

UCO Policy and Procedure

HE Student Attendance & Engagement Policy

Reference Code: UCOQH – PO009

Version No: 5

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1. POLICY INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled at University Campus Oldham, Higher Education at Oldham College. In this policy, ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’ refers to University Campus Oldham. ‘You’ and ‘your’ refers to all students studying at University Campus Oldham (UCO).

The policy outlines our attendance and engagement requirements and expectations from you during your course/time with us. It confirms how we will monitor and support your attendance and engagement to help ensure that you have an excellent experience that leads to successful outcomes.

This policy also outlines the steps that we will take to record, monitor, and support your attendance and engagement to meet our statutory and contractual obligations.

2. PURPOSE

The Student Attendance & Engagement Policy has been developed as part of University Campus Oldham’s commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all students to achieve their full potential. Attendance is a key component of students’ engagement with their studies and therefore is important in student retention, progression, achievement and employability.

Punctuality and attendance at a place of work is a fundamental expectation of employers and, in order to prepare students for employment, it is an expectation that students will treat attendance at scheduled classes as they would attendance at a place of work. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked; at UCO we expect 100% attendance and engagement from all students.¹ Students who actively participate in their learning by regularly attending and participating in classes and other scheduled activities are more likely to:

- enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed;
- successfully complete their course;
- achieve better results.

¹ For example, see: Halpern, N. (2007) ‘The impact of attendance and student characteristics on academic achievement: Findings from an undergraduate business management module’, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31(4), pp. 335-349.

Student attendance will be monitored through the use of registers on the UCO Management Information System EBS to provide an analysis and overview of each individual student's attendance. Monitoring of student attendance also allows UCO to calculate and manage grant and bursary payments. Students who are in receipt of funding or bursaries should be aware that UCO may be obliged to report any absences to the funding authority, and this may impact upon their funding. UCO also has an obligation to ensure that it has accurate records of all students for funding and other statutory returns.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. Attendance

We define attendance as being present at timetabled learning, teaching and other activities required by a module and/or course. This includes:

- Physical attendance at face-to-face timetabled teaching which includes lectures, seminars, and group tutorials;
- Arriving for timetabled sessions on time, and fully engaging in the session;
- Participation in other scheduled learning events that are a compulsory part of a course (e.g., practical sessions, placements);
- Attendance at scheduled examinations, tests, and other assessment activities.

3.2. Engagement

We define engagement as participating in guided independent or group study activities, or any other activity which supports learning and personal development, independently or in collaboration with peers. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Submission of assessments by defined deadlines;
- Accessing and/or interacting with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), it's learning, to access course related resources and support materials;
- Utilising student facing services to support student learning and wellbeing (including the Library, Academic Skills, Disability and Wellbeing services, and the Careers and Employability service).

4. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

4.1. Attendance and Engagement

All students studying at University Campus Oldham are expected to attend and engage with all learning and teaching activity associated with the module and/or course on which they are enrolled, as detailed in the definitions set out above.

Students should arrive on time and remain for the duration of their sessions. Late arrival at and early departure from timetabled sessions, without prior communication with the Module Lead, will for the purpose of this policy be treated as lack of engagement in learning and teaching activity.

Students should attend wearing their UCO ID card. Replacement cards are available from the UCO Reception Desk and incur a replacement fee of £5.

We expect you to submit all required assessments by their stated deadlines, or you may incur a penalty for late or non-submission of work.

4.2. Reporting an Unexpected Absence

We recognise that from time-to-time students may be absent from their studies due to illness or personal reasons. Please ensure that you report your absence from any scheduled activity as soon as possible to your Module Lead, ideally no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of a session. Students undertaking a professional placement should follow the absence reporting process detailed in their Placement Handbook, to ensure the placement provider and Module Lead are informed of the absence in a timely manner.

If you are absent from any teaching and learning activity, you must take full responsibility for completing any outstanding academic work arising from your absence. This includes engaging with your Module Lead and wider UCO Support and Wellbeing Services to access additional support as required.

