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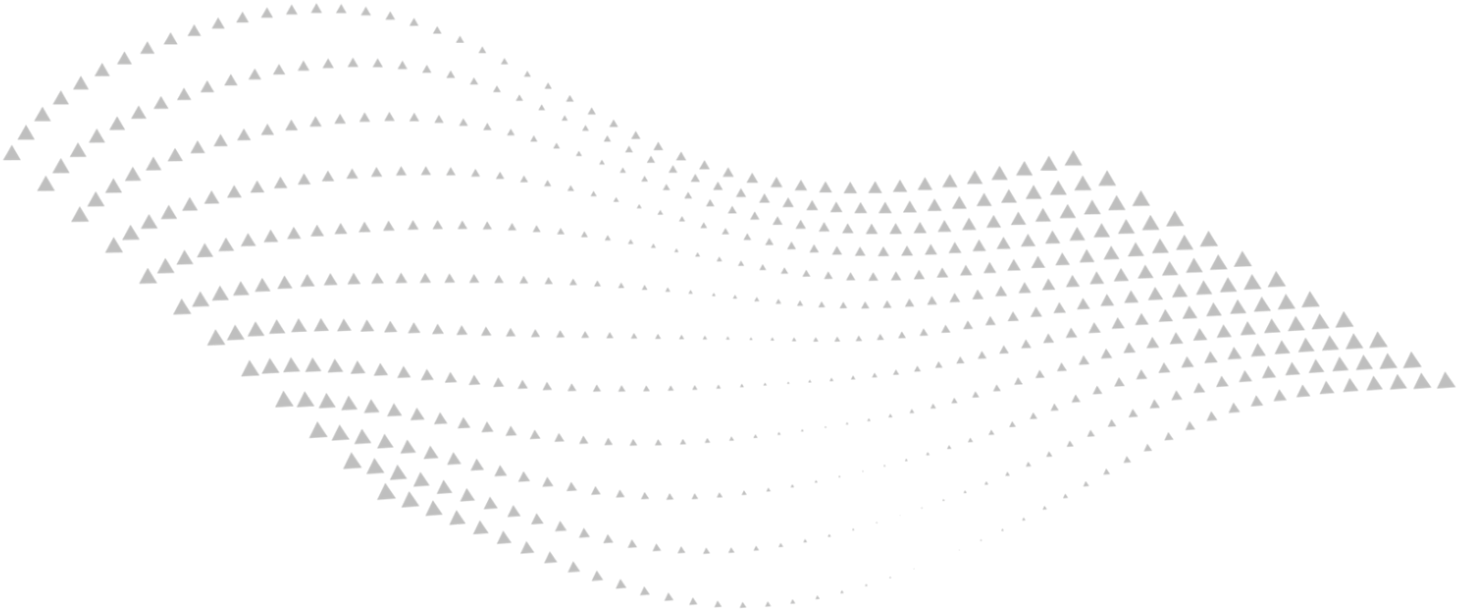
Student Engagement Policy



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1 Introduction:

1.1 This Student Engagement Policy applies to all students registered on a course at BIMM University. Student engagement is closely monitored to support progression and achievement within a student's course of study and aims to ensure the provision of information, advice and guidance at the earliest opportunity to help overcome any barriers to study. Monitoring of student engagement is also required for international students to meet the requirements of their visa.

1.2 Good levels of student engagement are also a requirement of certain external bodies, such as:

- Student Loans Company (SLC) - a UK public sector organisation that provides loans and grants to students in colleges and universities across the UK;
- UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) – a department of the Home Office that oversees the allocation and monitoring of Student Route Visas granted for educational purposes.

1.3 This policy has the following aims:

- To encourage students to maintain good levels of engagement, thereby making them active participants in ensuring their own achievement;
- To identify poor engagement and to intervene early to support students who may be struggling with their studies;
- To maintain levels of attendance in the interests of all students to prevent any adverse impact on learning that involves group and ensemble work (via the attendance monitoring procedure in Appendix 1 of this document);
- To ensure that all students are given a fair and equal opportunity to achieve the academic aims of their course of study;
- To ensure that international students meet the conditions of their Student Route Visas and the University meets its Student Sponsor Licence obligations.

2 What is Engagement?

2.1 Activities considered as monitored contact points for the purposes of recording engagement are:

- A day of timetabled lessons, lectures, workshops or work placement (when it is an integral and assessed part of the course);
- A day of assessments or examinations where a student is required to be physically present.

2.2 Additional Activities considered as evidence of engagement for the purpose of this Policy are:

- Attending a scheduled online lecture;
- Submission of assessment via the VLE.

