

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy establishes attendance expectations for international students studying at University of Cumbria International College. It ensures compliance with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations while fostering student engagement and academic success.

In compliance with the UKVI and as a sponsor, the University of Cumbria International College have a legal obligation to keep a record of registration, attendance and engagement of all students. The college will withdraw sponsorship and notify UKVI of continued non-engagement as set out in this policy.

1.2 Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all international students enrolled in foundation, international year one, and pre-master's programmes delivered at University of Cumbria International College. It sets a uniform standard for attendance monitoring while accommodating institutional-specific processes.

1.3 Regulatory and Institutional Compliance

This policy aligns with the following external and institutional requirements:

- UKVI Student Visa Sponsorship Regulations
- QAA Quality Code for Higher Education Guidelines
- Office for Students (OfS) Metrics and Expectations
- Partner University Policies

2. Attendance Requirements

2.1 General Expectations

All students must maintain a minimum 85% attendance rate across all scheduled academic activities, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, and practical sessions. All our programmes are designed to comply with the minimum requirements of in- college contact time of 15-hours per week.

2.2 Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is recorded through daily registers by the International College's Student Services Team. Attendance is reviewed informally weekly to identify students at-risk and there is an additional formal monthly review meeting to identify students with repeated absences that require early intervention support.

3. Absence Reporting and Authorisation

Absences must be notified via email studentservices@internationalcollege.malvern.com to the International College before 9am. Absences will only be authorised for legitimate reasons such as illness, medical appointments. A doctor's note will be required for prolonged absences. The International College will retain evidence used for authorisation and store it in line with GDPR and Data Processing agreements.

3.1 Short-Term Absences (Up to 7 Days)

Students must inform student services using the dedicated email inbox studentservices@internationalcollege.malvern.com of any sudden absence due to illness as soon as possible but before their first scheduled session takes place.

If the student submits evidence that justifies their absence (e.g. medical report) the absence can be authorised. This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Student Services at the International College.

If the student does not submit evidence, or submits evidence that is not considered acceptable, the student will be required to meet with Head of Student Services at the International College who will complete an engagement report with an action plan after the meeting has taken place.

3.2 Long-Term Absences (Over 7 Days)

Any absence exceeding 7 days requires students to complete an authorised absence request form. Any student with an absence exceeding 7 days will need to provide supporting documentation. This documentation will be reviewed and approved at the discretion of the Head of Student Services at the International College.

3.3 Exceptional Circumstances

Students experiencing visa delays, medical emergencies, or family crises must notify the International College's Student Services Team and liaise with the Head of Student Services at the International College immediately. Each case will be assessed individually, ensuring a fair process in line with institutional and UKVI regulations.

3.4 No Engagement

If, after 4 consecutive weeks we are unable to get in touch with the student, the matter will be escalated in accordance with the University's Trusted Contact Process, for safeguarding and wellbeing assurances. A representative from the International College will be included in the Trusted Contact decision making process.

We define no engagement as:

- Fails to attend and/or engage with formal university learning activities and associated procedures for 4 consecutive weeks;
- Fails to respond to communications from the university regarding this matter, or
- Unable to give reasonable explanation for their absence and assurance of future appropriate engagement.

4. Attendance Warnings and Consequences of Non-Compliance

4.1 Initial Warnings and Early Intervention

If attendance falls below 85% in any given month, students will receive an attendance review notification sent by the Student Services Team at the college. Students will be required to meet with the Student Services to discuss reasons for absence, and the personal tutor who will provide academic support.

4.2 Continued Poor Attendance (Below 75%)

If attendance remains below 75% for two consecutive months, students will be issued with a formal warning and an academic review. Students will be required to attend a meeting with the Head of Student Services at the International College and the Head of Learning and Teaching to create a support plan to restore attendance levels in line with the university, college and UKVI expectations.

4.3 Notification leading to De-registration

A notification that is intended to lead to de-registration from the programme will be issued to students who fall in one of the following categories:

- If a student has 0% attendance for any given month with no evidence of engagement.
- If the student's attendance doesn't show improvement and remains below the 70% threshold for monthly attendance for three consecutive months.

4.4 UKVI and Visa Implications

If a student fails to meet the required attendance levels without valid reasons, the university will report the student to UKVI, which could result in:

- Withdrawal of visa sponsorship.
- Requirement to leave the UK due to non-compliance with visa conditions.

If a student is in receipt of a government sponsored loan/scholarship, there may be a requirement for the university to report on attendance, performance and progression. If this is the case, the University may have an obligation to report poor attendance and/or withdrawals to the sponsor. There may be a requirement to report at the end of each term, and failure to draw poor attendance to the sponsor's attention may have consequences for both the student and the university.

