



Student Attendance Policy

Document Control Box	
Document title (include version number if amended within same year as approved)	Student Attendance Policy
Reference Number	028/24
Approval category (Please indicate)	
Governance/Governor	X
MPRIG Executive/Other Committee (insert name)	
Senior Staff (insert name)	
Date document approved	5/9/24 (by email)
Supersedes (insert previous title and/or version date)	July 2018 Attendance Policy
Date document last reviewed and/or updated	July 18
Date next due for review	Sept 2027
Related statutes or regulations	
Related policies/procedures/guidance/forms	Attendance Intervention Form
Staff member responsible for update	Academic Director

Amendment History

Version	Revision Summary	Date Approved	Author



Student Attendance Policy

Introduction

1. The College is committed to supporting students to successfully complete their programmes of study and achieve the best possible results. For this to happen, it is vital that students' engagement with all parts of their programme is encouraged, supported and monitored, and that any issues with attendance or engagement are quickly identified and relevant actions/support put in place.
2. Students are expected to be active partners in their own learning and to demonstrate this through engagement with learning opportunities and attendance at scheduled teaching and learning sessions.

Purpose and scope

3. This policy outlines the expectations and procedures related to recording, monitoring and responding to student's attendance levels. It also ensures that Spurgeon's College (the College) complies with the requirements of any relevant external bodies in relation to student attendance and engagement.
4. This policy applies to students on all taught programmes that are awarded and taught by the College, whether delivered in person or by distance learning. It does not apply to the following:
 - a. Students on postgraduate research programmes¹
 - b. Students who are studying towards an award of the College that is delivered by a partner's institution, except where it is expressly stated in the institution's regulations that this policy is applicable.
 - c. Students on all non-credit bearing courses, including but not limited to the Equipped to Minister or Pastoral Supervision Programmes²
5. The College is legally required to collect, record and monitor the attendance and engagement of international students on a student visa, and where necessary

¹ Attendance requirements for Postgraduate Research Students are detailed in '*Recording and Monitoring Attendance Policy (Research Degrees)*' and in the PGR Student Handbook.

² Attendance requirements/procedures are stated in the student handbooks for these programmes.

report to the Home Office/United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI). As a condition of their Student Visa, international students must maintain the required levels of attendance and engagement throughout their course. Failure to do so may result in their leave to remain in the UK being revoked and being withdrawn from their course. The additional attendance and monitoring requirements for these students are set out in Appendix 1.

6. It is recognised that there may be programmes with additional attendance requirements, such as those accredited by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB). Where such additional requirements apply, students are expected to comply with the requirements of both Spurgeon's and the PSRB unless otherwise stated in the programme specification for the course. Students should be made aware that non-attendance for certain units or parts of the curriculum may result in them having to retake units or affect their progression to the next level of their programme.
7. The College has a statutory duty to report poor attendance and/or engagement to a range of stakeholders, including Student Finance England and other funding bodies. In fulfilling these duties, the College will report non-attendance or engagement in a timely way and/or at the census points set by these third parties.
8. This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant programme regulations and any additional attendance requirements documented in the programme or student handbooks.

Attendance requirements

9. The College expects all students will:
 - a. Attend and actively engage with all timetabled teaching events (lectures, seminars, workshops, residentials, intensives, supervision, tutorials etc.) whether they are delivered in person or online³.
 - b. Attend orientation and any designated pre-sessional courses.
 - c. Attend and engage with any placements or other periods of study off campus.
 - d. Participate in any learning activities outside of timetabled events, as guided by tutors. This includes, but is not limited to, reading/reviewing materials available through the College's virtual learning environment (Moodle), preparing for timetabled events or undertaking practical exercises.
 - e. Prepare for, and attend or submit, all assessments.

³ Students with disabilities may apply to the College's Disability Officer/s to have higher levels of absence considered as a reasonable adjustment.