4.3. Student Requests for a Period of Absence

Any request for periods of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances i.e., bereavement, serious personal/family difficulties, observance of certain religious days or festivals. Any request will be reviewed by the Course Leader and referred to the Faculty Lead where relevant. Requests need to be submitted in a timely manner. No extended period of absence is permitted unless authorised through application for temporary leave, suspension of study, or deferral.

5. THE ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT PROCEDURE

We will monitor your attendance and engagement throughout your time with us as a student. If your attendance falls below the threshold of 90%, or other concerns arise, we will discuss these with you. We will listen to you and take into account the reasons you have which may be having a detrimental effect on your attendance and engagement. We are committed to helping and supporting you to attend and engage with your studies. We understand that a lack of attendance and engagement can indicate that you may be experiencing difficulties, and so we may refer you to the relevant UCO Student Support and Wellbeing Service, if deemed appropriate, at any point of this procedure.

5.1. Early Intervention – Informal Monitoring

Following recurrent, prolonged and/or unexplained absences, or a noted lack of engagement, your Personal Tutor will invite you to attend an Academic Tutorial meeting to discuss the reason/s for absence. At this meeting you will work together to formulate and agree an action plan to increase your attendance and engagement and catch-up on missed work. Your Personal Tutor will also discuss referral to UCO Student Support and Wellbeing Services, if required, at this time.

A review period will be determined, usually two weeks, to allow you to work through your action plan and/or seek advice from the recommended Student Support and Wellbeing

Services. At the end of this review period, your Personal Tutor will invite you to attend an Academic Tutorial meeting to discuss your progress against your action plan. If the concerns around your attendance and engagement have been addressed satisfactorily, this will be noted. Further meetings may be scheduled to continue to monitor the situation/progress and help to ensure that continued support is provided to you to enable you to study effectively. If, however, the concerns have not been addressed, a further review period may be agreed, or the case will move to the next stage of the procedure.

5.2. Stage 1 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring

If your attendance and engagement concerns are not satisfactorily addressed through informal monitoring, you do not attend and/or attempt to rearrange the Academic Tutorial meetings you are invited to, or the concerns raised are deemed serious enough to be escalated directly to this stage, you will be invited to a Stage 1 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring Meeting to discuss the reason/s for absence. This meeting will take place with your Course Leader, and you will be given 5 working days' notice to attend.

At this meeting your Course Leader will discuss the reason/s for absence and/or lack of engagement with the course. You will review any actions plans from the previous stage of the procedure, and will work together to formulate and agree an action plan to increase your engagement and catch-up on missed work. You will be asked to attend fortnightly monitoring meetings to discuss your progress against your set action plan. Your Course Leader will also discuss referral to UCO Student Support and Wellbeing Services, if required, at this time.

Further meetings will be scheduled to continue to monitor your situation/progress against your action plan and help to ensure that continued support is provided to you to enable you to study effectively. If, however, the concerns are not addressed, either a further review period may be agreed, or the case will move to the next stage of the procedure.

5.3. Stage 2 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring

If your attendance and engagement concerns are not satisfactorily addressed through Stage 1 of the procedure, you do not attend and/or attempt to rearrange the meetings you are invited to, or the concerns raised are deemed serious enough to be escalated directly to this stage, you will be invited to a Stage 2 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring Meeting to discuss the reason/s for absence. This meeting will take place with your Faculty Lead, and you will be given 5 working days' notice to attend.

At this meeting your Faculty Lead will discuss the reason/s for absence and/or lack of engagement with the course. You will review any actions plans from previous stages of the procedure, and work together to formulate and agree an action plan to increase your engagement and catch-up on missed work. You will be asked to attend fortnightly monitoring meetings to discuss your progress against your set action plan. Your Faculty Lead will also discuss referral to UCO Student Support and Wellbeing Services, if required, at this time.

Your Faculty Lead will discuss the importance of attendance and engagement, along with the consequences of non-attendance, including the possibility of withdrawal from UCO, and the potential impact this may have on your funding.

