



Attendance & Engagement Policy

Policy no:	3.5	Version number	V2
Version date	17-05-2025	Written by	Murray Cooper
Checked by	Noorulain Zafer	Approved by	Academic Board
Responsible persons	Head of Online Programmes	Next review due	July 2027
Related policies	• Admissions Policy • Academic Appeals Policy • Student Handbook		
External reference points	Student Loan Company - HESA		

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Scope	3
4. Aim and Objectives	4
5. Informing Students	4
6. Students Engagement	5
7. Monitoring & Support Process	5
8. Attendance Flow Chart	7
9. Punctuality	8
10. Authorised Absence	8
11. Mitigating Circumstances	9
12. Consequences of Unauthorised Absence	10

1. Introduction

Good, predictable levels of attendance help the tutor in the planning and delivery of effective teaching and learning. Faculty and Student Support Officers should emphasise the importance of attendance, engagement and punctuality to all students from induction onwards. They should point out to students the possibility that they may not succeed if they fail to maintain good attendance and engagement. However, Magna Carta College is aware that attendance and achievement are strongly linked, and it is our intention to support students who struggle with attendance rather than penalise them. The College will support and engage students who are failing to meet the attendance expectations. It expects students to exercise reasonable diligence in attending classes and offers support to students to ensure that they are able to.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the College's approach to ensuring student attendance and engagement is maintained. The policy explains how students are encouraged to attend, how their attendance and engagement is monitored and reported and what steps the College takes when students do not attend or engage. The policy also provides students and staff with clear information on what to do when they cannot attend due to mitigating circumstances, including the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.

3. Scope

This Attendance and Engagement Policy is applicable to all students attending courses in any of the College's programmes. **Attendance** refers to the joining of any MCC scheduled classes by students enrolled onto their respective course, whether the classes are being held online or in person. **Engagement** has a broader meaning and applies to different contact points including attendance of in-person or online scheduled sessions, as well as accessing online learning resources and learning materials required for the course and the submission of formative or summative assessments. This policy covers attendance and student engagement for all College courses.

4. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this policy and procedure is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders understand the importance of supporting student attendance and engagement and what they should do to ensure that the required level of attendance and engagement is maintained. This aim is achieved with the following objectives:

- All stakeholders know their role in ensuring that all students attend sessions and/or engage with their course Tutors and materials on the VLE and submit their assignments
- All students are fully and regularly informed and encouraged to attend their classes and engage with their course Tutors, materials on the VLE and submit their assignments
- All student attendance is accurately recorded by Tutors, checked and monitored by the relevant Student Support Officers on a daily basis

- The Tutor has access to regular updates on student attendance and engagement and is able to provide the Programme Leader and Executive Committee (EC) with updates on overall attendance and engagement
- Tutors and Student Support Officers are able to monitor the daily attendance and engagement of individual students
- Students receive regular reminders and subsequent warnings by email and/or text for unauthorised absences
- All students understand the potential consequences of failing to attend their scheduled classes, to engage with the course tutors, materials on the VLE or to submit their assignments
- All students understand what constitutes mitigating circumstances and know how to apply for authorised absences when they have genuine mitigating circumstances

5. Informing Students

Any attendance and engagement requirement for a course is confirmed in the course information that is provided to students during the application and interview process, such as the Student Handbook. The Programme Leader should familiarise students with the attendance and engagement requirements during induction. Tutors and Student Support Officers should remind students regularly about the importance of attendance and engagement throughout the course. The attendance, engagement and punctuality pattern of individual students should be monitored by Tutors and Student Support Officers as part of the student support system. Tutors should inform students that poor attendance is likely to affect their achievement and they may fail assessments or examinations if they do not attend.

6. Students Engagement

Engagement is expected of all students and includes:

- Attendance of in-person and online sessions
- Engagement with online learning resources and learning materials relevant to their course.
- Submission of summative and formative assessments

Students who are not attending will be contacted by Student Support to re-engage them with their course. Instances of illness or other mitigating circumstances that affect an assessment or examination should be reported to the Programme Leader. Students who are undertaking assignments affected by illness or other factors may request extensions in accordance with the Assessment Policy.

Students are permitted to apply for temporary leave, suspension of studies, or deferral of their course of study for personal or medical reasons. Guidance and advice on these processes can be found in the Interruption, Withdrawal & Study Break Policy.

The College may withdraw students from a taught course if they are not attending, engaging and/or submitting assessments. This may have consequences for student loan funding liability. See the section below on Consequences of Unauthorised Absence.

