

## **Section 5B: Academic engagement regulations and procedures**

### **1. Engagement expectations**

- 1.1 Students are expected to engage regularly and consistently with their programme of study and attend all scheduled teaching, performance and assessment activities. Engagement is not just about attendance it also includes preparation for, and participation in, all scheduled activities.
- 1.2 The engagement requirements specific to a module/programme will be made available at the start of each academic year to every student. Exceptions to the general requirements will also be specified in the published handbook for the programme or for an individual in a Special Scheme of Study. For taught students, at the first session of each module the tutor will communicate the participation requirements and check that all students understand these requirements.
- 1.3 It is a student's responsibility to ensure that the arrangements of their personal circumstances, including the payment of fees, enable them to engage in all aspects of their programme as required.
- 1.4 Monitoring of a student's attendance and engagement will be undertaken:
  - To identify potential wellbeing issues
  - To identify potential progression issues
  - To meet statutory and regulatory reporting requirements including but not limited to Student Loans Company, US Federal Aid, Office for Students, UKVI.

### **2. Attendance and absence**

- 2.1 A student must enrol within the first two weeks of the academic year to demonstrate that they wish to participate in their programme. For a returning intermitting student this will be within the first two weeks of the first term on return from intermission. Additionally, a student visa student will need to re-enrol each term. A student who has not temporarily enrolled by the end of week two will be deemed self-withdrawn with immediate effect and without review.
- 2.2 A student will be required to comply with any and all procedures established by the School and/or department to monitor their attendance. The primary method for recording attendance will be via ASIMUT registers completed by staff. Where an alternative form of attendance monitoring is in place, a student will be

informed and will be required to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure their attendance is recorded (this may include signing in, submitting weekly reports or supervision reports, or another method).

- 2.3 When a student is unable to attend a scheduled session they should inform their department as soon as possible and usually before a session is due to take place unless the nature of the absence means it can only be reported retrospectively. This includes reporting potential timetable clashes. Students should inform their department in accordance with departmental processes for reporting absence (found on departmental My Guildhall pages).
- 2.4 The School will make every effort to keep the number of timetable clashes to a minimum and, where notified of a clash that affects a student meeting the minimum requirements for a programme of study the School will make alternative study arrangements for the affected students.\*

*\* There is no right to an exact replacement of a missed class; alternative arrangements are designed to support a student in meeting the overall learning outcomes of the programme and may include, but will not be limited to, a short one to one tutorial, additional directed reading, or a recommendation to attend another scheduled class.*

- 2.5 Where a student is required to schedule their own teaching, supervision or coaching sessions directly with a teacher any difficulties should be reported to the relevant departmental administrator at the earliest opportunity. Where a student had failed to make adequate effort to arrange these sessions, or regularly reschedules, this may be viewed as non-engagement and will be considered under section 6 below.

### **3. Fit to study policy**

- 3.1 A student is responsible for their own health and wellbeing and will, where relevant, be expected and facilitated to access support services provided by the School (e.g. counselling) and provided externally (e.g. GP services).
- 3.2 The term 'fitness to study' in this policy relates to the entire student experience; the School expects its students to be able to live independently and in harmony with others, and not conduct themselves in a way which has an adverse impact on those around them. A student's fitness to study may be questioned if health problems or behaviours are disrupting their own studies or the studies of others, or result in unreasonable demands being placed on staff or other students.\*

*\* A diagnosis of a health issue (mental or physical) is not a requirement for the fitness to study policy to be activated; observable behaviours are sufficient.*

The School has a duty of care to its community and is bound by health and safety legislation, which means it is obliged to take action if a student presents a risk to themselves or to others.

- 3.3 Where a student's fitness to study is questioned, the level of risk and/or disruption posed by the student will be measured by the relevant Head of Department/Programme Leader in consultation with the Head of Student Affairs and/or the Senior Health & Welfare Advisor, and a Registry nominee; they will determine which of the following procedures should be applied:
- informal action (eg encouraging the student to access the support available),
  - interruption of studies under Regulation 5.4(i) of *Section 2 of Academic Regulatory Framework* for absences of 25 working days,
  - referral to a case consultation meeting under Regulation 6.11 to 6.14 below or referral to Progress Review under Regulations 6.18 to 6.28 below
  - referral for consideration under the *Principal's Emergency Powers* (Section 5C)
  - investigation under the *Student code of conduct & disciplinary procedure* (Section 5A)
  - investigation under the *Fitness to practise procedure* (MA in Music Therapy students only, Section 5E).

