

QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 88 Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Arden University is committed to providing the highest quality student experience and a key component of this is promoting and encouraging student engagement and attendance with all aspects of the learner experience. Students who engage fully with their studies and make the most of the opportunities offered by the University are the ones who are most successful.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the expectations of attendance and engagement for all students, across all Study Centres and modes of delivery at Arden University.
- 1.3. Where there are differing requirements relating to attendance for different student types at Arden University, these have been specified by stating **Study Centre Student** which refers to students who attend one of the University's study centres for in person teaching. **International Student** refers to students who have been sponsored by Arden University to enter the Country and attend in person teaching on a full-time programme and who must meet additional requirements as part of the terms of their visa¹. **Distance Learning and Apprenticeship Student** refers to students who have enrolled to complete a programme online and on a remote basis.
- 1.4. Student attendance and engagement is monitored for the following reasons:
 - To aid student retention and progression through the early identification of students at risk and allow timely academic and personal support interventions.
 - To enable notifications of withdrawals/suspensions to be made on time, ensuring all stakeholders are informed in a timely manner.
 - To meet any requirement to report absences to employers or other sponsors where they are funding/co-funding programme fees, including Apprentices in receipt of ESFA funding.
 - To comply with the requirements of the Student Loan Company who require confirmation of attendance on a regular basis for those students who are in receipt of financial support.
 - To comply with visa authorisation and undertake any necessary reporting to local immigration authorities (where applicable).

¹ Where Visa is referred to throughout this document it applies to students on Student Route Visa (SRV) issued and regulated by UKVI and students in Berlin on a Student Visa issued and regulated by German Immigration Authority.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Attendance:** The presence of the student during the scheduled teaching or learning activity for the entire session (including remote attendance for online, live sessions).
- 2.2. **Engagement:** Active participation by the student with their studies (attendance or distance-based) and use of resources to support their learning, including:
- Attendance of scheduled learning and teaching sessions and activities such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, project and dissertation workshops and meetings.
 - Active contribution to personal and group tutorials, lectures and seminars.
 - Use of library facilities and other learning resources.
 - Engagement with, and submission of assessment tasks set.
 - Attendance at examinations or time-constrained assessment activities.
 - Responding in a timely manner to formal communications from the University, such as letters, emails, text messages and telephone calls.

3. Induction Requirements

- 3.1. The Induction process is designed to prepare students for study.
- 3.2. **Study Centre Students**, including **International Students** are also required to attend a face-to-face induction which will take place in study centres one week prior to teaching commencing of the first study block.
- 3.3. **Distance Learning and Apprenticeship Students** are required to complete an online induction which will be available up to 6 weeks before the first module begins. For Apprentices this will be after completion of enrolment.
- 3.4. **Distance Learning and Apprenticeship Students** are also required to attend a live induction session, multiple dates and times will be offered from 4 weeks prior to teaching start and into week 1 of teaching.
- 3.5. Late enrolments may be accepted up to the start of teaching (Apprenticeship programmes do not permit late enrolments). Students who are enrolled late are expected to attend and complete relevant induction activities within 1 week of their enrolment.
- 3.6. **Study Centre Students**, including **International Students** who have been approved for late enrolment and who may have missed all, or part of the study centre induction will be briefed/provided copies of relevant information by Student Support.

Absences are not permitted with the induction period as this is a key time for student onboarding and future success. Students who are unable to attend a class during the first two weeks of their first study block should engage with their

Student Support team immediately and confirm in writing why they are not able to attend. This may result in a deferral to a later intake depending on the length of the unauthorized absence.

4. Attendance and Engagement Requirements

- 4.1. Arden University recognises the importance of good attendance and expects all students to attend and engage in all activities relating to all programmes and modules.
- 4.2. **Study Centre Students**, including **International Students** are expected to attend 100% of timetabled classroom sessions (*where sessions are scheduled to be in person and are also offered as online, **International Students** must attend the in-person activity as online attendance will not be accepted towards attendance monitoring for visa compliance*).
- 4.3. **Study Centre Students**, including **International Students** are expected to regularly log in to iLearn to access learning and assessment materials.
- 4.4. **Study Centre Students**, including **International Students** are expected to attend study centre scheduled assessments (presentations, exams etc).
- 4.5. **Distance Learning Students** are required to complete weekly lessons, weekly learning activities and contribute to discussion forums.
- 4.6. **Apprenticeship Students** Apprenticeship students are required to attend all Mandatory Impact/Masterclasses and assessment workshops as scheduled in their timetable. It is expected an apprentice attends a minimum of 90% of the sessions and to demonstrate evidence of new learning within each calendar month to remain compliant with the ESFA/DFE funding rules for your apprenticeship. Attendance at monthly Coaching sessions/reviews and quarterly tripartite reviews are mandatory.
- 4.7. An apprentice who does not maintain their attendance and expected level of engagement is at risk of withdrawal from their apprenticeship programme due to noncompliance.
- 4.8. All students are expected to complete and submit assessments on time unless extenuating circumstances or a deferral has been approved, please see Arden University Quality Assurance document QA 41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment.
- 4.9. Where any student is required to attend additional sessions in relation to skills development, they will be expected to attend these sessions which will be monitored as per point 4.2 to 4.4 above.
- 4.10. Upon enrolment **Distance Learning Students** will be asked how many modules they intend to complete during the academic year, a minimum of 40 credits must be achieved per year or a student will be considered for Academic Withdrawal, please see Arden University Withdrawal Policy. If a **Distance Learning**

