitor attendance patterns and make initial supportive contact where concerns arise.
- Encourage active participation and highlight the importance of regular engagement for success.
- Reasonable adjustments will be applied for absence related to health or wellbeing in line with the University's duties under the Equality Act 2010. Adjustments should be considered whether or not a formal support plan is in place, where the University knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that a learner may require support. Learners without an agreed support plan should be referred to the Disability Team, but appropriate interim adjustments should be considered and implemented where necessary.
- Signpost learners to wellbeing services when concerns arise during meetings with those progressing through any of the attendance stages.
- Provide evidence of a learner's engagement to enable Programme Administration to process a deregistration using the correct last date of engagement.
- Report any safeguarding concerns through the online Student Enquiry form (StEP).

16.6. Module Leader Responsibilities:

- Monitor attendance patterns for Continuing Professional Development courses (CPD) and make initial supportive contact where concerns arise.
- Ensure learners can register attendance at every timetabled session using the approved university system. Noting that this will be actioned by the teaching team in the absence of the module leader.

- Work with the Timetabling Team to ensure session information is correct and up to date.
- Follow up on absences, and lateness within 48 hours and address issues through organising tripartite or Student Progress Reviews, updating APTM RAG ratings as needed for apprentices.
- Be responsible for communicating apprenticeship absences and issues with punctuality with the employer.
- Remind learners to record accurate attendance and reinforce engagement expectations during induction and throughout the module.
- Encourage active participation and highlight the importance of regular engagement for success.
- Inform learners promptly of any timetable or session changes and update information in the appropriate systems (e.g., Blackboard).
- Liaise with Placement Providers to ensure attendance monitoring meets university and PSRB requirements.
- Ensure attendance records are accurate, never knowingly falsified, and reported in compliance with UKVI, funding, and university regulations.
- Provide evidence of a learner's engagement to enable Programme Administration to process a deregistration using the correct last date of engagement.
- Report any safeguarding concerns through the online Student Enquiry form (StEP).

16.7. Employer Responsibilities:

- Supporting apprentices, to enable their full engagement with the planned learning sessions as set out in this Policy.
- Engaging in the tripartite review and any other process (e.g. Student Progress Review) alongside the University and the learner.

16.8. Programme Administration Responsibilities:

- Review attendance data weekly and identify concerns or patterns requiring action.
- Track reported absences and record updates as needed.
- Provide personal tutors with identifying patterns of non-attendance.
- Follow up on missing or incomplete attendance records with the relevant academic staff.
- Notify academic staff when learners have reached attendance thresholds and require intervention.
- Coordinate and administer required actions at each stage of the attendance process.
- Process unresolved non-engagement after four weeks for deregistration processes.

- Issue appropriate communications to learners, Student Support Services, Programme Leaders and Personal tutors at the relevant stages.
- Update the student record system accurately and in a timely manner.
- Provide training and guidance to academic staff on attendance procedures and systems.
- Maintain and update attendance-related resources and system guidance.
- Track instances of lateness, combine repeated occurrences into an absence, and monitor for emerging patterns.

16.9. Apprenticeship Team Responsibilities:

- The Apprenticeship Quality Assurance (QA) team is responsible for undertaking bimonthly quality audits of apprenticeship attendance records to ensure compliance with apprenticeship funding requirements. These audits will include checks to confirm that:
 - Attendance records are current and have been fully completed within the previous calendar month.
 - Attendance records are complete, with no unexplained gaps or omissions.
 - The average attendance percentage of the sampled apprentices is accurately recorded.
 - Attendance data recorded for the first day of learning aligns with the corresponding start date recorded in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).
- As part of the bimonthly audit process, the QA team will also verify that all attendance records are stored within the appropriate programme administration SharePoint site to ensure accessibility and readiness in the event of an external or internal audit.

16.10. Partner Responsibilities:

- Monitor the attendance and engagement of all learners on programmes delivered in partnership with the University.
- Ensure that all procedures are applied consistently and remain compliant with university policies and regulations.
- Provide attendance and engagement data to university colleagues to support audits and data sampling.
- Supply attendance data and provide access to relevant learner information.
- Work with the University to identify and advise on learners who need to be withdrawn or deregistered due to non-attendance or lack of engagement.

16.11. University of Cumbria UKVI Compliance Team Responsibilities:

- Provide support to Programme Administration when concerns arise regarding poor attendance.
- Offer guidance on learner sponsorship and ensure compliance with UKVI regulations.

16.12. Student Support Services Responsibilities:

- Work with Programme Administration to support learners whose attendance has declined and identify whether they may require wellbeing support.
- Direct learners to Programme Administration if they have concerns about their attendance.
- Support learners when there has been no improvement in attendance, or alert personal tutor if the learner appears to be struggling with any stage of the attendance process.

17. Related Policies and Procedures

- Attendance and Engagement Procedure
- Academic Regulations
- 4-Week Rule Procedure
- Student Attendance Policy and Procedures International College
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

18. Document Control Information

UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL SCHEDULE POLICY SCHEDULE	
Policy title	Attendance and Academic Engagement Policy
Policy owner	Academic Registry
Related University Policy Documents	Attendance and Engagement Procedure Academic Regulations 4-Week Rule Procedure Student Attendance Policy and Procedures International College Student Code of Conduct Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
Policy lead contact	Programme Administration Manager
Approving body	Academic Board
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