



Student Attendance Policy

September 2023

Version 1.0
Approved by the Board of Governors

Introduction

1.1 This applies to all students enrolled at Vantage. The policy is designed to facilitate the students achieve their academic goals in a swift and steady manner without any interruption and in-convenience.

1.2 When the students are enrolled in Vantage, it is the institution's duty to ensure maximum attendance of the students so that they are not left behind in the academic progress.

1.3 The College is also obliged to remind its students that the terms of any student loan that may have been obtained from the Student Loan Company require the attendance of that student on their programme of study and any absence(s) must be reported by the College.

Aim

2.1 The policy aims to assist all students to take responsibility for their full and prompt attendance which will enhance their learning experience, develop their personal skills and promote retention, achievement and progression.

2.2 Furthermore, the following policy and procedures are intended to give staff greater clarity in relation to the College's expectations of an effective attendance monitoring process.

2.3 This policy is also aimed at fulfilling Vantage's obligations as a provider of courses designated for student loans funding by HEFCE.

Principles on which the policy is based

3.1 There are five principles underpinning the College's approach to student attendance:3.1 Student attendance should be managed across the College;

3.2 Targets for student attendance rates should be set and monitored across all College provision;

3.3 Punctuality and full attendance should be one of the benchmarks by which the quality of provision is judged;

3.4 Every effort should be made to maximize punctuality and attendance;

3.5 All Vantage staff are responsible for implementation of the Student Attendance Policy

Student Attendance Requirements

4.1 All students are expected to attend majority of their scheduled sessions.

4.2 In particular the student attendance guidelines are shown here below:

Students are required to attend on time and on brief, and therefore, must be in class for the commencement of the lesson. Note that in the event that a student has not arrived on time and within 15 minutes after the lesson has commenced, no entry is allowed until the scheduled break, so that the class is not interrupted.

4.3 Students are required to attend the majority of their classes as otherwise it would be considered as non-serious behaviour which would then lead to re-evaluation of academic performance.

4.4 Late arrival at, and early departure from teaching sessions is disruptive, discourteous and unfair to other class members and lecturers. Students are required to arrive for their classes on time and remain for the duration of the teaching session.

4.5 An attendance register is to be taken at each class. It is mandatory for the lecturer/tutor to ensure that the register is available. However it is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure they have signed the register.

Timetable

5.1 The College timetable may include classes in the morning, afternoon or evening. The timetable is published in advance of the start of the term. Individual timetables are emailed to student Vantage email accounts.

5.2 Students are expected to attend their assigned class groups. In exceptional cases, and for valid reason, students may request to change their class group by filling in a Notification Form and submitting it with the supporting evidence to the Registry Office. All class change requests are subject to review and approval by the Registry Staff.

5.3 If a student fails to seek or does not get the permission from the Registry to attend a different class group, the student will be marked Absent.

5.4 Students should check notice boards and email communications regularly for information that may include important timetabling or room changes.

Procedure for Recording Attendance

The attendance can be marked automatically by swiping the ID card on the scanner which is located at the entrance of each class room

6.1 For students who forget their ID card there is a manual register available to mark the attendance. The Attendance Officer prepares Attendance Registers before the start of the classes and hands them over to the lecturers who take attendance.

6.2 The lecturer records appropriate codes against the name of every student. Both the lecturer and the students are required to sign the register.

6.3 Students will be recorded as present (Y) if they arrive up to 15 minutes after the start of the class

6.4 Students will be recorded as unauthorised absentees if they miss any scheduled classes according to their individual timetables.

6.5 Students will be recorded as early leavers (EL) if they leave at any time before the end of the class.

6.6 The Attendance Officer collects the signed registers from the lecturers at the end of the class.

6.7 The Attendance Officer will input the attendance record for each class into the attendance module of the electronic Management Information System (SMS).

6.8 Where a member of staff is absent, the relevant Program Leader will arrange for a register in order to inform about the respective teacher's absence to the HR Officer and the Attendance Officer.

