

POLICY/PROCEDURE: HE STUDENT ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approval required by:	Executive	Y	Governing Body	N
Senior Lead:	Director of Quality HE			
Responsible Manager:	HE Academic Registrar			
Date approved:	September 2025			
Date to be reviewed:	September 2028			

Significant changes to policy

New policy covering the requirements of the new DfE requirement for Attendance Monitoring, and to meet SLC service requirements.

Impact of changes**INTRODUCTION**

Barnsley College is committed to being a supportive learning environment which enables all students who have chosen to study with us to achieve their full potential. The College recognises the investment that students and their sponsors make when a student enrolls on a course and has a duty to monitor engagement, act on non-engagement and support students to complete their programme of study.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This policy applies to all taught students, regardless of mode, or HE level of study.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our procedure for the monitoring of student engagement and attendance in all HE courses at the College, including higher and degree apprenticeships, and while students attend assessed placement.

It sets out the College's expectations of, and the learning behaviours which demonstrate students are engaging in their studies, and to help students to maximise their success and achievement. The policy also sets out what students can expect from the College and how any concerns to support engagement will be followed up on and actioned.

The College takes a proactive approach to engagement and attendance monitoring, associated expectations, response where there are concerns regarding a student's engagement, and how the College will use engagement and attendance data to support success

DEFINITIONS

For this policy, 'engagement' encompasses engaging with, and participating in, guided independent or group study, assessment and feedback or any other activity that supports learning and development. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Attending timetabled teaching or learning events;

- Submitting assessments within defined deadlines;
- Accessing and/or interacting with online learning materials (e.g. lecture recordings or learning materials);
- Utilising infrastructure in place to support student learning (i.e. the Library and VLE);
- Attending meetings with Academic Tutors or other staff.

Attendance is one component of engagement. For this policy, 'attendance' is defined as being present at timetabled learning, teaching and other activities required by modules and/or programmes. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical attendance at face-to-face scheduled teaching and or other learning activities as required by the module and/or programme;
- Virtual attendance at scheduled synchronous online teaching and/or other learning events as required by the module and/or programme.

RESPONSIBILITIES

a) The College

The College has a duty to monitor attendance at teaching and learning activities and to act on non-attendance. This duty includes but is not limited to, reporting requirements for the Student Loans Company and other oversight bodies.

b) Academic staff

Are responsible for:

- encouraging a culture of student attendance/engagement, including providing information, advice and guidance to students at Induction and key points throughout their programme of study;
- have the opportunity to trigger the unsatisfactory attendance processes as defined within the Course Handbook in cases where concerns have been informally raised and/or when formal attendance triggers are hit.

c) HE Quality & Registry staff

Are responsible for:

- retaining student attendance records;
- liaising with students and Pathway Leaders to arrange Academic Concern meetings regarding unsatisfactory attendance, as required;
- providing formal attendance monitoring data on request, and other relevant student success and progression monitoring processes.

d) HE students and apprentices

It is a student's responsibility to ensure they can engage with their studies and attend all timetabled sessions, whether online or face to face. Students should give due consideration to the commitment required prior to embarking on a programme of study and should maintain arrangements such that they can continue to engage and attend for the duration of their course.

Students and apprentices must attend all learning and teaching sessions unless they have valid mitigating reasons for not doing so. The learning and teaching methods for each course and component modules are set out in the Course and Module handbooks. Examples of learning and teaching sessions (which may be face-to-face or virtual) include, but are not limited to: lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, laboratory and practical sessions, professional placements, field trips and industrial visits, meetings with academic staff or equivalent.

Students must arrive on time for classes and remain for the duration of the session. Late arrival at, and early departure from, sessions is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other class members and tutors.

Students are part of the Barnsley College academic community and as such are expected to contribute to their fellow students' learning experience. This is particularly the case when engaging in assessed group work where non-attendance at any stage in the learning process can impact adversely on others' experience. It is unacceptable for a student to fail to engage or attend without valid mitigating reasons when this will have a direct impact on the experience of fellow students.

Students and apprentices are responsible for making applications in good time for Extenuating Circumstances / Additional Consideration where absence is impacting their ability to study and submit work to prescribed deadlines.

