University of Roehampton London

Student Route (previously Tier 4) Attendance and Engagement Policy

Owner: Academic Registrar

Approved by: Senate

Review due date: July 2023

To discuss receiving the document in an alternative format, please contact the disabilities team at disabilities@roehampton.ac.uk

Student Route Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. **Summary**

The university is required to monitor the attendance of students as part of its UKVI sponsorship duties. This policy outlines the expectations of student regarding academic engagement and outlines how attendance and engagement will be monitored for students studying on different courses and levels of study.

2. **Purpose and Scope**

This policy applies to all international students studying in the UK under the sponsorship of the University of Roehampton on a Student route or Tier 4 (Student) visa.

The University is committed to supporting students to complete their programmes of study and attain the best possible academic outcomes. Monitoring academic engagement helps the University to identify student wellbeing issues and support students through to successful completion as well as maintaining compliance with the external requirements of professional, regulatory and funding bodies.

- o Wellbeing – The university can offer advice and support to students who need help to re-engage with their studies

- o UKVI – Under the terms of its sponsor licence the university must notify the UKVI of students on a Student Route or Tier 4 visa who stop engaging with their studies.

3. Academic Progress – The University will use engagement data in conjunction with assessment data to monitor student progress and offer support to students when required.
   This policy outlines how the University records attendance and engagement as evidence that each student is actively and consistently engaging with their programme of study and sets out what we expect from students in terms of academic engagement. It also details how the University monitors academic engagement levels, the interventions we apply if overall academic engagement, including attendance, is deemed unsatisfactory, and subsequent outcomes.

4. Attendance is defined as presence and participation in scheduled teaching sessions associated with a student's programme of study whether these are face-to-face or virtual sessions. A scheduled teaching session includes, but is not limited to lectures, seminars, study groups, practical classes, tutorials, supervisory meetings, industrial placements, field trips or other activities which students are expected to engage with.

   We expect our students to :
   - attend timetabled teaching sessions and engage with scheduled assessments within their programme of study
   - participate with all attendance requirements while away from the University on work placement, period of study abroad or organised field trip
   - attend supervisory meetings

5. Engagement is defined as active participation in learning activities associated with a programme of study

   We expect our students to:
   - actively participate in their learning and teaching by engaging with programme materials and other learning resources available on. Moodle

- actively engage with learning resources associated with their programme of study which are available via the University Library Facilities
- be familiar with their programme handbook and other programme documentation which may provide more information on specific requirements relating to engagement in their course of study.

6. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring

We expect students to attend all scheduled teaching sessions. We monitor academic engagement via a range of information sources. This is primarily through attendance at timetabled teaching sessions on campus (normally recorded through the use of attendance monitoring system but also using local registers where applicable for specific subject areas) but also includes engagement with online learning sessions, Moodle, library resources and assignment submissions. The exact form of engagement monitoring, and any related interventions, will depend on the level of study and the programme of study. This is set out in more detail below

7. Pathway and pre-sessional English programmes

Students studying on courses at Level 3 are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours per week of classroom-based study on campus, which is formally timetabled.

Monitoring the attendance of all students studying at Level 3 with the University's pathway provider will be carried out in line with UKVI sponsor licence requirements, as detailed in the UKVI's Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2.

It is the responsibility of Pathway Campus staff to monitor attendance on a weekly basis in the first instance and to obtain underlying evidence to support any absences. Pathway Campus staff and the University UKVI Compliance Team will meet every four weeks to review attendance levels and supporting evidence provided by students to explain any absences. In addition, Pathway Campus staff must escalate issues that arise at other points throughout the Semester where a student has dropped below required attendance levels.

Attendance levels are monitored as illustrated by the workflow process contained in **Appendix 1**. Interventions will be triggered when a student's attendance level on campus is identified as having dropped below specific thresholds as outlined within the UKVI Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2.

8. Undergraduate and Post-graduate Taught students

Students must register their attendance in classes tapping their student ID cards on the readers in classrooms and lecture theatres. It is the responsibility of students to carry their student ID card with them at all times, and to swipe their card at the start of each timetabled class. Students will be registered as absent if the swipe card data is recorded more than 15 minutes before or 15 minutes after the timetabled session begins.

