University of Wolverhampton

Student Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1   There is clear evidence to show that to maximise academic success, students need to engage fully with their studies, and the University is committed to helping you engage and achieve the best possible outcome from your studies. This policy sets out how the University will support you to engage fully with your studies, what we expect of you by way of engagement with your programme, how we will monitor that engagement, and what we will do if you are not engaging.

1.2   This policy applies to all students on taught programmes.

1.3   For the purposes of this policy, engagement is defined as "<u>active attendance and regular use of resources and learning activities</u> including (but not exclusively) participation in scheduled events, accessing core University systems, completing all required assessments, and interacting with staff and peers, and with programme learning resources".

1.4   Engagement is compulsory and will be monitored by the University. Academic staff will provide appropriate learning opportunities to facilitate engagement from all student groups. Persistent non-engagement may result in you being withdrawn from your studies by the University.

1.5   This policy outlines the minimum requirements for all students. You may have additional requirements as to your engagement with the University and your programme, for example if you are studying a programme governed by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), you are an international student subject to Home Office requirements, or you are on an apprenticeship.

1.6   If you are an international student and you stop engaging academically with your studies, the University is required to withdraw your sponsorship for studying in the UK, in accordance with its obligations under the UKVI Student Sponsorship Guidance.

1.7   This Policy forms part of the University's Regulatory Framework (http://www.wlv.ac.uk/polsregs). It applies to all students except those registered for postgraduate research only. The engagement requirements for postgraduate research students are outlined in the Research Student Handbook.

2. Support for Student Engagement

2.1.   The University recognises that attendance and engagement significantly benefits your development and achievement and wishes to support you to achieve your full potential. In addition to attendance at learning and teaching events, we encourage engagement with programme-related quality activities,

and a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities provided and promoted by the University and the Students Union.

2.2. The University supports your engagement in a number of ways, including:
- pre-entry and induction information, activities and processes that are designed to ensure you are familiar with the requirements of your programme and know how to access facilities, services and support;
- high quality teaching and learning experiences;
- encouraging early opportunities for you to submit work and receive detailed feedback and feed-forward;
- high quality programme-related learning resources and support materials;
- a range of academic and personal support services;
- clear policies and regulations written in student-facing language; and
- by offering a range of co- and extra-curricular activities designed to improve the student experience and to enhance employability.

2.3. Personal tutors and/or academic coaches will advise on, monitor and encourage engagement throughout the student journey.

2.4. The University expects you to engage fully with its engagement monitoring procedures, including attendance recording through digital registers. The derived data will be made available to staff including module tutors, personal tutors, academic coaches and programme leaders to enable you as an individual to be supported.

2.5. You will be able to see your own attendance and engagement data through the same system, including whether you are meeting the University's requirements and comparison with levels of engagement by your peers.

2.6. Where illness or other circumstances impact on your engagement and/or attendance, you should report your absence through our digital register system. This does not mean the non-attendance doesn't count, but the information you provide will be taken into account when interventions are required. Where assessment submission is impacted, you should follow the procedure referred to in paragraph 8.1.

3. Communication with Students

3.1 It is important that our expectations around attendance and engagement are clear to you. It is your responsibility to engage with your learning, staff, systems and resources and you are encouraged to become a proactive partner in your own development and learning experience.

3.2 Clear guidance on positive engagement with the University will be given in relevant programme materials (e.g. module and programme guides). Induction programmes will include a briefing on the University's digital register system, including your responsibility to record your attendance and seek approval for any absences.

3.3   Induction programmes and programme materials will also outline the consequences of non-engagement, as set out in section 9 below, and include any additional programme-specific requirements that apply over and above this policy, for example if there are stricter requirements set by a PSRB.

3.4   It is your responsibility to ensure we have your accurate contact details throughout your studies with us. Your contact details can be updated at any time via eVision.

4. Principles of Student Engagement

4.1   Engagement with learning and teaching activities, including placements, is compulsory and will be monitored by the University in the ways that are set out in the further sections of this policy, with the aim of identifying any issues and difficulties at a sufficiently early stage to be able to work with you to facilitate your full engagement with your studies.

