



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

Effective from September 2023

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document provides detailed operational guidance for monitoring student attendance and engagement as specified in the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy. It is designed to further support staff and students in their understanding of how the policy is applied and works.

2. MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1. Where attendance data for scheduled learning sessions over a 7-day week shows poor attendance, this should trigger attendance and engagement concerns.
- 2.2 Informal interventions will be made, where appropriate, by the Faculty Student Centre (FSC) in order to identify any student who may be at risk of receiving formal interventions due to their lack of attendance and engagement. Informal interventions will vary and may include contacting the student via email, text message, telephone conversation and/or inviting the student to an informal meeting with their Personal Tutor or appropriate member of the Course Team. Through these interventions, students may be signposted toward appropriate support services and/or Faculty Student Centre colleagues. These types of interventions may continue for any student who has received a formal intervention. They are intended as a supportive measure to try and prevent the need to invoke the formal three-stage process which may ultimately result in a student being withdrawn from the course.
- 2.3 If a student's attendance does not meet the requirements outlined in the policy, then the student they will be issued with formal attendance notifications as outlined in Section 3 below.
- 2.4 The FSC will analyse a range of attendance and engagement data to in order to inform informal and formal interventions. The list below includes examples of the datasets which may be reviewed:
 - Formal attendance at scheduled learning sessions during the 7-day period.
 - Module level attendance.
 - Patterns of specific days/times where absence concerns have been noted.
 - Submission data.
 - Absence records.
 - Moodle engagement.
 - Students with learning agreements.
 - Barrier swipe data.

- 2.5 Attendance and/or engagement will be monitored on a weekly or monthly basis. Formal attendance notifications will be issued in line with the student and course parameters set out in the schedule in Section 6 of the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy.
- 2.6 Where attendance is monitored across a 7-day period, formal attendance notifications will be issued after teaching weeks 2, 5, 8 and 11 for a standard teaching semester. For a non-standard teaching block, formal attendance notifications will be issued after week 2 and then every three weeks thereafter.
- 2.7 If a student has attended zero scheduled learning sessions over a 7-day week in each of the above monitoring periods, this may result in a formal attendance notification being issued. The student may also be contacted to discuss their attendance and engagement. For Student Route Visa holders, zero attendance over a 7-day week in each of the above monitoring periods will result in a formal attendance notification.
- 2.8 Where there is a minimum 85% attendance requirement as outlined in section 6.3 in the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, the student's attendance must meet a minimum cumulative threshold percentage during the whole teaching period and each monitoring block.
- 2.9 Attendance monitoring runs across the entire academic year, commencing from when a student starts their course and is provisionally enrolled. A student's attendance records resets for each new year of study. This means if a student has received a Stage 2 'Urgent Attendance Notification – Contact us Immediately' attendance notification in their first year of study, this will not carry forward into their second year. Attendance monitoring will resume once the student re-enrols onto their second year of study. Any courses that are delivered continuously across 52 weeks a year, will be monitored for the full duration.
- 2.10 A student's attendance record will be reset for each new year of study.

DISSERTATION AND PLACEMENT – MONTHLY CONTACT

- 2.11 Where there is a requirement to monitor attendance and/or engagement on a monthly basis, for example where the student is undertaking a dissertation or a placement, this will be monitored via monthly contact points by the academic team or FSC, or a combination of both. The FSC will notify academic teams (in advance of attendance notifications being issued to the student) where a monthly contact point has not been completed on MySRS and where the student is at risk of receiving a formal attendance notification. Where a student has not engaged and where the contact point has not been completed, formal attendance notifications will be issued.

- 2.12 The University reserves the right to escalate attendance notifications where there is a serious concern regarding a student's attendance. As per section 6.13 in the Policy, the FSC can request that a student receives an attendance notice by notifying Delivery Services of a cause for concern based on a student's attendance and engagement profile. Usually in such cases informal interventions will have been instigated by the FSC but these have not led to improved attendance and/or engagement. All escalated cases will be approved by the Associate Dean Teaching, Education and Student Experience or nominee prior to being requested.
- 2.13 Where there is a serious concern regarding a student's attendance and where further investigations need to take place to ascertain if a student is attending and/or engaging, the University reserves the right to inform Student Finance England (or equivalent funding body) to temporarily suspend any funding to the student.

