

# ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE POLICY

	4.0
<b>Effective date</b>	September 2024
<b>Date for review</b>	August 2026
<b>Policy owner</b>	Head of Quality
<b>Reference points</b>	Office for Students guidance: <a href="https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/providers/equality-of-opportunity/effective-practice/student-engagement-and-consultation/">https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/providers/equality-of-opportunity/effective-practice/student-engagement-and-consultation/</a> UK Quality Code guidance on student engagement: <a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/student-engagement.pdf?sfvrsn=6224c181_3">https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/student-engagement.pdf?sfvrsn=6224c181_3</a>
<b>Audience/handling notes</b>	Student Services, Students, External, Public
<b>Dissemination and implementation plan</b>	This Student Attendance and Engagement Policy is an externally facing public statement and is published on NHAM's website.  Academic and Student Services staff will receive training in how to apply this policy and its procedures. They will also be directed to where it is published. The Academy Manager will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy and procedures to academic and support staff through the Education Committee and for monitoring student engagement and attendance at NHAM. Students will be made aware of this policy and its implementation in the Student Handbook and at induction.
<b>Linked Policies, Procedures and Forms</b>	Student Handbook, Student Disciplinary(Policy), Extenuating Circumstances(Policy), Deferral of Assessment(Policy), Learning Agreement, No Adjustments Needed, Disability Disclosure(Policy), Assessment(Policy).
<b>Date approved</b>	September 2024

## 1 Introduction

The Notting Hill Academy of Music (NHAM) wants its students to thrive and succeed in their studies. We believe that the more a student engages with their studies, the more likely it is that they will achieve academically. We understand that if a student is not engaging fully in their studies, this might indicate that they require further pastoral support to help support them in their life.

The Academy also has statutory and regulatory responsibilities that require it to monitor student engagement with their studies. It is for these reasons that we monitor student engagement. Through our processes we will reach out to students to offer support to those who are falling short of our expectations, and in some cases, students may need to be interrupted through the Fitness to Study process or withdrawn from the Academy.

This policy sets out the expectation and procedure for monitoring engagement and attendance. It covers any student who is currently enrolled at the Notting Hill Academy of Music, regardless of level, fee, student status, or whether their course leads to a formally recognised credit-bearing award.

The Engagement and Attendance Policy is included in the Academy's Terms & Conditions for all Higher Education students and explored further with students as part of their induction programme – a compulsory element of each student's study with us.

## 2 Definition of Students and Measures of Engagement

This policy applies to all students undertaking any course of study at the Academy.



A significant measure of engagement is attendance. Attendance refers to being present at scheduled teaching sessions that make up an NHAM programme of study.

Each course has its own mix of sessions all requiring compulsory attendance, including induction sessions during the enrolment period.

Attendance is one measure of engagement, but other measures of engagement might include:

- submission of formative and summative assessment work
- accessing the student portal
- accessing physical and online library resources
- examinations or tests
- a meeting with a supervisor or tutor
- an appointment with specialist student support services.
- any scheduled session/appointment that is considered compulsory for that programme of study.

The above is not an exhaustive list and it remains at the discretion of the Academy to determine which other measures of engagement are a compulsory requirement for each programme of study.

### 3 Attendance Monitoring Parameters

Although 100% attendance is expected, attendance at scheduled sessions is deemed acceptable for monitoring purposes if maintained at a minimum of 85% of total scheduled sessions on a rolling basis.

Attendance is monitored continuously and formally reviewed four-weekly. Should a student's attendance fall below 70% by the end of the four consecutive teaching weeks review point the Academy will proactively engage with the student to identify potential reasons for falling attendance and the support available to allow the student to re-engage fully with their studies and maximise their achievement.

If the student's attendance falls below 70% for two consecutive months, with notifying the Academy of Extenuating Circumstances or having a learning agreement in place, the Academy may withdraw the student.

### 4 Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the student to engage in their programme of study.
- It is the responsibility of the Academy to actively collect information on student attendance and engagement and to contact students when their engagement drops.
- The Academy is responsible for reporting accurate information to its collaborative partner (validating institution), which in turn has reporting obligations to the Office for Students (OfS) and the Student Loans Company (SLC) about students who are actively engaged in study and their ongoing eligibility for financial support, where relevant.
- All Academy staff are responsible for maintaining a culture and belief in attendance and punctuality to support a student's engagement with their course. Staff will provide support where relevant and necessary to enable participation and progression.
- The Academy is responsible for implementing the non-engagement process where necessary to help support students to engage with their studies.

### 5 Self-certification

It is accepted that there may be legitimate reasons for absence/lateness/a requirement to leave early from time to time. A student will be able to self-certify for a maximum of five (5) calendar days only over the 4-week attendance monitoring period, and only for the taught delivery within those five days. If the student does not self-certify they will be marked as absent. After five days' absence through self-



certification the student must then use the Authorised Absence process if they are to continue to miss teaching, otherwise they will be marked as absent.