Monitoring the attendance of international students on a student visa (including Tier 4) will be carried out by the UKVI Compliance Team. Attendance data is collated within the electronic monitoring system which calculates a percentage of attendance for each student. Monitoring will take place at three points across each semester with an additional review point after the Exam Board period at which point module outcomes and broader engagement data for all sponsored students is reviewed. Every effort will be made to take full account of

all extenuating circumstances and any evidence supplied by the student regarding their engagement in their programme of study.

Engagement data will include swipe card entry data to the University Library and electronic engagement with course materials via Moodle and submission to assessment. This data enables levels of attendance and academic engagement to be monitored and patterns of low attendance and / or academic engagement to be identified and students referred for additional support where necessary to support re-engagement.

Attendance levels are monitored as illustrated by the workflow process contained in **Appendix 1**. Interventions will be triggered when a student's attendance levels on campus is identified as having dropped below the stated thresholds.

9. Work Placements

The Placements Team is responsible for monitoring the attendance of students while they are on work placements, with additional support from the UKVI Compliance Team if required. The Placements Team issues and reviews a monthly request to employers regarding attendance.

The Placements Team will escalate cases to the UKVI Compliance Team where a student has stopped engaging with their work placement, or attendance levels have dropped below expected levels.

10. Programmes accredited by Professional Bodies

Professionally accredited programmes often have specific attendance requirements which have to be met by all students registered on the programme. Full details of attendance requirements are available in the relevant course handbooks.

We expect students studying on any of the professional programmes to record their attendance at scheduled classes on campus via the swipe card system.

In addition to attendance recorded through the swipe card system, additional monitoring of attendance and engagement may take place. Examples of this include:

     i)   Class registers. These may also be used to record attendance at specific sessions when attendance at these sessions is a mandatory part of the programme, for example clinical sessions on nursing programmes.

     ii)   Completion of mandatory requirements such as DBS checks

     iii)   Attendance at scheduled meetings with academic tutors during placement.

Absences from work placements are not permitted with the exception of illness (with medical evidence) and any student who misses part their placement due to illness may be expected to make this up at a later date.

11. Study Abroad programmes

Monitoring the engagement of students while on Study Abroad programmes is the responsibility of the Study Abroad Team. This is done using three checks points across each Semester. Checks are normally carried out on arrival at the host institution, halfway through the Semester and during the penultimate week of teaching. Following enrolment at the partner institution, students must obtain a stamped arrival certificate from the partner institution and return this to the Study Abroad Team in Roehampton. At two further points

during the Semester, students must obtain an attendance certificate, stamped, and approved by the partner institution which confirms the student has been engagement academically with classes at the partner institution.

Where a student fails to submit the necessary paperwork, authorized by the partner institution, at each check point the Study Abroad Team will contact the host institution directly as a follow up. If a student is found to have stopped engaging while overseas on a Study Abroad programme, this will be escalated to the UKVI Compliance Team for further action. The student will then be directed towards the interruption or withdrawal process, as appropriate

12. Research students

The Graduate School is required to ensure that registered Student Route/ Tier 4 Visa students attend and engage regularly with their programme.

Research Degree students are required to attend 7 engagement points (e.g. supervisions) with the research supervisory team each year.

Attendance at RSDP sessions can count as additional engagement points, and the Graduate School maintains these records.

Records to be kept at Department level

Supervisors must ensure they keep a record of supervision sessions, whether one to one, or group sessions, with their Student Route/Tier 4 visa students. The supervision record should be completed on the University's attendance monitoring system after each supervision meeting so that the Graduate School and UKVI Compliance Team can access these records. The supervision record should be agreed by students and supervisors adding an electronic signature to the meeting record.

Attendance at Upgrade, APR meetings and any Departmental events can also be used as evidence of attendance, but must be recorded via the attendance monitoring system and signed off. Student Route/Tier 4 students who are in their writing up period, preparing for their viva or working on corrections are still expected to have contact with their supervisor to enable the University to meet their UKVI requirements. These meetings must be recorded on the attendance monitoring system. They may take place face to face, by telephone or Skype. E-mail exchanges/discussions do not represent satisfactory engagement points.