4.2   Timetabled learning and teaching sessions, whether taking place on campus or online, are an essential part of your learning experience on your programme, unless you are studying by distance learning. Timetabled sessions also give you the opportunity to interact with academic staff and other students about programme-related themes and issues. Where programmes have practical or placement elements, attendance at these is similarly central to your success. Therefore, attendance at all timetabled sessions is mandatory.

4.3   If you are an international student undertaking a placement as part of your programme, you are required to submit timesheets as evidence of your continued engagement, to ensure that we continue to sponsor you to study in the UK.

4.4   Dissertation students are required to maintain regular contact with their supervisor.

5. Attendance at Timetabled Sessions

5.1   The University expects you to attend all timetabled teaching sessions for their duration, including placements and fieldwork/in-programme visits, and you are expected to inform the University if you are unable to attend your classes for any reason. If you are on an apprenticeship programme, you must also inform your employer.

5.2   Attendance will be monitored as part of this Policy, as one element of engagement. If you are absent for three consecutive timetabled sessions on a module, or if your attendance falls below 80% overall, you will be contacted by a member of staff, normally your personal tutor or academic coach, to determine the reasons for your absence and agree an action plan. You must comply with this action plan in order to continue with your studies.

5.3   If you are an international student and you do not meet the conditions of an

action plan that has been agreed in accordance with section 5.2 of the University's Student Engagement Policy, we will normally withdraw its sponsorship of your study in the UK.

5.4   If you are on an apprenticeship programme, the University and the employer may revise the apprenticeship agreement and contract where absence means the apprenticeship cannot be completed as scheduled.

5.5   If you fail to attend at least 80% of your timetabled teaching sessions over the duration of a semester, and you have not engaged with online learning or submitted assessments, you may be withdrawn from your studies by the University.

5.6   If you are studying on an apprenticeship programme, you will be require to take a break in learning if you are continuously absent for more than four weeks.

5.7   If you are an international student on a programme at Level 3 or below, such as the International Foundation Year or Pre-Sessional English, you are required to attend at least 85% of your taught sessions as a condition of your sponsorship.

6. Engagement with the Digital Environment for Learning

6.1.   The University's VLE is integral to the delivery of all programmes, providing programme-related resources and learning activities. In addition, the majority of assessments are managed and delivered through the VLE. You therefore need to access and interact with those learning resources and support materials on a regular basis if you are to be successful in your studies.

6.2.   There are a range of other digital systems with which you will interact. This includes, but is not exclusive to: the library resource list system and the appointment management system, in addition to programme-specific systems. You will also need to be an active user of the University's digital register system throughout your studies, in order to conform with the requirements of this policy. Systems may be added or replaced over time.

6.3.   The University monitors students' engagement with the VLE and other systems. Should you have a low level of engagement, and this is impacting on your progress, this information will be shared with staff including module tutors, personal tutors, academic coaches and programme leaders to enable you to be supported.

6.4.   If you fail to engage with the University's systems, including failure to use the digital register system for recording your attendance, you may be withdrawn from your studies by the University.

7. Engagement with Assessment

7.1.   You are required to complete pieces of academic or practical work on or by

specified dates throughout the academic year. These pieces of work form part of assessment for the academic level on which you are enrolled. If you do not submit work for assessment, or if you submit work but receive a low mark for it, you are unlikely or less likely to be able to achieve an overall pass for a given level.

7.2. The University records the submission and non-submission of work by students. This information is made available to staff who teach and support you. If you record multiple non-submission of assessments, you may find that your progression on the programme is affected.

7.3. The penalties for late and non- submission of work are contained within the University Academic Regulations (https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/policies-and-regulations/academic-regulations/).

7.4. Following the marking of assessments, you will be invited to attend a module assessment feedback workshop, the timing of which will be listed in the relevant module guide.