3 Engagement Monitoring for all Students

3.1 All students are expected to be in attendance from the beginning of lessons or other learning activities. It is in the first few minutes of each class that lecturers introduce the aims and objectives that the session will help students achieve. If a student is late, this will be recorded on the register, and lecturers may, at their discretion, decide to exclude a student from a session where they are very late and / or if their delayed arrival time may be disruptive to the group.

3.2 Students are expected to attend all contact points as timetabled and, where this is not possible for unexpected or unavoidable reasons (e.g., minor illness or bereavement), students should inform their information hub of the reasons for their absence.

3.3 Where the School has been notified by the student, absences of up to five days may be authorised without additional evidence. For absences of more than six days, the student should contact their Course Leader and Student Wellbeing Advisor and provide evidence of the reasons for their absence. Students who hold a student route visa should also inform the international compliance team,

In such circumstances, one of the following courses of action may be taken:

a. Registers are updated to reflect the fact that the student has informed the School;
b. Registers are updated, followed up with contact from Student Wellbeing to check on the student's wellbeing;
c. The Student at Academic Risk Committee (SARC) is advised of any relevant information that could impact on decisions it might take regarding the student in question.

3.4 Where a student is repeatedly absent for reasons related to illness or an ongoing pastoral situation, the School may also consider if the University's Fitness to Study Procedure should be invoked.

3.5 In circumstances where a student's absence is expected to prevent them from progressing on their course of study, the Student Wellbeing Team should liaise with the Course Leader and Head of School, and the student should be contacted with recommended options for progression or interruption of studies.

3.6 Each Campus has personnel in place to produce regular reports for all students on engagement at monitored contact points. Students are responsible for ensuring they are marked present on class and assessment registers when they attend or are late to class. Where lecturers keep attendance records, administrative staff should flag any incomplete or incorrect records to lecturers to ensure they are updated as soon as possible.

3.7 Engagement recording is still required when students are at a different location on work placements that are a formal part of the course of study. Each School has nominated personnel in place to ensure monitoring of such placements.

3.8 Each Campus maintains and acts on its Student at Academic Risk Register (SARR), which identifies students whose engagement, in terms of attendance, submission of coursework, presence at examinations and communication with the school has fallen below the expected levels.

3.9 Campuses convene a SARC that will meet twice per semester / trimester / term to review the SARR and make decisions on the status of students on the register.

3.10 Where a student on the SARR does not respond to a final warning (giving 14 days' notice of withdrawal) issued after normal attempts to re-engage them have failed, the SARC will withdraw the student from their course of study.

3.11 Students have the right to appeal against any such decisions via the Academic Appeals Procedure, and students have final redress to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

3.12 Each campus's SARC will receive engagement data from the University's centralised management information systems. Additional information, such as mitigation applications, fitness to study, disability support, tutorial records, or any other pertinent evidence can be

considered by SARC in its deliberations. All data presented to and discussions that take place at SARC Are strictly confidential. Student names may be used in meetings, but minutes will refer only to candidate numbers.

4 Additional Information for International Students on Student Visa Route

4.1 It is the University's policy to make students holding a Student Route Visa (SRV) aware that certain categories of low engagement with their course of study, notably attendance, **will** result in the withdrawal of sponsorship or funding. This means that SRV students may be required to return to their home country in accordance with the requirements of the Immigration Rules and relevant Home Office Guidance.

4.2 The University expects all SRV students to attend all their timetabled classes and be fully engaged with their course. Additionally, SRV students must abide by all the conditions of their visa including those relating to engagement with their course. Notes on any specific requirements are included below.

5 International Student Attendance Monitoring

5.1 The University has a centralised Attendance Monitoring Policy for all SRV students studying at the University with the exception of SRV students studying at Essex Campus. SRV students at this Campus will have their attendance monitored by the local campus team against a local campus policy with oversight from the International Student Compliance Team. This local policy is being followed given the significant performance element of courses delivered by this campus.

5.2 This policy is fully compliant with the requirements of Home Office Guidance. SRV students must ensure that they are present at the beginning of each timetabled class when academic staff take the class register. SRV students on integral and assessed work placements will also have their attendance monitored by the University.

5.3 The International Student Compliance Team working in conjunction with local Wellbeing and Academic Teams will run weekly attendance reports to identify SRV students who have missed timetabled classes in accordance with the thresholds detailed in section 7 of this Policy.

5.4 The International Student Compliance Team will take steps in accordance with this Policy to ensure that students who miss timetabled classes are reminded of the requirements of this Policy and offered appropriate assistance to assist them to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance throughout each academic year.