STUDY ABROAD

- 2.14 Where a student is completing a Study Abroad programme at a host institution, the University's Mobility and Partnerships Team in the International Office, and the Faculty Mobility/Go Abroad Tutor will work with the Partner Institution to ensure there are no attendance and/or engagement concerns. It is the student's responsibility to inform the University of any long-term absences or matters which could impact on their attendance and/or engagement (see section 10).
- 2.15 For Student Route Visa holders, there is a requirement to monitor attendance and/or engagement on a monthly basis. This will be monitored via monitored via monthly contact points in conjunction with the Academic Team and/or FSC.

STUDENT UNION SABBATICAL OFFICER — STUDENT ROUTE VISA

- 2.16 For a Student Route Visa holder who is appointed to the role of Sabbatical Officer in the Students' Union, the Students' Union will notify the UKVI Compliance team and the student will be placed on a Break in Study. The UKVI Compliance Team will update the monthly contact point via MySRS with relevant updates pertaining to the student's role/placement. Where a student has not attended a monthly contact point or where it has not been completed, formal attendance notifications will be issued.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH (PGR) STUDENTS

- 2.17 Supervisory meetings are considered to be the primary mode of engagement for PGR students.
- 2.18 PGR students are expected to meet regularly with their supervisor(s) as agreed in consultation with their supervisor(s) and a minimum of once per month (although it is normally expected to be twice per month for full-time PGRs).
- 2.19 Meetings should be recorded on MySRS within one week of the meeting taking place. The student or supervisor can create the record of the supervisory meeting and the supervisor must approve that record within one week.
- 2.20 Engagement monitoring is still required when students are at a different location e.g., on research field work, and a meeting should take place monthly, (via MS Teams, etc.) and still be recorded on MySRS.
- 2.21 PGR students (International and Home fee status) whose course is campus based (i.e., not distance learning) are required, each year, to normally attend a minimum of four of the twelve-monthly supervisory meetings in person, on campus.
- 2.22 Recording of supervisor meetings will be monitored by the Faculty Research Degrees and Environment Committee (FRDEC). Concern will be raised to the Director of Studies. The Doctoral Research College (DRC) and FRDEC will be informed in any of the following scenarios:
 - If the Directorate of Student and Academic Services (DSaAS) note that regular supervisory meetings for PGR students are not being recorded.
- 2.23 Absence affecting progression on the course should be reported to the Director of Studies in the first instance and necessary action to be taken to best support the student will be implemented and reported to the FRDEC and DRC.
- 2.24 If it is found that the student has not been engaging, DRC will then contact the student. DRC will establish any reasons for non-engagement and agree a plan for future engagement in liaison with the Director of Studies and Supervisory team. They will signpost students to the [Student Support services](#) where relevant.
- 2.25 Where the student cannot be contacted and has missed supervisor meetings, action will be taken as outlined in the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, which may result in permanent withdrawal.

3. FORMAL ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATIONS

- 3.1 The following attendance notifications will be issued to a student's BCU and personal email address that is held on the student record system.

STAGE 1 – 'YOUR ATTENDANCE REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT' EMAIL

- 3.2 A formal email notification will be sent to the student to alert them that their attendance and engagement is a concern and that they are being formally monitored at Stage 1.
- 3.3 Students will be required to resume attendance on their course to avoid progressing through to the formal attendance notification stages. If there is a reason why the student cannot attend and re-engage with their course, they must contact the FSC immediately to discuss the matter and review alternative options such as a Break in Study.

