

# Student Academic Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

## 1. Context

The University of York is an inclusive and welcoming place where students, irrespective of their background and level of study, are engaged by academic departments/schools and our professional services. We aim to work together to ensure they are fully participating in their studies and all that University life has to offer.

In order to ensure that students are benefiting from their studies, and to monitor students' academic progress and wellbeing, the University monitors students' engagement on their programmes in order to quickly identify those who may be experiencing difficulties and/or at risk of disengaging from their programme. This enables the University to offer more timely interventions designed to identify and support follow-up of any academic, wellbeing or welfare issues that may be inhibiting engagement, give students a holistic view of the ways in which they might benefit from their learning, and help students successfully complete their studies and achieve their full academic potential.

Other forms of student engagement will be explored in due course, to ensure that students who are struggling with their course and University life are able to receive support at the earliest possible opportunity.

Whilst this policy applies to all University of York students, as a sponsor of Student Visa holders, the University of York is specifically required to monitor the academic engagement of sponsored students in line with [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\) regulations](#) as well as the [Immigration Rules](#) that underpin immigration into the UK. This provides the assurance that students are fully compliant with the requirements of their visa status. Failure to monitor student engagement is classed as a serious compliance breach and could result in the University's sponsorship licence being revoked. The University will need to reserve the right to update this policy at any point in order to remain compliant with our sponsorship duties as laid out by the UKVI.

## 2. Purpose

- a. To outline how the University supports all students to engage fully with their studies;
- b. To set out what the University expects of students in relation to engagement with their course;
- c. To outline the systems used to record students' attendance and other evidence of academic engagement;
- d. To specify where the responsibility lies for collecting and monitoring the relevant items of data that together comprise our record of attendance and academic engagement.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all taught students and postgraduate researchers registered at the University of York, other than those specified below. This policy does not supersede any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) or other discipline specific requirements, which may exceed the University's own requirements<sup>1</sup>. The policy also applies to sponsored students where UKVI legislation requires higher levels of engagement.<sup>2</sup>

The following exclusions apply as separate monitoring arrangements are in place:

- Hull York Medical School (HYMS) students;
- Students on York Online programmes (HEP) and other taught distance learning programmes;
- CPD programmes and Lifelong Learning;
- Validated Provision (CITY College).

For the purpose of this policy "Academic Department" refers to the department / school in which the student is registered in the University's central student records system (SITS). In the case of combined programmes, this will be the 'main' host department as recorded in the SITS system. For the avoidance of doubt this information is recorded in the Student Course Enrolment (SCE) record.

Detailed information on how student engagement is recorded, will be available in the supporting procedures (yet to be finalised).

### 4. Support for Student Engagement

The University supports student engagement in a number of ways:

- a. through 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;
- b. through teaching and learning experiences, including supervision of postgraduate researchers;
- c. through course related learning resources and support materials within the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE);
- d. through a range of academic and professional support services.

The University monitors student engagement 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 full engagement with their studies.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is likely to include Health Sciences/Nursing degrees, Apprenticeships, PGCE and Social Work

<sup>2</sup> This includes programmes delivered by the IPC

## 5. Monitoring Academic Engagement

### Taught Students

In order to ensure that students are benefiting from the opportunities provided, and to monitor their academic progress, welfare and wellbeing, the University will monitor student engagement in the following ways.

- a. Attendance at timetabled teaching sessions
  - i. Attendance at timetabled teaching sessions is an essential part of the student learning experience on all courses at the University. Much of the curriculum content of courses is conveyed through timetabled teaching sessions. Such sessions also give students opportunities to interact with academic staff and other students about course related themes and issues. Attendance is similarly central to students' success where courses have practical or placement elements. The University therefore strongly encourages students to make every effort to attend all timetabled teaching sessions (including practical, workshop and laboratory classes) and, where applicable, placements.
  - ii. The University uses Check-In to register student engagement at in-person teaching sessions. Students are required to record their attendance using a unique code presented at the start of each timetabled teaching session. Where a student's attendance falls below an acceptable level, this may indicate an academic or welfare concern that requires further investigation. When this occurs, the student will receive an email from their department/school administration team raising their concerns.
  - iii. Whilst Check-In is used to capture attendance at in-person teaching sessions, we strongly encourage attendance at online sessions, where this forms part of a programme.
  - iv. If engagement continues below an acceptable level, further action could be taken depending on the outcome of a risk assessment.
  - v. If a student needs to report an authorised absence, they should follow the reporting absence procedure.
- b. Summative assessments
  - i. Students are required to submit summative assessments, which form part of their academic programme. Submission is required on specified dates during the academic year and form part of the final assessment for the academic stage on which they are enrolled.

