



Student Engagement in Learning Policy

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**by
Senior Leadership Team**

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New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact records@newdur.ac.uk

We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments, and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

Other policies and procedures mentioned in this document will be published internally and externally in these locations:

[Website](#)

This policy has been assessed for its compliance with the principles of the OIA Good Practice Framework.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Student Engagement in Learning Policy articulates the mechanisms by which New College Durham facilitates, supports and monitors the engagement of a student with their studies.
- 1.2 There is clear evidence to show that to achieve success, the majority of students need to engage fully with timetabled sessions and also with the Remote and Online Learning opportunities that are provided through the College Virtual Learning Environment and Microsoft Teams. In addition, some students must meet the assessment requirements for their course which may include the completion of work placements.
- 1.3 All staff must have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put students at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education can be signs that a student is at risk.
- 1.4 This policy sets out how the College supports students to engage fully with all elements of their studies, what the College expects of students in relation to engagement with their course, how it will monitor that engagement and what it will do where students are not engaging.
- 1.5 International students who are covered by Home Office Tier 4 requirements need to be aware that they have additional obligations in line with UKVI.
- 1.6 Where a student has demonstrated no engagement **for four weeks** and there has been no response to the College, **the student will be referred to the relevant withdrawal policy, FE or HE dependent on their qualification.**

2. Principles on which the Policy is Based

- 2.1 There are four principles underpinning the College's approach to student engagement in learning:
- 2.2 There is clear evidence that to achieve success, the majority of students need to engage fully with all learning opportunities including face to face and remote learning that provide opportunities for live instruction, delivery and interactivity and online learning.

- 2.3 Teaching, learning and assessment should utilise innovative methods including the application of technology to provide high quality learning to students.
- 2.4 The engagement of students in their learning should be one of the benchmarks by which the quality of provision is judged.
- 2.5 Every effort should be made to maximise student engagement in learning and encourage students to take responsibility to engage fully with all elements of their course.

3. Student Responsibilities

- 3.1 New College Durham requires students to **engage in all elements of their studies** according to their signed learning agreement and course timetable.
- 3.2 Timetabled learning sessions, delivered both face to face and remotely, are an essential part of the student learning experience on all the courses the College provides. Much of the curriculum content of the course, including the knowledge, skills and behaviours required are conveyed through timetabled teaching sessions. These sessions also give students the opportunity to participate in teaching and to interact with staff and other students about course related issues and themes. The development of these personal skills is a key feature of the student journey.
 - The College expects students to attend all timetabled teaching sessions, both face to face and remote (Including practical, workshop and laboratory) and placements.
 - Students are expected to let the College know if they are unable to attend their timetabled learning for any reason.
- 3.3 Planned Online Learning provided through the College's Virtual Learning Environment and Microsoft Teams, is integral to the delivery of most courses. These systems provide students with learning resources, academic support, assessment and feedback that they complete independently. Students need to access to these resources and support materials on a regular basis and in line with the expectations communicated from staff if they are to be successful in their studies.
 - Students are expected to engage in Online Learning and to complete all outputs of online learning as specified by their tutor. The College will

monitor students' engagement with online learning materials and provides information on that engagement to staff who teach and support students.

- Students are expected to let the College know if they are unable to access or complete the Online Learning for any reason.

- 3.4 Students are required to submit pieces of academic work or complete practical work on specified dates during the academic year. They may also be required to complete other forms of assessment e.g., examination, presentation or performance. These pieces of work represent their final assessment for the qualifications on which they are enrolled. Students who do not submit work will be governed by the regulations of the appropriate awarding organisation and may be unlikely to achieve their qualification and even if the work is subsequently submitted it may result in grades being capped at a lower grade e.g., a Pass or 40%.
- 3.5 Students are required to submit all work to the deadline set. In the case of assessment activity that takes place on a date, e.g., practical, presentation or examination, students are expected to attend and be able to undertake the assessment activity.
- 3.6 Students are expected to let the College know if they are unable to submit or complete the assessment for any reason. This will inform the application of the relevant academic procedures to apply mitigation arrangements if applicable.
- 3.7 Students should not knowingly miss a learning activity/ not complete online learning or assessment for anything other than illness or exceptional circumstances. It is not advisable to take holiday in term-time. Unacceptable attendance and/or punctuality may affect examination entry or other concessions including progression to the next level qualification. If students need to miss a learning activity or are unable to complete the online learning/ submit assessed work, they, or someone acting on their behalf should:
- Report their absence as soon as possible on the day of their absence using the College report and absence process by calling 0191375 4389 or emailing absence@newdur.ac.uk and leave the student's full name, the course they are studying and the reason for absence.
 - inform their Personal Development Coach or Academic Support Tutor (where applicable) and Programme Leader, in advance, of any planned absence (e.g., for a doctor's or dentist's appointment);
 - on return to college meet with their Personal Development Coach or Academic Support Tutor and programme leader to discuss arrangements to catch up on the work missed during absence;

