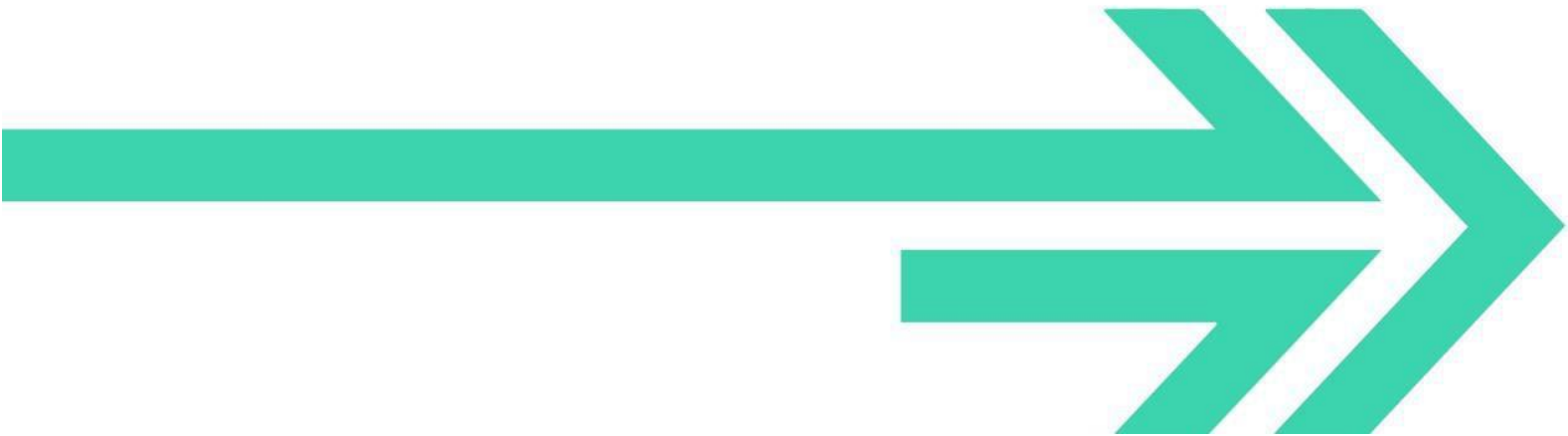




Ulster University International Students Attendance Policy



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Introduction

The International Students Attendance Policy has been developed as part of QA Higher Education's commitment to provide a supportive learning environment to enable students to achieve their full potential, and to ensure we meet our sponsorship duties. This policy outlines attendance and engagement requirements for Ulster University 'Student' permissions, previously known as Tier 4 permission.

Attendance is a key component in student retention and progression, and in our experience, regular attendance and engagement is closely linked to improved academic achievement. QAHE will consider relevant legislation such as the Mental Health Act, Equality Act and the general rights and expectations of a student with respect to confidentiality, while executing the Attendance Policy.

Attendance and Engagement

The International Students Attendance Policy requires that sponsored students are punctual and regular in their attendance and engage with timetabled classes or other forms of instruction as may be prescribed - this includes attendance meetings and appointments.

Attendance and/or engagement will be regarded as unsatisfactory in any of the following circumstances:

- ❖ Failure to attend weekly contact points
- ❖ 4 weeks of non-attendance or engagement during a semester
- ❖ Failure to attend pre-notified appointments/meetings
- ❖ Non submission of assessments
- ❖ Non-attendance at examinations

Absence notification

Students must notify qahe.attendance@qa.com of any absence. Where the absence is for a period of more than five working days, and/or caused by illness which may affect the student's studies, the student shall arrange for a medical certificate to be presented and submitted to the Attendance team. Records of this communication will be noted onto the student's record for review and may be taken into consideration at any time.

We are unable to mitigate any of the following absences:

- ❖ Travelling to/from work
- ❖ Working
- ❖ National Insurance Number appointments
- ❖ Holidays during term-time period

Attendance and Engagement Monitoring for Semesters 1 and 2

What happens when attendance or engagement levels become unsatisfactory?

Where a student's attendance or engagement is unsatisfactory during the first and second semesters, one or more of the following actions may be taken by QAHE:

- ❖ Send an email to the student detailing the contact points missed, requesting an explanation for their non-attendance.
- ❖ Require those students whose have missed 4 contact points during a semester to attend a meeting with a member of the Compliance team to discuss their continuation on the course.

- ❖ Initiate the student withdrawal process (see below) and inform the UKVI of withdrawal of sponsorship.

Student Withdrawal Process

If a student misses up to 3 contact points during a semester, they will receive an email to their university email and/or personal email address after each missed contact point, requesting a response for their reason for absence.

