Student Attendance and Engagement Policy: On-Campus Programmes

1. Introduction

1.1 We recognise the pivotal role that student attendance and engagement play in fostering a conducive learning environment, promoting academic success, ensuring student well-being, and complying with legal requirements.

1.2 This Student Attendance and Engagement Policy addresses these interconnected aspects, aiming to provide students with a positive educational experience, equip faculty and support staff with the necessary tools, and uphold Walbrook's legal obligations.

2. Context and Legal Framework

2.1 The significance of student attendance and engagement is underscored by compelling evidence that establishes a direct correlation between active participation in classes and academic progression. Students who attend classes and engage with their programme not only contribute to a vibrant learning community but also enhance their likelihood of achieving academic success.

2.2 Effective monitoring of attendance and engagement serves a dual purpose by not only supporting academic success but also identifying students who may be encountering difficulties. This proactive approach enables timely interventions and the delivery of pastoral care, including specialized well-being support. Engaging with students facing challenges often opens a channel for them to discuss and address the issues they may be encountering.

2.3 The meticulous monitoring of attendance is crucial for compliance with Walbrook 's statutory obligations to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) for students subject to immigration control. Currently UKVI requires minimum 70% of attendance from international students. Walbrook is obligated to notify UKVI in instances where a student has missed ten consecutive expected contact points without permission, signalling a potential breach of visa conditions. Additionally, Walbrook is committed to informing UKVI when it intends to terminate a student's registration due to non-compliance. This not only ensures legal compliance but also underscores Walbrook 's commitment to maintaining a transparent and accountable educational environment.

3. Policy Aims

3.1 Timely Identification and Support

- To promptly identify students displaying attendance and engagement patterns indicative of potential academic struggles, personal challenges, or risks of breaching visa compliance and implement follow-up measures to

provide necessary support, fostering student engagement with their academic programme.

3.2   Confirmation of Engagement

- Ensure all academic programmes have established procedures to verify that students are actively and satisfactorily engaged in their respective programmes of study and develop and enforce mechanisms to confirm ongoing student engagement across various academic activities.

3.3   Universal Applicability

- Extend the policies coverage to encompass on-campus programmes within Walbrook 's Higher Education provision and ensure consistent application and adherence to the policy across the entire spectrum of higher education offerings.

4.   Key Principles and Definitions

4.1   Student Engagement

- Definition: The active involvement of students in their learning experiences, encompassing participation in academic activities, interactions with peers and instructors, and overall engagement in their student journey.

- Characteristics: Engaged students exhibit genuine interest, active participation, contribution to discussions, dedicated completion of assignments, and proactive efforts to deepen their understanding.

4.2   Student Learning

- Definition: Students actively engage with their programmes of study, seeking guidance and support from staff while maintaining responsibility for their own learning.

- Expectations: Encourage students to proactively seek support, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

4.3   Student Wellbeing

- Definition: The psychological, cognitive, social and physical functioning and capabilities needed to be positive, fulfilled and successful.

- Expectations: Promote an environment that encourages open communication and provide necessary support to drive success.

4.4   Ethical Data Use

- The use of student data will be transparent and compliant with all legal protocols outlined in Walbrook 's Data Protection policy, available on the Walbrook website.

5.   Policy Applicability

5.1   This policy extends its application to all on-campus students, encompassing Home and international students alike.

6.   Expectations from Students

6.1   In alignment with Walbrook 's commitment to academic excellence and holistic student development, we establish the following expectations as a minimum standard for all enrolled students:

- On-campus students are required to attend scheduled learning and teaching activities conducted both on campus and in online environments.
- Students are expected to fully engage with and actively participate in all learning activities, fostering an interactive and collaborative learning environment.
- Students must adhere to submission dates for assessments and participate in examinations as outlined in the academic calendar.
- Students are required to attend all scheduled meetings with Walbrook staff, contributing to effective communication and support mechanisms.
- On-campus students are obligated to inform Walbrook promptly if they are unable to attend scheduled learning and teaching activities due to illness or other extenuating circumstances.

7.   Monitoring of Attendance and Engagement

7.1   As a foundational element of our commitment to academic success, the monitoring of on-campus students' attendance and engagement will be consistently applied across all on-campus programmes. This ensures a standardised approach to support student progress and foster a thriving academic community.