STAGE 2 – 'URGENT ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION – CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY' EMAIL

- 3.4 A formal email notification will be sent to students to alert them that their attendance and/or engagement remains a concern and they are now formally being monitored at Stage 2.
- 3.5 A Stage 2 is issued when the student has not demonstrated the required improvement in their attendance and/or engagement following a stage 1 notification.
- 3.6 In addition to the formal email, the FSC will contact all students who have received a Stage 2 notification either via email, telephone, text message or an online/face to face meeting, to discuss the reasons for persistent low attendance and engagement. The risks associated with receiving a Stage 2 notice will be explained and the student will be signposted to appropriate support mechanisms.
- 3.7 Students will be required to engage with the FSC once they have received a Stage 2 attendance notification and to immediately resume their attendance at scheduled learning sessions and engage with their studies (for example through the use of Moodle to submit coursework etc) to avoid progressing to a Stage 3 'Withdrawal Notification from BCU' attendance notification, which could lead to a student being withdrawn from their course.

STAGE 3 – ‘WITHDRAWAL NOTIFICATION FROM BCU’ EMAIL

- 3.8 A formal email notification will be sent to inform the student that due to continued attendance and/or engagement concerns, minimal or no evidence of re-engagement, and/or risk of academic failure, they will be permanently withdrawn from their course. Further to the notification, the student will have five working days to submit a formal appeal. The notification email will provide details on how to make an appeal and will suggest what evidence may be required in support of the appeal. Please note that the date of this formal notification will be the date the student is withdrawn from their course.

4. DATA CAPTURE FOR ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT MONITORING

- 4.1 Attendance data will be captured in the following ways:
- Where a card reader is located in a teaching room, students are responsible for registering their attendance by placing their student ID card against the reader.
 - Challenge Codes (for on campus teaching rooms where there is no card reader).
 - Manual register updates, completed by academic teams.
 - Online registers for sessions delivered online.
 - Supervision meetings (PGR and PGT students) recorded via monthly meeting.
 - Access to campus buildings via ID card swipes will be collected at entry gates.

5. MONITORING STUDENTS OR APPRENTICES SUSPENDED FROM THEIR STUDIES

- 5.1 Students who are suspended from their studies pending the outcome of formal procedures as detailed in Student Governance Procedures in the [Student Contract](#) will not be subject to formal attendance and engagement monitoring for the period that they are suspended. However, this does not necessarily mean that a student cannot attend online scheduled learning sessions, submit or take assessments online or engage with Moodle and/or other online resources. The means by which a student will engage with their studies during their period of suspension will be agreed with their Course Leader or nominee and will take account of any PSRB requirements. Some courses may not permit a student to continue to engage with their studies during a period of suspension, in such cases an enforced Break in Study may be required. For an apprentice, if a suspension is over a consecutive 4-week period, a BiL will be required. Equally, for a Student Visa Route holder, if a suspension exceeds 20 working days, a Break in Study will be enforced.

6. MONITORING FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT PAID THEIR TUITION FEES

- 6.1 Students who have been restricted from engaging with their course and accessing BCU campuses and resources due to non-payment of tuition fees (as outlined in the University's [Tuition Fees Payment Policy](#)) will not be subject to formal attendance and engagement monitoring. Whilst restrictions are in place, further study will not be permitted and this may lead to an enforced Break in Study.

7. ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT PLANS

- 7.1 Following intervention by the FSC where a student has received a Stage 2 'Urgent Attendance Notification – Contact us Immediately' or where the student has had a successful appeal for their Stage 3 Withdrawal Notification from BCU, a support plan may be agreed with the student. Where appropriate this will outline actions that the student will need to take to re-engage with their course.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1 A collaborative approach is required across the University to support the engagement, retention and success of our students. Listed below are responsibilities in relation to supporting the requirements of attendance and engagement. This is not exhaustive and some may not be applicable in all cases. This is aimed to assist staff and students in understanding how we can all support effective attendance and engagement and ensure that the system that records attendance is accurate.

