University of Wolverhampton

Undergraduate Student Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 There is clear evidence to show that to maximise academic success, students need to engage fully with their studies, and the University is committed to helping students engage and achieve the best possible outcome from their studies. This Policy sets out how the University supports students to engage fully with their studies, what the University expects of students in relation to engagement with their course, how it will monitor that engagement, and what it will do if students are not engaging.

1.2 For the purposes of this Policy, engagement is defined as “the active and regular use of resources and learning activities including (but not exclusively) attendance at scheduled events, accessing core University systems, completing all required assessments, and interacting with staff and peers, and their course learning resources”.

1.3 Engagement is compulsory and will be monitored by the University. Academic staff will provide appropriate learning opportunities to facilitate engagement from all student groups.

1.4 Some students have may additional requirements as to their engagement with the University and their Course, including attendance, for example courses governed by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), International students who are governed by Home Office requirements and Apprenticeships.

1.5 This Policy forms part of the University’s Regulatory Framework (http://www.wlv.ac.uk/polsregs).

2. Support for Student Engagement

2.1. The University recognises that Higher Education has a role in the overall development of the student. In addition to learning and teaching, the University encourages engagement of the student with course-related quality activities, and a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities provided and promoted by the University and the Students Union.

2.2. The University supports student engagement in a number of ways, including:
   - pre-entry and induction information, activities and processes that are designed to ensure that students are familiar with the requirements of their Course and know how to access facilities, services and support;
   - high quality teaching and learning experiences;
   - encouraging early opportunities for students to submit work and receive detailed feedback and feed-forward;
• high quality Course-related learning resources and support materials;
• a range of academic and personal support services;
• clear Policies and Regulations written in student-facing language; and
• by offering a range of co- and extra-curricular activities designed to improve
the student experience and to enhance employability.

2.3. Personal Tutors and/or Academic Coaches will advise on, monitor and
encourage engagement throughout the student journey.

2.4. The University expects students to engage fully with engagement monitoring,
including attendance. The derived data will be available to Module Tutors,
Personal Tutors, Academic Coaches and Course Leaders in sufficient detail to
allow staff to differentiate their learning and teaching activities.

2.5. The same information about their engagement will be supplied to students.

2.6. Where illness or other circumstances impact on student engagement and/or
attendance, students should follow the procedure given in Paragraph 8.1.

3. Communication with Students

3.1 Before joining the University, students should be clear about their
responsibilities in terms of engagement with their learning, staff, systems and
resources and are encouraged to become proactive, engaged partners in their
development of the student experience.

3.2 Clear guidance on positive engagement with the University will be given in
relevant Course materials (e.g. Module and Course guides).

3.3 At a Course level, there will be clear definitions of and reasons for student
engagement, clear consequences for non-engagement and rewards and
celebration for successful engagement. These will be published in the relevant
Course Guide.

4. Principles of Student Engagement

4.1 Engagement in learning and teaching activities is compulsory and will be
monitored by the University in the ways that are set out in the further sections
of this Policy, with the aim of identifying any issues and difficulties at a
sufficiently early stage to be able to work with students to facilitate their full
engagement with their studies.

4.2 Timetabled learning and teaching sessions are an essential part of the student
learning experience on all Courses, other than those Courses that are delivered
by distance learning. Much of the curriculum content of courses is conveyed
through these sessions.

4.3 Timetabled sessions also give students opportunities to interact with academic
staff and other students about course- related themes and issues. Where
courses have practical or placement elements, attendance at these is similarly central to student success.

5. Attendance at Timetabled Sessions

5.1 The University expects students to attend all timetabled teaching sessions for their duration, including placements and fieldwork/in-course visits, and students are expected to inform the University if they are unable to attend their classes for any reason.

5.2 Attendance will be monitored as part of this Policy, as one element of engagement.

5.3 As part of expectations relating to engagement, Courses can make the decision that attendance at some or all activities is mandatory. This must be supported by the relevant Dean of Faculty, formally approved, made clear to students, and managed via assessment of modules.

5.4 Where a student’s attendance over a semester falls below 80%, and this is judged to be the cause of academic concerns about progress, the University will draw this to their attention (Appendix 1).

