

ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

SUMMARY

This policy establishes clear expectations for student attendance and engagement, details the monitoring mechanisms in place to support student success, and describes the support structures for students facing difficulties affecting their attendance and performance.

PART 1: Preliminary information

1. INTRODUCTION

The Attendance and Engagement Policy at OELS highlights the importance of regular attendance and active engagement as essential for student success. This policy establishes clear expectations for attendance, explains the procedures for monitoring, and details the consequences of non-compliance. It ensures that all students are well-informed and supported in fulfilling their academic commitments. OELS proactively supports student engagement, including providing assistance to students who face challenges in attending.

2. SCOPE

- This policy covers all students of OELS. A student is defined as a student registered for an award or a student taking modules for credit as part of their programme elsewhere.
- Student Audience: OELS Students.
- This policy should be read alongside the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, the Fitness to Study Policy, Student Welfare and Wellbeing Policy and the Appeals and Complaints Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

Attendance: The act of being present at scheduled classes, lectures, exams, workshops, and other academic activities as outlined in the student timetable (online and in person). Attendance is recorded for each session and contributes to the assessment of student engagement and academic progress.

Engagement: Active participation in academic activities, including but not limited to, class discussions, group projects, online forums, and submission of assignments on time. Engagement is measured through qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the degree of student involvement in their educational process.

Mitigating Circumstances: Exceptional conditions or events beyond the control of the student, as defined in the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, that significantly impede their ability to attend or engage in academic activities. These circumstances require formal documentation and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if absences can be justified under this category.

4. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Study Abroad Students:

Study abroad students at OELS are required to attend and participate in all scheduled sessions, exams, guided tours, and activities, both face-to-face and online. The guidelines for attendance are as follows:

a. Mandatory Attendance:

All classes and administrative meetings are mandatory unless specified as "optional" in the schedule. Attendance is crucial for academic success and participation in the programme.

b. Punctuality:

Students must arrive on time for classes. Arriving more than 5 minutes late will result in being marked absent and exclusion from that session. This policy ensures that students do not disrupt the learning environment and maintain discipline.

c. Allowable Absences:

Students are permitted to miss up to 25% of a module (e.g., 2 sessions out of 8) without penalty. Exceeding this limit can affect grades and lead to academic penalties:

- Missing up to 25% of a module results in no penalty.
- Missing between 26% and 50% of a module caps the final grade at 50%.
- Missing more than 50% of a module results in an automatic fail, and the student will not be allowed to resit the module.

Range of Outcomes			
Total sessions per module	Tolerated missed sessions	Final grade capped	Module Failed and Resit Not allowed
8 sessions	Up to 2 sessions missed	3 or 4 sessions missed	More than 4 sessions missed
12 sessions	Up to 3 sessions missed	4, 5 or 6 sessions missed	More than 6 sessions missed
16 sessions	Up to 4 sessions missed	Between 5 and 8 sessions missed	More than 8 sessions missed
20 sessions	Up to 5 sessions missed	Between 6 and 10 sessions missed	More than 10 sessions missed

d. Types of Absences:

Justified Absence: Approved by the OELS administration due to mitigating circumstances.

If student has a long-term illness, a bereavement, or other issues (see table below), then the student can apply for their absence to be justified. The student is required to follow the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and inform the administration about the circumstances. The Mitigating Circumstances Panel will study each case and will decide to justify the absences and waive penalties linked to this absence if the application is successful.

Unjustified Absence: Any absence which has not been approved by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel. These absences can lead to academic penalties and may impact a student's progress and standing within their programme.

e. Consequences of Excessive Absences:

If absences exceed the 25% threshold without valid mitigating circumstances, the student's final marks will be capped or may result in failure, as specified.

f. Responsibility for Missed Work:

Students are responsible for catching up on missed materials and topics independently. It is essential to communicate any absences to the lecturer via email and manage the learning materials missed during the absence.

5. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

All students need to submit an application for mitigating circumstances (mitigating circumstances form and proof) on Boostcamp (emails will not be accepted) by submitting [a Mitigating Circumstances form](#) following the process as outlined in the Mitigating Circumstances policy.

Please see below six circumstances normally eligible for consideration:

Circumstances normally eligible for consideration		
Circumstance	Examples	Supporting Documentation ¹
Visa	Delay before arriving in London	Letter from Visa centre confirming the delay. Students must have a valid passport to enter the UK. It should be valid for the entirety of your stay. Students may also need a visa, depending on which country they are from.

¹ Documents may be checked by the administration

Serious Health Issues	- Serious illness - Surgery - Long stay in hospital - Accident (physical or mental health) - An unanticipated deterioration in an ongoing illness or chronic medical condition - Deterioration of a permanent condition students have already told us about (physical or mental health)	Doctor's letter confirming the illness or accident and attesting to its impact on the students. Copy of a letter from GP (Doctor), health professional or psychological counsellor.
Crime	It can be an assault of which students are a victim outside the school. For example, if students have been robbed, scammed or attacked, and this has caused their absence.	If students are victim of an assault, they need to provide a crime number and Police report.
Bereavement of someone close to the student	'Someone close' includes: - parents or guardians - siblings, brothers/sisters - spouse or partner - children - grandparents	Copy of the death certificate and evidence of closeness.
Bullying, harassment, victimisation, assault, or threatening behaviour	Only eligible if students are the victim or alleged victim and the situation has been discussed with the Psychological Coach and Counsellor	Copies of emails or other communications or police report, hospitalisation certificate or letter from the GP.
Special circumstances approved by the OELS Director	Special circumstances discussed with OELS Director. Examples: participating in an official athletic event, technology failure, etc.	Copies of emails or other communications with written consent from OELS Director.

The Administrative Officer in charge of attendance will review the completed form and proof once a week. This is then presented at the Mitigating Circumstances Panel, which also meets once a week to look at the individual cases and decide if the absence is justified or not. The Administrative Officer informs the student of the outcome within 5 working days.

6. ABSENCES FOR ASSESSMENTS

OELS recognizes that all students may occasionally face circumstances that prevent them from attending scheduled assessments. The following guidelines outline the procedures and policies related to absences from assessments:

Reporting Absences:

- Students who anticipate missing an assessment due to illness, personal emergencies, or other significant reasons must submit an application for mitigating circumstances (mitigating circumstances form and proof) on Boostcamp.
- In the event of unexpected circumstances on the day of the assessment, students must inform the administration immediately to ensure their absence is recorded and managed appropriately. For absences to final exam, all proofs and documents must be uploaded on the Boostcamp platform within 48h.

The outcome for a missed assessment depends on:

- whether the absence is justified through the Mitigating Circumstances process
- for justified absences, it also depends on how heavily the assessment is weighted within the module.

Absence Type	Weight of the missed assessment	Outcome
Justified	50% or more of the module	The student resits the module. The resit grade is uncapped
Justified	Below 50% of the module	No resit is required. The missed assessment is replaced by the student's grade in the next most heavily weighted assessment in the same module
Unjustified	Any weight	The missed assessment is recorded as 0/20. The student may be invited to resit the module, and any resit grade will be subject to overall attendance caps.

- These outcomes apply to the individual assessment only. Where a student's overall absence exceeds the thresholds in the Allowable Absences section above, the resulting cap on the final module grade (10/20 for absence over 25%, and a fail for absence over 50%) takes precedence over the outcome of any individual missed assessment. The full detail sits in the Assessment and Feedback Policy (Section 5).

Limit on Assessment Opportunities for Study Abroad students

OELS students are entitled to a first sit and, where applicable, a resit opportunity for each assessment component. However, **there is no resit of a resit**, even if the absence or failure

at the resit stage is justified through the Mitigating Circumstances process. Students are expected to make every effort to attend and complete their resit as scheduled. In cases where a justified absence prevents a student from attending the resit, the standard academic consequences (such as failure of the module) will apply, and the student may need to retake the module in full at the next available opportunity.