Process for recording supervision, attendance at Upgrade/Progression Review and APR/contact points with Student Route/Tier 4 students on fieldwork outside of the UK (the term supervision used in the following outline covers all of these contact points)

  (i) Student attends supervision session, Upgrade or APR
  (ii) Supervision record is completed by student and supervisory team on attendance monitoring system
  (iii) E-signatures used to sign off on the session

13. Fieldwork outside the UK

It is important that a supervisor reminds their students of the need to contact the UKVI Compliance team should they need to leave the UK for any period including for any fieldwork, so that it can be recorded and reported to UKVI. The student should contact the UKVI Compliance team at least one month before they are due to leave the UK. Tier 4 Students need to maintain contact with their supervisor during any periods of fieldwork by

telephone, e-mail, Skype or a combination. Auditable records must also be kept and added to the attendance monitoring system.

 If for any reason it is not possible to maintain contact at an appropriate level during a period of study outside the UK, the UKVI Compliance team will notify the UKVI of a withdrawal of sponsorship of their Tier 4 visa and a new CAS will be issued when the student is ready to return to the UK. It is not recommended that Student Route/Tier 4 students undertake trips where it will not be possible to maintain contact with their supervisory team, as there is always the risk that a new visa application could be rejected when the student is ready to return.

Appendix 1 outlines the processes in place to monitor academic engagement of Research students

14. Absences

The University understands that occasionally there will be good reason why a student cannot attend a class or engage in their studies for a short time. In such instances students must contact their Academic Department to request an authorised absence. Depending on the length and nature of absence, they will be able to signpost relevant support and procedures to help students to stay on track.

Students will need to make sure they keep up with their work. Faculties/Schools should consider the grounds on which the request is made, the length of time requested and the impact of the absence on the student's academic studies. The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances which the University would normally accept:

- Reasonable circumstances that may arise as a result of illness.

- Death or serious illness of a close relative or friend.

- Significant adverse personal/family circumstances – such as divorce, burglary, fire, major court proceedings, financial difficulties beyond the control of the student, which require the student to leave the University at short notice.

Student must provide corroborating evidence for absences greater than one week. An absence of normally no more than 2 weeks but no more than 4 weeks authorised absence can be granted by the academic department. If a student is experiencing personal, financial or medical difficulties that affect their ability to engage with their studies, we may advise students to interrupt their studies.

Faculties/Schools must notify the UKVI Compliance team of any authorised absences to ensure these are recorded on the students record.

Discretion may be applied in relation to international students on research programmes where the absence requested is no longer than 6 weeks. Absences of up to 6 weeks must be approved by the Graduate School and the UKVI Compliance Team notified in a timely manner. If a student fails to re-engage with their studies or requires further time away they will be directed towards to the University interruption or withdrawal process as appropriate.

Absences which are not deemed to be approved, will be incorporated into the overall academic attendance percentage and interventions triggered in line with this policy.

15. Potential Abuse of System

Students are required to register their attendance at scheduled face-to-face teaching sessions by swiping their student card against the readers located in each teaching room. The

University recognises the potential for abuse of the system in students scanning into scheduled teaching sessions for others or scanning and then not attending the scheduled learning session. Any suspected abuse of the system will normally be investigated by the Faculty/School in conjunction with the student compliance team who will invite students to a meeting to discuss the circumstances in the first instance. Students suspected of abuse of the system may have their case escalated to the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure, depending on the nature of the situation.

16. Requesting a Review of a decision to withdraw a student for non-attendance

A student who is withdrawn for non-attendance under the University's Student Route Attendance and Engagement Policy shall be entitled to request a review of this decision. Review requests should be submitted under Paragraphs 29hh – 29qq of the University's Taught Degree Regulations to studentcasework@roehampton.ac.uk.

Review requests should be submitted within 14 days of the withdrawal decision being communicated to the student.

Review requests can be submitted on the following grounds:

i)   That a procedural irregularity or administrative error has occurred in respect of the original decision which is of such a nature as to create a reasonable possibility that, in the absence of the procedural irregularity or administrative error, the decision in question would have been different;

ii)   That the decision is unreasonable given the facts of the case;

iii) That the student has new material evidence which, for a good reason, they were unable to provide at an earlier stage in the process.

Review requests will normally be considered and a response provided to the student within 20 days of submission.

