

School of Law Student Support Procedures

Attendance Monitoring for Academic Year 2011-12: Version 1.2 **September 2011**

Introduction

It is good practice to have in place a number of mechanisms to ensure that in the event of a student failing to appear for classes or an exam or failure to submit an essay or dissertation all reasonable attempts are made to contact the student. In the School of Law we aim to provide an efficient administrative support structure to allow us to quickly identify attendance problems and then follow up on those problems.

It is also important to note that there are several regulatory and legislative requirements which mean that we must ensure we are investigating all instances of non-attendance. Not least of these requirements is that imposed by the UKBA on all those with Tier 4 student visas and this document summarises a variety of compulsory procedures that we are required to support our students through.

The following represents a summary of current practices in the School of Law with some additional clarification of further action that may be required if the student in question holds a Tier 4 visa.

1. Confirmation of attendance at the start of the academic session

It is necessary to confirm attendance for all students and this must be completed after meeting with the student by clicking on the relevant box in EUCLID.

- For new undergraduates attendance is confirmed by the Director of Studies (DoS) after the first meeting.
- For continuing undergraduates attendance is confirmed by the team in the Student Support Office (SSO) after the student has reported to reception and presented their matriculation card.
- For postgraduate students attendance is confirmed by staff in the PG Office after the student has reported in person to that office.
- For Diploma in Professional Legal Practice student attendance is confirmed by staff in the Centre for Professional Legal Studies.

If attendance has not been confirmed by a specific agreed date (end of week five in Semester one or 10 days after programme should have commenced for later starts) or a student has failed to register then Academic Registry will automatically withdraw/discontinue the student. If the student holds a Tier 4 visa they will also be reported to the UKBA.

If the SSO or PG Office are aware of a particular approved reason why the student has not appeared/had their attendance confirmed then they must contact Academic Registry (registry@ed.ac.uk) and make them aware that the student is expected to be delayed before the cut-off date. (For example the attendance may be delayed because the student is still awaiting the issue of their visa and the Programme Director may have given permission for the student to start late).

2. Tier 4 students: Attendance census points during the academic year (New for 2011-12)

In addition to confirmation of attendance at the start of the year there will be further census points during the year where students with Tier 4 visas will be asked to report in person to Academic Registry. Detailed guidance about the census points will be circulated to all staff and students but the key information for 2011-12 is as follows:

Undergraduate Census One will be **week six of semester one (24-28 October 2011)** and students will be required to report in person to the Academic Registry which will be open all that week from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. Census Two will be during **week five of semester two (13-17 February)** and again students will be required to report in person to the Academic Registry (open all week 9.30 am- 4.30 pm).

Postgraduate Census One and Two will be the same as for the Undergraduates but there will be an additional Third Census during the **week of 23-27 July**. Again students must appear in person at the Academic Registry which will be open all week from 9.30 am -4.30 pm.

Please note that students are not required to make an appointment to complete the Census and can report at any stage during the Census week. When reporting to Academic Registry students must take along their student card, their current passport and visa and a biometric card (if they have one). Students who are on an approved leave of absence, authorised study abroad or field trip will be asked to email the Academic Registry (registry@ed.ac.uk) to explain why they cannot appear in person. Those students on interruption of studies will be exempted from this reporting requirement and similarly students who are following Distance Learning Programmes will not be asked to attend.

We will assist with advance publicity before the census periods and during the census week and all students will be contacted direct by Academic Registry with guidance about where and when they can report. We recommend that if any member of staff is aware that a student may experience a problem in reporting during the Census period they contact the SSO or PGO for guidance on how to support the student. For example if we know a student is unwell and will not be in a position to report at all during the week we will need to ask them to get a medical certificate.

Academic Registry will be sending notifications to all on-campus students who have a non-European Economic Area nationality on their student record so it is important to note that only those with Tier 4 visas are required to report. Some students may ask about this and should be advised that if in doubt they should check with the SSO or PGO. Only Postgraduate students will be contacted about the third Census period in July (excluding DLP and Distance Learning).

If a student fails to appear during the Census week the Academic Registry will report that to the School and we will have 10 working days from receipt of that report to meet with the student in person. The SSO will follow up on Undergraduates, the PGO will follow up on Postgraduates and the CPLS will follow up on any Diploma students who fail to report. Directors of Studies may be asked to help if we are unable to make contact with the students and for any who fail to appear in person in those additional two weeks we will have no option other than to report this to Academic Registry who will in turn withdraw the student and then report this to the UKBA.

It is unlikely that we will be unable to make contact with the vast majority of students over this prolonged period of time. Those who fail to appear at all may already be known to us by way of the other attendance monitoring processes that are outlined in the rest of this document.

3. Attendance Monitoring for Undergraduate Students

For all of the information that follows please note that these procedures will be applied without prejudice to all students. In addition note that the current guidance is such that it will only be necessary to report an international student's lack of attendance/academic engagement after 10 separate occurrences. This will therefore require student support teams to keep a record of individual trigger events.

