

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Attendance monitoring – information for taught students

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1. Why is it important for the University to monitor student attendance?

Monitoring of student attendance is an important element in supporting both student retention and performance. Regular and appropriate attendance has been a University requirement for many years as outlined in the Curricular Ordinances and Regulations¹ <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/calendar/ordinances.htm> For taught students, failure to attend and/or absence without permission can result in serious consequences for the student through the Unsatisfactory Student Procedure, ultimately resulting in the student having to leave the University. The Graduate Board has similar arrangements in place for research students.

For international students, the University will also be legally required under the Home Office's Points Based System (PBS), to notify them of international students who fail to fully register when expected or who are absent for a prolonged period without authorisation, as supplementary to the normal monitoring of the attendance of all our students (both home/EU and international).

The following guidance has been developed to give students greater transparency in relation to the University's expectations of an effective attendance monitoring process and our response to UKBA's reporting requirements.

2. What are my responsibilities in relation to attendance?

Students are expected to attend all teaching activities, including lectures, seminars, practicals and personal tutorials. During registration, all students sign up to the Student Contract which states that: 'Continuous unauthorised absence from teaching activities may lead to formal warnings being issued about unsatisfactory performance. Such warnings are part of the University's 'Unsatisfactory Students Procedure', details of which are specified at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/aaandr/unsatis_stu_proc.htm and can, ultimately,

¹ See ordinance IX p6, section 7; ordinance X p2, section 5; ordinance XI p4, section 5

result in you being excluded from the University. In addition, for international students, the University has a legal responsibility to report serious cases of non-attendance to the UK government – since this may affect the validity of a student's visa. It is therefore important that you notify your school in advance of absence. If at any time you have problems which may prevent you from attending sessions or continuing as a student, please talk to your personal tutor or a member of student support staff who will do their best to help you.'

3. What should I do if I am unable to attend University?

In cases where a student is ill and unable to attend University, if the absence is for less than 5 working days, the school should be notified, either via the online absence request form (accessed via the Portal) or by contacting the administrative office directly. Students should refer to their school for further information. If the student is away ill for more than 5 working days, a doctor's medical certificate should be provided to the administrative office.

For any other class absences, students must notify their school administrative office, in advance if possible or as soon as practical afterwards. Acceptable reasons for absence to be authorised include health problems, bereavement and serious personal difficulties. Traffic delays, attending family celebrations, paid employment or extra-curricular sports activities are normally regarded as unauthorised absence. However, each case will be considered on an individual basis.

4. What happens if I do not register or collect my student ID card?

Taught Student Administration's monitoring requirements will continue to incorporate already established registration follow up procedures. This includes email warnings to schools and students where registration status is still EL (eligible to register) 10 weeks after eligibility to register has commenced (and approximately 6 weeks after the course was due to start), informing schools and students that there is a further 2 weeks in which to register before holds are placed on records.

Failure to register during the 2 weeks after holds have been applied will lead to students being made permanently withdrawn and schools and UKBA, where appropriate and after a final 'audit' check, will be informed accordingly (this is approximately 12 weeks from when eligibility to register has commenced and approximately 8 weeks after the course was due to start).

The same process (minus applying holds to the record) and timescales as described above will apply to students who have a registration status of RE (registered) but who have failed to have their photographic ID checked and student ID card produced, as this is an essential and integral part of the registration process.

5. What is the consequence of unsatisfactory attendance at the University?

Any student whose attendance is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the school will be warned at an early stage by the Head of the Parent School. Initially this may be informal but if there is no immediate improvement or no satisfactory explanation from the student, the Head of School may apply the following procedure:

- Where the Head of School judges the case to be sufficiently serious they will issue a First Formal Written Warning
- If there is no improvement in the student's work/attendance/progress and the student has not made a serious attempt to recover the position, the parent school will issue a Second Formal Written Warning. This will be copied to the Office of Appeals and Regulation. Where the school recommends that the student is to be excluded from the University, the student will be notified by the Office and invited to submit a plea against this recommendation. The student will then be interviewed by the Head of Academic Appeals and Regulation.

The next course of action will be decided on the basis of the interview and what information has been provided by the student and school. This will usually be one of the two following possibilities:

- The case is submitted to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to act in excluding the student permanently from the University or

- The second formal warning is enforced with a final warning that if the student does not make a serious attempt to recover the position, then the case will proceed to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with a recommendation for exclusion.

Where the case proceeds to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor the decision is final.

Further details of the unsatisfactory student procedure can be found at:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/aaandr/unsatis_stu_proc.htm

If you wish to appeal a decision, further details of this procedure are available at:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/AAandR/appeals_guide.htm

6. What is the 'presumed withdrawn' process and how will this affect me?

The 'presumed withdrawn' process provides the University with a means to exclude students who have an unsatisfactory attendance record from the University.