Following the Stage 2 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring, further meetings will be scheduled with your Course Lead to continue to monitor your situation/progress against your action plan, to help ensure that continued support is provided to you to enable you to study effectively.

If you do not attend and/or attempt to rearrange the Stage 2 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring Meeting, or if after 10 working days from the date of 2 Attendance & Engagement Monitoring Meeting, your Course Leader reports that there has been no improvement, your Faculty Lead will issue you an Attendance Warning Letter.

If there is no engagement from you within 10 working days of the Attendance Warning Letter being issued, the case will be referred to the next and final stage of the procedure.

5.4. Stage 3 – Withdrawal from Course

This stage of the procedure will only be implemented following a referral from a Faculty Lead. If your attendance and engagement concerns have not been satisfactorily addressed through any previous stage of this procedure, or you have failed to respond to inform us of your reason for non-attendance/engagement, or you fail to engage in the support offered by us to help you to engage with your studies, we reserve the right to withdraw you from your course. The Assistant Principal HE & Higher Skills will consider and decide if withdrawal from the course is deemed to be the correct course of action at this time.

Further information can be found in the HE Suspension, Transfer and Withdrawal Procedure.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT FEES/FUNDING

HE Students who are required to pay tuition fees and withdraw from or suspend their studies during the year will be charged a proportion of the fee for their course as set out below:

- Leaving within three weeks – no charge;
- Leaving within Term 1 – 25% charge;
- Leaving within Term 2 – 50% charge;
- Leaving within Term 3 – 100% charge.

Further detail can be found in the Oldham College Fees Policy.

Where we are attempting to re-engage a student but are receiving no response to contact, we may temporarily suspend the student's payments with the Student Loans Company to minimise the risk of the student being overpaid student finance.

7. RIGHT OF APPEAL

If a student wishes to appeal a withdrawal decision, they must submit an appeal in writing to the Oldham College Deputy Principal within 7 days of the notification of the decision.

The student can only appeal the decision on the basis that:

- a) the decision was not reasonable; or;
- b) procedural irregularity occurred; or;
- c) new material evidence is now available which was not disclosed at an earlier stage of the process.

Associated Documents

- HE Leave Request Form (see Appendix A)
- HE Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure
- HE Student Maternity Policy
- HE Suspension, Transfer and Withdrawal Procedure
- HE Capacity to Study Policy
- HE Disability & Mental Health Policy
- HE Personal Tutoring Procedure
- Oldham College Fees Policy

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Curriculum & Quality Standards Committee
- Attendance and retention data will be reported to the Curriculum & Quality Standards Committee
- The policy will be reviewed at three-year intervals

Version History:

Issue	Changes	Author	Approved at	Date of Issue
1.0	Policy and Procedure Implemented	Assistant Principal HE	HE Management Group	August 2014
2.0	Process Revisions and Inclusion of Director of Learning Positions	Head of Student Journey	HE Management Group	September 2017
2.1	Minor revisions to include the Faculty Lead roles	HE Quality Officer	QIC	February 2018
3.0	Revisions to include MyCap monitoring	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC / Governors C&Q	November 2019
4.0	Full review	Retention & Achievement Monitoring Group	UCO CQSC TOC Governors Curriculum & Quality	February 2024
5.0	Scheduled Review Amends made to definitions.	HE Quality and Standards Manager	UCO CQSC TOC Governors Full Corporation	March 2025

Published on:

UCO Website	UCO Staff Intranet	UCO Student VLE
✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX A - REQUEST FOR PERIOD OF ABSENCE FORM

REQUEST FOR PERIOD OF ABSENCE			
Student's Full Name:			
Student ID Number			
Programme		Year	
Start Date of absence:		Date returning	
Reason for absence request:			
Student's signature:		Date:	
Course Leader's Name			CL signature and date
Approval	I approve this absence request	YES/NO	
	I do not approve this absence request	YES/NO	
	I have referred this absence request to the Faculty Lead to consider	YES/NO	
Faculty Leader's Name			FL signature and date
Faculty Lead's recommendation			