3.1. Tutorial Attendance

There is an expectation that all students following Ordinary Courses should attend tutorials. All tutors have been advised that they must report non-attendance to the Teaching Office. If a student fails to appear for more than two consecutive tutorials then this will be reported to the SSO and this will be classed as one non-attendance occurrence. If the student is from Law the SSO will attempt to make contact with the student and his/her DoS and will report findings back to the Teaching Office. If the student is registered with another School this information will be forwarded to the relevant student support team in that School. If a satisfactory explanation is not provided for the missed tutorials this information will be passed by the SSO to the relevant DoS and by the Teaching Office to the relevant Course Organiser(s).

3.2. Honours Seminar Attendance

All Honours students are required to attend seminars and Course Organisers have been asked to keep attendance records. If a student misses two consecutive seminars or two out of three seminars this must be reported to the Teaching office by email Law.Teachingoffice@ed.ac.uk This will be classed as one non-attendance occurrence.

The Teaching Office will check to see whether or not there are other courses for which the student is missing seminars and all details will be forwarded to the SSO. As with missed tutorials, the SSO will attempt to make contact with the student and, if successful, the SSO will ask the student to contact the Course Organisers and/or DoS.

3.3 Failure to submit a summative assessment/Dissertation

From 2011-12 onwards all Honours essay submissions will be electronic and therefore not classed as contact points. If, however, a student fails to submit a summative assessment/Dissertation this will be reported to the SSO as well as the Course Organiser. The SSO will attempt to make contact with the student and, if successful, the SSO will ask the student to contact the Course Organisers and/or DoS.

3.3. Exam Attendance

The Teaching Office will follow up on any student who fails to sit a particular exam (identified once all papers have been checked). This will involve discussion with the SSO who may have logged special circumstances for this particular student. If there

is no known reason why the student has not attended the exam then the SSO will attempt to make contact with the student and his/her DoS.

Failure to sit an exam is considered as a formal “trigger event” and, where the student holds a Tier 4 visa, there is therefore a requirement to follow up and report the non-attendance to College. The College guidance on this particular trigger event is as follows:

- Non-attendance at an exam crystallises at the point that the marking has been done and it is noted that no paper was available and that no special circumstances case has been lodged. Schools will have to follow up any absences as soon as the marks list is available after the Exam Board meeting – that is “day 1” for these purposes.

Please note this means that there are therefore 10 days after publication of the marks list to make face-to-face contact with the student if that student holds a Tier 4 visa. In practice reasonable attempts will have been made to contact the student before this cut off and other progression and support mechanisms may necessitate communication with College prior to expiry of the time limit.

For all students if repeated attempts to contact the student fail then it is acceptable for the SSO to request the emergency contact details from Academic Registry. If the emergency contact is not able to provide satisfactory clarification for the non-attendance the student may need to be withdrawn. Please note that if the student holds a Tier 4 visa and has not appeared for 10 occurrences without satisfactory explanation this non-attendance must be reported to College. As a general rule we must try to make contact with students within 10 days of receiving a report of their non-attendance.

4. Non-School Undergraduates

For all three instances mentioned above if the student is registered with another School then the SSO will contact the relevant student support team to advise them that a student has missed an essay submission or failed to sit an exam. The SSO will only be expected to contact/trace students who are registered on School of Law degree programmes. This also means that the SSO may be contacted by other Schools regarding non-attendance of our students for trigger events on courses not owned by the School of Law.

5. Progression Monitoring for Postgraduate Students on Taught Programmes (including Diploma in Professional Legal Practice)

5.1. PGT/Seminar Attendance

All PGT/DLP students are required to attend seminars and Course Organisers have been asked to keep attendance records. If a student misses two consecutive seminars or two out of three seminars this must be reported to the Postgraduate office by email PG.Law@ed.ac.uk . This will be classed as one non-attendance occurrence.

The PG office will check to see whether or not there are other courses for which the student is missing seminars and all details will be forwarded to the relevant Programme Director. The PGO will attempt to make contact with the student and, if successful, will ask the student to contact the Course Organisers and/or DoS. Programme Directors will also be updated for those students who are missing a number of courses.

5.2. LLM/MSc Essay Submission

As all postgraduate essays are submitted online failure to submit an essay cannot be used as an attendance monitoring event. The Postgraduate Office (PGO) will, however, chase up all students who fail to submit an essay. If they are not able to contact the student this will be reported to the Programme Director.

5.3. Diploma in Professional Legal Practice (DLP)

Students following the full time or part time DLP are required to comply with formal absence reporting procedures which are administered by the CPLS Office. All tutors for this programme complete attendance registers and report non-attendance to the CPLS office. Students are asked to complete an absence reporting form if they have missed any session. The CPLS Office will investigate all absences and follow up on any student who fails to appear and does not complete the absence form. Any problems in making contact with students are reported to the Director of the CPLS. (If a student holds a Tier 4 visa and misses 10 days of teaching with no reasonable explanation and cannot be contacted then this individual will be reported to the College Office.)

The CPLS will follow up on any student who fails to sit a particular exam (identified once all papers have been checked). This will involve discussion with the Director of the CPLS who may have logged special circumstances for this particular student. If there is no known reason why the student has not attended the exam then the CPLS team will attempt to make contact with the student.