5.5 Students who record no attendance for any three consecutive teaching weeks will normally be contacted by their Personal Tutor/Academic Coach to check on student wellbeing and to guide the student as to their future studies.

5.6 New students who have failed to engage with their course, in accordance with the approved measures (Appendix 2), within the first 50 days of the Course start date will be withdrawn from their course (Paragraph 3.3.9 of the Undergraduate, Foundation, Taught Postgraduate and Professional Doctorate Regulations: https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/policies-and-regulations/academic-regulations/).

6. Engagement with the Digital Environment for Learning

6.1 The University’s VLE is integral to the delivery of most courses, providing course-related resources and learning activities. In addition, many assessments are managed and delivered through the VLE. Students therefore need to access and interact with those learning resources and support materials on a regular basis if they are to be successful in their studies.

6.2 There are a range of other digital systems with which students will interact. This includes, but is not exclusive to: the library resource list system and the appointment management system, in addition to Course-specific systems. Systems may be added or replaced over time.

6.3 The University monitors students’ engagement with the VLE and other systems. Where a student has a low level of engagement, and this is impacting on student progress, the University will draw this to their attention (Appendix 1).
7. Engagement with Assessment

7.1. Students are required to complete pieces of academic or practical work on or by specified dates throughout the academic year. These pieces of work form part of assessment for the academic level on which they are enrolled. Students who do not submit work for assessment, or who submit work but receive a low mark for it, are unlikely or less likely to be able to achieve an overall pass for a given level.

7.2. The University records the submission and non-submission of work by students. This information is made available to staff who teach and support students. Students who record multiple non-submission of assessment may find that their progression on the course is affected (Appendix 1).

7.3. The penalties for late and non-submission of work are contained within the University Academic Regulations (https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/policies-and-regulations/academic-regulations/).

7.4. Following the marking of assessments, all students are invited to attend a module assessment feedback workshop, the timing of which will be listed in the relevant Module Guide.

8. Pastoral Support for Students

8.1. If students consider that there are good reasons why they will not be able to meet deadlines for the submission of coursework or attend an examination, they should apply for an extension or claim extenuating circumstances. Guidance is available from https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/academic-standards-and-quality/documents/Guidance-for-Students-circumstance.pdf.

8.2. If students experience academic or other difficulties, a range of support is available from Faculty Student Services and from the Directorate of Student and Academic Support (https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/faculty-student-services/) including: financial support, support for students with disabilities, mental health and wellbeing, as well as academic and career development skills. Personal Tutors, Academic Coaches and other academic staff are also available to provide support.

8.3. Impartial and independent advice is available from the Students Union (www.wolvesunion.org/advice/getadvice/academic).

9. Student Retention, Progression and Achievement

9.1. At the end of each year of study, students will receive a detailed notification of their results, which clearly sets out (at a minimum):
   - the start date for the subsequent academic year (unless the student is a
finalist or they are ineligible to return);
• brief details of any optional modules to be undertaken in the following year; and
• if required, detailed of any actions needed to complete credits from the previous level.
• If the student is eligible to complete their undergraduate study, guidance to possible postgraduate courses, and information regarding access to careers advice should also be included.

9.2. At the end of each year of study, students will also be invited to meet (or telephone/video conference) with their Personal Tutor or Academic Coach to review the outcome(s) of the year. This will provide an opportunity for the student to:
• review their overall progress across the year and discuss approaches that they might take in order to enhance their achievement in the following year;
• clarify and confirm if any further work is required to successfully complete the appropriate level; or
• in the case of final-year students, review their outcome award and discuss their progression into employment, self-employment or further study.

9.3. If a student is unable to complete their studies, then there will be managed withdrawal, which includes advice regarding possible routes to return to study (Appendix 3).
Appendix 1 – implications and consequences of non-engagement

1. A student who chooses not to attend the teaching sessions in their Course, and/or who does not respond to offers of support when alerted to concerns from their course team, will be required to attend a meeting (or take part in a telephone conversation or video conference) with their Personal Tutor or Academic Coach to discuss the situation and to agree what the student and the University will do to enhance the opportunities for a successful outcome for the student.