## 4 Monitoring engagement

### *Taught Students*

- 4.1 All attendance and leave of absence data will be collated in Power BI\* and will be viewable to staff involved in monitoring engagement. Students will also be able to request their absence data from their departmental administrator.

*\*Microsoft Power BI is a cloud-based business analytics service that assists the School in collating and analysing student patterns of attendance and absence based on ASIMUT registers and school systems data.*

- 4.2 Departments will monitor a student's attendance on a weekly basis through a combination of days missed and overall attendance.
- 4.3 Departments will discuss any concerns about engagement with students at the earliest opportunity. Additionally, where a student is a Student Visa holder, departments will discuss their concerns with the Assistant Registrar (Admissions and Enrolment) see 4.5 to 4.6 below.

### *Doctoral students*

- 4.4 Doctoral student engagement will be monitored through attendance at scheduled research training activity, monthly supervision reports submitted to the Doctoral Programme Coordinator, and the annual progress review.

### *Student visa compliance monitoring*

- 4.5 Registry will monitor attendance at week 4, week 8 and the last week of each term for Student Visa holders to ensure compliance with UKVI requirements.
- 4.6 Registry will confirm with departments any action that may need to be taken under section 6 below and will require a copy of notes and outcomes from any of the stages set out in section 6 below.

## **5. Absence trigger points**

- 5.1 A student who is absent from their programme of study for three consecutive weeks or more during term time without an approved leave of absence will be deemed to be self-withdrawn and will receive a letter to this effect from the Head of Registry Services (or other senior member of staff). A student requesting a review of this decision will be seen by the Progress Review Committee.
- 5.2 Whilst full attendance is expected, it is acknowledged that on occasion students will be absent. The total number of days absent in any academic year is not expected to exceed 25 (for doctoral students this is outside of annual leave provisions). Overall absence will include authorised and unauthorised absence, but will not include approved professional engagements (paid or unpaid) which contribute to meeting the learning outcomes of a student's programme of study.
- 5.3 Each cumulative five days of absence will act as a trigger for action to be taken. The steps outlined below are the minimum actions required but the department will have discretion to take a different course of action based on the circumstances of each individual student:
- Absent for 5 days – Welfare email from administration
  - Absent for 10 days – Meeting with Head of Administration/Head of Department \*
  - Absent for 15 days – Case Consultation\*
  - Absent for 20 days – Progress Review
  - Absent for 25 days – Progress Review

Other concerns regarding engagement, including participation, could lead to any of the above meetings taking place.

*\* In music the Case Consultation stage will be with the Head of the Principal Study Department or the Head of Music Programmes. In some instances it may be a combined meeting.*

### *Doctoral Students*

- 5.4 In addition to the above considerations of absence levels, doctoral supervisors will raise engagement and progression concerns with the Doctoral Programme Leader and any student gaining an unsatisfactory assessment at the annual progress review will have a case consultation.

## **6. Engagement procedures**

- 6.1 A student is encouraged to inform their department and/or Student Affairs if they are experiencing personal issues that are affecting their engagement with their programme.
- 6.2 Where a student's engagement is a cause for concern, they will be informed and will be required to engage with one of the processes set out below. The student will be contacted by email using the student's School email address.
- 6.3 Failure by the student to attend a meeting, provide documentation, and/or to take satisfactory action to improve their poor performance/participation within the agreed timeframe will lead to an escalation to a higher stage. A student can be called under any stage of the procedures, it is not necessary that all or any of the previous stages have been used.

### **Stage 1: Welfare email**

- 6.4 A welfare email will be sent to the student stating the points of concern relating to attendance and/or participation, it will ask the student to inform the School if there are personal circumstances of which the School should be aware, and will set out the expected actions for the student to improve their engagement.

### **Stage 2: Interview with the Head of Administration**

- 6.5 The student will be asked to meet with the relevant Head of Administration (or other nominated senior member of staff) to explain their poor attendance and they will be asked to provide evidence of good cause for their non-attendance, with supporting documentation where relevant (eg medical certificate), as well as an explanation why the reason for their absence(s) could not be communicated to the School at an earlier date.

In some instances where this is a first occurrence, the Head of Administration may forego this meeting and conduct their inquiry by email but for all significant absences, or where a student has already been at this stage in the procedure during the same academic year, the student will always be called to a meeting.

- 6.6 Where good cause is demonstrated no further action under this policy will be taken provided the student's attendance improves immediately or their continued absence is covered by a medical certificate or similar. However, an informal warning may be issued where absence reporting procedures have not been followed.
- 6.7 Where no good cause is demonstrated the Head of Administration will issue a disciplinary warning under the informal procedures of the *Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure*. This warning will be reported to Registry and logged.