7. LATENESS

OELS is committed to providing high-quality education to its students and ensuring they have a successful time in London as a global citizen, where cultural expectations are that both students and professionals arrive for classes and meetings on time. To achieve this, OELS will maximize your learning opportunities and prepare you for the professional world by setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality at all times.

All students who are more than 5 minutes late will not be accepted in class and will be marked as absent.

8. SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

At OELS, we recognise that various factors can influence a student's ability to attend and engage with their academic programmes. The institution is committed to providing robust support systems to assist students who encounter barriers to regular attendance.

Initial Support Measures

Academic and Wellbeing Advising: Early intervention is critical. Students demonstrating attendance issues are required to meet with the administrator in charge of absences or the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SEN Coordinator). These meetings aim to identify the root causes of attendance issues and to provide personalised support and resources.

Counselling and Mental Health Services: External professional counselling services are available to help students manage personal and psychological challenges. These services are confidential and integral to supporting students' overall wellbeing.

Proactive Support Plans

Student Support Plans: For students whose engagement is affected by medical or physical conditions, a tailored Student Support Plan is developed. This plan includes academic accommodations, such as modified coursework deadlines, alongside wellbeing support measures like counselling or medical follow-ups. The SEN Coordinator oversees the creation and implementation of these plans, ensuring they are responsive to the student's needs. Furthermore, the SEN Coordinator communicates these plans or any other necessary information to academic staff and other relevant parties, handling all related coordination to ensure the student receives comprehensive support.

Monitoring and Adjustments: the SEN Coordinator holds regular review meetings with the student to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments to the support plan. This ensures that the support remains effective and responsive to the student's evolving needs.

Structured Outreach Initiatives

Communication and Re-engagement Efforts: continuous low attendance triggers formal communications from the academic department aimed at re-engaging the students. These communications stress the importance of attendance and engagement, outlining potential academic consequences and reiterate the availability of support services.

- **Step 1:** In the first instance when students have missed more than 25% of their classes, they will receive an email from the Campus Coordinator.
- **Step 2:** If a student continues to miss classes and exceeds the 37.5% threshold, which would represent, for example, 3 out of 8 sessions (8 sessions/12 hours being a fairly common module length at OELS), the Campus Coordinator informs the OELS Director during the Mitigating Circumstances Panel meeting, who emails the student for a second time.
- **Step 3:** Where absence persists after this second contact, or where the Panel identifies a pattern of absence at programme-wide level that may indicate a broader issue, the OELS Director arranges a meeting with the student. The meeting aims to understand the circumstances behind the absences and to offer support. Where attendance does not improve despite these steps, the case may be escalated to a Fitness to Study assessment and/or the home school contacted.

Engagement Workshops and One-to-one: workshops and one-to-one on demand, focusing on time management, study skills, and stress management are regularly offered to help students enhance their engagement and academic success.

Intervention for Severe Cases

Fitness to Study Assessments: in severe cases where attendance and academic performance do not improve despite multiple interventions, the situation may be escalated to a Fitness to Study assessment. This process involves a thorough review by a panel, including the Director of Teaching and Learning, the SEN Coordinator, a mental health professional, and an academic staff member, to decide on the best course of action, which may include a temporary withdrawal to focus on recovery. For further information, refer to the Fitness to Study Policy.

9. SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

OELS recognises the unique challenges faced by international students. It is crucial that these students adhere to strict attendance requirements to comply with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations. To support our international students in maintaining compliance and achieving academic success, OELS implements the following measures:

- Upon arrival, international students receive a specialised orientation that covers essential attendance policies, visa compliance, and engagement expectations. This session aims to clarify their responsibilities and the consequences of non-compliance, ensuring students are well-prepared from the outset.
- Regular communications are sent to international students, reminding them of the importance of attendance as it relates to their visa status. These communications outline the specific requirements set by UKVI and the potential risks of non-compliance.

