BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

DOCUMENT ADMINISTRATION SHEET

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Version Control Table – *[To be added to as required]*

Version Number	Date Authorised	Summary of Key Changes
1.0	TBC	First Version

STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT & ABSENCE POLICY

1.   **Introduction and context**

1.1.   The Student Attendance, Engagement & Absence Policy has been developed as part of the University's commitment to provide a supportive learning environment in which encouragement is given to all students to develop a range of skills and approaches to their studies.

1.2.   The University has responsibilities to a number of bodies to ensure that students attend the programmes for which they are enrolled and to encourage engagement leading to successful outcomes in assessments. These bodies include, but are not limited to, public authorities who finance programmes of study; the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) that accredit some of our awards; and to the UKVI to monitor the attendance of international students whose student visa is sponsored by the University.

1.3.   This policy is supported by the Student Route Compliance Policy, which sets out the expectation for all students who require a visa in order to enter, remain and study in the UK to adhere to the requirements of their visa and UK immigration rules at all times during their studies.

2.   Purpose and scope

2.1.   The University recognises the investment that students and their sponsors make when a student enrols on a programme. As a responsible institution, the University has a duty to act on non-attendance or lack of engagement so that students can be supported to complete their programmes of study successfully.

2.2.   This policy applies to all enrolled undergraduate and taught postgraduate students of the University.

3.   Definitions

3.1   The University defines attendance as the act of being physically present at scheduled academic sessions (held physically or online), placements, compulsory field and other trips, scheduled assessment and group work activities.

3.2   The University defines engagement as the act of a student participating in programme requirements, scheduled academic sessions (held physically or online), use of the virtual learning environment, use of study and library resources, and related opportunities which aim to help students to achieve their potential in their studies.

4.   Policy principles

4.1   Attendance and engagement are key components in student retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who actively participate in their learning by attending classes regularly are more likely to:

a. enjoy a rewarding and collaborative experience in which their knowledge, skills

andabilities are developed;

    b. successfully complete their programme; and

    c. realise their full potential.

4.2   The University expects students to attend and engage with learning and teaching sessions associated with the programme on which they are enrolled unless exemption has been agreed with tutors or reasonable adjustments agreed through Student Advice. The University will work with students to support them to ensure they are able to meet these expectations. The learning and teaching methods for each programme and component module are set out in the validated programme documentation.

4.3   The University will keep attendance records for all taught lessons, lectures, tutorials or seminars (relevant to the course), whether they are held physically or online. If a student's attendance becomes a cause for concern, the student will be informed, and they will be invited to meet or have a conversation with their Programme Leader. The Programme Leader will explore the reasons for lack of attendance and/or engagement and will provide practical information and guidance to support engagement with study. If a student's attendance and/or engagement continues to be a concern, the student will be informed, and they may be invited to a further meeting or to attend a Support for Study meeting. The Code of Practice for Support of Study sets out further information about this process.

4.4   Unsatisfactory attendance includes but is not exclusively confined to:

    a. failure to attend regular learning and teaching sessions (including placements) without providing a satisfactory reason to tutors for absence;

    b. persistent late arrival or early departure from learning and teaching sessions or placements; and

    c. failure to attend tutorials.

4.5   If a student fails to attend meetings with their Programme Leader, or fails to address concerns raised about their attendance and engagement, the student will be referred to Stage 3 of the Code of Practice for Support for Study. This would only be held where significant and ongoing concerns have been identified and in particularly serious circumstances this may lead to a recommendation to terminate a student's enrolment on their programme of study. Students who do not attend or engage with their programme of study may be asked to withdraw by the Board of Examiners (see the Code of Practice for the Conduct of Board of Examiners).

5.   Responsibilities of students

5.1   Students are expected to arrive on time for classes (held physically or online) and remain for the duration of the session. Registers will be taken at the start of a session to record attendance.

5.2   As outlined in the Student Charter, students should engage with teaching and learning activities and should take responsibility for their own learning.

5.3 There will be circumstances occasionally where ill health or other legitimate reasons prevent students attending sessions. Students are responsible for informing the Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader of these circumstances in advance of their absence or as soon as is reasonably possible. If students are on placement, the placement host should also be notified.

5.4 Students must obtain prior permission from their Module Tutor and/or Programme Leader in respect of planned absences of two or more days. Students granted authorised absence will not be eligible for a refund of tuition fees.