2. Students who are not accessing or making progress through their Canvas courses will be required to attend a meeting with their Personal Tutor or Academic Coach (or take part in a telephone conversation or video conference) to discuss the importance of accessing this information.

3. Following the marking of assessments, all students are invited to attend a module assessment feedback workshop to discuss the options they have and to receive further information regarding the referral process. The timing of this feedback will be published in the module guide, and should normally be within 2 weeks of the date of the module assessment board. Attendance will be recorded at this workshop.
Appendix 2: Implementation of the 50-day rule, 2019-20

The clause within the Academic Regulations, clause 3.3.9 states:

If an enrolled student does not engage with their course of study within the first 50 days of the start date of the course, the Dean of Faculty will recommend to the Academic Registrar that the student is discontinued and their registration terminated. The Faculty must provide evidence that there have been repeated and reasonable attempts to contact the student and establish their engagement with the course.

Different courses have different definitions as to what constitutes engagement and different approaches to establishing contact with students who have enrolled, but not yet academically engaged with their course of study. For example, many courses with PSRB accreditation have an attendance requirement, whilst other courses do not. In order to ensure a consistent, equitable and fair approach to the application of the 50-day regulation the minimum requirement for engagement for all courses is defined here, noting that some courses may have additional requirements as expressed at validation or as defined by a PSRB which will be applied. Course-specific requirements are contained within the Course Guide. Failure to engage to this minimum institutional requirement will result in a recommendation to the Academic Registrar to terminate the student’s registration under the 50-day regulation.

Any recommendation to be made to the Academic Registrar to discontinue a student’s registration on the grounds of non-engagement is to be accompanied by evidence that there have been multiple attempts (at least 3) to contact the student by more than one method of communication over the initial 50-day period.

To whom does this regulation apply?
This regulation applies to all students (L3 – L7 inclusive, both full-time and part-time) in the first 50 days of study on a new course of study (all new entrants to the University and those progressing to a new course of study (e.g. HND to degree or degree to masters)).

Day 1 represents the course start date, regardless of when students enter the University.

How is non-engagement measured?
Students will be deemed to not be engaged if they have not completed the following in the first 50 days of their course:

- Enrolled on the course and registered for their modules
  AND
- Attended at least 50% of teaching sessions
  AND
- Have accessed and made progress through each of their Canvas courses
  AND
- Met with their personal tutor/academic coach in a group or individual setting
Faculties may identify additional engagement requirements e.g.

- Additional attendance requirements
- accessed library learning resources
- engagement with the Helpdesk
- engaging with DBS/OH tasks
- logging into e:Vision since the start date of the course

How faculties will work with students to ensure they engage:

- Faculties should identify students who have not enrolled on their course at the start of teaching week 2. Students in this position should be contacted by the Faculty to ask them to do this. This should also be an opportunity to check whether the student is having problems. Faculties should check with the student that they have had their source of funding confirmed.

- At the end of teaching week 3, Faculties should identify any student who has not registered for their modules. Students in this position should be contacted by the Faculty to ask them to do this. This should also be an opportunity to check whether the student is having problems.

- At the end of teaching week 5, Faculties should determine whether students are attending (where attendance is monitored) AND have accessed and progressed in the Canvas courses AND that they have met with their personal tutor/academic coach. Where a student has not met these conditions, they should be contacted and directed to meet with their personal tutor/academic coach (or take part in a telephone conversation or video conference) to discuss their engagement and advised that the Academic Registrar will write to confirm the termination of their registration from their course of study if they do not do this before the end of week 7.

- At Day 50, any student has failed to engage at at least the minimum expected level will be written to by the Academic Registrar confirming that their studies have been discontinued and their registration terminated.

