

Student Attendance Framework

Introduction

This Framework has been approved by the Academic Board of Birkbeck, University of London and sets out the expectations the College has of students participating in our learning community. The Student Attendance Framework is a key document that is accepted as a condition of enrolment and when agreeing to the College's Terms and Conditions.

1. Principles

The College delivers teaching and learning for classes that are some of the most intellectually stimulating in the country according to the National Student Survey. This can involve online discussion, face to face interaction in classroom and/or laboratory environments.

Consistent and regular student attendance in class (or equivalent) promotes and affords student success. Inconsistent and irregular attendance is less likely to result in student success and is consistent with lower marks and degree classifications being achieved and awarded.

- a. A high level of attendance and participation in learning and teaching in class will mean you will develop a strong sense of identity with members of the Birkbeck learning community.
- b. Student support is most relevant and beneficial when a member of staff is able to talk to a student they know.
- c. Regular attendance means that you can take full advantage of the learning and teaching opportunities available to you and gain the greatest benefit from the course.
- d. If you are undertaking a programme of study by distance or blended learning, you are expected to engage in your studies and learning materials/tutor with the same diligence as if you were physically attending.
- e. Attendance is expected where active engagement with teaching staff is provided. Physical non-attendance in certain classes is detrimental to your academic success and is therefore highly discouraged.
- f. Poor attendance not only affects you but also affects others who rely on you in group projects and for peer learning: where group work and peer learning is central to the subject, poor attendance can lead to the failure of an assessment.
- g. Irregular or intermittent attendance is not sufficient justification for submitting a Mitigating Circumstance request for an upcoming assessment. (See Mitigating Circumstances Policy, Procedure and Guidance)

2. The attendance expectation

Birkbeck, University of London expects you to consistently attend all timetabled sessions, including lectures, seminars, group and individual tutorials, learning support sessions, workshops, laboratories, field trips, inductions and demonstrations.

- a. Our students are often in full or part time employment and may have other commitments such as childcare or caring responsibilities. However the College does expect you to manage these commitments around timetabled sessions in order to take part in the module or programme fully.
- b. Further details of specific Programme or module attendance requirements e.g. attending field trips, are noted in your Programme Handbook. You should familiarise yourself with specific programme or module level attendance requirements.
- c. If you expect to be absent over a number of days or weeks, you are expected to make contact with the relevant member of staff in your School or Department and make arrangements to ensure you engage appropriately in your studies for the duration of your absence from class.
- d. If there is insufficient information about you attending and you do not respond to communications, the Registry (on the recommendation of Director of Operations) reserves the right to inform the relevant funding body or sponsor and where appropriate withdraw your enrolment. The date of withdrawal will be communicated to you in writing.
- e. The last day of attendance for the purposes of withdrawing or suspending study is the date the College is informed in writing that you are withdrawing. If you decide to stop attending, you must follow the Cancellation Procedure and consider the financial implications of withdrawal and/or suspension which are outlined in the Fees Policy.
- f. What constitutes sufficient attendance in class is a matter of academic judgement for your Programme Director/Personal Tutor (or equivalent).

3. E-registers

All Birkbeck students are issued with student cards. Students are expected to take them to classes and to assessment venues and to present them to a member of staff if requested. This is for the purpose of identifying Birkbeck students.

- a. You should use your electronic student card to 'swipe' into each learning and teaching session when you are in a Birkbeck managed facility with a card reader. Distance learning students will use their activity on a virtual learning environment e.g. Moodle as a proxy for 'swiping in'.
- b. The College collects student data for the purposes of supporting your engagement with learning and teaching. This includes activity in College computer systems and swiping into teaching venues. If you are not actively engaging with your studies, the College may contact you to signpost you to services to help you succeed. All data is held in accordance of the Data Protection Act.
- c. A member of the public is not permitted to engage or participate in Birkbeck learning and teaching without having enrolled and paid their module or programme fees. The College only expects attendance from and provides services to enrolled students who have paid their fees.
- d. The College may allow a maximum period of up to 28 days after your course starts to allow you to complete your admission and enrolment. You need to complete your enrolment to access a student card.
- e. You can attend and start fully engaging in learning and teaching once you have completed enrolment and paid your fees.

- f. Learning or scholarship events that are open to members of the public which do not require enrolment and/or a fee will be identified as such and are not subject to this Student Attendance Framework.
- g. Members of the public who attend learning and teaching events provided by the College without permission may be asked to leave the teaching venue by authorised members of staff. There is no right of appeal to this decision as services are only provided to enrolled students who have paid their fees.
- h. There are no fee refunds for non-attendance.

4. Tier 4 Sponsored Students

- a. In addition, if you are a Tier 4 student, you must complete Registration before starting your programme of study, and attend the termly registrations at the beginning of each term thereafter.
- b. You must comply with all United Kingdom Visa & Immigration (VISA) guidance and requirements.
- c. Tier 4 students are sponsored by the College to complete their studies in the UK. However the College recognises that some postgraduate research students may need to leave the UK during term time to complete elements of their research. If you are away from the College for study purposes, such as research field trip or data collection, and would like to retain a Tier 4 Student visa, it is your responsibility to obtain the permission from the College before your planned trip. You should discuss your planned trip with your research supervisor and the School Administrator and submit the 'Off-campus Study Agreement form' (available from Registry Services or your School Office) for approval.
- d. For short term 'authorised' absences (e.g. illness) of students who hold Tier 4 sponsorship, documentary evidence on the reasons for absence must be offered to your School Office. For absences of up to two weeks in length, an email is required from you detailing the reason for your absence and logged. For absences longer than two weeks, more formal documentation should be provided (e.g. letter from GP). Registry Services maintains a list of relevant documentary evidence.
If you do not receive relevant permission prior to the planned trips, it may not be possible for the College to continue your visa sponsorship. Failure to adhere to the agreement may jeopardise your student status and your Tier 4 Student visa.
- e. Some degree programmes may offer 'work placement' as an assessed part of the programme. If a programme offers this and you wish to take it up, you must discuss this further with your academic department. A completed 'Work placement form' (available from Registry Services or your School/Department Office) must be submitted to the academic department for approval. If it is approved, the Home Office will be informed.
- f. The College is required to report to the Home Office any Tier 4 student who misses 10 consecutive expected contacts or who interrupts or withdraws from their studies. The Home Office will then curtail the visa to 60 days. It is, therefore, very important that you maintain attendance and inform your academic department of any possible absences.