- (for HE students) maintain communication with the Programme Leader and complete any HE requirements e.g., extension/ mitigation, as required;
- provide, when requested, evidence to support their absence as this may be needed to support mitigation arrangements and authorise absences.
- engage in any other remedial action requested before the end of the four-week absence period, if a students' pattern of attendance and/or punctuality is not of an acceptable standard;

4. International Students

- 4.1 New College Durham (College) must ensure that sponsored students are attending and academically engaging with their studies. A student is academically engaging if they are actively and consistently following their programme of study.
- 4.2 The College must report the following information to the UKVI within 10 working days:
- When a higher education student (Level 6 and above) fails to re-engage with their studies within 60 days of the first contact from their sponsor regarding their lack of academic engagement, the sponsor must withdraw sponsorship except in exceptional circumstances, outlined in the Student Sponsor Guidance document issued by UK Visa and Immigration.
 - When a higher education students (Level 4 & 5¹) attendance falls below 85% for three consecutive months unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for non – attendance, such as illness
 - When a further education student (Level 3¹) misses 10 consecutive attendance points unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for non – attendance, such as illness
- 4.3 Student attendance is monitored via registers that generate a UKVI student attendance report that is monitored weekly by the International Team. The report gives an overall attendance percentage for students and also how many absences students have had in the last 10 sessions.
- 4.4 Academic staff are responsible for informing the International Team as soon as there are any concerns regarding an international students' attendance or engagement. More information on the process for

¹ Students studying level 3,4 & 5 programmes are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours daytime, classroom- based study per week.

monitoring international students' attendance and engagement can be found in the International Student Engagement and Attendance Procedure.

5. HE 'Remediation'

- 5.1 Students enrolled on higher education programmes are expected to engage with their programme for a minimum of 24 weeks per academic year. Engagement may include timetabled teaching, tutorials, supervision, independent study, assessment activity, work-based learning, placement activity, academic support, and other structured learning opportunities relevant to the programme.
- 5.2 For HE students the programme team will monitor attendance and engagement. Where a student does not attend or submit work within a four-week period, the Programme Team will consider whether referral to the HE Withdrawal Policy is appropriate, taking account of any approved mitigation, suspension of studies or other individual circumstances.
- 5.3 A successful engagement model is where a student attends, engages with their tutor and submits work regularly,
- 5.4 Where a programme is validated as 100% face to face delivery, physical attendance in class is expected. This will be monitored by the programme team and **where engagement falls to a point where it can be reasonably assumed the student will be unable to achieve their qualification due to lack of teaching or non-submissions**, the Programme Team must meet with the student to address the issues. At this point the student should be advised to apply for Mitigation (if relevant) or a Suspension of Studies or be asked to consider withdrawing from their programme to protect their future opportunities.
- 5.5 Where a programme is validated as blended delivery, attendance and engagement will be measured across physical attendance in class as well as synchronous and asynchronous online activities. This will be monitored by the programme team and **where engagement falls to a point where it can be reasonably assumed the student will be unable to achieve their qualification due to lack of teaching or non-submissions** the Programme Team must meet with the student to address the issues. At this point the student should be advised to apply for Mitigation (if relevant), a Suspension of Studies or be asked to consider withdrawing from their programme to protect their future opportunities. If students are observed only attending online sessions for a period of 4 consecutive weeks this will be considered

in breach of the students' enrolment and will result in the student being referred to the withdrawal process.

- 5.6 Where a student declares a health condition or injury preventing them from attending in person, the use of remote access to classes may be agreed as part of a temporary reasonable adjustment plan. If the absences cannot be mitigated in this way, then the student should be advised to apply for formal Mitigation, a Suspension of Studies or be asked to consider withdrawing from their programme to protect their future opportunities.
- 5.7 Tutorial contact will constitute engagement as long as this can be evidenced and constitutes regular, scheduled engagement.
- 5.8 For dissertation or major project modules, engagement should be monitored through scheduled supervision, progress reviews, agreed milestones, draft submissions, research activity, and independent study. Although dissertation activity may involve fewer taught sessions, students must continue to demonstrate regular academic engagement throughout the dissertation period, including attendance at supervision meetings and evidence of sustained progress against the agreed project plan.
- 5.9 Withdrawals should be identified in a timely manner to ensure they are processed within sixty days of the Last Date of Engagement (LDE) in line with the Service Level Agreement between NCD and the Student Loans Company (SLC).