Teaching Staff Responsibilities

7.1 Start and finish classes on time;

7.2 Follow the College timetable and inform the students and Registry staff promptly of any changes (i.e. classroom move)

7.3 Apprise students of the College Attendance Policy and Procedure;

7.4 Accurately mark attendance, absence, lateness and early leaves in the register and SMS;

7.5 Allow administration staff to make spot checks on registers and attendance;

7.6 Refer unresolved issues concerning attendance and punctuality to the Programme Leader, Attendance Officer or the Principal;

7.7 Prepare attendance register and record attendance into SMS in the absence of the Attendance Officer.

Absences

9.1 For any absences, students must notify the Attendance Officer in advance or as soon as possible by email (dedicated email address is:

Self-Certification

9.2 For illness-related absences of up to 5 consecutive days no supporting evidence is required. Students should complete a Self-Certification Form and submit/email it to the Attendance Officer. Self-Certification can be used only on one occasion during any one term. Further absences will need to be requested through the Leave of Absence procedure (see below).

Leave of Absence

9.3 The Leave of Absence covers both medical and non-medical circumstances. For non-medical types of Leave of Absence students are required to state the type they are applying under. A student wishing to request a leave of absence will need to complete a Leave of Absence Form and submit/email it to the Attendance Officer. If a request is submitted without the form or the supporting evidence, the absence will not be authorised.

9.4 Suitable medical documentary evidence:

- a medical certificate
- a medical report
- a note from a hospital
- a formal notification of a hospital or clinic appointment

In case of illness, the note from the GP or a Hospital should also state the period during which the student will not be able to attend classes.

9.4.1 Other acceptable documentary evidence:

- A court letter
- A police crime report
- A death certificate or order of service (absence due to a funeral)
- A death certificate in case of bereavement (only grandparents, parents, siblings, offspring or long term partners will be included as a close member of family and not aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces or friends)

9.4.2 Statements from family, friends or a landlord will not be acceptable as the sole supporting evidence.

9.4.3 All evidence must be in English, or accompanied by an English translation from an accredited translator. The College cannot seek evidence on a student's behalf from a third party.

9.5 Where the absence falls at a time of assessment (assignment submissions, presentation deadlines or examinations) and the student wishes to request mitigating circumstances, the 'Mitigating Circumstances Request Form' should be used. Please see Mitigating Circumstances Policy for further guidelines.

9.6 The maximum length of compassionate leave is four weeks.

9.7 Students must make their own arrangements to catch up with any work missed during their absence.

9.8 In certain cases, where this is considered to be in the best interests of the student (e.g. long-term illness preventing the student from attending the classes), the College reserves the right to withdraw the student from the course or transfer them to a different mode of study until their circumstances allow them to return to studies.

Maternity-related Absence

9.9 Students are advised to inform the Student Attendance Officer of the date they wish to start their maternity-related absence no later than 15 weeks before the baby is due. This will allow sufficient time for the College to liaise with the student and make any necessary arrangements.

9.10 In line with the Equality Challenge Unit's recommendation, students are required to take at least two weeks compulsory maternity-related absence.

9.11 Students are allowed to decide when they start their maternity-related absence in agreement with the College. If students wish to, they will not be prevented from studying up to their due date.

9.12 The maximum length of maternity-related absence is four weeks. In exceptional circumstances, students may need to extend the length of maternity leave that they take beyond the standard time allowed, for example in cases of postnatal depression, serious illness or loss of a baby. The extended maternity-related leave would be processed as the Leave of Absence procedure described above.

Paternity-related Absence

9.11 If a student wants to take paternity-related absence, they are required to inform the Student Attendance Officer of their partner's pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the baby is due.

9.13 Students are allowed to take a maximum of two weeks paternity-related absence.

Attendance and Punctuality Monitoring Procedures

10.1 Student attendance and punctuality are monitored on a daily basis.

10.2 During term time Student Attendance Officer will send out weekly email and SMS reminders to students with consecutive absences.