4.5 Appeals

A student who receives a notification is entitled to appeal within 10 working days and should do so by writing formally to the Head of Student Services, clearly stating the grounds under which they wish to appeal.

Any appeal should be accompanied by independent documentary evidence supporting the explanation for non-attendance or non-engagement.

The appeal will be reviewed through the Attendance Panel.

If the appeal is upheld, the student will be permitted to continue to study. It may be necessary to put in place additional support if required.

Circumstances under which an appeal can be considered

Consideration of an appeal will be restricted to the following grounds:

- The college did not act in accordance with this policy/procedure.
- The student has been affected by unfair treatment or bias.
- The student has been affected by extenuating circumstances which have prevented them from attending their programme.

Appeals claims which will be ruled invalid

- Appeals submitted outside the specified deadlines
- Appeals by a third party (unless the appellant is serious incapacitated or there is a recognised plan in place that prevents the individual from engaging with the process appropriately).

Vexatious, frivolous or fraudulent appeals will be dismissed immediately and may result in disciplinary action against the appellant.

Attendance Panel

All appeals received need to be reviewed immediately after the 10 working days have concluded through an attendance panel committee who will be meeting bi-monthly. The panel will have the responsibility to:

- Evaluate the evidence submitted
- Decide to uphold or reject the appeal
- Provide summary reason for the rationale behind decision to inform communications to student
- Ensure transparency and consistency of this policy applied across the college.

The Attendance Panel Committee will be chaired by the Chief Operating Officer from Malvern International and represented by the College Director, and Head of Student Services at the International College. University of Cumbria compliance representatives will be notified of the recommended actions from this committee to ensure transparency of the decision-making process and to ensure alignment with university withdrawal and de-registration processes.

Concluding the appeal review, the decisions will be communicated to the relevant University of Cumbria representatives to be actioned.

Independent External Review

If the appeal is not upheld and the student is discontinued they will be provided with a Completion of Procedures letter advising they may pursue the matter further by submitting a Scheme Application Form to the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA) ([Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education - OIAHE](#)). This must be submitted within twelve months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

5. Support Mechanisms

5.1 Academic Support

Students struggling with attendance will be referred to their personal tutor and will be on an individual learning plan to support their academic progress. Furthermore, students will be required to attend

regular check-ins with Student Services at the college until their attendance is back at a minimum of 85%.

5.2 Health and Wellbeing Support

Students experiencing health or mental wellbeing concerns will be referred and can access university counselling and healthcare services. Adjustments will be made for students with long-term medical conditions or disabilities.

5.3 Mitigating Circumstances for Attendance Issues

Students experiencing extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness, bereavement) can apply for mitigating circumstances consideration. The institution will assess each case and may offer academic flexibility where appropriate. These will always need to be evidenced with documentation and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Student Services at the International College, and in line with UKVI regulations.

5.4 Visa Support

International students on a Student Visa are required to meet specific attendance and engagement requirements to maintain their visa status. The International College provides dedicated visa support services to assist students in understanding and complying with these responsibilities.

Support includes:

- Regular updates and guidance on UKVI compliance requirements.
- One-to-one visa guidance sessions available through the Student Services Team.
- Assistance with understanding the implications of absences or academic changes (e.g., interruptions, deferrals) on visa status.
- Liaison with the university's compliance and immigration team where necessary.

Students are encouraged to seek advice immediately if they:

- Are unsure how a medical or personal situation may affect their visa.
- Are considering changing their course or study mode.
- Have received a UKVI compliance warning.

It is the student's responsibility to maintain awareness of their visa conditions, including attendance and academic engagement. The college will work proactively to support students in maintaining visa compliance, but cannot override UKVI decisions if regulations are breached.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Student Responsibilities

- Attend all scheduled academic activities and report any absences in a timely manner.
- Engage with personal tutors and support services when facing attendance difficulties.
- Ensure compliance with UKVI visa attendance requirements.

6.2 Staff Responsibilities

6.2.1 International College Staff Responsibilities

- Maintain accurate attendance records and provide timely interventions for at-risk students.
- Offer student support and guidance for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Ensure students are aware of attendance obligations and potential consequences.

6.2.2 University of Cumbria Staff Responsibilities

- Collaborate with International College staff to ensure attendance and compliance reporting processes align with university standards.
- Provide oversight and escalation support in cases of repeated non-attendance or risk of de-registration.
- Support delivery of shared student services, such as academic advising and welfare support in exceptional cases or where further support is required.

7. Policy Review and Compliance

7.1 Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance with UKVI, and institutional regulations. Any policy updates will be communicated to students and staff.

7.2 Compliance Audits

Monthly internal audits will be conducted to verify attendance monitoring accuracy and institutional compliance by the Head of Student Services at the International College. Audit findings will inform continuous improvements in attendance monitoring and student engagement strategies.