- ii. Departmental Boards of Studies define the nature and regularity of open and closed summative assessments for their students. These are published in Department Assessment Schedules.
  - iii. The University records submission and non-submission of work by students. This information is available to academic supervisors and departmental administration teams, and where students are displaying a pattern of non-submission, their department/school administration team will email the student offering support and advice.
  - iv. The penalties for late and non-submission of work are contained in the [guide to assessment](#).
  - v. This policy requires that any unauthorised non-submission of open summative assessments, or non-attendance at closed assessments, is acted upon to seek an explanation for non-engagement and confirm continued engagement with the Programme of Studies. If a student fails to submit work on more than one occasion, further action could be taken depending on the outcome of a [risk assessment](#).
- c. Academic Supervision
- i. The University will monitor attendance at or engagement with scheduled academic supervision meetings. This policy requires that all Supervision meetings be recorded in e:Vision as soon as possible after the event, and not later than two weeks after the expected meeting.
  - ii. The University requires that two supervision meetings take place in semester 1 and 2 for all students. Meetings can be delivered flexibly (in groups or over zoom), but at least one of these meetings per semester needs to be delivered, in person, on a one-to-one basis.
  - iii. For the summer semester period (PGT students), we require that there are three engagement points recorded, which could include Academic Supervision, Capstone Project Supervision, teaching, or any other form of pastoral support within the department/school. Please refer to the procedural details (to be finalised) for requirements on scheduling of these meetings.

### **Postgraduate Researchers**

In order to ensure that postgraduate researchers (PGRs) are benefiting from the opportunities provided, and to monitor their academic progress, welfare and wellbeing, the University will monitor student engagement in the following ways.

- a. Attendance at formal supervision meetings

- i. Formal supervision meetings must be held at least every 6-7 weeks throughout the calendar year for both full-time and part-time PGRs (including visiting PGRs) during the normal enrolment period and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes. This equates to a minimum of eight formal Supervision meetings per calendar year.
  - ii. For sponsored PGRs, formal supervision meetings must continue while the PGR remains sponsored.
  - iii. A record of each formal supervision meeting should be saved on SkillsForge as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks after the meeting took place.
- b. Attendance at TAP meetings
  - i. For full-time PGRs, the TAP will meet with the PGR at least once within every six-month period (i.e. in months 1-6, 7-12, etc., for a full-time PGR). For part-time PGRs, the TAP will meet with the PGR at least once a year.
  - ii. A record of each TAP meeting should be saved on SkillsForge as soon as possible, but no later than two weeks after the meeting took place.
- c. Formal review of progression
  - i. Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PhD/EngD and MPhil PGRs (towards the end of a PGR's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil PGRs. Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted. PGRs are expected to submit the required paperwork for the relevant review of progress and, where applicable, attend a meeting of the progression panel.
  - ii. Formal reviews of progress are recorded in SkillsForge.
- d. Attendance at timetabled teaching sessions
  - i. PGRs who are undertaking taught modules for credit may be subject to the monitoring applicable for taught students with respect to attendance at taught sessions and the submission of summative assessments.

### **Students studying away from the University**

This policy also applies to campus-based students studying away from the University - those on Placement, Study Abroad, Fieldwork or Research to ensure that students are academically engaged throughout their period away from York.

- a. Record of engagement for placement and study abroad students

- i. Students on placement or studying abroad, whether in semester time or the vacation, are expected to produce some written evidence of their activity and learning whilst on the placement.
  - ii. Students should keep in contact with their placement/study abroad supervisor by email/zoom and agreement reached with the student before departure for the placement regarding the frequency and method of communications.
  - iii. Students on placement and studying abroad will also have summative assessments which will need to be recorded.
- b. Students on fieldwork or research away from the University
  - i. Supervisory arrangements in place for Student Visa holders should continue in an agreed form during a period of fieldwork or research away from the University.
  - ii. Students away from the University should keep in contact with their academic supervisors by email/zoom and agreement reached with the student before departure for the fieldwork or research placement regarding the frequency and method of communications.

## 6. Support for Students

The University is committed to supporting all students and understands that students will sometimes have valid reasons for not attending taught/scheduled sessions and the policy will be implemented with full regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.

### Difficulties with assessment

#### a. Taught students

We understand that sometimes things happen that seriously impair a student's performance in an assessment or prevent them undertaking the assessment at the scheduled time. If these events are unforeseeable and exceptional (i.e. serious and unusual) students may be able to defer an assessment or take it again. In these circumstances, they will have to complete a self-certification of assessment or [exceptional circumstances affecting assessment](#) claim.

#### b. Postgraduate researchers

We understand that sometimes things happen that impair a PGR's ability to undertake progression or final examination. In these circumstances there are various routes available to provide mitigation, as set out in the [Policy on Research Degrees](#). PGRs who are undertaking taught modules for credit should refer to a above.

### Academic or other difficulties

If students experience academic or other difficulties, a range of support is available from the [Student Hub](#) and through the [Academic Skills Community](#).

## **7. Further information**

If you require any further information on this policy contact Jen Wotherspoon - Deputy Director of Student Administration and Academic Affairs ([jen.wotherspoon@york.ac.uk](mailto:jen.wotherspoon@york.ac.uk))

Final approved version

31.07.2023