Student Engagement Policy

About this policy

The Student Engagement Policy articulates the mechanisms by which Manchester Met facilitates and supports students' engagement with their studies, in order to promote their student experience and student success. Students should use the absence portal to let the University know if they are not going to manage to attend a session. The absence portal is important for various reasons, including signposting, professionalism and health and safety. This document is relevant to most students, please contact the Student Engagement team with any specific queries.

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1.   Introduction

1.1   There is clear evidence to show that to achieve academic success, the majority of students need to engage fully with timetabled teaching sessions, with course-related learning resources and support materials that are held within the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). In addition, all students must meet the assessment requirements for their course.

1.2   This policy sets out how the University supports students to engage fully with their studies, what the University expects of students in relation to engagement with their course, how it will register their engagement, and what it will do if students are not engaging. The University is also required to keep a record of and assess student engagement to meet its statutory and contractual obligations with some external organisations. Examples can include organisations regarding UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), financial sponsors, or partners.

1.3   Tier 4 and student visa holders need to be aware that they have additional obligations related to engagement. These are set out in Appendix 1.

2.   Support for student engagement

2.1. The university is an on campus focused institution and that in person teaching is the primary mode of engagement. For a majority of full-time courses, engagement in on campus activity is vital for student success. For Student Visa holders, this may also be a statutory requirement.

2.2 The University supports student engagement in several ways through:

- pre-entry and induction information, activities and processes that are designed to ensure that students are familiar with the course requirements and understand how to access facilities, services and support;
- high quality teaching and learning experiences;
- high quality course-related learning resources and support materials within the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and other relevant materials, including online materials;
- a range of academic and welfare support services;
- support from personal tutors or relevant academic staff (more information and resources for personal tutors is available on the intranet);
- students may receive proactive support from the university regarding their engagement levels, based on any of their engagement parameters including attendance, Moodle and Assessment. For further support, please visit the Student Hub intranet page;
- support for students will often include signposting

2.3 The University registers student engagement 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 students to facilitate their engagement with their studies.

2.4 Students may receive support due to their engagement levels, based on any of their engagement parameters.

2.5 The University may decide to withdraw the student under the University's Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure where there is a risk of academic failure. (See section 7).

2.6 Where issues with engagement levels are thought to be related to a health condition or disability, the student can be referred for support through the University's Fitness to Study Procedure

3.   Attendance

3.1 Timetabled teaching sessions (face-to-face or online) are an essential part of the student learning experience on every course, other than those courses that are delivered by distance learning. A lack of engagement via attendance of face-to-face or online sessions can start to affect student success. Conversely, good engagement with face-to-face, online sessions or with Moodle and relevant online resources is key to student success. Much of the curriculum content of courses is conveyed through timetabled teaching sessions. Such sessions also give students opportunities to interact with academic staff and fellow students about course-related themes and content. Where courses have practical or placement elements, attendance at these is also central to students' success. Student visa holders are required to regularly engage with on campus activity.

3.2 The University expects students to attend all timetabled teaching sessions, including practical, workshop and laboratory classes etc. as well as placements. The University expects students to engage fully with any attendance registration methods that are in place. Signposting and other support may be shared with students if it is felt this could be beneficial, based on their engagement levels including attendance, Moodle and assessment. With the exception of students below degree level, UKVI will allow us to treat home and visa-holding students in the same way, regarding their engagement.

3.3 For online sessions conducted via MS Teams, attendance data is automatically uploaded into Presto. Academics will not need to manually record student attendances for a session. If a session is conducted online, students must be logged on to MS Teams with their University credentials to be registered correctly for the session.

3.4 Students are expected to let the University know if they are unable to attend their classes for any reason via the absence portal. The absence portal is important for various reasons, including signposting, professionalism and health and safety. For further support, please visit the Student Hub page.

3.5 The University registers students' engagement with attendance and provides information on that engagement to staff who teach and support students. Students are expected to engage with any project or dissertation supervisors regularly, this may include meeting with supervisory staff to discuss progress on a regular basis.

3.6 Non-attendance of work is likely to affect student success. When attendance calls into question a student's ability to pass the course or academic session, the University may decide to take further action under the University's Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure This may be determined at academic's discretion or through the student engagement or submission data that is available, where it is felt that students would no longer be able to pass the year.

4. Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle)

4.1 The University's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) provision is integral to the delivery of most courses. Moodle provides course-related resources and learning activities. In addition, many assessments are managed and delivered through Moodle. Students therefore need to access those learning resources and support materials on a regular basis to be successful in their studies. Moodle engagement, in isolation, is not considered as sufficient engagement on the course. Students should refer to the University's Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure for further information. Students holding a Student Visa should also refer to Appendix 1 of this policy.