8.   Authorised Absences

8.1   If on-campus students find the need to be absent during a semester, it is imperative to contact the Higher Education (HE) Support team (hesupport@walbrook.ac.uk). Ideally, this communication should occur before the period of absence, providing a detailed explanation for the inability to attend. Alternatively, students should contact the HE Support team as soon as possible to apply for an authorised absence. Authorisations may be granted for **up to two weeks** during a semester and are applicable for the following reasons:

- *Illness*: A prolonged illness lasting more than 2 teaching days must be supported by medical documents or a doctor's note. Evidence is not mandatory for absences lasting 2 teaching days or less. Students must inform the HE Support team and provide necessary documentation for extended illness.

- *Family Illness/Bereavement:* Applicable when a student plans to visit a family member who is ill or attend a family member's funeral. An official medical or death certificate is required. Communicate with the HE Support team and submit the necessary documentation for approval.

- *Emergency Situations:* Applicable for unforeseen emergencies or crises necessitating absence. Supporting evidence, like a police report or official documentation, may be required. Promptly inform the HE Support team and submit any necessary documentation for approval.

- *Legal Obligations:* For fulfilling legal obligations such as court appearances or legal proceedings. Provide supporting evidence like a court summons or official communication. Inform the HE Support team and submit the required documentation for approval.
- *Personal Commitments:* Applicable for engagements such as hospital or dental appointments, job interviews, and other commitments deemed inflexible. Students are required to submit evidence of the commitment to the HE Support team for approval.

9. Approval Process

9.1   Approval is mandatory for all authorised absences.

9.2   Upon submission of a request, students will receive confirmation indicating approval, rejection, or a request for additional evidence.

9.3   In case of exam or assessment hindrance due to absences, a separate special consideration request must be submitted.

9.4   This comprehensive framework ensures that students can request authorized absences for various valid reasons while maintaining transparency, fairness, and adherence to necessary procedures.

10. Late Sign-Ins for On-Campus Students

10.1   Students are allowed to sign in up to 15 minutes after the designated start time (e.g., for a class starting at 10 am, students can sign in until 10:15 am) on the Seats app. All students need to make sure their Bluetooth, Wi-fi and location services are working. Sign-ins beyond this 15-minute window will be marked as late. Accumulating three late arrivals will be counted as one instance of non-attendance. Timely attendance is crucial for maintaining a productive learning environment, and adherence to this policy ensures a fair and consistent approach to attendance tracking. In addition to late sign-ins, if a student completes their sign-in but leaves the classroom before the end of the lecture and is noticed by the lecturer, they will be marked as absent.

11. Absence Procedures

11.1   Irrespective of whether an absence is notified or unauthorised, Walbrook considers student absence from study as a significant concern affecting progression and academic achievement. To address this, Walbrook has established a structured Absence Monitoring Procedure, outlined as follows:

11.2   *Early Intervention:* Communication between the HE Support Teams and students is paramount when addressing emerging issues. Routine one-to-one meetings will be conducted in the presence or online, where registers reveal short periods of absence or emerging patterns. Early referral to additional support services may be initiated when necessary.
- Stage 1: Absence Concern Email
  - *Circumstance:* If a student's attendance (unauthorised) falls below 70%.
  - Communication: An Absence Concern email will be sent, copied to the teaching faculty, outlining the implications of unsatisfactory attendance and presenting available support services.