5.5 If a student is absent because they are unwell for fewer than seven days, they may self-certify their absence. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays which fall within a period of sickness count as sick days when calculating the duration of illness.

5.6 If a student is absent for seven days or more, they will require independent medical certification. Students are responsible for meeting the cost of any charge made by the medical centre or GP for independent medical certification.

5.7 If a student is absent for an extended period, they may need to suspend their studies for one or two semesters. The Code of Practice for Intercalation (Suspension of Studies) gives further information about the procedures for this.

5.8 If a student is unable to meet a deadline for assessment as a result of an absence, they should refer to the Code of Practice for Extenuating Circumstances.

5.9 Where a student misses a scheduled academic session without notifying the University their absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

5.10 Where a student has been advised of concern about their attendance or engagement they are required to engage with any recommended support in order to seek to address this concern.

6. Responsibilities of taught postgraduate students undertaking an independent study or dissertation

6.1 Students who are undertaking a taught postgraduate -project or dissertation are required to have a meeting with an academic member of staff (academic tutor or dissertation supervisor) at least once per month during their independent study.

7. Responsibilities of the University

7.1 The University will alert students to concerns about their attendance or engagement and seek to identify and implement relevant interventions to support the student.

7.2 The University will make available the promised learning and teaching opportunities for students. Timetabled classes will only be postponed in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, e.g. staff illness. If it is necessary to postpone a scheduled academic session, the University will notify students promptly and seek to make reasonable alternative arrangements.

7.3 Programme Leaders, supported by Heads of Programme and the Faculty Business Manager,

will ensure that Module Tutors actively record attendance for relevant sessions using the University systems.

7.4   Academic staff and members of the Faculty Administration Team, including the Faculty Business Manager, will review recorded attendance and engagement data and co-ordinate action at identified review points.

7.5   The Faculty Administration Manager and Faculty Business Manager will support the relevant regulatory procedures that may be triggered as a result of non-attendance and will ensure that the International Office is kept informed of any processes involving students holding a student visa.

8.   Appeals

8.1   A student will have the right to appeal against any decisions taken under this policy and procedure by writing to the Faculty Administration Manager detailing the reasons for the appeal (see 8.2) with accompanying evidence, as appropriate, within 20 working days of the decision being taken. The appeal will be acknowledged within five working days by the University. The appeal will be considered by an Attendance and Engagement Appeal Panel (consisting of two members of the Faculty Executive and two members of the Registry Management Team) within 20 working days of receipt. Decisions taken in accordance with Code of Practice for Support to Study will follow the processes outlined in that Code.

8.2   An application for appeal may be submitted on one or more of the following grounds:

1. there was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the attendance and engagement procedures;
2. clear reasons why the decision was taken have not been effectively communicated to the student ;
3. new evidence is now available which was not available upon reasonable enquiry or application at the time of the decision; and/or
4. The decision reached was of such nature that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

9.   Attendance Monitoring Procedure

9.1   The University will record attendance data for students on undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and modules at scheduled academic session taught both on campus and online.

9.2   At the start of teaching period the University will inform students of their responsibilities in respect of attendance at scheduled academic sessions and absence reporting, and of the support available.

9.3   Attendance and engagement data will be reconciled and reviewed on a weekly basis.

9.4   In weeks 3, 6, 9 and 12 attendance and engagement data will be reviewed formally, and where a student's attendance at scheduled academic sessions drops below 60% and/or their engagement with the VLE (Blackboard) shows they have not been active for more than 7 days, the student's Programme Leader will be notified. The Programme Leader will judge whether

the student's attendance and engagement is a cause for concern based on the available information. The Programme Leader may then, as set out in 4.3 above:

    a.   arrange an informal meeting or conversation with the student;
    b.   arrange a Support for Study meeting where there is ongoing concern; or
    c.   escalate to Stage 3 of Support for Study where there is serious ongoing concern.

9.5   If an international student holding a student visa has been flagged through this procedure, in addition to the actions detailed in 9.4, the International Office will be notified and the compliance log will be updated. In accordance with UK Immigration Law, the International Office may report the student to the UK Visa and Immigration Directorate of the Home Office (UKVI). Further details are outlined in the Student Route Compliance Policy.