

Student Engagement Policy

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Related Policies & Procedures	Termination of Studies Policy Interruption of Studies and Withdrawal Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Student Engagement Policy aims to ensure the School's commitment to providing a supportive learning environment to help ensure all students achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 The School recognises the investment that students and their sponsors make when a student registers onto a programme and believes that, as a responsible institution, it has a duty to monitor engagement, and to act on non-engagement, so that students can be supported to complete their programme of study.
- 1.3 This policy applies equally to all students registered with LSHTM in all locations, on and off School premises, both in the UK and overseas.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Attendance is a key component in student retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular engagement and academic achievement are closely linked. Students who participate actively in their learning by attending classes regularly or engaging with their supervisors are more likely to:
 - a) enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed,
 - b) successfully complete their programme; and
 - c) achieve better results.
- 2.2 The School expects students to attend all learning and teaching sessions associated with their programme of study, whether in person or online. The learning and teaching methods for each programme and component modules are set out in programme handbooks. Examples of learning and teaching sessions include (but are not confined to) lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory and practical sessions, professional placements, field trips and industrial visits, and in the case of research students, regular scheduled meetings with their supervisory team.
- 2.3 Students should arrive on time for classes and remain for the duration of the teaching session. Late arrival at, and early departure from, teaching sessions is disruptive, discourteous, unprofessional and unfair to other class members and tutors.

2.4 In order to be assessed in any assessment component or element, a student shall normally be required to have attended a minimum of 80% of the teaching sessions associated with that programme element. The School will utilise various methods to ensure that students are attending, supervisory meetings, project progress meetings, exams sitting, submission of work, and any other appropriate method. The School may retrospectively consider engagement information gathered during the previous term to consider whether students are engaging regularly.

2.5 Unsatisfactory engagement includes repeated failure to attend learning and teaching sessions without providing a satisfactory reason to staff for absence and/or persistent late arrival at, or early departure from, these sessions.

2.6 Unsatisfactory engagement may lead to the [Termination of Studies Policy](#) being invoked.

3. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Students are responsible for:

- a) attending all learning and teaching sessions associated with their programme of study,
- b) attending scheduled tutorial meetings,
- c) notifying their Module Organiser/supervisory team in advance that they expect to be absent from timetabled sessions/meetings,
- d) obtaining prior permission from their nominated Module Organiser/supervisory team for planned absences for two or more consecutive days during term time,
- e) notifying their Programme Director/supervisory team within 24 hours following any unplanned or unforeseen absences and, if requested, providing a medical certificate or other corroborating evidence explaining their absence,
- f) notifying the Student Records team in the Registry, and where applicable Immigration Advisory Service, of an authorised or unforeseen absence lasting more than five consecutive days.

3.2 Additional engagement requirements may apply to students supported by scholarships or sponsors, e.g. students in receipt of US Federal Loans. Further information about these requirements can be found in the [US loans - satisfactory academic progress policy](#) and in case of visa sponsored students in Appendix 1 of this Policy.

4. ACADEMIC STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Programme Director (for MSc students) and the student's supervisory team (for Research degree students) are responsible for:

- a) reminding students of the importance of regular attendance at learning and teaching sessions/supervisory meetings,
- b) meeting with students whose attendance is deemed unsatisfactory by the School, and providing a written record of the meeting where required,
- c) ensuring that all students have access to a Personal Tutor/Primary Supervisor,
- d) ensuring that there are regular reviews of students' progress on their programme, including attendance, completion of assessment requirements and academic achievement, and that appropriate action is taken to help students achieve their academic aims,
- e) notifying students of the [support services](#) available within the School, where there are attendance concerns,
- f) notifying the [Registry](#), and where applicable [Immigration Advisory Service](#), of any students who have been on an unauthorised absence for more than five consecutive days so that student records can be updated.