- f. Engage with the College's Library resources, digitally and/or physically, and with Moodle as directed by tutors.
- g. Engage with the method of attendance-recording used by the College to ensure their attendance is noted either via systems or by staff.
- h. Inform the College as soon as possible if they cannot attend a scheduled event via the process outlined in the appropriate Student Handbook.

10. Any specific attendance requirements for individual programmes are listed in the Student Handbooks.

Recording attendance and engagement

11. It is the responsibility of the Senior Registrar, in conjunction with the Academic Director, to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to record and monitor the attendance of all taught students.

12. The College uses a range of methods to record and monitor the attendance and engagement of students, including:

- a. Attendance registers (paper or electronic via Moodle).
- b. Annual registration.
- c. Attending pastoral groups or meetings with their academic tutor or other staff.
- d. Submission of assessments and attending examinations.
- e. Selection of modules for future academic years.
- f. Engagement with Moodle.
- g. Use of the College Library and other learning resources.

13. The method/system in place to register attendance for each programme will be confirmed in the Student Handbook for that programme.

14. Systems are in place to record attendance/engagement in the first two weeks of each new academic year, including attendance at orientation events. This is required to confirm a student's status for the Office for Students and Student Finance England. Attendance at orientation sessions is noted and contributes to a student's overall attendance percentages.

15. When a student is on a placement, the placement provider will monitor their attendance and engagement. Placement supervisor reports and learning logs record engagement, and nominated College personnel ensure monitoring of this information.

16. It is the responsibility of academic staff to ensure attendance records are accurate, complete, and submitted in a timely manner.

17. In fulfilling its statutory obligations, the College is required to maintain records of student attendance and to make records available to statutory bodies when required. Student attendance data is only shared with third parties where this relates to a statutory obligation of the College.

Notification of absence

18. All students should report their absence as soon as possible, and before the start of the session from which they will be absent.

19. Students should report absence by completing the Notification of Absence Form available on the home page of Moodle. Students should ensure that they give full and accurate information regarding the reasons for their absence.

20. On submitting this form, a copy will be sent to the Reception Team and to the student's Pastoral Tutor (for Theology Courses) or Unit Tutor (for Counselling Courses). The Reception Team will populate the Moodle attendance records (and thus notify relevant teaching staff of the student's absence).

21. The Reception Team has a list of units (refreshed each semester in consultation with Programme Directors) that are compulsory for students to attend⁴ and which member of staff is responsible for monitoring their attendance on these units. Any student who is requesting absence from these units will be marked as absent and then referred in writing to the appropriate Programme Director or Dean of Ministerial Formation, to have further discussion regarding the consequences for their academic and professional progression. The Programme Director or Dean of Ministerial Formation will inform reception if there is any change to the absence status following those discussions.

22. If an international student on a Student Visa is requesting absence, the International Student Officer must be notified in writing as soon as possible (See Appendix 1).

Part attendance at timetabled teaching sessions

23. The College recognises that situations arise which lead to unavoidable lateness or early departure. Students who arrive for a teaching session more than 20 minutes late will be marked as absent, with the tutor noting the reason as 'late due to...'. In the same way, students who leave teaching sessions more than 20 minutes before the end will also be marked as absent, with the tutor noting the

⁴ Students should be made aware that non-attendance for certain units or parts of the curriculum may result in them having to retake units or affect their progression to the next level of their programme.

reason as 'left early due to...'. Students should ensure that staff have recorded the reasons for their late attendance or early departure.