10.5 Attendance Panel meets at the end of each term to review overall attendance across the College and to consider and make decisions regarding all individual cases of nonattendance.

10.6 Any student whose attendance during the first monitoring period (term) is deemed to be unsatisfactory will be identified as 'At Risk' of failing their programme of study. Students will be given conditions relating to their attendance and engagement with studies. In addition, students will be required to attend regular meetings with their personal tutor who will closely monitor the student's performance during the term.

10.7 Students will be warned about poor attendance as follows:-

10.7.1 On the first week of unauthorised absence the student will be sent an enquiry email stating that he/she has been marked as an unauthorised absence, and requesting the student to provide an explanation for that absence.

10.7.2 On the second week of unauthorised absence the student will receive a 'warning' email stating that he has been marked as an unauthorised absence, and requesting students to provide an explanation for that absence.

10.7.3 On the third week unauthorised absence the student will receive a 'notarised warning' email, which will be retained on his student record file, and may be invited to a meeting with his

personal tutor to explain the absence. Any unauthorised absences after the notarised warning for other modules will immediately be escalated to 'notarised warnings' thereafter.

10.7.4 On the 4th week occasion, a 'Warning letter' will be sent at student home address if there is no communication with student via email or phone line.

10.7.5 On the 5th week occasions, a final warning' will be issued, and copied to the student's home address.

10.7.6 On the 6th week and subsequent unauthorised absence, the student will be discontinued from the module , and will be required to retake it next time it is scheduled to run The student will be required to pay an additional fee to re-enrol in that module if he wishes to continue the course.

10.7.7 No refund will be available to students whose registration is terminated for poor attendance, or who withdraw after receiving a suspension for unauthorised absence.

10.7.8 Students who fail to fulfil the conditions regarding the attendance during the second monitoring period (term) will be placed on 'Academic Probation'. Students will be given conditions relating to their attendance and engagement with studies. In addition, students will be required to attend regular meetings with their personal tutor who will closely monitor the student's performance during the term.

10.7.9 Students who failed to fulfil the conditions regarding the attendance during the third monitoring period (term) will be normally recommended for Termination of Registration by the Assessment Board.

10.10 Any students who is not in attendance for a total of six or more consecutive weeks may be 'presumed withdrawn' by the Attendance Panel without going through the above described procedure.

10.12 In considering whether to withdraw a student for poor attendance, the Attendance Officer gets feedback from class tutor, phone call and email correspondence with the student, and submission of their work/or class exams etc in addition to reviewing the class register. If the student failed to respond to contact through all these avenues they will be withdrawn or expelled from the College. The relevant authorities will be informed about the absences of the student.

Lateness & Early Leaving from the Class

11.1 Lateness/early leaving from the class will be recorded by the lecturer on the register.

11.2 Where a student is late for the first time the lecturer must speak to the student on a one-to-one basis to discuss the reason for lateness.

11.3 Where the lecturer believes that the reason is justifiable they need to take no further action.

11.4 Where the lecturer believes that the reason is unjustifiable the lecturer must explain the lateness policy to the student. This is to include the fact that they may be sent home as an unauthorised absence.

11.5 Where a student has been late at least three times within the semester the lecturer may send them home and record them as an unauthorized absence.

11.6 Where the student persists in being late the lecturer will send them home as an unauthorised absence and refer the incident to the Principal.

Attendance Maintenance and Access

All attendance in the current term is collected and processed by the Registry team and then filed for that Term only. Access to attendance records is limited to the Registry team and senior management only. Attendance record files are not allowed to be taken out of the administration room except for exceptional reasons with the permission from the College management.

Attendance Storage

13.1 Only the current Term attendance sheets are maintained after entering them electronically into the College's Management System - SMS. The College has a policy of only having physical attendance records for the current Term. At the end of each Term all the attendance sheets are destroyed in a secure way.

13.2 E-records of attendance are maintained for all students for six years after the completion of the programme of study.

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least once in an academic year or subject to changes in the policies of the regulating authorities.

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