8. Pastoral Support for Students

8.1. If you consider that there are good reasons why you will not be able to meet deadlines for the submission of coursework or attend an examination, you should apply for an extension or claim extenuating circumstances. Guidance is available from https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/academic-standards-and-quality/documents/Guidance-for-Students-circumstance.pdf.

8.2. If you experience academic or other difficulties, a range of support is available from Faculty Student Services and from the Directorate of Student and Academic Services (https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/faculty-student-services/) including: financial support, support for students with disabilities, mental health and wellbeing, as well as academic and career development skills. Personal tutors, academic coaches and other academic staff are also available to provide support.

8.3. Impartial and independent advice is available from the Students Union (www.wolvesunion.org/advice/getadvice/academic).

9. Consequences of Non-Engagement

9.1   If you do not attend at least 80% of the timetabled teaching sessions for your programme, and/or you do not respond to offers of support when alerted to concerns, you will be required to attend a meeting with your personal tutor or academic coach to discuss the situation, to agree an action plan for your academic learning and an improvement plan for your ongoing attendance. If you do not attend this meeting, following repeated attempts to contact you, you will normally be withdrawn from your studies by the University.

Withdrawal for non-engagement may take place at any time during the year, and does not need to be ratified by a board of examiners.

9.2   If you do not access or make progress through your Canvas courses, you will be required to attend a meeting with your personal tutor or academic coach to discuss the importance of accessing this information.

9.3   If you show no engagement (attendance at timetabled sessions, accessing online materials, submitting assessments) throughout a semester, you will normally be withdrawn at the end of that semester.

9.4   Personal tutors and academic coaches are available to support you in times of difficulty. If you are experiencing difficulties, you should seek a discussion regarding your options at the earliest opportunity and not wait for the personal tutor/academic coach to raise concern about your lack of engagement.

9.5   It is recognised that in certain circumstances you may be unable to continue with or complete your programme of study as originally planned. However, there are a range of opportunities available to you which can be explored before your withdrawal is decided, and should withdrawal be inevitable, then you will be advised on your options for returning to higher education.

Approved by Academic Board March 2021

Appendix 1 – Implementation of the 50-day rule (excludes apprentices)

The clause within the Academic Regulations, clause 3.3.9 states:

> *If an enrolled student does not engage with their course of study within the first 50 days of the start date of the course, the Dean of Faculty will recommend to the Academic Registrar that the student is discontinued and their registration terminated. The Faculty must provide evidence that there have been repeated and reasonable attempts to contact the student and establish their engagement with the course.*

Different courses have different definitions as to what constitutes engagement and different approaches to establishing contact with students who have enrolled, but not yet academically engaged with their course of study. For example, many courses with PSRB accreditation have an attendance requirement, whilst other courses do not. In order to ensure a consistent, equitable and fair approach to the application of the 50day regulation the minimum requirement for engagement for all courses is defined here, noting that some courses may have additional requirements as expressed at validation or as defined by a PSRB which will be applied. Course-specific requirements are contained within the Course Guide. Failure to engage to this minimum institutional requirement will result in a recommendation to the Academic Registrar to terminate the student's registration under the 50-day regulation.

Any recommendation to be made to the Academic Registrar to discontinue a student's registration on the grounds of non-engagement is to be accompanied by evidence that there have been multiple attempts (at least 3) to contact the student by more than one method of communication over the initial 50-day period.

To whom does this regulation apply?

This regulation applies to all students (L3 – L7 inclusive, both full-time and part-time) in the first 50 days of study on a new course of study (all new entrants to the University and those progressing to a new course of study (e.g. HND to degree or degree to masters)).

Day 1 represents the course start date, regardless of when students enter the University.

How is non-engagement measured?

Students will be deemed to not be engaged if they have not completed the following in the first 50 days of their course:

- Enrolled on the course and registered for their modules

AND

- Attended at least 50% of teaching sessions (higher thresholds may apply, particularly for PSRB-accredited programmes, any attendance below 80% will be actively reviewed in accordance with the Student Engagement Policy)

AND
- Have accessed and made progress through each of their Canvas courses

AND
- Met with their personal tutor/academic coach in a group or individual setting

AND
- Completed any DBS/OH tasks, where relevant.