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

8.2 The University expects students to;

- attend all scheduled learning sessions punctually and for the full duration;
- engage with all learning activities and resources;
- complete both formative and summative assessment tasks at the first opportunity;
- always carry their ID card and use it in line with [Student ID card guidance](#). Where a card is faulty or lost, the student must visit their FSC to obtain a new card;
- record their attendance at on-campus timetabled sessions either by the card reader, challenge code or manual register;
- make tutors aware, in timetabled sessions, if they do not have their ID card or there is an error when scanning the card reader, so that attendance can be updated manually;
- attend the correct timetabled session as presented in their timetable. Attendance will not be recorded if any alternative sessions are attended;
- record attendance for each individual session if back-to-back sessions are scheduled in the same teaching room;
- notify the University of absence requests in advance where possible using MySRS;
- regularly check their attendance record via MySRS to ensure that their attendance is being accurately recorded. Where anomalies exist, they should contact their FSC;
- respond in a timely manner to any communication from the University relating to their attendance and/or engagement;
- make reasonable attempts to attend scheduled learning sessions and re-engage with their studies where a concern (informal or formal) has been raised;
- contact their FSC or tutor/s to discuss any matters that are impacting on their ability to attend and/or engage with their studies;
- adhere to the Learning Agreement where repeating a year of study, semester or module;
- ensure the University holds up-to-date and accurate contact information via MySRS;
- have personal integrity and do not misuse student ID cards for recording attendance;
- be familiar with available [support services](#) and access those services where appropriate

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES

8.3 Academics support attendance and engagement in a number of ways including;

- ensuring accurate attendance data is captured via [PRESTO Academic](#) for the sessions that they deliver in week. This could be via card reader swipes, manual updates or using challenge codes;
- reminding students at the start of each on-campus session to register their attendance;
- prompting students in back-to-back sessions to record their attendance for each session;
- signposting students to their FSC if there are issues with their ID card or registering their attendance;
- where monthly contact points are required, ensuring attendance and engagement notes are updating in MySRS;
- logging card reader issues in teaching rooms with ITHelp@bcu.ac.uk, copied to attendance@bcu.ac.uk;
- inform the Timetabling Team where there is a change to a scheduled learning session and ensure non-mandatory sessions are correctly reflected in TermTime;
- following up on attendance and/or engagement concerns in personal tutoring sessions;
- For apprentices only, ensure that:
 - o monthly off the job logs (OTJ) are approved;
 - o tripartite reviews are held as per the schedule agreed in the Training Plan;
 - o employers are made aware of any attendance and/or engagement concerns in a timely manner;
 - o where a Break in Study is required, work with the FSC and Apprenticeship Compliance Team to ensure this is processed;

FACULTY STUDENT CENTRE (FSC) RESPONSIBILITIES

8.4 The FSC supports attendance and engagement in a number of ways including;

- early identification of student behaviours that may require interventions to maintain good levels of attendance and engagement;
- contact and support students who are at risk of disengaging from their course through informal and formal interventions and/or attendance notifications (as per the policy);
- refer students to appropriate BCU [support services](#) where a need is identified;
- action absence requests from students in-week, monitoring absence patterns and highlighting any concerns to support students to re-engage with studies;
- for apprentices only, ensure that:
 - o monthly OTJ logs are submitted via APTEM, where required following up with apprentices;
 - o where required a BiL is processed in a timely manner;
 - o working closely with the academic teams to ensure OTJ's have been approved and tripartite reviews have been held as per the schedule agreed in the Training Plan;
 - o ensure that employers are made aware of any attendance and/or engagement concerns in a timely manner in collaboration with Academic teams.