Monitoring attendance and engagement

24. Attendance for all students is overseen informally by tutors on a continuous basis in order to pick up patterns of absence that raise concerns about a student's wellbeing as soon as possible. Tutors should raise concerns with the relevant Programme Director or Dean of Ministerial Formation who will follow up with the student as necessary.
25. Tutors must alert the Programme Director if a student is absent from classes for the first two weeks of each new academic year⁵. Similarly, tutors must alert the Dean of Ministerial Formation if a student is absent from any sessions on a ministerial intensive.
26. Postgraduate Taught students on their dissertation year are subject to specific monitoring arrangements which are outlined in the Student Handbook.
27. Tutors must alert the International Student Officer if an international student on a Student Visa is absent from a scheduled teaching event, and this absence has not already been notified by the student (See Appendix 1).
28. Attendance is monitored through the production of attendance reports that provide the attendance percentages for each student⁶. These attendance reports draw on the electronic registers completed by tutors on Moodle and are produced by the Digital Learning Officer twice per semester.
29. The Digital Learning Officer sends the attendance reports to tutors⁷, Programme Directors and the Finance Department (for reporting to Student Finance England).
30. If the report highlights attendance figures that fall below the trigger point of 80% or show a pattern of absence across units that raises concerns, relevant staff will contact the student and take action according to the processes outlined in this policy.

Attendance concerns

31. The monitoring of student attendance is a supportive – not a punitive – measure. The intention of the College's interventions and escalation process is to assist

⁵ This should be done even if a student submits a notification of absence form.

⁶ These percentages only monitor attendance at timetabled teaching events.

⁷ Pastoral Tutors for theology students and Unit Tutors for counselling students.

and support students to get the help they might need to resume attendance on their programme, and to catch up with any learning they have missed.

32. All absences will count towards students' overall attendance figures. If a student falls below the minimum attendance threshold of 80%, then a staged process will be initiated. Before initiating this process, tutors and programme directors should ensure that they are aware of the stated reasons for the student's absence, so that they can communicate with the student appropriately.
33. Students whose overall attendance for any unit has fallen between 70% and 80%⁸ will be sent an email by their tutor, reminding them of the College's expectation that they should be present for all timetabled teaching and learning sessions and asking them to ensure that they have caught up on any learning they have missed.⁹
34. Students whose overall attendance for any unit has fallen between 60% and 70%¹⁰ will be contacted by their tutor in writing and asked to explain their pattern of attendance (by email or appointment) within 5 working days of receiving the notification. They will be asked to provide evidence that they have caught up on any missed learning. The student may also be signposted to appropriate support where required. Tutors will keep a record of these interactions by completing an *Attendance Intervention Form*.
35. If a student has not responded within five working days, they will be sent a follow up email by the tutor. If the student has still not been in contact after an additional five working days, or their pattern of absence continues to cause concern, they may be asked to meet with the Programme Director to discuss the situation and what support they might need to improve their attendance.
36. Where serious ongoing causes for concern are identified, the tutor will consult with the Director of Postgraduate Studies (Dir PGS), the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Dir UGS), the Dean of Ministerial Formation, or the Directors of Counselling (Dir CS) as appropriate.
37. Students whose overall attendance for any unit has fallen below 60% will be asked to make an appointment to see the relevant Programme Director. The meeting should take place as soon as possible and may result in the agreement of an action plan to improve the student's attendance, or catch up on missed learning if required. Additional work may be set at the discretion of the

⁸ Evidenced by the mid or end of semester attendance reports.

⁹ Students on CPCAB validated programmes will be contacted by their tutor if they miss more than two consecutive sessions.

¹⁰ Evidenced by the mid or end of semester attendance reports.

Programme Director. These actions will be recorded on the *Attendance Intervention Form* and agreed by the student.

38. A copy of the Attendance Intervention Form will be sent to the Registry Department for addition to the student's record before the Pre-Progression and Awards Board meets.
39. At any stage of the process, a student may be referred to the Fitness to Study Policy if there are concerns about the student's safety or wellbeing.
40. For students who do not respond to, or engage in any part of the above process, and/or whose attendance continues to be of concern, the College may decide to take one or more of the following courses of action, according to the severity of the concerns:
 - a) Referral to the College's Chaplain or Learning Enhancement Department.
 - b) Recommendation that the student applies for an Interruption of Studies.¹¹
 - c) Issue of a formal warning letter by the Academic Director, outlining consequences of further unacceptable absences; this may be reported to the Progression and Awards Board and/or relevant validating body.
 - d) In the case of ministerial students, consideration of attendance records as part of the College's commendation processes.
 - e) Refusal of the opportunity for referred assessment by the Progression and Awards Board in the case of students who have failed a unit following unsatisfactory attendance, if relevant, according to the programme regulations.¹²
 - f) Suspension of the student from their studies on the grounds of academic insufficiency.¹³
 - g) Withdrawal of the student from the College.