6 International Student Attendance Monitoring Procedure

6.1 It is the responsibility of academic staff to be vigilant as to the possible absence of SRV students from their taught sessions, and to ensure that registers are completed accurately. Academic staff must capture on the register the attendance of any SRV students who arrive late for a timetabled class. If academic staff have concerns about the attendance and engagement of any SRV student, they should promptly contact the Head of Immigration and Compliance or Lead Immigration and Compliance Officer (Attendance and Engagement) to discuss these concerns by contacting immigration@bimm.co.uk

7 Minimum Attendance/Engagement thresholds for Student Route

7.1 All SRV students undertaking either an undergraduate or postgraduate course at BIMM University must attend a minimum of **70%** of all timetabled classes per calendar week.

7.2 BIMM University reserves the right to amend or suspend the attendance threshold specified at 4.0 paragraph 1 in the event of exceptional external circumstances (e.g., public health) or other significant internal operational reasons without prior notice.

7.3 Where a CertHE student has not reached 85% attendance of their classroom-based study in any given month, the University will review the reason for the student's absence. The student's record will then be annotated with the reason for non-attendance and the steps being taken to improve the student's attendance.

7.4 Where a CertHE student's attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the University will withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement, unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for the non-attendance (e.g., illness).

8 Absence reporting procedures for Student Route Students

8.1 Students who experience minor illness of five working days duration or less are required to inform their respective Information Hub via the respective absence form on each day that they are absent.

8.2 The student is not required to provide any evidence of their minor illness. This type of absence will be recorded as an Authorised Absence for minor illness.

8.3 The International Student Compliance Team in conjunction with local Wellbeing colleagues will offer appropriate support and assistance to students who experience repeated bouts of minor illness to ensure that they remain fit to study in accordance with University policy.

8.4 Students who are required to attend a job interview are required to contact the International Student Compliance Team in advance of their interview date and request an Authorised Absence. When making this request students must provide evidence of their interview in the form of an invitation letter or email.

8.5 The International Student Compliance Team will issue a written notification approving Authorised Absence requests relating to job interviews.

8.6 Students who require a prolonged period of absence of more than five working days duration are required to complete the authorised absence form and submit to the International Compliance Team – Evidence and a follow up meeting may be requested.

8.7 An Authorised Absence will be granted in accordance with the following criteria:

Category	Allowable Period	Evidence Requirements
Pregnancy and Birth	Up to 4 weeks	Medical documentation
Paternity Leave	Up to 2 weeks	Medical documentation
Minor illness	Up to 5 days	Not required
Sickness or ill-health	Up to 4 weeks, longer periods may require student to intermit	Sick note or other evidence from the student's GP / Consultant or other medical specialist. Evidence must be provided in the English language
Sick relative or dependant[1]	Up to 2 weeks	Reliable 3rd party evidence / medical certificate
Participation in internal BIMM University events, such as showcases	To be determined by the International Student Compliance Team and the BIMM University colleague organising the event	Email from BIMM University staff organising event confirming participation of student
Job interview	Up to 2 days	Invitation to attend interview
Severe disruption to student's mode of transport	1 day	Objective evidence of cause of disruption
Other exceptional circumstances	Up to 2 weeks, longer periods may require student to intermit	Reliable 3rd party evidence / medical certificate

8.8 Upon receipt of an Authorised Absence form, the International Student Compliance Team will assess the request and issue the student with written confirmation of this decision and the duration of their Authorised Absence, if approved. An electronic copy of their Authorised Absence Form, supporting evidence and approval notification will be retained by the International Student Compliance Team for audit purposes.

9 Attendance Monitoring Procedures for high-risk Student Route visa students

9.1 The International Student Compliance Team will use the following procedures to monitor the attendance of all Student Route visa students at BIMM University whose attendance falls between 0 – 30%:

1) The International Student Compliance Team will collate attendance data for all SRV students for the preceding week of teaching

2) In week 3, all SRV students with attendance levels below the specified thresholds will receive an email from the International Student Compliance Team.

3) If the SRV students 'attendance remains unsatisfactory by Week 3 of teaching the student will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of School or relevant Course Leader to discuss any issues impacting upon their attendance. The Head of School will seek to help the student to improve their attendance by acting as a point of contact for academic and pastoral support, respectively.

[1] *A dependant is classed as a spouse, cohabitee, child, parent, or someone who reasonably relies on the student for assistance if they fall ill, or are injured, or relies upon the student for help, or in making arrangements in the provision of care.*

4) The Head of International Student Compliance will monitor student attendance, and should improvement not be seen by week 5, may make a recommendation to withdraw sponsorship of their VISA.
5) Please note that a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) may not be issued to students needing to extend their visas if their attendance is less than 70%. If this is the case a student may have to repeat as 'Assessment Only' or accept a lower award. If there is time for the student to improve their attendance before their visa expires, the International Student Compliance Team will arrange to meet the student to discuss this.

