

Higher Education Student Attendance and Engagement Policy & Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Faculty of Higher Education expects all of its students (with the exception of those that have deferred or intermitted):

- To attend in a timely manner and contribute fully to timetabled lectures, teaching sessions, seminars and tutorials
- To attend in a timely manner and in accordance with agreed protocols during work related activities, such as placements with employers and meetings as part of consultations with stakeholders on live briefs
- To contribute to the College's Higher Education (HE) community and learning experience of students in teaching sessions and, where agreed, fulfilling commitments as a Student Mentor, Student Representative and Student Ambassador
- To contribute to class, listening to and reflecting on the contributions of others
- Timely completion of and adequate performance in assessments

1.2. The following terms in this document have the meanings indicated below:

“Attendance” - the physical presence in a timely manner of the student at teaching events or other required events (including but not limited to programme related trips, work-related activity such as placements) as prescribed by the Faculty of Higher Education and/or College.

“Engagement” - the active involvement of the student in their studies as evidenced, for example, by meaningful contributions to taught sessions (howsoever delivered), to online programme related discussions, message boards, viewing, downloading and interacting with learning resources on the College's virtual learning environment (VLE), appropriate preparatory work in advance of teaching events, constructive working with fellow students as required by the structure of the programme.

“Progress” - the achievement of satisfactory academic results, evidence of developing academic, employability and transferrable skills in line with programme requirements.

“Higher Education / HE” refers to HE undergraduate, graduate and sub-degree programmes overseen by or associated with the Faculty of Higher Education.

“Student” refers to all those enrolled on a HE undergraduate, graduate and sub-degree programme overseen or associated with the Faculty of Higher Education.

“Work placement” is any work-related setting overseen by the College as part of the HE programme, whether arranged by the College or the student.

2. Monitoring of student attendance and interventions

2.1 Students should make a concerted effort to attend every timetabled session on time and remain for the duration of each session. However, this might not be possible due to underlying issues or other barriers to regular attendance. Consequently, the following interventions are triggered due to lapses in attendance (and should be considered alongside section 3 below where there are also concerns about engagement and/or progress):

- a) Attendance falls to below 90% within a four-week period: students will be asked to attend a meeting with their Programme Leader.
- b) Attendance remains below 90% in the next four-week period: in this case only, the Programme Leader for the programme concerned will:
 - i. invite the student concerned to an initial meeting
 - ii. write up notes of the meeting and store in a designated folder accessible by Programme Partnership Managers
 - iii. Ensure that the student is reminded of the HE Student Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure and the importance of attending
 - iv. Remind students of the relevant extenuating circumstances policy

This process will also apply where the overall attendance of a student in any one term falls below 85%.

2.2 Where a student fails to attend a meeting (as per 2.1(b)(i) above) and fails to give a reason for the non-attendance or fails to make alternative arrangements and the student is not otherwise engaging with studies or reporting absences to the College (via the College's absence line) in agreement with the Programme Leader, a Programme Partnership Manager will invite the student to a formal meeting.

2.3 Where, however, the student is otherwise engaging with studies, reporting reasonable absences¹ to the College (via the College's absence line) and this is agreed with the Programme Leader, no further action is required, but the student's attendance will continue to be monitored.

2.4 The following are possible outcomes of a meeting with the Programme Leader (as per 2.1(b)) above):

- (a) Take no further action, but student's attendance continues to be monitored, or
- (b) Refer the student for student support, or
- (c) Invoke fitness to study procedure

¹ 'Reasonable absences' depends on the context / individual circumstances (e.g. an absence due to minor illness, absence due to emergency events, prolonged period of illness)