9. RECORDING ATTENDANCE AT SCHEDULED LEARNING SESSIONS

- 9.1 For scheduled learning sessions, a student will only be considered to have been in attendance if their card is scanned and recognised by the readers located in each teaching room. Where sessions are in a room without a card reader, the tutor will ensure attendance is captured via manual registers or using Challenge Codes.
- 9.2 If a student does not scan their card at a scheduled learning session, they will be recorded with as an unauthorised absence and these absences will count negatively towards a student's attendance record.
- 9.3 Students can scan into a scheduled learning session 20 minutes before the start of the session, and up to 20 minutes before the end. Students will not be able to scan in and log their attendance after the session has ended; if they do it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- 9.4 If a student has forgotten their ID card, they must inform the tutor and ensure that their attendance is manually updated for that session. Failure to do so could lead to incorrect issuing of attendance notifications and it cannot be guaranteed that attendance can be recorded in retrospect. Where this has occurred, the student is responsible for contacting the session Tutor to confirm their attendance and request that the register is updated accordingly. If a session tutor cannot verify attendance the register will remain as unauthorised absence.
- 9.5 Where online learning sessions are scheduled and delivered via Microsoft TEAMS, the student must login using their BCU email account. Attendance will only be recorded where a student's BCU email address is used. Failure to log in using a BCU email address could lead to incorrect issuing of attendance notifications and it cannot be guaranteed that attendance can be recorded in retrospect.
- 9.6 A student is required to scan in using their own Student ID card only. If a student scans into a scheduled learning session using another student's ID card, the actions of both the card holder and the individual who scanned the card will be considered under the University's [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#). Where a student is enrolled on a course leading directly (or partially) to a professional qualification or the right to practice a particular profession, they may also be referred under the University's [Fitness to Practise procedures](#).
- 9.7 Where there are circumstances outside of a student's control that means they cannot attend on campus scheduled learning, for example if extreme weather leads to the cancellation of a scheduled teaching session, then attendance will not be monitored and will not count towards the students attendance record. However please note, transport strikes are not classed as exceptional circumstances and the student must make every effort to attend on campus. In this scenario, any absence will be classed as unauthorised absence.

10. APPROVED ABSENCES

- 10.1 FSCs will oversee and approve absence requests made by students on an individual basis and where relevant, students may be advised to follow the [Extenuating circumstances procedure](#) or [Change of circumstances policy](#).
- 10.2 It is the responsibility of each student to request, in advance where possible, any absence request where they will be unable to attend scheduled learning sessions via the [MySRS](#) portal.
- 10.3 The University reserves the right to refuse any request for authorised absence:
- where the pattern of attendance and/or engagement already gives cause for concern;
 - where academic achievement will be impeded;
 - where appropriate evidence is not provided;
 - where vital elements of the course will be missed (including examinations and submissions of assessed work);
 - where a student will not complete their course by the expected end date;
 - where absence will prevent a student from completing their course within the required registration.
- 10.4 Where students have exemptions in place (usually through personalised learning agreements supported by Disability Support Summaries) that impact on their ability to attend scheduled learning on campus, the individual must request an absence via MySRS. However, it must be noted that the University has a 'campus first' approach and attendance in scheduled learning sessions (on campus) is expected for all students as outlined in the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy. Failure to attend where possible, and as outlined in any personalised learning agreements, could lead to the triggering of formal attendance notifications and ultimately a student being withdrawn from their course. Approved absences will be considered when monitoring the student's overall attendance and engagement record, and this will form part of the decision as to whether informal and/or formal attendance interventions or notifications be issued.
- 10.5 Students' attendance will be reviewed and taken into consideration when reviewing student absence requests submitted via mySRS. Absence levels will be monitored in line with the absence request table included at Appendix 1 to this guidance. Where there are regular patterns of non-attendance are attributed to approved absence requests, the student may be subject to formal attendance monitoring notifications as outlined in Section 7 above. Any absence requests in excess of the maximum limit may result in absence being classed as unauthorised and lead to a student receiving an attendance notification. Alternatively, the student may be required to take a Break in Study. For an apprentice, all absences will be reported to the employer and where required a Break in Study will be initiated.

- 10.6 Where a student does not make a request for approved absence and is not present in scheduled teaching sessions, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 10.7 In all cases where absence requests are authorised, it is the student's responsibility to complete any outstanding academic work.
- 10.8 Where a student has an approved absence on the day of a scheduled learning session, this will be discounted from a student's attendance record where it is in line with permitted absence limits as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 10.9 Where patterns of absence raise concern, the FSC will contact students to discuss this further, with a view to putting appropriate support in place or to discuss options such as Break in Study. Where such patterns place a student at risk of in-year academic failure, the university may issue formal attendance notifications.