5. UNSATISFACTORY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Where a student's engagement with their studies causes the School concern, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

- a) School staff, including the Immigration Advisory Service, may contact the student to seek an explanation for their unsatisfactory attendance/engagement,
- b) students may be invited to discuss with their Personal Tutor/Programme Director/supervisory team how their attendance will be improved and any support that may be required,
- c) students may be issued with a formal written warning about their attendance, in accordance with the [Termination of Studies Policy](#),
- d) a formal report on a student's attendance may be made to the student's sponsor, including an employer, the US Federal Loans department or relevant Research Council,
- e) staff writing references for students may refer to a student's record of attendance,
- f) Boards of Examiners may take into account a student's attendance record in exercising their discretion in relation to progression and awards; and
- g) in accordance with UK immigration law, where a sponsored student who does not engage academically and misses consecutive academic engagement checkpoints (please refer to the Appendix 1 for further details) and further fails to reengage within 60 days from the first contact, the School will automatically invoke the [Termination of Studies Policy](#) and a report will be made to the Home Office,
- h) ultimately, where attendance remains unsatisfactory, students may be withdrawn from their programme in accordance with the [Termination of Studies Policy](#).

APPENDIX 1

Visa sponsored students – Academic Engagement checkpoints

UKVI expects the School to monitor and record academic engagement, students must therefore meet the below expected engagement checkpoints during their year of study. We will record student activity as stated below to ensure that students are academically engaging.

MSc Students

Month	Checkpoint
September	Registration – Autumn Term
Mid-October	Physical Contact Point
End October	Physical Contact Point
Mid-November	Moodle Activity
End November	Meeting with Personal Tutor
January	Term 1 End of Module Assessments
Mid-January	Physical Contact Point
February	Physical Contact Point
	C Module Submission
March	Physical Contact Point
	D Module Submission
April	Physical Contact Point
May	Physical Contact Point
	E Module Submission
June	Project Check Point
July	Project Supervision Progress meeting
August	Project Supervision Progress meeting

PHYSICAL CONTACT POINTS

Students are expected to academically engage on their programme of study as outlined within this policy. This includes attending teaching premises, namely Keppel Street and Tavistock place, regularly in accordance with their timetable, and we will record these as stated above.

PERSONAL TUTORIAL & PROJECT SUPERVISION

Students are expected to meet with their personal tutor throughout the year. First term meeting has been designated as a checkpoint for academic engagement. At the end of November, we will request confirmation from personal tutors that contact has taken place. During July and August Project Supervisors will be requested to confirm that students are engaging and progressing on their summer project.

ASSESSMENTS

Throughout an academic year students are required to submit pieces of assessed work in each timetable slot, sit any scheduled examinations and complete a final project. Any students who fail to submit work on time may be recorded as missing an expected contact point. Where students have requested an extension to their assessment/project hand-in date, such request will be treated as meeting an expected contact.

REASSESSMENTS

Where reassessment is necessary and an extension to the student visa has been granted, it is expected that students will continue to meet designated checkpoints for its duration. Details of the required checkpoints will be dependant the duration of the visa and communicated directly to the student on an individual basis and as part of the visa extension request process.

Research Degree Students

Research degree students are expected to be in regular contact with their supervisor throughout the year including when on Research Leave. Monthly supervision contacts have been allocated as expected contact points. The interaction usually takes the form of a face-to-face meeting between a student and their primary supervisor, however, email or videoconference is also acceptable when meeting in person is not possible.

All supervisory contact points are expected to be recorded and will be monitored. Where supervisors indicate that a student has not been in contact with them, Immigration Advisory Service will attempt to communicate with a student directly. Students who fail to respond will then be recorded as missing an expected contact point.

FAILURE TO COMPLY

Students who do not meet an expected engagement point will receive a reminder of their visa conditions by e-mail from the School's Immigration Advisory Service Team.

Students who do not meet two consecutive engagement points will receive a further e-mail warning from the School's Immigration Advisory Service Team that they are in potential breach of their visa conditions. They will also be asked to attend a meeting with their Programme Director/Research Degree Manager outcome of which will be formally recorded.

Students who fail to respond to this message and/or fail to attend a scheduled meeting or a student who has a period of non-engagement which exceeds 60 days in duration will be sent a final warning by the School's Immigration Advisory Service Team setting out a clear deadline to respond by. Failure to do so is likely to lead to a visa sponsorship withdrawal and a relevant report being made to the Home Office.

As a Tier 4 Sponsor we must also notify UKVI and withdraw sponsorship where a student has interrupted their studies for more than 60 days unless exceptional circumstances apply. All students must contact the [IAS team](#) if they are considering interrupting their studies.