### **Stage 2: Interview with Head of Department**

- 6.8 The Head/Deputy Head of Department will call a student to a meeting where their performance and/or engagement is not satisfactory. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss any potential areas of concern with the student at an early stage. Following the meeting, a short written note will be sent to the student outlining the issues and the action the student and department have agreed to take to rectify the situation and in what timeframe, this may include seeking help from the Student Affairs Department or providing medical certification. A copy of this note will be sent to the Registry for the student file and to the Student Affairs Department when relevant.
- 6.9 Where no good cause is demonstrated for poor engagement the Head of Administration/Head of Department may issue a disciplinary warning under the informal procedures of the *Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure*. This warning will be reported to Registry and logged.
- 6.10 If no satisfactory action is taken by the student to improve their poor performance/engagement within the agreed timeframe then the Head of Department will convene a case consultation meeting or, for a very serious matter, a progress review meeting.

### **Stage 3: Case consultation meeting**

- 6.11 A case consultation will include, as a minimum, the Programme/Pathway Leader(s), the Head/Deputy of Department (or other teaching staff representative of the department) and the student. The student will be given at least three working days' notice and will be informed that they may be accompanied by a friend as defined in Regulation 2.4 of Section 5 of the regulations.

- 6.12 For case consultations involving the consideration of health or welfare matters the Head of Student Affairs or nominee will be invited to attend the meeting.
- 6.13 The case consultation meeting will not be invalidated by the student's absence provided that adequate notification of the meeting has been sent (see 6.11 above).
- 6.14 The case consultation meeting will determine:
- (i) the reasons for the student's poor participation/attendance\*. and/or
  - (ii) whether the student is in need of student services or additional academic support, in which case an action plan will be agreed upon, and/or
  - (iii) whether the poor participation/attendance is wilful and necessitates a formal warning under the informal procedures of the *Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure* and action plan. Any warning given will be reported to Registry and logged.

*\* A student may reasonably be asked to provide supporting documentation as evidence of their reasons.*

#### **Stage 4: Progress review or disciplinary action**

- 6.15 Where a student's progress on their programme is at serious risk a Progress Review Committee will be convened.
- 6.16 In the case of a breach of an agreed action under 6.8 or 6.14 or a second notification or warning under any part of these *Academic engagement regulations and procedures*, the Programme/Pathway Leader(s), in consultation with the Quality Assurance Officer (Assessment & Progression), will determine whether this is an academic or a disciplinary matter for referral under the progress review procedures or the *Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure* as appropriate. Repeated failure to comply with a procedure to monitor attendance may be considered as "a failure to follow a reasonable instruction", i.e. a disciplinary offence.
- 6.17 The purpose of the Progress Review Committee will be to investigate exceptional shortcomings in a student's engagement and/or performance and instigate or recommend help, remedial measures and/or action. It is not the function of the Progress Review Committee to determine whether a student has reached a specific standard to pass the year or programme; the School Assessment Board has this responsibility. However, the Progress Review Committee may consider the totality of a student's record of engagement, including their assessment results to date.

## ***Progress Review Committee***

- 6.18 A matter referred to the Progress Review Committee will be considered within fifteen days. The meeting will be convened by the Programme/Pathway Leader(s) in consultation with the Quality Assurance Officer (Assessment & Progression).
- 6.19 The Programme/Pathway Leader(s) will write to the student concerned informing them of the reasons for convening the meeting and informing them of the date, time and venue.
- 6.20 Notification will always be in writing with at least five working days' notice and will include all documentation to be considered by the Committee. A Progress Review Committee meeting will not be invalidated by the student's absence provided notification of the meeting has been sent.
- 6.21 A student shall always be permitted to be accompanied by a friend as defined in Regulation 2.4 of Section 5 of the regulations. The name of the friend and their relationship to the student must be given to the Programme Leader(s) in advance of the meeting.
- 6.22 The membership of the Committee shall be:
- Vice-Principal for the area of study in the Chair or other member of the Senior Management Team\* but not the Programme Pathway Leader or Head of Department
  - Member of teaching staff from the department (but not presenting the case, see 6.23 below)
  - Senior member of the teaching staff drawn from another department who is completely independent of the case
  - Students' Union President or Students' Union Vice-President (or SU nominee) not from the same department.\*\*

The quorum shall be three and must include the Students' Union member. Where a member of the Committee cannot attend the meeting, a written report may be submitted.