- 2.5 Where a student's attendance improves satisfactorily following a meeting with the Programme Leader, then the process comes to an end and no further action is necessary.
- 2.6 However, where a student's attendance continues to fall below an average of 85% over a period of time determined by the Faculty of Higher Education, then a Programme Partnership Manager will invite the student to a formal meeting, the possible outcome of which could be as follows:
- (a) Recommend to the Dean of Higher Education that no further action is taken, but that the student's attendance continues to be monitored over the course of 2 weeks.
 - (b) Refer the student for student support Refer the student to Student Services as part of a package of support measures
 - (c) Invoke the fitness to study procedure
 - (d) Recommend a final written warning to the Dean of Higher Education
 - (e) Recommend withdrawal or intermission to the Dean of Higher Education
- 2.7 In relation to 2.6(a) to (c) above, if there is no improvement to the student's attendance, the Dean of Higher Education will issue a final written warning. Where, however, these improve satisfactorily, no further action is necessary and the process ends.
- 2.8 In relation to 2.6(d), if there is still no improvement to attendance, the student is withdrawn and the process ends. Where, however, these improve satisfactorily, no further action is necessary and the process ends.
- 2.9 In relation to 2.6(e) above, the student can withdraw or be withdrawn or can intermit (by mutual agreement), in which case the process ends.
- 2.10 Wherever a current process comes to an end as a result of no further action proving to be necessary, a new intervention can be commenced where that student's attendance again falls below a level over a period of time, both determined by the Faculty of Higher Education (see 2.1 above). Where the process is activated twice within an academic year, it will become a disciplinary matter (subject to extenuating circumstances).
- 2.11 It is the responsibility of programme lecturers and tutors to record student attendance in a timely manner and for Programme Leaders to monitor student attendance.
- 2.12 As your Tier 4 sponsor, the College is required by UK Visas and Immigration to monitor your attendance and engagement with your course. If you are studying at South Essex College on a student visa, this guidance will explain to you what attendance and engagement is required and how this will be monitored. Please refer to the SEC Attendance for Tier 4 student for more information about attendance & absences. Continued unauthorised absences will lead to suspension from your course and could result in withdrawal from the College. If you are a Tier 4 visa holder, your withdrawal will be reported to UK Visas and Immigration and you will be required to leave the UK

3. Monitoring of student engagement and progress

- 3.1 Students are expected to engage with their studies and make adequate progress. There may be instances where a student's attendance is above 90% or, as a result of interventions in relation to attendance (see section 2 above), attendance is no longer a concern, but the level of engagement is a concern or the progress on one or more units/modules is inadequate (e.g. they are due to fail their unit(s)/module(s)). In such instances, the process is similar to that in section 2 above, save for the focus on attendance.
- 3.2 There are minimum standards of progress expected in units/modules in order to successfully complete each year of a programme. The Faculty of Higher Education and, in turn, the College is monitored on a range of metrics / student outcomes, including but not limited to student retention from 1st December of year one to 1st December of year two, progression from year two to year three, completion of the programme and high grades and degree classifications. Moreover, the Faculty of Higher Education and the College are committed to widening participation and seeking to maximise the academic and, in turn, the employment potential of its students.
- 3.3 Consequently, where a student's engagement or unit/module performance fall below an acceptable standard, the Programme Leader for their programme will:
- i. invite the student concerned to an initial meeting
 - ii. write up notes of the meeting and store in a designated folder in Pro-Monitor which will be accessible by Programme Partnership Manager & relevant student.
 - iii. Ensure that the student is reminded of the *HE Student Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure* and the importance of engaging with the programme and making adequate progress
 - iv. Remind students of the relevant extenuating circumstances policy
- 3.4 Where the student fails to attend the meeting (as per 3.3. above) and does not provide an explanation or does not make alternative arrangements, a Programme Partnership Manager will invite them for a formal meeting, the outcomes of which can include referral for student support to Student Services, invoking the fitness to study procedure and, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. refusal to improve engagement with the programme or accepting support with the programme), a final written warning issued by the Dean of Higher Education or withdrawal from the programme or intermission (by mutual agreement). Where a final written warning by the Dean of Higher Education results in the student making satisfactory improvements in engagement and unit/module performance, the current process comes to an end. Where this is not the case, then the student is likely to be withdrawn from the programme.
- 3.5 Where a student fully engages with the process and attempts to improve their engagement and unit/module performance (including but not limited to participating in student support arrangements, attending additional workshops,

liaising with their lecturers and the Programme Leader), sufficient time will be given to the student to make the required improvements and their progress monitored accordingly, with further interventions, support and guidance as necessary.