- OELS develops online training, workshops and seminars specifically designed for international students. These sessions cover topics such as time management, cultural adjustment, stress management, and understanding the UK educational system, all intended to enhance their engagement and academic success. In particular, OELS developed a learning activity called “Excuse my English”. This introduces international students to the essentials of student life in London, helping them get a head start before having these experiences first-hand. The activity aims to enhance cultural awareness by teaching local greetings, etiquette, and common practices. Additionally, it guides students through the school environment, classroom norms, and academic expectations. Language proficiency is also improved through practical scenarios, conversations, and e-learning exercises, ensuring that students are well-prepared for their studies in London.
- When necessary, OELS will provide access to legal and immigration advice to assist international students with any complexities related to their visa status or other legal matters affecting their stay in the UK.

10. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

At OELS, we believe that active student engagement is integral to learning and academic success. To accurately measure and evaluate engagement, OELS employs a comprehensive set of qualitative and quantitative metrics designed to capture the full spectrum of student participation in academic activities:

- Active contributions to class discussions are recorded and factored into overall course participation grades where possible. Faculty members use rubrics that quantify the quality and range of contributions – both in and out of the classroom - to ensure fair and consistent assessment. OELS has developed a standard table for grading participation which is available on our VLE for lecturers and students.
- Timely submission of assignments is a key indicator of student engagement. Assignment completion rates are monitored and analysed to identify students who may need additional support.
- Involvement in group projects is monitored through peer evaluations and project supervisor reports. These assessments provide insights into each student's contribution to team efforts.
- Interaction with Boostcamp (VLE), including access frequency, duration, and participation in forums, is tracked. Data from the Boostcamp provides a digital footprint of student engagement in online components of their courses.
- Registration and attendance at supplementary academic workshops and seminars are recorded. These activities often enhance understanding and retention of course material, reflecting a higher level of academic engagement.
- At the midpoint of each semester, a formal review of student engagement metrics is conducted through the Programme Lead meeting. This review helps identify any concerns early in the semester and allows sufficient time for intervention strategies to be implemented.

By employing the above measures, OELS ensures a robust framework for measuring and evaluating student engagement, which is vital for academic achievement and overall student success. This approach not only helps in identifying students in need of additional support but also fosters an environment of continuous improvement and high academic standards.

11. POLICY COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW

At OELS we understand the importance of clear and effective communication of our Attendance and Engagement Policy to ensure that all students are fully aware of their responsibilities and the support available to them. Our communication strategy includes:

- At the start of each academic year, comprehensive orientation sessions (welcome session, Academic Culture workshop, etc.) are conducted for new and returning students. These sessions cover key aspects of the Attendance and Engagement Policy, emphasising the importance of regular attendance and active participation.
- New Lecturers attend induction sessions when the Attendance and Engagement Policy is explained.
- Lecturer Core Meetings are organised at the start of each semester to review the essential elements of the Attendance and Engagement Policy.
- Regular updates, reminders, and educational materials related to attendance and engagement are disseminated through OELS's official digital platforms, including email, newsletters and Boostcamp.
- Throughout the academic year, OELS offers workshops to students on time management, study skills, and the importance of engagement beyond the formal curriculum. These workshops are designed to help students better understand and meet the expectations outlined in the policy.

The Attendance and Engagement Policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective in promoting academic success and student well-being. This review is conducted by the Quality and Enhancement Steering Committee. Students and staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the policy throughout the year. Based on the annual review and feedback received, necessary amendments are proposed to address emerging challenges and to incorporate best practices. All proposed changes are discussed and approved by the Academic Board. Any changes to the policy are communicated to all students and staff through formal announcements and updated materials. Training sessions are conducted to familiarize everyone with the revised policy.

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