There are currently two scenarios in which a student may be made 'presumed permanently withdrawn'. The first relates to students who are currently registered but where the University is aware that they have failed to attend for 4 weeks or more. In this situation the school must have attempted to contact the student concerned on at least 2 occasions in writing before asking Taught Student Administration (TSA) to instigate the presumed permanently withdrawn process. This information would be communicated to the student concerned.

The second scenario relates to students who were on temporary leave and have failed to return by their expected return date. A report is emailed out to all schools concerned. The school is then given a deadline within which they must contact the students and notify the outcome to TSA. Failure to respond will result in the student being made permanently withdrawn from the University. Students who are "presumed withdrawn" should seek immigration advice immediately.

7. What do I need to do if I leave the University?

Where a student is identified as a leaver by the school, the student and school should complete a Leavers Form - http://www.maths.leeds.ac.uk/school/students/Leavers_Form.pdf

and return it immediately to Operations, Taught Student Administration (TSA). In the case of international students who are present under Tier 4 of the UKBA visa system, TSA will submit a report to UKBA.

8. What is the University's obligation to notify international students' continuous non-attendance to UKBA?

The standard attendance process is applied to all students in relation to failing to register, leavers, presumed withdrawn and sanctions under the Unsatisfactory Student Procedure. For international students who fall into one of these categories, the following final verification will be carried out prior to notifying absence to UKBA.

Once the student has received final notification relating to their unsatisfactory attendance (as outlined in point 5), the University has 10 days to notify the UKBA that the student is a presumed leaver etc. A final check will be made with the School to ensure the information to date is correct and that the student is a leaver.

9. Are there any exceptions to the process for monitoring attendance that I should be aware of?

In some instances, the process for monitoring attendance may need to be adapted to take account of the student's mode of study. The following guidance is provided in relation to these 'exceptions'.

Clinical Placements

It is the student's responsibility to inform the school and placement provider if they are unable to attend

their placement. It is also usual practice for placement providers to inform the school placement co-ordinator of a student's absence within a couple of days.

Distance Learners

Students on distance learning programmes will be monitored by email.

Fieldwork

Students participating in field work away from the University will be monitored by the fieldwork tutor and any absence followed up through the briefings and progress meetings that students undertake as part of the normal activity.

Joint Honours

For students on cross-disciplinary or joint honours programmes the teaching schools will notify the parent school, or centre for joint honours of any student whose attendance is a cause for concern and where further action may be appropriate.

Joint Programmes

In the case of jointly-run programmes delivered with another university, the student's sponsor institution will have overall responsibility for reporting continuous absence to UKBA. In cases where the student is taught at Leeds but sponsored by another institution, the partner institution will be notified of any continuous unauthorised absence.

Language Centre – English language pre-sessional courses

If students are absent without giving a reason, they will be contacted by the Language Centre by telephone, e-mail or letter. If no response is received within a three week period, the students' details will be escalated to Taught Student Administration who, in the case of international students under Tier 4, will carry out the final verification before contacting UKBA to inform them of the absence.

Short fat modules

Students on short fat modules, such as those delivered by the Executive MBA and Civil Engineering MSc programmes, will be monitored in the usual way when participating in taught sessions. During project or dissertation work, students are not expected to attend classes, but are allocated a supervisor with whom they discuss progress updates. The module leader or programme administrator is responsible for following up absence issues in discussion with the student and supervisor.

Study Abroad

As part of the University's duty of care, outgoing study abroad students should expect contact with their year abroad or personal tutor at least twice a year if away from the University for a full year, or once if abroad for just one term. Parent schools will be responsible for monitoring the attendance of incoming study abroad students.

Suspensions

Please refer to section 5 of this document.

Visiting students

Visiting students who intend to study at the University for under 6 months and enter the UK with 'student visitor' status should be monitored as part of the school's general duty of care. They do not come under the requirements of the Points Based System.

Work Placements

Students on work placement will be monitored by the placement provider in the usual way and the University notified of any unexplained absence, as per existing arrangements.

10. Where can I go for further advice or information on attendance monitoring and the UKBA requirements in relation to this?

Web links

If you require any further guidance about how to respond to UKBA's requirements in relation to PBS, the following web links may be useful:

Internal information relating to the PBS

<http://campus.leeds.ac.uk/newsincludes/newsitem6320.htm>

UKBA website

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/managingmigration/apointsbasedsystem/>

Immigration advice for international students

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/international/visa.htm>

UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/immigration.php>

University services

Taught Student Administration

If you have a query about the presumed withdrawn process for taught students, please contact the Operations Section within the Student Services Centre at studentrecords@adm.leeds.ac.uk

International Student Office

If you have a specific enquiry related to student immigration under PBS, please contact internationalstudents@leeds.ac.uk or call 0113 343 393.

Leeds University Union – Student Advice Centre

For advice on disciplinary procedures, please contact advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk or call 0113 3801 300. You can also visit <http://www.luuonline.com/help> or the Advice Centre within the Student Union building.