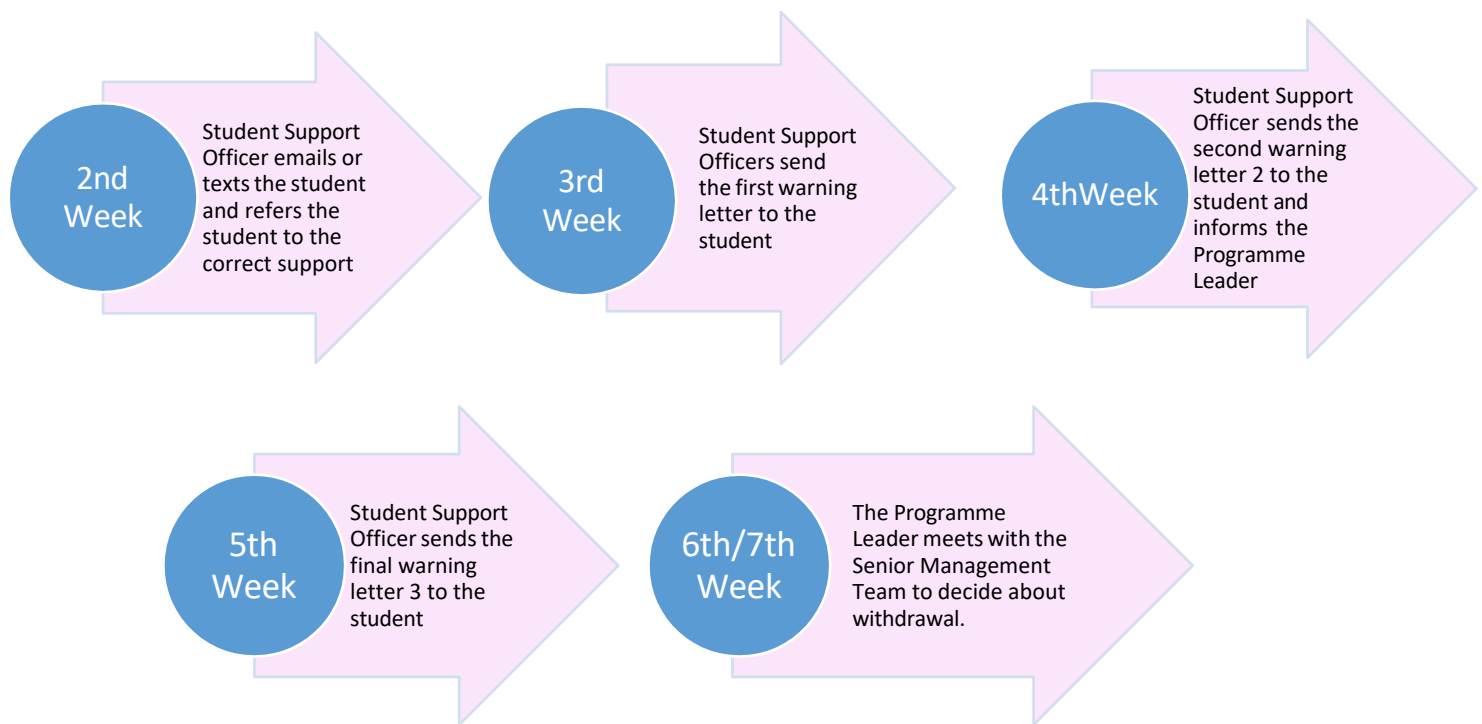
7. Monitoring & Support Process

Students are expected to attend all of their classes. Attendance is recorded daily by the Tutor. If a student has mitigating circumstances, they can be granted authorised absence. See the sections below on authorised absence and mitigating circumstances. If a student is consistently absent without being granted authorised absence for mitigating circumstances, the following steps should be followed:

- **Two weeks:** If a student fails to attend their classes or submit assignments for two weeks consecutively without being granted mitigating circumstances, Student Support Officers send them an email or a text to remind them that they need to attend classes (see Appendix 1). The Student Support Officers keep a record of all attempts to contact a student.
- **Three weeks:** The Student Support Officers repeat the process with a warning letter (see Appendix 2) in a second email or text in the third week of non-attendance if the student continues to miss classes and fails to engage without being granted authorised absence.
- **Four weeks:** In the fourth week of non-attendance and non-engagement without authorised absence, the Student Support Officers inform the Programme Leader or designated person. The Student Support Officers also contact the student to see what help the student may need. In the absence of any acceptable response, the Student Support Officers send the student their second warning letter (Appendix 3).
- **Five weeks:** The Student Support Officers continue to contact the student to follow up on their attendance. If there is still no attendance and no mitigating circumstances granted in the fifth consecutive week, the Student Support send a third (final) warning letter (Appendix 4).
- **Six or seven weeks:** After the sixth or seventh week, Programme Leader meets with the Senior Management Team to make a final decision about whether or not to withdraw the student.

