International Student Engagement & Attendance Policy

1. This policy outlines the mandatory engagement and attendance requirements for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students who have been issued a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) by Birkbeck. It does not apply to international students who hold a non-Student visa immigration status.

2. Students who are issued with a CAS are in the United Kingdom primarily for the purpose of education and must therefore attend and engage with their studies to the full extent. In practice this means students must actively and consistently follow their programme of study, attending all sessions in their timetable.

3. For the purposes of holding a Student visa the terms attendance and engagement can be used interchangeably. Students sponsored for Student Visas are expected to abide the College’s Student Engagement and Attendance Policy in addition to the requirements laid out in this policy.

4. The College Secretary and Clerk to the Governors as the Authorising Officer will delegate to the Academic Registrar as the Key Contact, the operational responsibility for ensuring appropriate policy, process and communications is in place to support engagement and attendance for students who have been issued a CAS by Birkbeck.

5. Within Registry Services the International Student Administration Team (ISA) will implement the attendance and engagement requirements and intent of this policy and be supported by International Student Coordinators in each School. The Executive Dean of the School will appoint the International Student Coordinator and who will be the primary liaison point with Registry Services. Schools are expected to regularly and proactively check international student attendance.

6. The minimum requirement for taught students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and MRes students outside of the School of Science) is engagement with at least one scheduled teaching activity each week of term time. Examples of this include laboratory sessions, seminars, lectures, exams, registration sessions and submission of assessed or unassessed coursework. Registry Services will also monitor students’ attendance to ensure that students who have ongoing poor attendance patterns are identified and contacted. Students are expected to attend at least overall 60% of scheduled teaching events. Postgraduate research requirements are laid out in a separate section.

7. Outside of term time there is no requirement to attend College. The definition of term time varies depending on the level of study undertaken. Undergraduate students will use the published term dates to define their term time, excluding departmental reading weeks Postgraduate taught and research students are deemed to be in term time throughout the calendar year, excluding Christmas and Easter breaks and reading weeks.

8. Students who fail to meet the minimum engagement and attendance requirements will be contacted by Registry Services. Details of the actions that the College will take in these circumstances are laid out in Appendix 1 and 2. Where visa sponsorship withdrawal is required, the decision would follow a discussion between the Academic

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1 ‘Student visa’ is the updated term for the student immigration route, but for the purpose of this policy it is also used to include students sponsored on the previous Tier 4 route.
Registrar and a nominee of the Executive Dean of the appropriate School in which the student is registered.

9. If a student is determined to have gone 60 days without engagement or attendance, they will have their visa sponsorship withdrawn and their student record for that academic year will be terminated. The 60 days can be calculated from any point from the beginning of the academic year and then at any point throughout the year.

Non-Standard Teaching Periods

10. During teaching periods where alternative teaching and learning activities take place e.g. Work placements, field trips, study abroad or intercollegiate study, students will be required to maintain engagement with the College. An appropriate form of engagement will be determined for each case and may include regular meetings with academic tutors or other College staff.

Taught Students Dissertation Periods

11. The College accepts that there will be minimal teaching requirements during this time, but the underlying principle is that all students should have academic engagement at least once every 60 days. Engagement for students who are in a dissertation period with no taught elements will be based on the student’s regular meetings with their dissertation supervisor, submission of written work and attendance at exams.

Authorised Absences

12. Students can request a period of authorised absence for a maximum of 60 days, provided the absence does not result in an extension to their expected programme completion date. During this absence formal engagement with the College is not required. Approval for this type of absence will require the agreement of a relevant academic member of staff e.g. Course Director or Personal Tutor and approval from ISA. Requests for authorised absences should normally be submitted before the absence but can also be submitted retrospectively if there is a valid reason.

Postgraduate Research Requirements

13. For students who are enrolled on postgraduate research programmes engagement will be monitored via supervisor meetings and seminars. A minimum of three engagements should take place per term and the expectation is that at least two of these are in person meetings.
14. The College accepts that there may be a lower frequency of supervisory meetings or reduced teaching requirements after the summer term, and during the Writing Up period. However, the underlying principle is that all students should have academic engagement at least once every 60 days.
15. As a result of the difference in study patterns, some MRes programmes in the School of Science are monitored using the postgraduate research attendance requirements outlined in this section. All other MRes programmes in the College use the taught attendance requirements (minimum one session per week and 60% overall).
COVID Concession Period

16. Due to the restrictions that are in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are some temporary changes to the engagement requirements with Student visa sponsorship (including those under the previous Tier 4 route). This concession period runs for the whole of the 2020/21 academic year, up to and including September 2021. During this time, many learning and teaching activities will only be accessed online. In these cases, physical attendance is not required, but online engagement will still be monitored. Students must access their scheduled online sessions from their timetable in My Birkbeck or through the link on Moodle (providing the session has been correctly timetabled) to ensure that their engagement is logged correctly.

17. Due to the amended UKVI guidance for this period if a student is determined to have gone 30 days without engagement, they will have their visa sponsorship withdrawn. This replaces the normal 60 day requirement. Full details of the requirements and actions taken for taught students are found in Appendix 3.

18. Postgraduate research students have a lower number of expected engagements per term and as such have a different set of requirements and actions, which can be found in Appendix 4.

Further Reading

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy.