Presumed withdrawn

41. In the following circumstances the College will presume that a student is withdrawing:
 - a. If a registered student has not submitted work, attended or engaged with studies for four weeks or more, and not responded to contact from the College.

¹¹ If permitted under the relevant programme regulations or by the validating body.

¹² 'If an Examination Board has documented evidence that, (a) a student's work or attendance or both have been unsatisfactory, and (b) the student has been formally warned of the unsatisfactory work or attendance but has not shown significant improvement acceptable to the Board, then the Board has the right to refuse referred assessment.'

¹³ If permitted under the relevant programme regulations or by the validating body.

- b. If an interruption of studies has been granted, but the student has not returned to study by the expected return date, and has not otherwise been in contact with the College in the month prior to the expected return date.

In both cases the Registry Department will contact the student to confirm that they are withdrawing you from the College in accordance with the procedures laid out in the [Interruption of Studies and Withdrawal from Study Policy](#).

Students on placement

42. Attendance/engagement recording is still required when students are on placements. This will include meetings with supervisors, placement tutors or pastoral tutors or peer reflection groups. The placement provider monitors the attendance of the placement student and escalate any concerns to their nominated College contact.
43. Placement Supervisor Reports and Learning Logs etc. are used to record engagement, and regular reporting to nominated College personnel ensures that any attendance concerns are identified and acted on according to this procedure. The Placement Supervisor will escalate any concerns about Student Route sponsored placement students to the Student Visa Compliance Team.

Distance Learning Students

44. Distance learning students are subject to the relevant requirements and processes recorded within this policy. Academic engagement will be monitored by a student's attendance at live seminars and their engagement with recorded learning material.

Student recourse

45. All students have a right to make a complaint under the College's [Student Complaints Procedure](#) if they have any concerns about the measures associated with low attendance.
46. A student who is refused permission by the Progression and Awards Board to take any form of assessment or progress on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance may submit a request for verification of the records on which that decision was based within 15 working days in accordance with the College's [Academic Appeals Procedure](#). According to the same Procedure, a student who is not satisfied with the outcome of the verification process may appeal against the decision within 15 working days of being notified of that outcome.

47. Students who have been subject to action taken under related policies such as the [Fitness to Study Policy](#) or [Interruption of Studies and Withdrawal from Study Policy](#), should follow the appeals processes outlined in those policies.

Appendix 1

Recording and Monitoring Attendance for Student Visa Holders

Introduction

48. The College has additional compliance responsibilities in relation to those international students studying at the College on a Student Visa. These students are required to be in regular attendance as part of the ongoing conditions of their visa. As the student's immigration sponsor, the College has obligations to UKVI to closely monitor their attendance at scheduled sessions and to take appropriate action where required.
49. The College has systems, processes, and procedures to record the physical attendance of these students on its programmes and has in place timely and effective methods of escalation. The College will report to UKVI via the Home Officer portal where a student fails to properly engage or attend.

UKVI requirements for Student Visa holders

50. Spurgeon's students who hold a Student Visa are expected to fully engage with their studies. As part of this requirement, they must meet the level of attendance specified by the Home Office / UKVI for the level of the course they are enrolled on. Current requirements are outlined below:

Undergraduate level – Student Visa holders

- a. At least 15 hours classroom-based attendance per week.
- b. If a holder of a Student Visa misses 10 consecutive contact points (e.g. lectures, pastoral sessions, supervisor meetings, exam or course work submissions) the College is required to report this to UKVI. This may lead to the student's visa sponsorship being withdrawn.
- c. Where a student has not reached 85% attendance in any given month, they will be contacted by the College to review the reasons for their absence and the steps necessary to improve their attendance. All contact and action must be noted on their student record for UKVI.
- d. Where a student's attendance falls below 70% for 3 consecutive months the College must withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement unless there are exceptional, valid reasons.