Student does not achieve the minimum yearly credits or is predicted not to achieve the minimum yearly credits, they will be contacted by a Success Coach to see if further advice and guidance is needed to support the students getting back on track.

5. Lateness

- 5.1. Students are expected to be punctual for all timetabled sessions.
- 5.2. A student will be recorded as late if they arrive 15 minutes after the timetable start time.
- 5.3. If a student arrives after 30 minutes, they will not be permitted to join the class at that time. Students can join the class after the next break to avoid disruption to the rest of the group.
- 5.4. If a student does not join the class after the break, they will be marked as absent for that session.
- 5.5. Students who are consistently late disrupt both their own education and that of others. Students will be required to attend a meeting with Student Support/Academic member of staff and may be considered through the withdrawal policy if their overall attendance levels are impacted by persistent lateness.

6. Absence

- 6.1. Arden University appreciates that at times absence will be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances, for example illness, medical appointment, visa appointment, police registration (this list is not exhaustive).
- 6.2. Students should email the Attendance inbox – attendance@arden.ac.uk (apprenticeship students should email apprenticesupport@arden.ac.uk and their apprenticeship coach) as soon as possible before or on the day of the absence.
- 6.3. For the first 7 days of your absence, we operate a self-certification process. Students are expected to catch up on work that has been missed. Any absence over 7 days requires formal evidence and should not be considered as authorised until this has been confirmed in writing. If you are given staged warnings at any time over your attendance, then we may require you to provide evidence for all absences.
- 6.4. Holidays during timetabled teaching weeks and assessment periods (including re-assessment periods where applicable) are not permitted (this does not apply to **Apprenticeship Students**).

- 6.5. Extensive or persistent absence affects a student's ability to continue studying and may result in withdrawal from the programme and notification to employer, sponsor, SLC and Visa authorities. Should an absence span more than 5 consecutive weeks, a fitness to study panel should be convened which may result in a forced leave of absence or withdrawal.

7. Mitigating Circumstances/Break in Learning

- 7.1. Mitigation is the process by which allowance is made for any matter or circumstance which may seriously affect a student's performance in assessment. Mitigating circumstances must have had a seriously adverse effect on the student's performance and have been unanticipated and beyond the student's control. Students should refer to the QA 41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment and consult with Student Support.
- 7.2. A Break in Learning allows a student to temporarily suspend their studies for a specified period to avoid withdrawing due to challenging personal reasons which have a substantial impact on their ability to study (including, but not limited to medical, maternity, personal issues or financial issues). Students should refer to the Arden University Quality Assurance Document QA 75 Break in Learning and seek guidance from Student Support.
- 7.3. For **International Students** who are considering applying for a Break in Learning, they must also seek advice from the International Student Compliance team to understand the impact to their visa. An absence of any kind can impact on a student's visa and their right to remain in the country whilst not studying. Additionally, any Break in Learning or Mitigation which extends a student's anticipated length of study should be considered within the terms of the student's visa.