- It is important to cross check against students who are in the process of applying for a Leave of Absence by using Faculty Student Services records.
## Timescales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welcome email (sent to University and Preferred email accounts) from the Faculty following enrolment. This email sets out expectations from the Faculty and the University around engagement. Continue to check that firm applicants are progressing through the enrolment process and encourage those at P and PC to fully enrol. Note that students should be clear as to whether they are entitled for SLC support or not before fully committing at this stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Continue to check that firm applicants are progressing through the enrolment process and encourage those at P and PC to fully enrol. Issue reminder that enrolments should be complete by the end of week 3. This should include advice that any student who is unsure about enrolment because they have not yet received confirmation of funding should discuss this with their Faculty Student Services Office/Faculty Student Advisor. Students should be reminded that once they are enrolled they will be liable for tuition fees in accordance with the University of Wolverhampton Fee Liability, Debtor and Refund policy available at: <a href="https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/policies-and-regulations/">https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/governance/legal-information/policies-and-regulations/</a></td>
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| 21         | This is the end of week 3. At this point, enrolled students should have:  
- Registered the correct number of modules  
- Attended a Personal Tutor/Academic Coach meeting (or Skype/Telephone call)  
- Attended module sessions  
- Engaged with Canvas  
Students who have not engaged as above should receive an email (sent to University and Preferred email accounts) which warns of the consequences of not engaging, and encourages them to come into the University. Note: consideration should also be given to the enrolment date of the student, as students are still able to enrol up until the end of week 3. |
| 28         | Students identified at the 21-day stage should have an engagement check once again.  
If students do not have the correct number of modules registered, regardless of any other engagement, they should be contacted. Students who have registered the correct number of modules, but who have not engaged with other aspects of the course, should receive an email (sent to University and Preferred email accounts) AND letter to their contact address, warning them of the consequences of not engaging. |
| 35         | All students should have an engagement check once again (to ensure continued engagement). |
Students who continue not to engage should receive an email (sent to University and Preferred email accounts) and letters to BOTH their contact and home addresses (if appropriate), directing them to a meeting with their Personal Tutor/Academic Coach, stating that if there is no evidence of engagement, then they will be withdrawn at Day 50.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>42</th>
<th>Students identified at the 35-day stage should have an engagement check once again. A preliminary list of non-engaging students should be prepared for the Academic Registrar.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Students who have no record of engagement will be withdrawn – although there is also an appeal process available, via the Student Complaints Procedure. Students remain liable for the first tranche of fees.</td>
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</table>
Appendix 3 Managed Withdrawal

It is recognised that circumstances may be such that a student may be unable to continue with or complete their course of study at the present time. However, there are a range of opportunities available to the students which might be explored before withdrawal is completed, and should withdrawal be inevitable, then the student should be advised on their options to return to higher education.

Under the Undergraduate Student Engagement Policy, Personal Tutors and Academic Coaches will have a more regular input into the students’ academic life and the relationship which develops should be used to support students in times of difficulty. This part of the Policy aims to shift the narrative towards a discussion regarding options at an earlier stage and not for the Personal Tutor/Academic Coach to attempt to undo a notification of withdrawal.

Under Managed Withdrawal, a student will submit a request via eVision, stating that they are considering withdrawing and this will formally set up a meeting (or telephone conversation or video conference) between the Personal Tutor/Academic Coach and the student. Withdrawal will not be processed until that meeting has taken place (meaning that fee liabilities continue). The meeting should normally take place within 7 days of the request.

At the meeting, the Personal Tutor/Academic Coach will use a structured interview [template to be provided] to establish the issues which are causing the student to consider withdrawing. This will collect information to be used to establish whether or not the issue is something that can be resolved, allowing the student to complete their qualification (e.g. health issues, Financial advice, change from full to part time, leave of absence). If circumstances permit, then the Personal Tutor/Academic coach will help the student book an appointment with the relevant part of the University in order to support continuation of study. This will allow the University to understand the reasons for withdrawal and thus plan to alleviate these reasons in the future, if possible.

If the issue cannot be quickly resolved, then a Leave of Absence should be discussed.

However, if the student wishes to withdraw, then the Personal Tutor/Academic Coach will approve this, and Registry will process the application. As part of the withdrawal, the student will receive a detailed letter, including a transcript, which makes it clear how, if the student wishes to, they can re-engage with the University, advice on what happens next and implications for further study.