Authorised and Unauthorised absences

The College understands that students may face difficulty in attending all sessions, and as such recognises that there will be cases of both planned and unexpected absence from either in-person or virtual classroom teaching, or both, usually as a result of:

- short-term illness, accident or injury, or medical appointments where rearrangement is not possible;
- the death or serious illness of a close family member or dependant (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence in accordance with compassionate leave regulations);
- significant adverse personal or family circumstances directly affecting the student;
- interviews or associated opportunities to gain paid or voluntary work where these appointments cannot reasonably be rearranged;
- other significant exceptional factor.

Students should make module leaders and pathway leaders aware when they are unable to attend sessions due to the above, giving as much advance notice of the absence as possible.

Unsatisfactory attendance/engagement

Unsatisfactory attendance/engagement (whether in-person or virtually) is deemed to be when a student, without valid reason, either,

- a. does not attend any scheduled sessions for a period of **fourteen consecutive days**,
- b. or student attendance falls **below 80%** for an identified period of study, typically measured within each module or unit.

Unsatisfactory attendance actions will be triggered by formal attendance registration data and/or in cases where other unsatisfactory behaviours are identified. This may include cases of persistent late arrival/early departure, poor attendance patterns across specific modules or types of activity, persistent non-submission of work or where there is other cause for concern.

Actions in case of unsatisfactory attendance

The actions taken in cases of unsatisfactory attendance and/or engagement will be defined and set out in the Course Handbook.

Typically, in cases of consecutive non-engagement or non-attendance and where previous attempts to contact the student have not resulted in re-engagement with studies, the concern will be escalated to the Director of Quality HE, or their nominee, and formal action will be taken.

This may include the issuing of an Attendance Agreement. **This will be no later than 28 days after the start of the period of unauthorised absence.**

Failure to re-engage with studies or to adhere to an Attendance Agreement will usually result in the student being notified of the intention to withdraw them from their programme of studies after a **further 7 days** if there is no evidence of re-engagement.

The student's sponsor (if applicable), or the Student Loan Company may be informed about the ongoing unsatisfactory attendance.

Non-attendance by an apprentice will result in the College contacting the apprentice's employer. Reporting expectations are outlined in the relevant Course Handbooks.

Attendance and engagement records will be considered in the following cases:

- At Assessment Boards when considering the opportunities made available to students to retake failed modules
- When considering academic appeals or complaints, where this information is relevant to the case
- When considering applications or Financial Support
- When confirming eligibility to receive College bursaries
- When assessing whether students are meeting attendance requirements of the Student Loans Company (SLC) or other funding body
- During or following study on receipt of an academic reference request

Ongoing unsatisfactory attendance and non-engagement with the above processes will result in the student being removed from their programme of study. Where a student is withdrawn from their course due to unsatisfactory attendance/engagement, they will have the right to appeal via the college Complaints Procedure.

Suspension and resumptions

Suspending studies is the process by which a student studying on a recognised Higher Education programme can temporarily withdraw from their studies to pause their learning activities. The student can then return to the same stage of the programme and resume studies (to be negotiated with the Pathway Leader) after an agreed period of time.

Reasons for suspension of studies might include:

- Prolonged illness or health complications
- Personal problems
- Death of a family member
- Multiple applications for Additional Consideration (or Extenuating Circumstances).

The maximum length of time allowed in a suspension of studies is twelve (12) months.

A student who has suspended their studies must inform the College in a timely fashion of when they would like to return to their studies. The student's situation must have improved and/or been rectified in order to return as a fully registered student. Evidence may be required to show that this is the case. In the first instance the student should make contact with the HE Registrar (Student Lifecycle) in HE Quality and Registry. Students who have suspended for the maximum period of twelve months and who do not contact the College about resuming studies in a timely fashion may be withdrawn permanently.

Possible implications of suspending studies

There will be financial implications if a student suspends their studies after the initial 14 day cooling off period. In addition, units and modules are subject to change and therefore it may not be possible to return to the same point of the programme or same module. It is recommended that students take advice from their Pathway Leader, Director of Quality HE and Student Finance England (if a student loan has been accessed) so that they are in possession of the full facts before making a decision.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All Higher Education students have equal access to the policy and the procedures and will be supported according to individual needs through the attendance process, and should they wish to make a formal academic appeal or complaint.

LINKED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.
Complaints Policy and Procedure.

LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THIS POLICY

This policy is available on the College's website and Microsoft Teams (HE Student area).