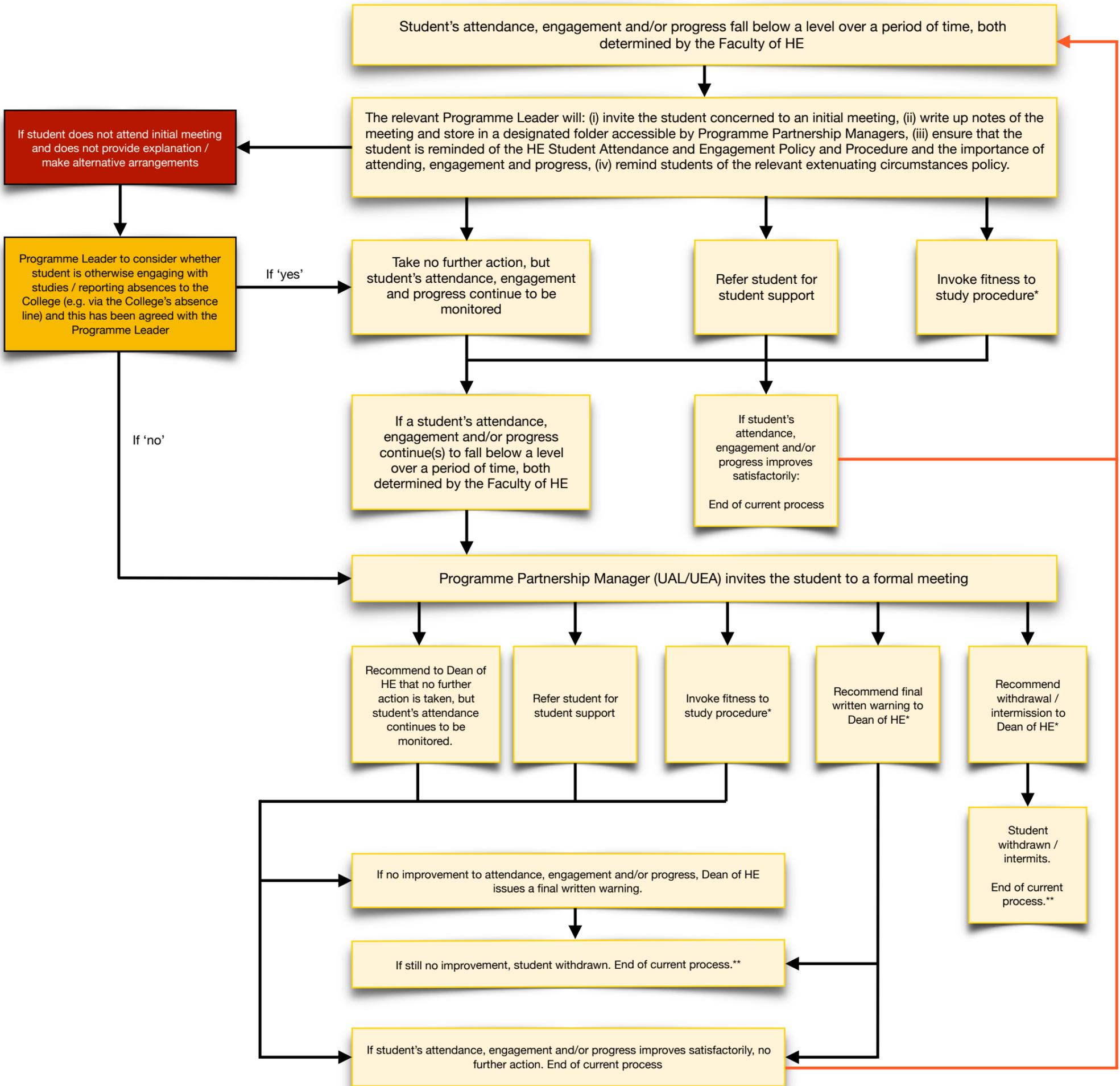
4. Withdrawal or intermission

4.1 The Faculty of Higher Education recognises that in some cases the most appropriate outcome is to withdraw a student or agree to the student intermitting (by mutual agreement). The average timeframe for this process is expected to be 6 weeks from the last date of attendance in cases where the student refuses to engage meaningfully with this policy and procedure by, for instance, not attending their classes. A shorter timeframe is available where the student so elects by, for example, notifying a member of the Faculty of Higher Education of their intention to withdraw from their programme or to intermit and there is no further attendance from this point onwards. In each of these cases, the student's fee liability is affected accordingly. See further, the *Higher Education Fee Policy 2018-19 (including fee liability, refunds and compensation)*, in particular section 9 of that policy.

4.2 [Link to Intermission Policy and Procedure and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure]

<https://www.southessex.ac.uk/higher-education/higher-education-policies>

Consideration of Student Attendance / Engagement



Notes

* Inform ESS by e-mail.

** Confirm to ESS by e-mail