8. Timetable Change requests

- 8.1 A Timetable Change Request can be submitted by a student who is in their second Study Period/Block and beyond.
- 8.2 A Timetable Change Request will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, see below:
- Change to Medical Conditions or Disability that impacts your ability to access the timetabled in-Study Centre teaching
 - A sudden or unforeseen change to personal commitments and/or arrangements
 - A Safeguarding concern – a sudden or unforeseen circumstance that poses a risk to harm, exploitation, or abuse

Examples of suitable evidence could include:

- Medical Evidence (could be submitted by a member of the Inclusion Team on the student's behalf)
 - Statements from responsible third parties on headed & signed paper
 - Formal submission of concern from a member of university staff, following a Safeguarding concern
- 8.3. All students must also provide supporting evidence to confirm the reason for their Timetable Change Request (except in the case of a Safeguarding issue, whereby a member of staff may provide evidence/statement on the student's behalf) – any requests that fall out of the above or do not have supporting evidence, will not be considered. There is no route of appeal to this decision.
- 8.4. Students will be expected to submit their request to the Student Support Team Leader at their Study Centre, via a Microsoft form (following the process of Applicant Timetable Reasonable Adjustment), who will review their case with the Centre Manager and confirm if the change is accepted or rejected.
- 8.5. Any approved requests will be implemented at the start of the next full Study Block unless it is deemed appropriate to action for immediate change (which will be assessed by the Centre Manager or Team Leader).

9. Monitoring and Recording

- 9.1 Attendance at timetabled sessions will be recorded and monitored. Module Lecturers will record attendance in a register at all sessions. This will enable analysis and oversight of individual student attendance at both module level and overall programme level.
- 9.2 Formative and summative assessment submission, including examination attendance and time-controlled assessment engagement (where applicable) will be monitored.
- 9.3 Online engagement will be recorded and monitored.
- 9.4 Data will be analysed and monitored by staff. It is expected that academic members of staff will also benefit from this information which will enable them to make positive steps towards absenteeism.
- 9.5 All student attendance and engagement will be monitored during a teaching block, any student whose attendance is a concern will be sent a notification and this will be logged on the student's record.

- 9.6 Any **UK Student Route sponsored student** who is absent without contact for 10 days and fails to respond to contact from the University will be reported to the relevant Visa Authority which may result in the student's visa being cancelled.

10. Unsatisfactory Attendance and Engagement

- 10.1. During the first two weeks of a student's first study block, **Study Centre Students** including all **International Students**, are expected to have completed the following actions to demonstrate their engagement:

- Student is enrolled and registered.
- Student has completed online induction.
- Student has engaged online completing lessons, activities and participating in discussion forums.
- Student has attended study centre induction.
- Student has paid or has approved student finance funding in place for study.
- Student attendance is at least 80%.

- 10.2. During the first two weeks of a student's first study block, **Distance Learning Students** are expected to have completed the following actions to demonstrate their engagement:

- Student is enrolled and registered.
- Student has completed online induction.
- Student has engaged online, completing lessons, activities and released their first module.
- Student has attended a live Induction.
- Student has a payment plan in place or has approved student finance funding.

- 10.3. Prior to the first week of a student's first study block, **Apprenticeship Students** are expected to have completed the following actions to demonstrate their engagement:

- Student is enrolled and registered.
- Student has completed apprenticeship online induction.
- Student has engaged online completing lessons, activities and have had their first module released.
- Student has completed a SWOT analysis.

- 10.4. For **Study Centre Students** and **Distance Learning Students**, failure to complete these actions will result in Student Support contacting students to discuss the situation and based on that interaction the student may be considered for Early Withdrawal or deferral to a future intake in accordance with the Arden Withdrawal Policy.

10.5. From week 3 of a student's enrolment, all students including **Study Centre Students, International Students** and **Distance Learning Students** will be monitored to ensure that they are maintaining the following attendance and engagement expectations:

- The student's attendance does not fall below 80% over each study block.
- The student fails to complete key engagement indicators within a module.
- The student fails to submit assessment or attend a scheduled Examination or Time Controlled Assessment.
- The student is persistently late.

10.6. If a student is reported to be a concern due to not meeting the above attendance and engagement requirements, a Success coach will attempt to contact the student to discuss the issue and agree arrangements for adequate participation, what the barriers are and how they can be supported further. If a student does not engage with their Coach and the support available they may be at risk of withdrawal.

10.7. Where a student does not respond to contact from a success Coach, or they fail to meet the expectations for participation as agreed with their Coach in 9.6, they will be considered for Attendance and Engagement Withdrawal in accordance with the Arden Withdrawal Policy.

10.8. A withdrawal decision concerning international students will be communicated to the relevant immigration authorities. This will most likely result in the termination of their right to reside in the respective country.

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| Policy Name: | Attendance and Engagement Policy BL, DL & International Students |
| Policy Reference: | QA88 |
| Approval Authority: | Quality and Standards Committee |
| Last Approved: | September 2023 |
| Responsible SMT Lead: | Academic Registrar |
| Responsible Department: | Academic Affairs |
| Policy Contact: | Rosella Brennan, Head of Registry Services (rbrennan@arden.ac.uk) |
| Review Frequency: | 3 years |