During the appeal process the student will continue to have full access to University facilities and be expected to attend and engage with their programme of study. Only at the end of the appeal process, if the decision is upheld, will the student be reported to UKVI and sponsorship of the visa withdrawn.

17. Guidance and Support

This Policy and any other processes relating to attendance monitoring are applied in conjunction with the University's Academic Regulations.

The University will make every effort to ensure that a student receives the necessary advice and guidance that they may need in order to comply with the Academic Regulations and with this Policy.

Appendix 1

Monitoring & Interventions – Pathway programmes

Pathway Programme staff will take class registers in every class. This will be used to calculate a rolling percentage of attendance for each student on a weekly basis. Pathway Programme staff will monitor attendance levels on a weekly basis and students must provide reasons / evidence to explain all absences.

Pathway Programme staff and the University UKVI Compliance team will review attendance information at three points across each Semester: at the end of Week 4; the end of Week 8 and the end of Week 12 (the end of the Semester). Students who fail to meet UKVI requirements of maintaining 85% attendance levels in any 4 week period will be identified for targeted interventions by Pathway Programme staff.

Monitoring point 1: This occurs at the end of Week 4 and considers attendance levels over the initial 4 week period. Programme staff in conjunction with the UKVI Compliance Team will review the reasons / evidence for a student's absence(s) where attendance level has dropped below 85% during that period. Where explanations are deemed to be unsatisfactory, the UKVI Compliance Team will determine and implement further interventions to ensure that students are fully engaging with their course.

Any student with attendance levels below 70% at this point will be identified as "at risk" (red flagged) for withdrawal at the end of the Semester and targeted interventions will be implemented to ensure that the student is re-engaging as required.

Targeted interventions include one-on-one meetings with red flagged students and an action plan to support the student.

Monitoring point 2: This occurs at the end of Week 8 and considers attendance levels covering weeks 1-4 and weeks 5-8). Pathway Programme staff in conjunction with the UKVI Compliance Team will review the reasons / evidence for a student's absence(s) where attendance level has dropped below 85% during weeks 5-8. Where explanations are deemed to be unsatisfactory further interventions will be agreed and implemented to ensure that students are fully engaging with their course.

Any student with attendance levels below 70% during the first two monitoring periods will be identified as "at risk" (red flagged) for withdrawal at the end of the Semester and targeted interventions will be implemented to ensure that the student is re-engaging as required.

Targeted interventions include one-on-one meetings with amber / red flagged students and an action plan to support the student.

Monitoring point 3: Occurs at the end of each Semester (12 week period), Pathway Programme staff in conjunction with the UKVI Compliance Team will review any student with an attendance level consistently below 70%. They will review supporting reasons and evidence and if reasons for non-attendance / poor attendance are not deemed to be exceptional (such as medical reasons with evidence) then sponsorship will normally be withdrawn.

Any student with attendance levels between 70% and 85% during at least two of the monitoring periods will be identified as "potential risk" (amber flagged) and targeted interventions will be implemented to ensure that the student is re-engaging as required.

Any student with attendance levels below 70% across monitoring points 2 and 3 will be identified as "at risk" (red flagged) for withdrawal at the end of the Semester and targeted interventions will be implemented to ensure that the student is re-engaging as required.

Targeted interventions include one-on-one meetings with amber / red flagged students and an action plan to support the student.

Pathway Campus staff must also follow up with students on a weekly basis where a student's attendance percentage is below 50% in any given week as well as obtaining and recording evidence / reasons for all absences on a regular basis.

Monitoring & Interventions – UG & PGT (excluding professional programmes, Study Abroad and students on work placements)

New students are expected to enrol promptly at the start of their course with the enrolment period continuing across weeks 1 & 2. Late enrolment is permitted until the end of week 2. All new students will have an initial contact point which is an in person in-person check of their immigration documents. Formal monitoring of attendance will consider data from week 3 onwards.

Monitoring points (each semester)

End of teaching week 3 – review attendance data for week 3

End of week 7 – reviews attendance data for weeks 4-7

End of week 10 – review data for weeks 8-10

Intervention points (each Semester)

Week 4, Week 8 and Week 11

Final monitoring point – after Exam Board

Final monitoring point will review attendance data from the three monitoring points along with progression results and identify students who are at risk of being withdrawn in line with Academic Regulations.