APPROVED ABSENCES – STUDENT ROUTE VISA HOLDERS

- 10.10 Student Route Visa holders are sponsored by the University to study full time and therefore the University is responsible for ensuring that students comply with the condition of their Visa which includes monitoring absence.
- 10.11 In cases where a student exceeds the permitted absence limits within an academic year, guidance will be provided to the student and advice regarding any impact on their studies. For Student Route Visa holders, this may impact the student's visa which will be reported to the Home Office and may result in the curtailment of the student's visa and the student will be required to leave the UK. When the student intends to resume their studies, they will need to contact their faculty to start the process to obtain a new CAS and they will be expected to apply for new entry clearance from their home country.
- 10.12 During term time the University will not approve non-urgent absences, and this will include holiday requests (unless PGR taken as annual leave).
- 10.13 Students may be absent for up to five working days, classed as **short-term absence**, for example for short term illness, domestic emergencies, or circumstances beyond their control. Absence from scheduled learning sessions must be requested, where possible in advance, via the MySRS portal. Repetitive and excessive short-term absence requests will be monitored and may lead initially to an informal intervention meeting and escalating to a formal attendance notification if required.
- 10.14 For Student Route Visa holders who require an absence of longer than 5 working days, long-term absence, an Authorised Absence request form accompanied by evidence, needs to be submitted to the FSC for approval. Students must not take any periods of long-term absence until they have been approved by the University. If a Student Route Visa holder proceeds to take their absence and it is still pending authorisation or has been rejected, they could be subject to immediate withdrawal from their course.

- 10.15 Where a sponsored student intends to travel overseas during term-time and requires a **long-term absence**, they must submit an Authorised Absence request. Long-term absences during term-time will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. If approved, a supporting letter will be issued which confirms the University has approved the request. The letter is to be used by the student when travelling to avoid any issues when leaving and/or re-entering the UK.
- 10.16. The University may approve absences for up to 20 working days per academic year without withdrawal of sponsorship. Any requests for more than 20 working days (unless an exception applies) are likely to result in a Break in Study or in extreme cases withdrawal from course and sponsorship will be withdrawn.

APPROVED ABSENCES – POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

Section 10 must be observed by all PGR students, noting that the following instances apply specifically to PGR students:

- 10.17. A PGR student must obtain in advance the prior authorisation of their Director of Studies for planned vacation absence.
- 10.18. If a PGR student is unable to carry out their doctoral research programme, they must notify their Director of Studies as soon as possible and provide details on the nature of the absence and expected duration of the absence. Students may be absent for up to five working days, such as for short term illness, domestic emergencies, or circumstances beyond their control and requests must be made in advance where possible via their Director of Service. A medical must be provided to the Director of Studies where an absence exceeds 5 consecutive working days.
- 10.19. Where a sponsored student intends to travel overseas during this short-term absence, they must submit an Authorised Absence request, which will need to be approved for a letter to be issued that confirms the University has approved the request, the letter is to be used by the student when travelling to avoid any issues when leaving and/or re-entering the UK.
- 10.20. Postgraduate Research students may also request a period of authorised absence, however the request will need to be approved by the DRC and UKVI Compliance Team and the same processes apply. The University will ensure that the absence does not negatively impact the student's studies and that the PhD can be completed during the registration period.
- 10.21. As part of their studies, Postgraduate Research students may be permitted to conduct elements of their research overseas. While this will not be considered as an absence, it must be agreed by their supervisor and the UKVI Compliance Team as the change in study location must be reported to Home Office.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS – UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

10.22. An absence by a PGR student which has not been certified nor is taken with the prior written consent of their Director of Studies shall be regarded as unauthorised absence.

EXCEPTIONS – APPROVED ABSENCES – STUDENT ROUTE VISA HOLDERS

10.23. If an absence request is for more than 20 working days per academic year then a formal Break in Study should be imposed, however in very exceptional cases, the University may continue sponsorship of the Student Route Visa Holder for up to 60 days.

10.24. Where a request is received for an absence of more than 20 working days and there are exceptional reasons (such as serious illness and injury) then the following evidence will be required:

- evidence that the student will resume their studies after the authorised absence;
- evidence to support the extended absence (see the Student Attendance and Engagement Operational Guidance Appendix 1);
- confirmation that the student will be able to complete their course within their current immigration visa duration;

10.25. The UKVI Compliance Team will consider the request for the extended absence and determine if sponsorship can be maintained. The Authorised Absence request must be approved by the UKVI Compliance Team, if the request is rejected, then a formal Break in Study will be imposed.