Self-certification can be used by a student to report sickness for up to five calendar days. Any subsequent absence at any time in the four-week period must be Authorised Absence otherwise the student will be marked as not being in attendance.

Self-certification by students will be continuously monitored and the Academy will proactively investigate if there are any trends or patterns of self-certification that raise concerns, whether by volume or frequency, and liaise with and support the student as appropriate.

Examples of authorised self-certificated absences are but not limited to:

- A hospital/doctor's appointment that cannot be arranged outside course hours.
- Antenatal and postnatal appointments.
- Bereavement.
- A funeral of a close relative (immediate family).
- Significant disruption to transport (i.e., severe weather conditions, public transport strike).

Examples of unauthorised self-certificated absences are but limited to:

- Taking a holiday during term-time.
- Unable to travel due to the distance a student is resident from campus.

Only in exceptional circumstances will an absence be granted retrospectively, where the student is able to demonstrate that they were for justifiable reasons unable to submit a request before the absence.

## 7 Sickness

There may be occasions of sickness that prevent a student from attending their scheduled sessions. Sickness absences for up to five consecutive calendar days can be reported by the student through self-certification. Sickness of more than five consecutive days will require the student to have agreed Authorised Absence, and evidence of the sickness will be required from a third party registered healthcare professional. Sickness absences of fewer than five days will be monitored by the Academy and if there are concerns for the student's health and wellbeing the Academy will proactively engage with the student as to how they might be supported.

If a student is expected to be sick for a long period i.e., more than 30 days, it may be advised that they consider interruption. Longer periods of sick leave will only be authorised by the Academy if their personal tutor is confident that the student will be able to complete their course within the period of registration. Such circumstances should be discussed by the student with their personal tutor.

## 8 Formal Attendance Process

It is expected that a student will fully attend all their scheduled sessions. However, if a student's attendance falls outside the acceptable parameters (described above under Attendance Monitoring Parameters), they will enter the formal attendance process.

The formal attendance process centres on the Academy meeting with non-attending students to jointly determine how they may be supported to bring their attendance back within the Academy's acceptable parameters. This is a three-stage compulsory process – Stage 1 is a first support meeting; Stage 2 a final support meeting (if required) and Stage 3 ends the non-attendance process (if Stage 2 is unsuccessful) and may result in the student being withdrawn from their course by the Academy.



Any meeting/discussion appointment arranged with a member of staff at any stage of the nonattendance process may be re-arranged once only, if necessary. If the student fails to attend a rearranged meeting, the next stage of the non-attendance process will be initiated, regardless of the reason for not attending the re-arranged meeting.

Any evidence regarding the reason for not attending a rearranged meeting can be provided during the appeals process.

If a student entering the informal or formal attendance process is identified as already engaging with another Academy process related to their attendance, such as but not limited to Fitness to Study, then their circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by all relevant stakeholders.

### **Stage 1 – First Support Meeting**

The student is invited to meet with their Personal Tutor or designated member of academic staff. The purpose of the meeting is to analyse why the student's attendance has fallen below expectations, the reasons for the non-attendance and how the student can be supported academically and pastorally to get their studies back on track. It will be established that the student understands the attendance requirement and the potential implications of not meeting it. It will also be established whether there are any previously unsupported issues impacting on their ability to meet the attendance requirement that may require support.

At this stage, Voluntary Interruption of studies can be agreed if deemed appropriate by the student and the relevant Programme Leader, in line with the applicable regulations. Interruption may also be implemented by the Academy in the student's best interests, through the Fitness to Study process.

Following the first support meeting, if the student's attendance falls back within the acceptable parameters for the rest of the academic year, the non-attendance process ends. If not, the process escalates to Stage 2.

### **Stage 2 – Final Support Meeting**

If the student does not attend the first support meeting or there is a subsequent occurrence of attendance falling outside the acceptable parameters at the next formal audit point, the second stage of the process is triggered.

The student is invited to meet with their Programme Leader or nominated senior academic related to their course of study. The purpose of the meeting remains to help the student to get back on-track, so their attendance can improve, and they fall within the Academy's acceptable parameters for attendance. It will be established whether there are any previously unsupported issues impacting on their ability to meet the attendance requirement that may require support.

The student's Personal Tutor may attend this meeting. If they do not attend this meeting the Programme Leader will notify the Personal Tutor of the outcome of the stage 2 meeting.

The Final Support meeting will confirm the implications that the student's continued non-engagement / attendance will have on their student status, including the likelihood of withdrawal from the course by the Academy should their non-attendance continue.

At this stage, Voluntary Interruption of studies can be agreed, if deemed appropriate by the student and the relevant Programme Leader in line with the Common Credit Framework (CCF). Interruption may also be implemented by the Academy in the student's best interests, through the Fitness to Study process.