Postgraduate Taught Degree level – Student Visa holders

- a. Postgraduate Taught Students must meet the engagement and attendance requirements for non-student visa holders as outlined previously in this policy.
- b. In addition, academic engagement requirements cover the following activities for Student Visa holders studying at this level:

- Attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials
 - Undertaking required course or fieldwork
 - Submitting essays, assignments and attending examinations.
- c. Student Visa holders studying at this level who do not engage for a 60-day period will have their Student Visa Sponsorship automatically withdrawn.

51. If any holder of a Student Visa fails to meet the required level of attendance or engagement without valid reason (such as serious illness or injury, or bereavement) they will be judged not to have sufficiently engaged with their studies and will be withdrawn from their course and their Student Visa Sponsorship will also be withdrawn¹⁴. Whether a reason for lack of engagement is valid or not is at the discretion of the College.

52. Withdrawal of Student Visa Sponsorship must be reported to the UKVI within 10 days of the student being withdrawn from their course. The College will notify the student of the exact date this occurs as this may determine the date UKVI will require them to leave the UK.

Notification and monitoring of absence

53. International students should notify the College of their absence as soon as possible, using the Absence Notification Form on Moodle.

54. The Reception Team has a list of the relevant students at the start of each academic year, and will notify the International Student Officer if an international student on a Student Visa reports an absence. A copy of the Absence Reporting Form will be sent to the International Student Officer.

55. Tutors will notify the International Student Officer in writing if an international student on a Student Visa misses a scheduled teaching event and has not notified the College of their absence.

56. Student Visa holders will be subject to the monitoring requirements outlined in this policy. In addition, the International Student Officer will meet with every visa student at the beginning of the academic year and at the end of each term¹⁵, to discuss:

- Attendance requirements.
- Procedures for reporting and monitoring attendance.
- Consequences of non-compliance on their visa status.

¹⁴ Any refund of tuition fees will be made according to the Tuition Fees Policy.

¹⁵ Before the Christmas, Easter and Summer breaks.

57. Student Visa holders on master's programmes who are in their dissertation period, are given specific contact points to monitor their engagement. These consist of attendance at Postgraduate Seminars, supervision sessions and submission of evidence to show how they are progressing with their research (including feedback from tutors, mentors and any work submitted for review). Supervision sessions will be conducted in person and held no less than 3 times a year, but may be held more frequently if the International Student Officer wishes. A record of each supervision session, including commentary on evidence submitted, will be added to their UKVI student record. Any engagement concerns will be reported to the International Student Committee.
58. If a visa student applies for an interruption of studies or withdraws from study, the International Student Officer **must** be informed immediately.

Attendance concerns

59. If a student fails to meet the attendance requirements, the International Student Officer will contact the student in writing to ascertain the reasons for their absence, remind them of the consequences of absence on their visa status, and offer support to help them re-engage with their learning.
60. If engagement concerns continue, the International Student Officer will request a meeting with the student as soon as possible. This meeting should explore the reasons for their absence, reiterate the consequences of non-engagement on their visa status, and produce an action plan to improve their attendance using the Attendance Intervention Form. This should be agreed by the student.
61. Continuing failure to meet the attendance requirements will result in the International Compliance Officer issuing a written warning to the student that the College will be required to withdraw the student from the programme and withdraw sponsorship of the student.
62. A student will have five working days to submit an appeal against the decision, which will be reviewed by the Vice Chancellor. If the student does not appeal the decision, or the student appeals but the Vice Chancellor determines that there are no exceptional reasons why the decision should be overturned, the College will withdraw the student from the programme and withdraw sponsorship in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Programmes of Study.
63. Throughout this process, staff should ensure that attendance or engagement patterns which might raise concerns regarding an individual student, such as wellbeing concerns, are appropriately identified and escalated to relevant support services.