EXCEPTIONS – APPROVED ABSENCES – STUDENT ROUTE VISA HOLDERS

- 10.26. Students who are completing their placement (integrated placement or professional placement) will be required to submit an Authorised Absence request, along with supporting evidence (see Appendix 1). Please note, the maximum number of approved absence days will be in agreement with the placement provider's policy. If the placement provider does not approve the absence, then this may result in a Break in Study and the student may be required to end their placement before completion. In these instances, the student will not be eligible for any refund of fees.

APPROVED ABSENCES – APPRENTICES

- 10.27. Apprentices should inform their employer before requesting absence from the University.
- 10.28. An apprentice's employer will be notified of any attendance and/or engagement concerns, including absence requests.
- 10.27 Apprentices who will be absent for 8 consecutive working weeks will be placed on a retrospective mandatory Break in Study.

11. APPRENTICES

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the University to monitor all apprentice's programme compliance and ensure the evidence to support this is available. This includes attendance and engagement as outlined in the Student Attendance and Engagement policy and as required by the ESFA, Ofsted and/or other regulatory requirements. Apprentices will therefore be monitored using the mechanisms outlined in the Policy and this Section of the guidance to ensure they are attending and engaging appropriately to enable the University to claim funding through the Individual Learning Record via the ESFA.
- 11.2 Attending scheduled learning sessions is a mandatory part of an apprenticeship and is detailed in the Apprenticeship Agreement and Training Plan which is signed by the University, the apprentice and the employer in a tripartite agreement.

- 11.3 Engagement with an apprenticeship programme is mandatory and includes activities in section 3.7 of the policy as well as;
- attendance and participation at tripartite review meetings,
 - monthly completion and recording of Off the Job (OTJ) hours in the University's apprenticeship system, APTEM,
 - participation in End Point Assessment activities,
 - Non-scheduled teaching time activities.
- 11.4 Where an apprentice fails to complete their OTJ log on a monthly basis or attend tripartite reviews, this could lead to formal action being taken and discussions held with the employer and apprentice to address the non-engagement with mandatory requirements of the apprenticeship programme. Failure to engage fully with the requirements of an apprenticeship could lead to withdrawal from the programme.
- 11.5 The University, via the FSC and/or academic apprenticeship team, will escalate and provide updates to employers where there are concerns around attendance and/or engagement. This will include advising employers of any scheduled learning sessions that have been missed by the apprentice on a weekly basis as well as requests for approved absence.
- 11.6 Attendance and engagement will be discussed and formally recorded at scheduled tripartite reviews and this will set out necessary actions for an apprentice to take to improve their attendance and/or engagement with their programme.
- 11.7 An apprentice who has been absent or is requesting in advance absence from their apprenticeship programme for 8 consecutive working weeks or more will be placed on a mandatory Break in Study and their employer will be informed and the ILR updated and returned to the ESFA.
- 11.8 Apprenticeship programmes are delivered across a full calendar year and activity outside of the academic calendar and scheduled learning sessions (non-standard teaching periods) will be monitored by the FSC and/or academic apprenticeship team, see section 6.ii in the Student Attendance and Engagement policy.
- 11.9 Employers have a responsibility to support an apprentice's attendance and engagement with their course and this includes:
- Ensuring that apprentices are given sufficient time as part of their contracted hours to meet their off-the-job obligations,
 - Supporting the completion and submission of OTJ training logs on a monthly basis,
 - Informing the university faculty contact of any absences e.g., annual leave, for illness that will mean the apprentice is unable to attend scheduled learning sessions,
 - attending and participating in Tripartite meetings.

- 11.10 Where attendance data shows that an apprentice has been absent for 8 consecutive working weeks from scheduled learning sessions, they will be contacted, along with their employer to confirm a mandatory BiL. This will be updated on APTEM, the student record system and in the Individual Learner Record (ILR) which informs the ESFA and ceases funding for the apprentice.