6. Staff Responsibilities

- 6.1 Teaching staff are responsible for the planning and delivery of teaching, learning and assessment and the recording and monitoring of student engagement with learning across all learning formats.
- 6.2 Teaching staff are responsible for making students aware of their responsibilities under this policy and associated policies including the relevant mitigation and withdrawal processes.
- 6.3 Teaching staff are responsible for monitoring the attendance and engagement of their students and providing this feedback to managers. Teaching staff are to be proactive in taking actions with students in response to poor or declining attendance to identify the root cause and put in place measures to address this. In the event that further support is needed, teaching staff are responsible for making these referrals to Support

teams e.g. Access Advisers, Personal Learning Coaches or Academic Support tutors.

- 6.4 In the event a student has not attended and demonstrated no engagement with the College, teaching staff must initiate the relevant withdrawal policy for the qualification on which the student is studying.
- 6.5 For face to face and remote learning formats, teaching staff should:
- make students aware of the Student Engagement in Learning Policy during induction.
 - **accurately** complete registers in line with the Marking a Student Register Policy.
 - ensure that students are provided with regular, live instruction with the ability for students to ask questions of staff in real time at the time indicated on the students' timetable.
 - ensure that instructions and expectations are clearly communicated to students at all times.
 - for Remote Learning, use only the College's recommended platforms for delivery of live instruction or for conducting one to one meetings with students including remote Progress Review meetings held between Apprenticeship Skills Coordinators, apprentices and employers.
 - ensure all learning activities incorporate a range of activities to respond to students' learning preferences (e.g., direct instruction, independent learning, group activities).
 - ensure all learning activity is appropriately planned, using the college approved Scheme of Learning planning document.
 - carefully consider the individual learning needs of all their students in design and delivery of any learning activity.
 - ensure that live remote learning sessions do not exceed 1 hour of continuous direct delivery to students unless essential for assessment.
 - provide all work linked to live delivery, instruction, or assessment in accessible formats.
 - be familiar with the use of College's approved platforms, and to be available online through these platforms at the scheduled time of instruction.
 - set, assess and return work relating to students in accordance with agreed timescales, maximum four weeks, using the most effective means.
 - provide feedback to students on their learning, through the recognised college platforms or face to face.
 - monitor and report individual and group engagement through quality processes.

- follow the college and awarding body guidelines in relation to feedback and quality assurance.
- follow the college policy on safeguarding at all times. Including the promotion of online safety.
- record on their TLA plan any identified areas for development in relation to remote learning or further development.
- attend relevant CPD sessions held internally and externally to support their development.
- raise concerns about students or apprentices who are not engaging through the relevant curriculum manager, liaison officer and apprenticeship manager and record any comments or targets for the student in the College's designated system.
- Teaching staff must only contact students through official college channels, which are:
 - New College Durham (@newdur.ac.uk) email address only. No personal email addresses must be used by staff;
 - Microsoft Teams chat or video conference (through New College Durham email address only);
 - Telephone contact to students and/or parent/guardian.

6.6 For Online Learning, teaching staff should:

- ensure that work is thoroughly planned, set and made available via approved platforms prior to the planned online lesson and that sufficient resources are made available to students via electronic means to allow them to carry out this work independently and for the duration planned.
- ensure that instructions and expectations for all online learning activity are always clearly communicated to students including deadlines and expected outputs.
- emphasise to students and apprentices that all online learning activities will be subject to formative or summative assessment following submission and this assessment will inform planning and delivery of face-to-face learning.
- provide assessment and feedback of the online learning activity prior to, or during the next face to face session to identify any misconceptions and ensure that the subsequent learning activities are appropriate for the need of the students or apprentices.
- ensure that any courses or Teams created on the college's recommended platforms adhere to the college guidance for structure and content.
- use only the college's recommended platforms for storage of course materials, assessments and resources.

- ensure online learning activities incorporate a range of resources to respond to students' or apprentices' learning preferences (e.g., videos, quizzes, workbooks, course discussions etc).
- carefully consider the individual learning needs of all their students and/or apprentices in design of any online learning activity.
- be familiar with the use of the College's approved platforms for online learning.
- follow the college and awarding body guidelines in relation to feedback and quality assurance.
- follow the college policy on safeguarding at all times.
- record on their TLA plan any identified areas for development in relation to online learning.
- attend relevant CPD sessions held internally and externally to support the development of digital skills.
- raise concerns about students or apprentices who are not engaging with online learning through the relevant curriculum manager, liaison officer and apprenticeship manager and record any comments or targets on Advantage.
- only contact students through official college channels, which are:
 - New College Durham (@newdur.ac.uk) email address only. No personal email addresses must be used by staff
 - Microsoft Teams chat or video conference (through New College Durham email address only);
- Follow all college guidelines for contacting groups of students and inviting students to access online learning.

