

Guidance on monitoring academic engagement for Postgraduate Taught courses

Context and requirements

All postgraduate taught students are expected to be engaging with their studies throughout the academic year. It's important that mechanisms are in place to monitor the engagement of students to identify where enhanced support from the collegiate University may be needed, or to consider whether a formal procedure should be initiated.

This guidance relates to all postgraduate taught courses, including those that come under undergraduate arrangements. It sets out the responsibilities of faculties and departments in relation to engagement monitoring and how to manage issues if they are identified.

Points of engagement and record-keeping

Engagement can be monitored using a variety of methods. Points of engagement can be in person and electronic. This may include:

- arrival and induction events
- lectures, seminars etc; some courses use swipe card entry to monitor attendance which is helpful, but a visual check is also fine
- submission or presentation of work
- examinations
- engagement with the course's Moodle site
- supervision reports submitted through the [PFRS](#)
- module selections, or dissertation title submissions/approval
- meetings with supervisors/course directors/programme leads.

This is not an exhaustive list and not all of these activities will apply to each course.

Consideration should be given by faculties and departments as to how they might ascertain that in general students are attending teaching sessions in person.

Lack of engagement

Efforts should be made to contact any student whose engagement with their studies is not as expected to check whether there is a problem and/or if extra support is required. It would be for the Department/Faculty to determine at what point action needs to be taken as this will vary depending on course structure and the point/s of engagement missed. However, the earlier an issue is identified and follow up can be initiated, the sooner the student can be supported to try and address it.

If an issue with engagement is identified, consideration should be given to which approach is most appropriate:

- Address the student's concerns and work to provide support in conjunction with their College and other [student support services](#), to allow them to re-engage/improve engagement with their studies.

- Consider whether the University's [Capability to Study](#) procedure is appropriate. Colleges also operate their own processes, sometimes called 'Fitness to Study'.
- Explore with the student whether a period of intermission might be appropriate.
- In some cases, it may be necessary for the student to be withdrawn where concerns around a lack of engagement have been raised, with an appropriate timeframe given for the student to reengage, but there has not been improvement:
 - Consider whether there are grounds for the Degree Committee to look at withdrawing the student under General Regulation 12e (Chapter VII) on the basis that 1) they have not been working to its satisfaction or 2) the student has not complied with the conditions laid down in their case or 3) the student is not likely to reach the standard of any qualification for which they might be registered as a candidate. The Degree Committee can make a recommendation to the Postgraduate Committee which will make the final decision.
 - For courses covered by undergraduate arrangements, the Faculty/Department should discuss procedures with the College, and guidance may be sought from EAMC and/or Student Registry.

Records of correspondence and actions taken should be documented and retained. However, there is no requirement to report the results of engagement monitoring centrally *except* for visa sponsored students in accordance with the separate instructions provided by ISO, or if formal action is required (e.g., the student is applying to intermit or is withdrawing/being withdrawn from studies).

Requirements for students sponsored for a student visa

Separate instructions on recording and reporting the academic engagement of students sponsored for a student visa for Home Office audit purposes are provided by the International Student Office (ISO).

If the student does not respond to contact and enquiries have been made with the College with no result, ISO should be informed. The Home Office requires that the University does not continue visa sponsorship where a student has stopped studying and they cannot be supported in re-engaging. The process to withdraw visa sponsorship would normally occur following a formal change to the student's status at the conclusion of the appropriate University procedure as outlined above.

Help and Advice

The [Education Quality and Policy Office](#) can advise on methods of engagement and [ISO](#) can answer questions on student visa sponsorship. The following may provide further related guidance where issues with student engagement arise:

Course type	Changes in circumstances	Residence requirements
Courses under undergraduate arrangements (LLM, MAST, MBA, MCL, MFin, MMus, and PGCE)	EAMC guidance	Statutes and Ordinances - Residence and Precincts of the University
Other programmes (MPhil, MRes, MEd, MSt, Diploma in Economics, Postgraduate Diplomas in Legal Studies and in International Law)	Changes to student status	Terms of Study/Residence