4.2 The University registers students' engagement with Moodle and provides information on that engagement to staff who teach and support students.

5.   Submission of work

5.1   Students are required to submit pieces of academic or practical work on specified dates during the academic year.

5.2   Students might also be required to complete some additional forms of assessed work, for example, to give a presentation or performance. These pieces of work can form part of their final assessment for the academic level on which they are enrolled.

5.3   Students who do not submit work, or who submit work but receive a low mark for it, are unlikely to be able to achieve an overall pass in their assessment for the academic level. The University records the submission and non-submission of work by students. This information is made available to staff who teach and support students.

5.4   Where students do not submit work, or where they submit work but receive a mark of less than 40%, they may be contacted by staff, for support, to discuss signposting and / or to discuss the options students now have to them.

5.5   Non-submission of work is likely to affect student success. When non-submission of work calls into question a student's ability to pass the course or academic session, the University may decide to take further action under the University's Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure. This may be determined at academic's discretion or through the student engagement or submission data that is available, where it is felt that students would no longer be able to pass the year.

5.4   The penalties for late and non-submission of work are contained within the Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes of Study.

6.   Extensions

6.1   If students think they might not be able to meet coursework submission deadlines and need to apply for extensions, they should make their personal tutor aware as soon as possible, so that they can be supported and advised regarding making a claim via one of the routes described on the Assessments webpage.

6.2   If students experience academic or other difficulties, a range of support is available from the Student Hubs

7.   Students at risk of academic failure

In addition to the proactive support that students may receive due to their engagement levels (based on any of their engagement parameters including attendance, Moodle and assessment), the University may decide to take further action under the University's Student Transfer Suspension and Withdrawal Policy.

7.1   Where there are concerns about engagement levels, academic staff and / or the Student Engagement team will attempt to contact the student. The student may be sent signposting

messaging and / or may be invited to a meeting with their personal tutor to discuss any issues that may be impacting their engagement as well as ways to improve their engagement.

7.2 If a student does not respond to requests for contact and / or their engagement does not significantly improve, they may be issued with a Final Academic Warning. This process will warn the student that unless there is significant improvement in their engagement, they may be withdrawn from the University.

7.3 The primary objective of the Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure is to provide guidance and support to students who are in these situations in order to help them re-engage with their studies and to achieve student success. However, the policy also includes provision for withdrawal from the University and suspension of studies (either at the student's request or by the University).

7.4 At least fourteen days following the Final Academic Warning, the Student Engagement Team will reassess the student's engagement levels. Unless engagement has significantly improved, and / or the student has arranged a meeting to discuss any issues impacting engagement, and provided satisfactory reasons for their level of engagement, and / or discussed a satisfactory way forward, the student will be withdrawn. Where a student is not withdrawn, the Student Engagement team will continue to monitor them. If subsequent concerns about engagement arise the process can be progressed directly to another Final Academic Warning.

7.5 Where a period of at least 21 calendar days has elapsed since the beginning of an academic year and there is no evidence that a student has either attended any classes or engaged in any other way with their Programme, the Student Engagement team will progress the process directly to a Final Academic Warning.

7.6 At any point of the process, if the student makes the University aware that a health condition or disability is impacting on their ability to engage, the student can be referred to the Fitness to Study procedure. In such cases, action under the Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure will be paused or stopped.

7.7 There may be occasions where the University must bypass the final warning stage for Student Visa holders and withdraw the student from their course to comply with UK Visa's and Immigration's Sponsor Duties.

8.   Visa-holding Students

Relevant information is available in Appendix 1

And here: https://www.mmu.ac.uk/study/international/when-you-have-an-offer/secure-your-place/apply-for-your-visa/if-you-make-changes

Students should email studentvisaattendance@mmu.ac.uk with specific queries.

9. Additional information

This Policy forms part of the University's regulatory framework. Other institutional Policies and Procedures that relate to Assessment include:

- Undergraduate Assessment Regulations
- Evidenced Extensions
- Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Student Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure
- Procedure for Academic Appeals and Review of Assessment-Related Matters
- Assessment Mitigation Procedure
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Your Visa Your Responsibility

10. Support and guidance

Further support and guidance in relation to these regulations is available from the following locations:

Student Life:

https://www.mmu.ac.uk/student-life/

Student Hubs:

https://studenthub.mmu.ac.uk/

International Compliance Team:

Email: studentvisaattendance@mmu.ac.uk

Students' Union Advice Centre:

www.theunionmmu.org/your-advice-centre

Tel: 0161 247 6533

Email: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 1: Student Engagement for Student Visa Holders and Financially Sponsored Students

1.   Tier 4 and Student Visa Holders

1.1 Tier 4 and student visa holders need to know that they have additional obligations related to engagement. The University sets most of these out in the document 'Your Visa, Your Responsibility'.