6) BIMM University reserves the right to amend or withdraw without prior notice the procedures specified in Section 4 of this Policy in the event of exceptional external circumstances (e.g., public health) or other significant internal operational reasons.

10 Attendance Monitoring Procedures for medium-risk Student Route visa student

10.1. The International Student Compliance Team will use the following procedures to monitor the attendance of all Student Route visa students at BIMM University whose attendance falls above 30% and below 70%:

1) The International Student Compliance Team will collate attendance data for all SRV students for the preceding three weeks of teaching. Any student with attendance that falls above 30% and below 70%: will be sent an email at the start of Teaching Week 4, requesting a reason for absence.

2) If no response is received, a reminder will be sent to the student at the start of Teaching Week 6, which will be filed on to the student record.

3) At the start of Teaching Week 8, attendance data is collated for the previous 4 weeks (teaching weeks 4-7). Students who have an average attendance of below 70% but above 30%, will have a second warning email will be issued.

4) Responses from students will be expected by week 8, though the University expects students to continually monitor their emails and respond promptly without delay.

5) Students who have averaged attendance between above 30% and below 70% for the previous 12 weeks will be escalated to the Head of School for intervention.

6) Commencing from week 9 of teaching the Student at Academic Risk Procedure (SARP) can be implemented at the discretion of the Head of International Student Compliance with a recommendation to withdraw sponsorship of their SRV or take other actions to improve the student's attendance and engagement as the committee deems fit.

7) The same process will be implemented from Week 1 in semester 2 and semester 3.

11 Transitional Measures

11.1 In academic year 2024/25 BIMM University may adopt measures from time to time to ensure that the operation and implementation of this Policy does not adversely impact upon teaching and learning or the international student experience.

11.2 The University reserves the right to reset SRV student attendance data collection points on 14th October 2024 and 17th February 2024. In the event of data collection points for data being reset SRV students will be informed accordingly.

Appendix 1: Higher Education Student Withdrawal Procedure

At BIMM University, we want our students to get the most out of their studies, and so it is important that we allow every opportunity for re-engagement and ensure staff have done all they can to assist with any difficulties, academic or pastoral, before it is too late. This procedure takes note of the regulations regarding early withdrawal, i.e., within the first 3 weeks of the academic year.

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School-Initiated Procedure

This consists of three stages from identifying the first point of non-engagement:

- Stage 1 – Students who have been flagged as not engaged will be contacted via both student and personal email addresses with an offer of support, should they have any questions or difficulties, and requesting a response and improved engagement by a specified deadline.

- Stage 2 – If no response or improved engagement is noted, a final warning will be sent to both student and personal email addresses, expressing serious concern with and outlining the consequences of continued non-engagement. Continued support will be offered, with both Course Leader and Student Wellbeing contact details provided, and a response and improved engagement will be requested by a specified deadline. It will be made clear that failure to respond or improve engagement by that date will result in their withdrawal being triggered.

- Stage 3 – If no action is taken or improvement seen on the part of the student after Stage 1 or Stage 2, the student will be sent a letter, both via email and post, signed by the Campus Dean, advising that their formal withdrawal has been initiated. Students will be given 14 days to respond prior to their withdrawal being finalised. International students on Student Route visas will only be given 7 days' notice.

Where a student is withdrawn by the School as a result of non-engagement, they will not be entitled to re-apply for entry in the subsequent academic year.

Student-Initiated Procedure

- The student will be required to meet in person with a member of the Student Wellbeing Team, who will discuss the financial and academic consequences of their withdrawal (where appropriate) and explore any possible provisions that could be made either to retain them or to facilitate a smooth withdrawal.

- Where possible (and appropriate), the student will be given time to process the information provided in the meeting and invited to return with a completed withdrawal form once they have made a final decision.

- If the student is under 18, written parental consent must be received by the Campus before the withdrawal is processed.

- The Course Leader/Head of School will need to countersign withdrawal forms where the reason given is that the student is unhappy with the course. In such cases, the Course Leader/Head of School may also contact the student to confirm that all reasonable courses of action have been taken to address issues raised before the withdrawal is processed.

Withdrawal data will be processed centrally and anonymously for the purposes of annual reports.

Appealing Withdrawal Decisions

Where a student has been withdrawn by the Campus, they have the right to appeal against this decision in line with the Student Appeals Procedure.