If a student misses a 4th contact point, a meeting would be arranged for the student with a member of the Compliance team. This would give the student an opportunity to present evidence of mitigating circumstances, if any. Failure to attend this meeting would lead to withdrawal of sponsorship.

The students' attendance will be very closely monitored after the 4th intervention. If a student's attendance does not improve after the 4th intervention and leads to consecutive 60 days of non-engagement, their sponsorship and university registration would be withdrawn. Furthermore, if a student consistently misses classes in addition to the contact points, fail to submit academic work in time, and does not provide required documents and contact details, the Compliance team will review the student's situation to determine if sponsorship withdrawal is warranted.

Attendance and Engagement Monitoring for Dissertation, AMP, Business Project & AP (& Internship)

Dissertation, AMP, Business Project and AP are spread across a period of 12 weeks. During each week the student has an individual/group session with their supervisor. The student is expected to attend all 12 sessions. The 12 sessions are divided into 3 contact points spread equally across the 12 weeks. The student would be contacted and invited for a meeting with a member of the Compliance team, in case of a missed contact point. Students are permitted to offer explanations and evidence for their absences. However, if no mitigating circumstances are identified, a warning will be issued to the student. Moreover, should a student accumulate 60 days of non-engagement, sponsorship withdrawal will ensue.

Attendance and Engagement Monitoring for Resits

Dissertation Resits: Four revision sessions will be provided to resit students and the students are expected to attend all four sessions. There would be two contact points for these four sessions. If a student misses the contact points, they would be contacted and invited for a meeting with the Compliance team where they would be given a chance to provide reasons and evidence for their absence. However, if no mitigating circumstances are identified, a warning will be issued to the student. Moreover, should a student accumulate 60 days of non-engagement, sponsorship withdrawal will ensue.

AMP, Business Project & AP Resits: A maximum of four revision sessions will be offered to resit students and the students are expected to attend all the sessions offered to them. There would be one contact point for the offered sessions. If a student misses the contact point, they would be contacted and invited for a meeting with the Compliance team where they would be given a chance to provide reasons and evidence for their absence. However, if no mitigating circumstances are identified, a warning will be issued to the student. Moreover, should a student accumulate 60 days of non-engagement, sponsorship withdrawal will ensue.

Semesters 1 and 2 Resits: A maximum of two revision sessions will be offered to resit students and the students are expected to attend all the sessions offered to them. Both the resit sessions would be considered contact points. If a student misses the contact points, they would be contacted and invited for a meeting with the Compliance team where they would be given a chance to provide reasons and evidence for their absence. However, if no mitigating circumstances are identified, a warning will be issued to the student. Moreover, should a student accumulate 60 days of non-engagement, sponsorship withdrawal will ensue.

Student Permission Sponsorship Withdrawal

In addition to withdrawal of sponsorship for 60 days of absences/non-engagement, where a student is out of studies for more than 60 days - excluding defined holiday periods - due to retakes for semester 2 alone, and devoid of any studies to undertake during semester 1, could lead to sponsorship withdrawal.

In these cases, a student may be eligible for a new CAS subject to prior attendance, engagement, and financial standing. The student may be required to leave the UK before further CAS issuance.

Academic and Progression Board

The Awards and Progression board may withdraw the registration of a student where there is a lack of academic progress or productivity at any time as stated in the university's regulations. The continued failure to submit assessed work without explanation may result in the student withdrawal process being initiated.

Emergency leave

Students should seek prior approval for emergency leave from the Compliance team. Emails, together with evidence, should be submitted to ulstercompliance@qa.com. Emergency leave can only be considered under medical grounds, bereavement of an immediate family member, wedding of the student or the wedding of an immediate family member.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

Students may apply for permission to interrupt their studies on personal grounds in line with the relevant university regulations. However, where a student will be out of studies for more than 60 days and/or they will no longer be able to complete their programme within the timeframe of their visa, there is a requirement that 'Student' permission sponsorship is withdrawn.

In these cases, a student may be eligible for a new CAS subject to prior attendance, engagement, and financial standing. The student may be required to leave the UK before further CAS issuance.

Pregnancy

Students must inform and provide evidence of their pregnancy, including due date, to the Compliance Team. Emails, together with evidence, should be submitted to ulstercompliance@qa.com.

A maximum of 2 weeks (14 days) of authorised absence may be approved (for normal delivery or C-Section). The 2 weeks will start from the day after the student gives birth.

In case the student is not able to attend classes and require additional time to recoup, we recommend that the student takes a leave of absence. The student is required to inform the Compliance Team of their intentions.

ⁱ Immediate family is defined as parent, siblings, spouse, child

