

QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 88 Attendance and Engagement Policy

Arden University's Student Attendance and Engagement Policy is based on guidelines from the Office for Students, which include standards recognised across the sector. The policy takes into account the unique needs of Arden students, including how the cost of living affects their ability to balance study, work, and social life. It also follows the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications to ensure academic standards are met and the quality of learning is maintained and improved.

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 Campus, and modes of learning at Arden University.
- 1.3. Arden requires students to attend and engage with their learning, be prepared for all learning opportunities ahead and communicate with their lecturer if they are not.
- 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).

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 **Blended Learning Campus Based Students**, including **International Students** are also required to attend a face-to-face induction which will take place in the campus location prior to commencement of the first study semester.
- 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 **Blended Learning Campus Based Students**, including **International Students** who have been approved for late enrolment and who may have missed all, or part of the campus induction will be briefed/provided copies of relevant information by Student Support.

Absences are not usually permitted within 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 semester must engage with their Student Success Coach and provide evidence as to why they are unable to attend. This may result in a deferral to a later intake depending on the length of the unauthorised 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 **Blended Learning Campus Based Students**, including **International Students** are expected to regularly attend timetabled compulsory 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 **Blended Learning Campus Based Students**, including **International Students** are expected to regularly log in to iLearn to access learning and assessment materials.
- 4.4 **Blended Learning Campus Based Students**, including **International Students** are expected to attend campus 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** are required to attend all coaching sessions and all scheduled classes. Apprentices are required to evidence learning in every four-week period to comply with ESFA expectations.
- 4.7 All students are expected to complete and submit assessments on time unless mitigation or a deferral has been approved, please see Arden University Quality Assurance document QA 41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 When monitoring Attendance and/or Engagement the following will be considered:
 - Overall percentage attendance at compulsory timetabled classes since the start of the programme.
 - Percentage weekly attendance at compulsory timetabled classes (to include current week and preceding four weeks)
 - Consecutive absences from compulsory timetabled classes

- Four-weekly Engagement for online students
 - Online students' interaction and participation in programme-specific learning activities
- 4.10 Students with low levels of Attendance and/or Engagement will be contacted to ascertain any reasons for this and to ensure that any need for additional support is considered. Such reasons may lead the University to implement its Fitness to Study policy.
- 4.11 Where Attendance and/or Engagement requirements are specified by the relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB), students are expected to comply with these requirements, which are published in the relevant Assessment and Award Regulations.
- 4.12 The University recognises that it may be necessary to make reasonable allowances and/or adjustments in the case of disability-related low Attendance and/or Engagement, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Each case will be treated on its facts and the University will seek to make fair and proportionate decisions that are in the student's best interests.
- 4.13 Attendance is expected to remain above 60% for all Blended Learning students. Students falling below this level may be considered for engagement interventions or withdrawal in accordance with QA66 Withdrawal Policy.

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 does not join the class after the break, they will be marked as absent for that session.
- 5.4 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 Team – attendance@arden.ac.uk
Apprenticeship students should email apprenticeattendance@arden.ac.uk) 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 reassessment 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 3 weeks (eg; 1 week Self Cert plus 2 week Fit Note), students will be referred to Wellbeing Services who will ascertain if your illness constitutes a disability under The Equality Act (2010) and, if so, discuss reasonable adjustments and support. For further information please refer to the [Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#). Absence beyond 3 weeks will only be approved following a meeting with a Wellbeing Advisor.

For long term absence, beyond 5 weeks, a Fitness to Study Panel may be convened which may result in a forced Break in Learning, a transfer to another mode of study or withdrawal.

7. Extenuating Circumstances/Break in Learning

- 7.1 Extenuating Circumstances is the process by which allowance is made for any matter or circumstance which may seriously affect a student's performance in assessment. Extenuating 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 Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment and consult with Student Hub Advisors.
- 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 Hub Advisors.
- 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 semester 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-Campus 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 Wellbeing Services 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 Lead Student Hub Advisor at their campus, via a Microsoft form (following the process of Applicant Timetable Reasonable Adjustment), who will review their case with the Campus 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 Semester unless it is deemed appropriate to action for immediate change (which will be assessed by the Campus 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 semester, any student whose attendance is a concern will be sent a notification and this will be logged on the student's record.
- 9.6 International students sponsored under the Student Visa route are required to meet all attendance and engagement expectations. Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of sponsorship in line with UKVI reporting duties.

10. Unsatisfactory Attendance and Engagement

- 10.1 During the first two weeks of a student's first semester, **Blended Learning Campus Based 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 in person induction.
 - Student has paid or has approved student finance funding in place for study.
 - Student attendance at compulsory scheduled sessions.
- 10.2 During the first two weeks of a student's first semester, **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 semester, **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 **Blended Learning Campus Based Students** and **Distance Learning Students**, failure to complete these actions will result in Student Hub 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 **Distance Learning Students, International Students** and **Distance Learning Students** will be monitored to ensure that they are maintaining the following attendance and engagement expectations:
- The student is regularly attending at the compulsory sessions.
 - Key engagement indicators are maintained
 - The student submits scheduled assessments or attends a scheduled Examination or Time Controlled Assessment.
 - The student is timely in their attendance i.e. is not persistently late.
- 10.6 If a student is reported to be a concern due to not meeting the above attendance and engagement requirements, the Student Hub will attempt to contact the student to discuss the issue and agree arrangements for adequate participation.
- 10.7 Where a student does not respond to contact from the Student Hub, or they fail to meet the expectations for participation as agreed with the Student Hub Advisor 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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