- Student Engagement & Attendance Policy
- Terms and Conditions of Study
- College Policy on the Termination of Registration

Academic Board
January 2021

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2 Where a scheduled teaching event is rearranged staff must follow the correct process for rescheduling to enable engagement to be logged.
Appendix 1 – Taught Students - Actions taken where minimum attendance not met

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consecutive Weeks</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student is sent email by Registry Services notifying them of missed classes. Academic Department informed and meeting with Registry Services /Department will be required if another week missed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mandatory meeting arranged between Registry Services staff, the academic Department and the student. The purpose of the meeting is to remind the student of their external visa obligations and to be signposted to relevant academic and student support services as appropriate. This can be an in person or online meeting which the student must attend. The student may bring a supporter with them but not a legal representative. The supporter may not talk on their behalf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student is sent a further email by Registry Services notifying them of missed classes. Registry Services will investigate and document whether appropriate support and intervention measures have been put in place in accordance with the Department and College’s policies and procedures. Department and Registry Services liaise if mitigating circumstances are identified. A range of academic and student support services may be engaged as appropriate to support the student. Where there are protected characteristics or sensitive personal issues discussed these will be shared with appropriate consent and fairness. The health and safety of the student will always be considered paramount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Final warning issued in writing and by email by Registry Services and a second and final meeting offered. Students may bring a supporter with them but not a legal a representative. The supporter may not talk on their behalf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Academic Registrar withdraws the student’s visa sponsorship and terminates student record for their programme of study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sub 60% Attendance**  

Once per term Registry Services will send an email to students who have attended less than 60% of their scheduled teaching events within the past 30 days. These students will be invited to a mandatory meeting with the relevant International Student Coordinator to discuss the importance of attendance and their visa obligations.

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**Appendix 2 Postgraduate Research Students - Actions taken where minimum attendance not met**

The following table outlines the actions taken where there has not been academic engagement for consecutive scheduled engagements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consecutive Engagements</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student is sent email by Registry Services notifying them of missed engagements. Academic Department informed and meeting with Registry Services staff/Department will be arranged. The purpose of the meeting is to remind the student of their visa obligations and to be signposted to relevant academic and student support services as appropriate. The student may bring a supporter with them but not a legal representative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Registry Services and the Department will investigate and document whether appropriate support and intervention measures have been put in place in accordance with the academic Department’s and College’s policies and procedures. Department and Registry Services liaise if mitigating circumstances are identified. A range of academic and student support services may be engaged as appropriate to support the student. Where there are protected characteristics or sensitive personal issues discussed these will be shared with appropriate consent and fairness. The health and safety of the student will always be considered paramount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Final warning issued in writing and by email by Registry Services and a second and final meeting offered. Students may bring a friend (but not a legal representative) to the first or second meetings. The friend may not talk on their behalf.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 Taught Students - Actions taken where minimum attendance not met during Covid Concession period

The following table outlines the actions taken where an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student (including MRes students outside of the School of Science) has not academically engaged for consecutive weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consecutive Weeks</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student is sent an alert email by Registry Services notifying them of missed classes and the academic Department is informed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student is sent a further alert email by Registry Services notifying them of missed classes. Academic Department is informed and meeting with Registry Services staff and the Department will be required if another week is missed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Final warning issued in writing and by email by Registry Services and a second and final meeting offered. Students may bring a friend (but not a legal representative) to the first or second meetings. The friend may not talk on their behalf. Mandatory online meeting arranged by Registry Services staff and the student. The purpose of the meeting is to remind the student of their visa obligations and to be signposted to relevant academic and student support services as appropriate. The student may bring a supporter with them but not a legal representative. Registry Services and the Department will investigate and document whether appropriate support and intervention measures have been put in place in accordance with the academic Department’s and College’s policies and procedures. Department and Registry Services liaise if mitigating circumstances are identified. A range of academic and student support services may be engaged as appropriate to support the student. Where there are protected characteristics or sensitive personal issues discussed these will be shared with appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The health and safety of the student will always be considered paramount.

The Academic Registrar withdraws the student’s visa sponsorship and terminates student record for their programme of study.

Sub 60% Attendance

Once per term Registry Services will send an email to students who have attended less than 60% of their scheduled teaching events within the past 30 days. These students will be invited to a mandatory group meeting with Registry Services and the relevant International Student Coordinator to discuss the importance of attendance and their visa obligations.

Appendix 4 Postgraduate Research Students - Actions taken where minimum attendance not met during Covid Concession period

The following table outlines the actions taken where an undergraduate or postgraduate taught student (including students on some MRes programmes in the School of Science) has not academically engaged for consecutive days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consecutive Days</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Student is sent email by Registry Services notifying them of missed engagements. Academic Department informed and meeting with Registry Services staff/Department will be arranged. The purpose of the meeting is to remind the student of their visa obligations and to be signposted to relevant academic and student support services as appropriate. The student may bring a supporter with them but not a legal representative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further 30 days</td>
<td>Registry Services and the Department will investigate and document whether appropriate support and intervention measures have been put in place in accordance with the academic Department’s and College’s policies and procedures. Department and Registry Services liaise if mitigating circumstances are identified. A range of academic and student support services may be engaged as appropriate to support the student. Where there are protected characteristics or sensitive personal issues discussed these will be shared with appropriate consent and fairness. The health and safety of the student will always be considered paramount.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>