6.7 College Personal Development Coaches and Academic Support Tutors are required to:

- Where they are delivering learning sessions to students, in either face to face or remote setting (Personal Development should only be delivered using online approach in exceptional circumstances and with authorisation from the Head of Foundation Studies and Personal Development) they are required to:
 - **Accurately** complete registers in line with the Marking a Student Register Policy
 - Ensure that students are provided with regular, live instruction with the ability for students to ask questions of staff in real time at the time indicated on the students' timetable
 - Ensure that the instructions and expectations that have been communicated from curriculum teams are implemented to students at all times
 - Follow the college policy on safeguarding children and adults at risk at all times

- Attend relevant CPD sessions held internally and externally to support their development
- Keep teaching staff informed of issues and actions relating to a students' attendance and punctuality;
- Monitor and report on students' attendance and punctuality, with the help of teaching and support staff;
- Refer unresolved issues concerning attendance and punctuality to the relevant Curriculum Manager;
- Raise concerns about students and apprentices who are not engaging with learning or are demonstrating unexplained and/or persistent absence with the relevant curriculum manager, liaison officer, apprenticeship manager and record any comments or targets for the student in the College's designated system.

7. Curriculum Managers Responsibilities

- 7.1 Curriculum Managers are also responsible for ensuring that timetables and associated registers for each component of the study programme or taught sessions are correct and that work placements are timetabled accordingly. Ensure major changes to timetables are communicated to CIS in a timely manner.
- 7.2 Curriculum Managers are responsible for monitoring the overall attendance and engagement in learning of each of their students and the interventions that have been taken by teaching staff to support the student. Where there is no other alternative, Curriculum Managers are responsible for invoking the relevant intervention actions and where required referring into the required disciplinary/ withdrawal process.
- 7.3 Curriculum Managers are responsible for the quality of learning in their area. They should use the college quality assurance processes to monitor the quality of learning in their curriculum areas and take effective action where this does not meet expectations.

8. Head of School Responsibilities

- 8.1 The Head of School is accountable for the overall student attendance, engagement, and academic performance within their school. This includes ensuring that all students meet the attendance requirements outlined in the policy and addressing any issues related to student absenteeism or non-engagement proactively.

- 8.2 The Head of School is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of student attendance and engagement across all programmes within their remit. They must ensure that data on attendance and engagement is regularly reviewed and analysed, and that any patterns of concern are identified and addressed. The Head of School will report on these findings to senior leaders, providing assurance on the effectiveness of the attendance and engagement strategies in place.
- 8.3 The Head of School must ensure that effective support mechanisms are in place for students who are struggling with attendance or engagement. They are responsible for overseeing the interventions initiated by Curriculum Managers and ensuring that these interventions are timely, appropriate, and in line with College policies. Where necessary, the Head of School will escalate issues to the appropriate senior leadership team members.
- 8.4 The Head of School is responsible for maintaining the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment within their school, ensuring it aligns with the College's standards. They must ensure that teaching staff are adhering to the attendance policy, that registers are accurately maintained, and that any issues with student engagement are promptly addressed through the College's quality assurance processes.
- 8.5 The Head of School must ensure that all staff within their school are fully aware of and comply with the College's attendance and engagement policies. They are responsible for ensuring that these policies are effectively communicated to students and that students understand their responsibilities regarding attendance and engagement.
- 8.6 The Head of School must work closely with the College's support services to ensure that any barriers to student attendance and engagement, such as lack of access to IT resources or personal difficulties, are identified and addressed. This includes ensuring that students receive the necessary support and that staff are informed of any issues that may affect a student's ability to attend or engage.

9. College Managers Responsibilities

- 9.1 Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy and that students have been inducted into it.
- 9.2 Senior Leaders will receive reports on attendance, engagement and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They will maintain an

awareness of the effectiveness of student engagement, reporting this through relevant committees.

- 9.3 Senior Leaders will ensure there is a College wide approach to supporting students who are identified as not having access to appropriate IT resources to engage with the learning opportunities provided.

10. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Quality Assurance of Teaching and Enhanced Learning Policy
- Information Security Policy
- HE Withdrawal Procedure
- Marking a Student Register Policy
- International Student Engagement and Attendance Procedure

11. Policy Review

The effectiveness of this document will be monitored annually and fully reviewed every five years in light of experience and best practice.

Implementation Date September 2024

First Review Date August 2029