12. RESCINDING AN ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION

- 12.1 There may be rare occasions where an attendance notification needs to be rescinded from a student's record. This will most likely be if an administrative error has occurred such as a register was not updated or a student has provided medical evidence in retrospect. In such cases, the student's record will be updated and they will be notified by email that the attendance notification has been rescinded.

13. WITHDRAWALS

- 13.1 Where a student has been withdrawn from their course due to on-going non-attendance, the date of the Stage 3 notification will be the formal date on which the student is withdrawn from their course; this will be recorded on the student record system.
- 13.2 Access to BCU building and systems are restricted following withdrawal.
- 13.3 A student who is withdrawn from their course is advised to inform their funding body of the formal date of their withdrawal to ensure accurate funding is received.
- 13.4 Once withdrawn from their course a student will no longer have access to statutory student funding or bursaries. An apprentice will no longer be funded to complete their apprenticeship via their employer.

14. APPEALS

- 14.1 Students who receive a Stage 3 'Withdrawal Notification from BCU' email from the University, in accordance with the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, will have the right to appeal within five working days of receiving the formal notification email (see section 12 in the Student Attendance and Engagement policy). All appeals should be emailed to attendanceappeals@bcu.ac.uk.
- 14.2 For Student Route Visa holders, if the student is unable to provide satisfactory evidence of their attendance and/or engagement, the decision to withdraw the student from their course will not normally be reversed. This is due to the student having failed to meet the conditions of their visa. Sponsorship of the student's visa will be withdrawn by the UKVI Compliance Team within 10 working days of the end of the stage 3 appeal window. The student will be required to leave the UK immediately and will be notified in writing of the action that they need to take.

APPENDIX 1 – ABSENCE REQUESTS

Students must submit their absence request via the MySRS portal. All requests will be reviewed by the FSC and will either be;

- Authorised and therefore the day/s will be discounted from attendance monitoring,
- Unauthorised and therefore this will negatively impact on the students overall attendance.

For Student Route Visa holders, longer term absence requests will also require approval from BCU's UKVI Compliance Team.

Consecutive days absence	Consideration	Significant?	Reason for Absence	Medical Documentation required?	Other Documentation required?
7 days or less (including weekend)	No assessment missed; nothing missed which would impact on the fulfilment of published minimum requirement for the award of credit	NO	Medical	NO	NO
			Other	NO	NO
	Assessment missed; at least one event missed which would impact on the fulfilment of published minimum requirements for the award of credit	YES	Medical	YES	NO
			Other	NO	YES
More than 7 days (including weekend)		YES	Medical	YES	NO
			Other	NO	YES

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

Suitable types of medical documentation include:

- A medical certificate.
- A medical report.
- A note from a hospital.
- A formal notification of a hospital or clinic appointment.

OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Suitable types of documentation include:

- A note from an independent responsible person who can vouch for the event which led to the absence.
- Evidence from a member of staff who was alerted to the circumstances at the time.
- A letter from a student counsellor or other professional that the student actually consulted during the period when the difficulties were occurring.
- A note from the police.

For Student Route Visa Holders, evidence that is not in English must be translated into English by a certified translator and both the original and certified copy must be provided.

This list of evidence requirements is not exhaustive and other reasons may be considered.

Each request for approved absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merit and in line with university policy.

If you require further support from the University, then please see the following webpage: <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/student-info/student-support>.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENCE

Maximum Student Absence	
Home Students	
UG and PGT	Up to 4 weeks (20 working days) per academic year
International Students	
<p>All absences over 7 days or related to travel must be reviewed: Any absence patterns/concerns should be flagged with UKVI for advice</p> <p>Absences over 7 days: Supporting evidence to be reviewed (e.g., doctor's note, letter etc.) and submitted to UKVI Compliance Team. Please Note: UKVI Compliance require as much detail as possible for international students, especially catch-up arrangements.</p>	
All Student Route Visa Holders	Up to 4 weeks (20 working days) per academic year