How faculties will work with students to ensure they engage:

- Faculties should identify students who have not enrolled on their course at the start of teaching week 2. Students in this position should be contacted by the Faculty to ask them to do this. This should also be an opportunity to check whether the student is having problems. Faculties should check with the student that they have had their source of funding confirmed.

- At the end of teaching week 3, Faculties should identify any student who has not registered for their modules. Students in this position should be contacted by the Faculty to ask them to do this. This should also be an opportunity to check whether the student is having problems.

- At the end of teaching week 5, Faculties should determine whether students are attending (where attendance is monitored) AND have accessed and progressed in the Canvas courses AND that they have met with their personal tutor/academic coach. Where a student has not met these conditions, they should be contacted and directed to meet with their personal tutor/academic coach (or take part in a telephone conversation or video conference) to discuss their engagement and advised that the Academic Registrar will write to confirm the termination of their registration from their course of study if they do not do this before the end of week 7.

- At Day 50, any student has failed to engage at at least the minimum expected level will be written to by the Academic Registrar confirming that their studies have been discontinued and their registration terminated.

- It is important to cross check against students who are in the process of applying for a Leave of Absence by using Faculty Student Services records.

Appendix 2 – 'Off the Job' Requirements for Apprentices

ESFA requirements

Off-the-job training is defined as learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day working environment and leads towards the achievement of an apprenticeship. The off-the-job training must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship Framework or Standard and could include the following:

- The teaching of theory (for example: lectures, seminars, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning or training)
- Practical training: shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and attendance at competitions
- Learning support and time spent writing assessments/assignments.

At least 20% of the apprentice's paid hours, over the planned duration of the apprenticeship, must be spent on off-the-job training. Paid hours are defined as the apprentice's contracted hours and should be collected through the apprenticeship application process and confirmed annually at enrolment.

The Off the Job (OTJ) training calculation will be included in the commitment statement and apprenticeship agreement (from 2019) for each Apprentice. The Off the Job calculation for 17/18 contracted Apprenticeships is Contracted Hours x 52 weeks x0.2 = OTJ Hours. The OTJ calculation for 18/19 contracted Apprenticeships is Contracted Hours x 46.4 weeks x 0.2 = OTJ Hours as the funding rules acknowledge the removal of Statutory Leave at 5.6 weeks. The cumulative total of actual off-the-job training hours (as defined in the funding rules) delivered to date, to the individual apprentice, in the academic year by the training provider, sub-contracted training providers and the employer should be returned in the monthly ILR return.

Evidence must be available to the ESFA to support the training delivered. Full details can be found at: **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training**

University Responsibilities: Apprenticeship Delivery Calendar

An apprenticeship calendar is approved through the validation and approval process to ensure that all apprenticeship courses meet the 20% off the job requirement as part of their course design. The calendar should include reference to the following as a minimum:

- weeks of activity per year
- hours of activity in average week
- what sort of activity makes this up (e.g. hours on lectures, work-based study)
- If there are non-apprenticeship versions of these courses, detail of any differences between the two routes

This apprenticeship delivery calendar will be used in conjunction with the apprentices contracted hours to determine the off the job hours requirement for individual apprentices.

Employer Responsibilities

Employers are required to:

- ensure that their apprentices are given sufficient time as part of their contracted hours to meet their off-the-job obligations;
- inform the university contact of any authorised absences e.g. for illness that will mean the apprentice is unable to attend scheduled sessions;
- inform the university contact of any changes to circumstances e.g. redundancy, break in learning that will impact on their ability to meet the off-the-job obligations
- Confirm details of absence with the University as the training provider so that continuation of learning can be reported to the Education and Skills Funding.
- Revise the apprenticeship agreement and contract where absence means the apprenticeship cannot be completed as scheduled.