Intervention Point 1

Trigger: attendance falls below 60% (but above 45%)

Action: Automatic warning email sent (email 1)

Red Flag Trigger: attendance already below 45%

Action: Targeted intervention in addition to an automatic warning sent (email 1). Additional engagement activity to be reviewed for these students and action plan agree i.e. refer for support and set expectations for future attendance / engagement as appropriate. Follow up with a phone call and meeting the student, as appropriate.

Intervention Point 2

Trigger: attendance falls below 60% (but above 45%)

Action: Automatic warning email sent (email 1)

Trigger: attendance continues to be below 60% and email 1 previously sent

Action: Targeted contact with student warning of specific consequences unless engagement improves (email 2 & possible follow up telephone call)

Red Flag Trigger: attendance falls below 45% or continues to be below 45%

Action: Targeted intervention in addition to an automatic warning emails sent. Additional engagement activity to be reviewed for these students and action plan agree i.e. refer for support and set expectations for future attendance / engagement as appropriate. Follow up with a phone call and meeting the student, as appropriate.

Intervention Point 3

Trigger: attendance falls below 60% (but above 45%)

Action: Automatic warning email sent (email 1)

Trigger: attendance continues to be below 60% and email 1 previously sent

Action: Targeted email sent to student warning of specific consequences unless engagement improves. (email 2 & possible follow up telephone call)

Trigger: attendance continues to be below 60% and email 2 previously sent

Action: Student invited in for meeting within 5 working days

Prior to meeting additional engagement activity to be reviewed. At meeting action plan to be agreed and expectations set for future attendance / engagement. Refer for additional support as required.

Red Flag Trigger: attendance falls below 45% or continues to be below 45%

Action: Targeted intervention in addition to an automatic warning email sent. Additional engagement activity to be reviewed for these students and action plan agree i.e. refer for support and set expectations for future attendance / engagement as appropriate.

Students who fail to re-engage after interventions and have a poor engagement record across the entire Semester are at risk of being withdrawn in line with the Academic Regulations.

Monitoring & Interventions – Work Placements

Monitoring continues to be carried out by Work Placements team on a monthly basis through the use of employer questionnaires. Targeted interventions are the responsibility of the Work Placements team where a student is not fully engaging with their work placement. Students who fail to engage while on their work placement will be escalated to Compliance Team and referred to the University's withdrawal or interruption policy.

Monitoring & Interventions – Professional programmes

Compliance Team to liaise with Faculty staff each Semester however it is the responsibility of Faculty staff to highlight any concerns relating to non-engagement with the Compliance Team as they occur.

Monitoring & Interventions – Study Abroad programmes

Monitoring is the responsibility of the Study Abroad Team in the first instance. Students who are deemed to not be engaging with their academic programme overseas will be escalated to the UKVI Compliance team as they occur.

Monitoring & Interventions – PG Research Students

The following steps should be taken if a Student Route/Tier 4 student fails to attend scheduled supervision sessions:

Step 1. Supervisor to contact student within 7 days to request an explanation for missed session and arrange a second session.

Step 2. Where no response is received within 7 days, Supervisor makes a further attempt to contact the student in writing (by e-mail) explaining that he/she must make contact and attend supervision. Student will also be warned that if they do not respond to this communication they will be at risk of programme termination.

Step 3. Where no response is received and where there has been no contact for 4 weeks, the student must be contacted in writing (by email) and advised of the importance attending a meeting. The e-mail should make clear that the Graduate School and UKVI Compliance team have been alerted to their absence from scheduled supervisions. The Graduate School should be copied into this message to the student. This will alert the Graduate School to contact the UKVI compliance team. The UKVI Compliance team will contact the student and invite them in for a mandatory meeting seeking a reasonable justification for their lack of attendance.

Step 4.Where no response is received and the student fails to attend the meeting with the UKVI Compliance Team, the student will be sent a withdrawal of Tier 4 sponsorship e-mail. Student will be given 7 days to provide any additional exceptional evidence to be considered by the UKVI Compliance Manager. If no response is received, student will be programme terminated and reported to UKVI. Supervisory teams should also monitor the academic progress of Tier 4 students as well as their attendance. Concerns about progress should be raised with the Graduate School and the Cause for Concern process (see Research Degree Regulations) initiated if necessary