\* *But not the Dean of Students or the Head of Registry Services or Head of Student Affairs*

\*\* *Or any student representative on the student representative list in a given year, or a student recommended by the SU President provided not from the same department as the student.*

- 6.23 The following staff members will be in attendance

- Programme Leader/Head of Pathway/Head of Department who will present the case
  - Quality Assurance Officer (Assessment & Progression) or other Registry officer
  - Head of Student Affairs or nominee (where relevant)
  - Secretary to the Progress Review Committee (provided by the Department).
- 6.24 The Committee shall receive and consider a summary of the student's performance, including a copy of any case consultation meeting notes, copies of any warnings, relevant module reports and regulations relating to academic progression.
- 6.25 The student (with their friend) will then be invited to join the meeting to answer any questions of the Committee. The student will be invited to make a statement.
- 6.26 The Committee will communicate its decision (see 6.28) with reasons to the student at the meeting where appropriate, and in any event in writing by email to the Student's School email address within 5 working days. A copy will also be lodged with Registry for the student's file.
- 6.27 There will be a written record of the deliberations and recommendations of the Progress Review Committee.

### ***Orders of the Progress Review Committee***

- 6.28 The Progress Review Committee may order one or more of the following:
- a) procedures whereby the student may be helped,
  - b) close and regular monitoring of work,
  - c) requirement to seek help and support from a recognised practitioner, the Committee to specify the nature of that help and support, the timeframe, and the monitoring requirements,
  - d) a final written warning,
  - e) the student be required to intermit\* their studies until such time as they are physically, emotionally, and/or academically fit to return to their studies, subject to the maximum period of interruption not being exceeded. The Committee may set a minimum period of intermission\* and may set conditions for re-enrolment including but not limited to re-entry audition and/or evidence of fitness to study;
  - f) the student be required to repeat a year (in whole or in part),\*
  - g) the student is withdrawn\* from the programme without prejudice and may reapply to the programme at a future date, via the usual method of application, to start again from scratch;
  - h) termination of the student's programme of study with no return to the programme.

*\*The UKVI will be notified of any intermission or termination of programme where the student requires a Student visa to study in the UK or any extension to the length of the programme of study beyond the visa end date.*

Termination of programme of study may be recommended where the student's lack of attendance and/or engagement has jeopardised their academic performance to such an extent that it could not reasonably be redeemed during the remainder of the academic year of study and a repeat year or re-entry is not appropriate.

## **7. Appeal procedures**

7.1 The student has the right to appeal against the decision of the Progress Review Committee in respect of e), f), g) or h) above.\* They must lodge that appeal, in writing, with the Head of Registry Services within 10 working days of the issuing of the Committee's decision. The grounds for the appeal must be clearly stated as part of the request and appropriate documentation supplied.

*\* A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued in respect of 7.7.1 a, b, c and/or d.*

7.2 The Head of Registry Services will refer the matter to the Principal (or their nominated Deputy\*), The Principal will allow an Appeal Panel to be established if they are satisfied that either or both of the following criteria might apply:

- i. that there is significant new evidence that could not have been, or for good reason was not, made available at the time of the Progress Review Committee;
- ii. that evidence can be produced of significant procedural error on the part of the School before or during the Progress Review Committee hearing.

*\* Unconnected to the case*

7.3 In addition to (ii) above, where there is evidence of significant procedural error in the Progress Review Committee proceedings, the Principal can also determine that the case be sent back to the Progress Review Committee, with a different panel membership, for the case to be reheard.

7.4 If the Principal determines that there is no case, the student will be notified and issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (see Section 5, paragraph 3 of the Academic Regulatory Framework).

7.5 An Appeal Panel shall normally be constituted to hear the appeal within 10 working days of the receipt of the appeal.

- 7.6 The Appeal Panel will normally be chaired by the Principal and will consist of:
- A senior member of the School not so far involved with the progress review process or its investigation
  - A representative of the Students' Union independent of the case and not from the appellant's department
  - A non-staff member of the Board of Governors of the School
  - A secretary to the Panel will be appointed by the Head of Registry Services.
- 7.7 The proceedings of the Panel will follow the regulations for a Disciplinary Appeal Panel (see Section 5A, Regulation 10 of the Academic Regulatory Framework).

## **8. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)**

- 8.1 If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal stage they may take their complaint to the *Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)*. The Dean of Students will provide the complainant with a "Completion of Procedures Letter" and all the necessary information the complainant needs to enable them to pursue their complaint with the OIA, see Section 5, Regulation 3 of the Academic Regulatory Framework.