If a student attends, engages on the VLE, or submits an assignment at any time during the above steps (e.g. in week 5), the monitoring and support process is reset to the beginning again for that student.

8. Attendance Flow Chart



9. Punctuality

It is important that students attend their classes punctually both for their own learning and so as the learning of others is not disrupted. Students who are late for practical sessions may be excluded from the session if there are health and safety issues involved.

10. Authorised Absence

Short-term absences (one week) due to illness or any other reason do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that students contact their Tutor or Student Support Officer to inform them if they are not able to attend scheduled sessions, or individual meetings that have been prearranged.

Students are permitted to apply for temporary leave, suspension of studies, or deferral of their course of study for personal or medical reasons.

Authorised absence is granted to a student who is able to provide an adequate reason for not attending scheduled classes for more than one week. If a student fails to attend without being granted authorised absence, their records are affected. The College actively monitors all applications for authorised absence based on mitigating circumstances.

If a student is expecting to be absent for more than one week or has been unexpectedly absent for more than one week, for example in the case of illness, he/she must inform a Student Support Officer. The Student Support Officer maintains a record of attendance for all students and a record of authorised absences.

When they send the email or text to their Student Support Officer, students should provide the reason for their absence, which will be noted in the student records by the Student Support Officer as mitigating circumstances. See the next section below for examples of mitigating circumstances. The student may be asked to produce evidence for their mitigating circumstances such as a note from their doctor.

If a senior member of staff is not satisfied with the reasons or evidence for absence provided by the student, the absence will be treated as unauthorised, and this will count against the student's attendance record. This process is made clear to all students on induction and is included in the student declaration and the Student Handbook. On induction every student is provided with the following:

- Phone numbers and emails of Student Support Officers
- Email addresses for all other relevant staff

11. Mitigating Circumstances

Mitigating circumstances refer to situations that genuinely affect a student's ability to attend their lessons, engage with College materials or submit their assignments by deadline. The list below is intended as a guide for staff and students on what may be considered a mitigating circumstance that may justify authorising student absence.

- Medical appointments that could not be made outside College hours
- Attendance at a funeral
- Wedding of a close family member (but only for one day and students must not schedule their own wedding during term time)
- Driving test
- A meeting with a solicitor
- Genuine family emergencies
- Religious holidays
- Illness (evidenced by a medical certificate)

The following will normally be considered unacceptable as reasons for authorising absence:

- Holidays during term time
- Work related activities
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or family celebrations
- Babysitting
- Driving lessons

The list is not exhaustive and each request for authorised absence will be considered on its merits by one or more of the following depending upon the circumstances:

- Registrar
- Academic Dean
- Head of Quality

12. Consequences of Unauthorised Absence

Students are responsible for maintaining satisfactory attendance and/or engagement throughout their course. Students who do not attend may be withdrawn and will not be eligible for a refund of any fees paid.

Attendance and engagement data are used to assess whether students are meeting attendance requirements for the Student Loans Company (SLC). Students may be withdrawn if they fail to attend and/or engage with their studies in any meaningful way, which includes submitting assignments. See the **Interruption, Withdrawal & Study Break Policy** for more details. Where a student is not attending or engaging at the point of a census, they may be withdrawn, and this will be reported to the SLC who will end payments.

If a student has been withdrawn from their course, they may become liable for repayment of any student loan they have received. They may be liable for maintenance payments and for the fees that have been paid to their university or College, regardless of whether they finish their course or gain a qualification.

Fees for tuition are paid to the university or College in the following instalments:

At the start of term 1	25% of Tuition fee
At the start of term 2	25% of Tuition fee
At the start of term 3	50% of Tuition fee

Based on government regulations, Student Loans Company (SLC) has a legal responsibility to recover any loan overpayments. In some cases, loan overpayments for a student who has been withdrawn can be recovered from student funding that a student may receive in future. Loan overpayments are not subject to the normal repayment terms and conditions.