Failure to sit an exam is considered as a formal “trigger event” and, where the student is international, there is therefore a requirement to follow up and report the non-attendance to College. This College guidance on this particular trigger event is as follows:

- Non-attendance at an exam crystallises at the point that the marking has been done and it is noted that no paper was available and that no special circumstances case has been lodged. Schools will have to follow up any absences as soon as the marks list is available after the Exam Board meeting – that is “day 1” for these purposes.

Please note this means that there are therefore 10 days after publication of the marks list to make face-to-face contact with the student if that student is international. In practice reasonable attempts will have been made to contact the student before this cut off and other progression and support mechanisms may necessitate communication with College prior to expiry of the time limit.

For all students if repeated attempts to contact the student fail then it is acceptable for the SSO to request the emergency contact details from Academic Registry. If the emergency contact is not able to provide satisfactory clarification for the non-attendance the student may need to be withdrawn. Please note that if the student holds a Tier 4 visa and has not appeared for 10 occurrences without satisfactory explanation or, could not be contacted within 10 days after the 10th missed attendance, this non-attendance must be reported to College.

6. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Students

All PGR students must meet on a face-to-face basis with their supervisor at least three times a year. Dates for each meeting should be set well in advance and if either

the student or supervisor is required to change that date a new one must be set within 10 days of the original date. From 2011-12 onward we will be using Pebblepad as the mechanism for recording all supervision meetings with students and separate guidance about this has already been issued.

If a student fails to appear for a meeting with no good reason then the supervisor must report this to the PG Office. All reasonable attempts will then be made to contact the student or, if necessary, their emergency contact. If the student cannot be contacted within 10 days (including weekends and public holidays) and the student holds a Tier 4 visa this must be reported to the College PG Office.

When a supervisor is on sabbatical/research leave there is generally an expectation that they will maintain contact with their supervisee(s) by whatever reasonable means. If, however, the principal supervisor is away from the School the second supervisor will be responsible for conducting face-to-face meetings and must ensure that non-attendance is reported to the PG Office.

PGR students are expected to be resident in Edinburgh throughout their studies except where leave of absence has been granted. The Director of Postgraduate Studies can normally authorise this for the purposes of fieldwork for no more than 15 months in total over the course of the PhD study; absence for other reasons or periods beyond this length will require an application to be made to College. PGR students holding a Tier 4 visa will be required to attend Registry during the Census dates unless leave of absence has been authorised.

Failure to attend the first year review or other formal review meetings without reasonable cause must also be considered as “trigger events” and the PG Office should be advised on this non-attendance.

There will also be a necessity to ensure that interruption of studies is not permitted on a retrospective basis and the Director of Postgraduate Studies can advise on the procedures for this.

7. Reporting non-attendance of students with Tier 4 visas

In accordance with UKBA legislation we are required to report non-attendance of students with Tier 4 visas after failure to appear at the University for matriculation/census or after missing 10 trigger non-attendance events. The College Office will take responsibility for deciding whether or not to report non-attendance incidents to Registry and the Registry will take responsibility for reporting an individual student to the UKBA. All international students will be made aware of this process at the point of registration.

College have provided a template form for reporting non-attendance to College Office and this is provided in appendix A.

8. Student Interruptions of Study and Withdrawals

There are formal procedures for dealing with requests for leave of absence and interruption of study for both UG and PG students. If any member of staff requires guidance on this please contact the SSO for UG students and the PG office for PG students. Please note that we are required to complete this either in advance or as close to the interruption as possible and retrospective permission may not be possible.

If a student indicates that they wish to withdraw they should be encouraged to speak to their DoS or Programme Director. If they do wish to proceed with the withdrawal the student must be asked to place their request to withdraw in writing either by email or letter. All notifications of withdrawal should be sent to the SSO for UG students, the PG Office for PG students or the CPLS office for Diploma students and the office will then use the appropriate form to send the request to Academic Registry. Students will receive written confirmation from the relevant School office that we have forwarded their request to Academic Registry.

School Administrator

Version (1.2) September 2011 (to be updated no later than September 2012)

APPENDIX A: Proforma: Decision by School to report non-attendance

1	Date of report	
2	Name of person completing report	
3	Role	
4	Non-attendance trigger events (delete as necessary)	Essay/ Dissertation/ Thesis Exam Lab PhD supervisory session
5	Date of series of events	e.g. Essay / Dissertation/ Thesis – (date the results are posted and no Special Circumstances case lodged) Exam – (date results are posted and no Special Circs case lodged) Lab – (date of lab) PhD supervisory session – (date session due)
6	If the student attends courses elsewhere in the University or in a partner HEI, date confirmation received that student is in non-attendance there also	name and position of person reporting.
7	Emergency contacts contacted?	
8	Finance check – are fees up-to- date?	
9	Accommodation Services, if applicable – is rent up to date?	
10	Name and position of person approving report to Registry, to be conveyed to UKBA	
11	Date of approval by College	
12	Name of person inputting decision to UKBA sponsor management system	Registry. Level 1 user.
13	Date of input	