1.2 For a majority of Tier 4 and Student visa holders studying on taught programmes, the expectations will be for student to maintain the same levels of attendance and engagement as their peers on the programme.

1.3 There are some specific criteria set by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) that they require the University to check specific student records.

1.4 UKVI expect engagement to be an academic requirement on the programme to sponsor a Tier 4 or Student visa. The University cannot create engagement points purely for extending a student visa.

1.5 UKVI do not currently allow students to study their course remotely, i.e., 'online'. Satisfactory engagement is measured by in person classroom attendance, submission of assessments and attendance at examinations.

2.   Financially Sponsored Students

2.1. Students may have minimum engagement requirements set by their financial sponsor.

2.2. In many cases, financial sponsors expect the University to report engagement levels to them at the end of each term or at the end of each academic year.

2.3. For the purposes of reporting, the US Department for Education and any auditors acting on behalf of the US Department for Education may also be considered a financial sponsor where a student has received a US Federal Loan.

3.   Student Visa holders studying below degree-level

3.1. UKVI expect Tier 4 and Student visa holders to attend 15 hours' worth of classroom-based activity per week where studying on course below degree-level, for example, on a foundation course.

3.2. Where Tier 4 and Student visa holders have not reached 85% attendance of classroom activity at the end of each calendar month the course is running for, the international compliance team will ask the student to attend a meeting.

3.3. Following the meeting, if attendance drops below 70% for three months in a row, UKVI will expect the University to withdraw sponsorship of any Tier 4 or Student visa held unless there are exceptional reasons for non-engagement that can be explained and recorded on the student record.

4. **Undergraduate, Postgraduate students studying on campus**

4.1. The International Compliance team will meet with students showing poor levels of engagement via the Student Engagement team's PRESTOFlow process and / or via reports from the Student Engagement team highlighting students who have not engaged in a required on-campus engagement point within the last 60 days.

4.2. For the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students, the Winter and Spring breaks are discounted from 60-day calculations. Additionally, for Undergraduate students who are between academic years, the summer period between Semester 2 of an academic year and Semester 1 of the following academic year is also discounted from 60-day calculations. Relevant students are not in term-time during these periods; therefore, the students are not expected to have any engagement points. The dates of these periods are published here: University term dates | Manchester Metropolitan University (mmu.ac.uk)

4.3. If students can evidence that they have met an engagement point within 60 days, the case will be referred to course tutors and the main engagement team.

4.4. Where engagement meets minimum requirements but is still of concern to the international compliance team (i.e., common patterns of absence, small number of engagement points met within a 60-day period) a decision may be made to initiate the formal warning processes.

4.5. Where it is clear a student is unable to evidence their engagement during a period of 60 days, the international compliance team will withdraw sponsorship of the student visa, or in situations where the student has had an absence because of a circumstance beyond their control, continue to sponsor the student but issue no further CAS to them.

4.6. Where sponsorship of a Student Visa has been withdrawn, the international compliance team will direct the Student Records Operations team (SRO) to withdraw the student from the course under the Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure.

4.7. Where a withdrawal under the Students at Risk policy is recommended, the University will be required to withdraw sponsorship of the student's Tier 4 or Student visa.

5. **Postgraduate Research students**

5.1. Although not part of the scope of the University's main engagement policy, UKVI have minimum engagement expectations for research students.

5.2. Engagement is largely managed via regular meetings with a research supervisor. The meeting is recorded on form RD9 and submitted via SkillsForge.

5.3. The Graduate School, through its research regulations, may advise a minimum supervision requirement per academic year. From an immigration compliance perspective, it is expected

that students submit an RD9 every month up until their thesis submission date or the end date on their CAS, whichever is the later date of two.

5.4. The International Compliance Team will check each month whether a student has more than 60 days or more of non-engagement on their course.

5.5. Where non-engagement, without reason, is found to have been ongoing for more than 60 days, the University will be required to withdraw sponsorship of any Tier 4 or Student visa.