After the final support meeting, if the student's attendance falls back within the acceptable parameters for the rest of the academic year, the non-attendance process ends. If not, the process escalates to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3 – Potential Withdrawal for Non-Attendance**

If the student does not attend the final support meeting or there is a third occurrence of attendance falling outside the acceptable parameters within the academic year, the third stage of the process is triggered.

The Programme Leader must ensure all previous processes have been adhered to and all appropriate support has been offered as required and whether the student has engaged with support or not. The Programme Leader will collate a summary of the student's level of engagement with the course. As well as their attendance, other available sources of information such as summative assessment performance, student portal engagement and other measures, might be collated.

The profile of the student will be submitted to the Governance Committee to check that they are satisfied that the Academy has made every effort to get the student to re-engage with their studies.

If the Governance Committee is satisfied that the Academy has made every effort to get the student to re-engage with their studies, then the profile of that student will be submitted to a panel to confirm whether they should be withdrawn. This panel will convene regularly and make an informed decision based on the data and evidence submitted about the student's engagement as to whether they will be withdrawn or whether the Academy will make further efforts to re-engage the student. In all circumstances withdrawal due to poor engagement and attendance requires panel approval.

The panel decision is final regarding withdrawal at stage 3.

If the panel confirms that the student will not be withdrawn at this point then that student returns to stage 2 of the formal attendance process. If the student subsequently re-enters stage 3 of the process following further non-attendance then that student will be automatically withdrawn by the panel.

When a student is withdrawn by the panel, details of the appeals process are provided to the student in the formal withdrawal letter.

The student has the right to be accompanied to any meeting to discuss withdrawal for non-attendance, by a supporter (e.g. member of the Student Union or other member of the Academy community).

The outcome of each meeting will be recorded on the student's file with a written notification of the decision provided to the student.

## **9 Interruption**

Where a student's circumstances have caused and are likely to have a long-term negative impact on their engagement and attendance, the Academy may agree or require a period of interruption as part of the non-attendance process at any stage. Any such circumstances should be established at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **10 Appeals**

Students have the right to appeal in writing against a decision to withdraw them from the Academy. However, an appeal against the withdrawal from Studies as a consequence of non-attendance may only be considered where one or both of the following criteria (the grounds) have been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the body considering the appeal:



- That there has been significant administrative or procedural error on the part of the Academy which materially disadvantaged the consideration of your attendance at Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the Attendance Monitoring process.
- That there were extenuating circumstances, beyond your control, that affected your ability to engage with the Attendance Mentoring process and that could not, for valid reason, have been able to disclose prior to the decision to withdraw you from your studies.

Appeals against Withdrawal in consequence to non-attendance must be made in writing within 10 working days following notification of withdrawal. An appeal will only be accepted or considered late in exceptional circumstances and where there is sufficient evidence to explain why you were unable to submit your appeal before the deadline.

For the purposes of this policy, a working day is considered to be Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm), excluding U.K. public and bank holidays, or other published Academy closures.

To make an appeal, you should write to the Academy Manager, stating the grounds (see above) and provide an explanation of those circumstances.

Appeals from students will be considered by a panel of senior staff. Reviews will occur within 10 days of receipt. This panel will include senior staff of the Academy that are independent of the student's course of study. The panel will consider any statements and documentary evidence submitted by the student to explain their absence from their studies and make a decision. Any appeal without documentary evidence will not normally be considered.

In consideration of your appeal, the Appeal Panel will make one of the following determinations:

- That there is substance to your appeal. In which case the panel will uphold your appeal and may decide to refer your case as follows:
  - i. Refer your case back to either Stage 1 or Stage 2 such as they feel appropriate to best support your studies further.
  - ii. Refer your case to Support to Study.
- That there is either (a) insufficient grounds to uphold your appeal based upon the evidence you have provided or (b) that your appeal does not meet the criteria for appeal. The panel will therefore reject your appeal.

Where the appeal is rejected, there will be no further right of appeal and the Academy's internal procedures are completed. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal against the withdrawal from study you may refer your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. The complaint must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months from the date of issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Further details about the OIA can be obtained from the following website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/> or by contacting the OIA at the following address:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education  
Second Floor  
Abbey Gate  
57-75 Kings Road  
READING  
RG1 3AB  
Telephone: 0118 959 9813 / Email: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk)



## 11 Enforcement, Monitoring and Review

This policy will be overseen by the Head of Quality but guidelines for student attendance and engagement will be monitored and enforced by the Academy Manager and Programme Leader(s).

Attendance statistics will be monitored and reviewed by Programme and reported at the Education Committee as a standing agenda item.

Every two years, the Academy must review this policy to ensure that:

- it remains up to date and continues to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code and Office for Students, applicable legislation or guidance;
- areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, relevant external colleagues, or professional bodies have been addressed; and
- opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.