- Stage 2: Initial Absence Concern Meeting
  - *Circumstance:* If a student's attendance remains below 70% in the subsequent 2 weeks.
  - *Arrangement:* The student will be invited to an Initial Absence Concern Meeting with a HE Support Team member, either face-to-face or via a video call. The meeting will assess reasons for absence, whether they were authorised or not, and review any evidence provided by the student. Additional support may be recommended, with possible referral to the relevant Academic Lead.
- Stage 3: Final Absence Concern Meeting
  - *Circumstance:* If a student's attendance is still below 70% in the subsequent 2 weeks.
  - *Arrangement:* The student will be invited to a Final Absence Concern Meeting with the Student Support and Wellbeing Manager, a HE Support Team member, and/or an Academic Lead. Depending on circumstances, temporary withdrawal may be suggested for situations where attendance issues (e.g., medical or financial reasons) need managing, or it may be recommended for withdrawal by the assessment board at the end of the academic year.
- Stage 3: Final Absence Concern Meeting (for international students)
  - *Arrangement:* If an international student fails to engage after Stage 2, they will be invited to a Final Absence Concern Meeting, where they may receive a Notification of Intention to Withdraw. Compliance with Student Visa regulations will be emphasized at each stage. Walbrook will adhere to UKVI reporting guidelines in case of concerns, ensuring responsible reporting.
- Stage 4: Withdrawal
  - *Circumstance:* If a student's attendance remains persistently below 70% after the Final Absence Concern Meeting, and interventions have been unsuccessful in improving attendance.
  - *Arrangement:* The student will be formally advised on the recommendation for withdrawal from their programme by the Academic Lead or relevant authority. The withdrawal process will adhere to the established academic regulations and procedures of Walbrook.
  - *Notification:* The student will be notified in writing of the decision to recommend withdrawal, including the rationale and any available options or support resources. The student will also be informed of the implications of withdrawal on their academic progression, financial obligations, and visa status (if applicable).
  - *Appeals:* Students have the right to appeal the decision for withdrawal following the designated appeals process outlined in Walbrook 's academic regulations. Appeals will be reviewed impartially by an independent panel to ensure fairness and transparency.
  - *Support:* Throughout the withdrawal process, students will be provided with guidance and support from the Student Support and Wellbeing Manager or designated support staff to address any

concerns or queries they may have.

- ▪ *Conclusion:* Stage 4 of the Absence Monitoring Procedure emphasizes the serious implications of persistent non-attendance and highlights the importance of proactive engagement and adherence to academic requirements to ensure successful progression within the educational framework of Walbrook.

12. Missed Meetings

12.1 If a student misses any of the absence meetings, they will be contacted in writing, and the situation will automatically escalate to the next stage.

12.2 Reasonable exceptional circumstances for missing meetings will be considered by the approval of the Student Support and Wellbeing Manager.

13. Absence Monitoring Procedure

STAGE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Routine: Standard monitoring	HE Support Teams will monitor attendance and engagement and report any issues of concern to the Student Support Manager/Head of Online Programmes.	HE Support team
Informal: Short periods of absence or emerging patterns/concerns	Early Intervention – HE Support Team invite students in for a discussion to understand more about their situation.	HE Support team
Stage 1: Attendance below 70% over one month	Absence Concern Email sent from HE Support. Students asked to respond with reason for absences and any relevant evidence.	HE Support team
Stage 2: Attendance below 70% - two weeks after Absence Concern Email sent	Initial Absence Concern Meeting takes place on agreed date/time with a member of HE Support and the Student Support Manager.	HE Support team
Stage 3: Attendance below 70% - two weeks after the Stage 2 Meeting took place.	Final Absence Concern Meeting takes place on agreed time/place with the Student Support Manager and the Academic Lead to decide next steps.	Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability and Academic Lead.

Stage 3 for International Students:	Notification of intention to withdraw meeting with the Student Support Manager and the Academic Lead.	Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability and Academic Lead.
Stage 4: Attendance below 70% - one month after the Stage 3 intervention	Notification of withdrawal.	Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability and Academic Lead and QPR Officer

14. Responsibility and Reporting Structure

14.1   The **Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability** holds the primary responsibility for the oversight of the Attendance and Student Engagement Policy, ensuring its continuous relevance and compliance. This role involves regular reviews and updates to uphold the policies effectiveness in promoting a positive learning environment. The **Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability** reports directly to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee, ensuring transparency and accountability in policy management.

15. Review Process

15.1   To guarantee the policies ongoing effectiveness, the **Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability** will conduct periodic reviews, considering feedback from stakeholders, emerging educational trends, and any regulatory changes. This iterative process aims to enhance the policies adaptability and alignment with the evolving needs of the academic community.

16. Reporting Structure

16.1   Routine updates on the policies status and any pertinent developments will be included in the Annual Monitoring Report, providing a comprehensive overview to stakeholders. In cases of urgent concerns or critical issues, a direct report will be made to the Provost to ensure swift and decisive action.

16.2   By integrating a robust review process and a clear reporting structure, the Head of Student Services and Careers and Employability ensures the continual improvement and alignment of the Attendance and Student Engagement Policy: On Campus Programmes with the evolving landscape of education and student needs.

Approved 18th November 2024 by Student Experience Committee