5.6. Where sponsorship of a Student Visa has been withdrawn, the international compliance team will direct the Student Records Operations team (SRO) to withdraw the student from the course under the [Transfer, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure](#).

5.7. Where a withdrawal under the Students at Risk policy is recommended, the University will be required to withdraw sponsorship of the student's Tier 4 or Student visa.

6.   International students completing a placement or internship

6.1. International students may be able to undertake a placement or internship within the terms and conditions of their visa.

6.2. Students may have separate conditions set by their financial sponsor, such as no placements outside of the UK. Students should check individual conditions with their sponsor.

6.3. International students undertaking a placement or internship will still be required to engage with the University during their placement or internship, for visa or financial sponsorship purposes.

6.4. International students undertaking a placement or internship are expected to maintain contact with their respective placements team, the requirements of which will be detailed by the placements team prior to placements commencing.

6.5. Placements teams will be required to advise the International Compliance team of any international students that have not maintained contact with them to investigate.

6.6. Students may be required to attend a meeting with the International Compliance team in such instances described in 6.5. Where non-responsive still, the University may be required to withdraw sponsorship of any Tier 4 or Student visa.

7.   International Students undertaking study overseas

7.1. The University is required to maintain engagement records and contact for Tier 4 and Student visa holders and financially sponsored students under the following schemes:

- Worldwide exchanges
- Erasmus[1]
- Turing[2]
- Supporting Tier 4 students

7.2. Students should be aware there is a five-year limit to studying under Tier 4 or Student visas at Undergraduate level. If they are in breach of this time limit, they may not be permitted to go onto the study abroad.

7.3. Prior to commencement on the scheme, a meeting will take place between a Study Abroad and Exchanges Manager and International Compliance manager to review what is expected from the student during the scheme.

7.4. After the meeting with the relevant Exchanges Manager, Compliance member of staff and student, an email will be sent (by the International Compliance team) to explain what was discussed at the meeting and to request the student confirm any actions that need to be addressed.

7.5. If, following the meeting, students decide to continue with the exchange, they will be required to submit a monthly report to VisaCompliance@mmu.ac.uk.

7.6. The International Compliance team will remind students monthly to send their reports.

7.7. If two consecutive months have been missed, the International Compliance team will arrange to meet with the student.

7.8. If there are no valid reasons for non-submission of progress reports, the International Compliance team will be required to withdraw sponsorship of any Tier 4 or Student visa.

7.9. Should a Tier 4 student withdraw/suspend during their exchange, the partner institution must notify the Study Abroad and Exchanges Manager immediately. In turn, the Study Abroad and Exchanges Managers must inform the compliance team so that they can report this change to the Home Office based on the following scenarios:

	Scenario	**Outcome**
A	The student will cease studying at Manchester Met	The Compliance team will report the withdrawal from studies and withdraw immigration sponsorship
B	The student will take a break from their studies	The Compliance team will report a deferral from studies and withdraw immigration sponsorship.
C	The student wishes to return to the UK and resume their studies at Manchester Met	In this instance immigration sponsorship will not be withdrawn **if the student is able to** resume their course at Manchester Met (usually for students who decide to withdraw very early on into the exchange). The Study Abroad and Exchanges Manager

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[1] Due to be phased out during the 21/22 academic year
[2] Due to commence during the 21/22 academic year

		will need to make local arrangements with the Departmental co-ordinator. If the student can return to the UK, the Study Abroad and Exchanges manager must inform the compliance team the date the student expects to return to Manchester Met and transfer plus a change of address will be reported to the UKVI. The student will be expected to meet the engagement requirements of their peers studying on taught programmes at the University.

8. Postgraduate Taught Students completing a final 60-credit module

8.1. Postgraduate Taught Students completing their final 60-credit module may not have timetabled sessions during their final 60 credits.

8.2. In such instances, the University will still require students to maintain regular contact with their dissertation supervisor and meet with them in person. Meeting monthly is the recommended minimum requirement until submission of the work.

8.3. Students may be asked to record an attendance in a dissertation meeting with their supervisor, the student engagement team will provide further information to students on this process.

8.4. The International Compliance team will check students access to Moodle and other online services during this period.

8.5. Where students are not accessing online services on a regular basis, additional checks will take place with the student's dissertation supervisors to ensure students are maintaining contact in person.

8.6. The International Compliance Team may need to request engagement information from students from faculties during routine internal and external audits.

8.7. If poor levels of engagement are found, i.e., non-engagement within the last 60 days, the University may be required to withdraw sponsorship of any Tier 4 or Student visa.

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