

Student Attendance Policy

Lead Officer (Post):	Principal and CEO
Responsible Office/Department:	Senior Management Team
Responsible Committee:	Academic Board
Review Officer (Post):	Depute Principal
Date policy approved:	30/07/2025
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	30/07/2025
Date policy due for review:	30/07/2028
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	N/A
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	N/A

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is intended to support students to achieve good progress by committing to high levels of attendance and for staff to manage attendance where desired thresholds are not being met.
Purpose	Learners need to be aware of their responsibility to attend classes in order to make agreed progress. Staff need to manage students whose attendance prevents them from doing so.
Scope	All courses.

Consultation	The policy was reviewed by QIC and Academic Board including contributions from HISA.
Implementation and Monitoring	Quality Improvement Committee.
Risk Implications	Students who do not achieve high levels of attendance may not achieve their full potential and may impact on achievement rates. Staff can identify early if students are declaring an issue and support can be put in place to improve the quality of student experience.
Link with Strategy	Our Vision: UHI Shetland will be an inspirational hub of innovation and learning designed to meet the needs of the people of Shetland, nationally and internationally. Our Values: UHI Shetland will achieve our Vision by: • Working together - Fostering activity and interaction across the organisation and between staff and students. • Working for Shetland - Addressing skills needs, supporting innovation and applied research for the Shetland economy as the university for Shetland, with the University for the Highlands and Islands (UHI). • Working sustainably - Embedding sustainability in the curriculum and in our practice. • Working to become resilient - Encouraging staff development and aspiration, exploring and achieving new income streams. • Working with partners - Developing relationships with employers, schools, communities, SIC and relevant national and international institutions.

1. Policy Statement

1.1 We expect that students will attend all of their classes. A high level of attendance can be linked to improved engagement and performance in classes. Attending classes means that students can have their questions addressed by their lecturer, take advantage of peer support and make use of other support services on campus such as the library, Student Support, wellbeing support and HISA.

1.2 We understand that at times students are unable to attend, for example when a student is ill. If you are unable to attend, please can you contact your lecturer by 9.00am on the morning of your class, advising your reason for absence. Where possible, can you please advise when you may be likely to return to class.

For students engaged in school programmes (Skills for Work/Senior Phase) an e-mail should be sent to schools.shetland@uhi.ac.uk notifying UHI Shetland of the pupil's absence. UHI Shetland staff will then communicate this information with the schools.

1.3 The expected levels of attendance and engagement will be communicated to all students at the beginning of their course of study, e.g. you are expected to attend college (in person or virtually depending on your course) for all timetabled classes.

As a minimum, your attendance should not fall below 85%. Individual courses and professional bodies may have different attendance thresholds in order to obtain an accredited qualification – please check with your lecturer.

This policy aims to support students to stay engaged with their studies. It is not designed to punish but to identify early signs of difficulties and provide the right help as soon as possible

1.4 Individual student attendance and engagement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 1.5 Life events and personal challenges can affect attendance and engagement. If you are experiencing circumstances that are impacting your ability to attend or participate, such as health issues, family emergencies, or other matters beyond your control, please contact your lecturer or the Student Support Team as soon as possible. Where this is the case, students can apply for Mitigating Circumstances (MCs) as per the attached: [APPENDIX H - MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES](#). This may mean that you may be entitled to additional time to complete an assignment, for example. For further information, please contact your lecturer, the Student Support Team, or HISA.
- 1.6 Some students may be entitled to individual accommodations owing to a disability or condition. Please see [Support - Inclusive and learning support](#) for further information. If you think you may be entitled to additional support, please contact the Student Support team at support.shetland@uhi.ac.uk in the first instance.

2. Definitions

Students are expected to attend all published classes in order that they are afforded the best possible chance of success in their assessments. This policy advises students of steps that will be taken should attendance fall below the minimum expected standards.

This policy applies to students attending in person on campus as well as those attending remotely or through a combination (in person + remote classes).

3. Purpose

- 3.1 **Initial recording of absence:** In the first instance, where a lecturer notices that the student's attendance has fallen below the expected threshold, they will record a student's absence, will e-mail the student to highlight the issue

with attendance and remind about the expected level of attendance/engagement.

3.2 Stage 1 – First Missed Engagement

If a student fails to meet the expected level of attendance and engagement for their course (for example your attendance falls below 85% for 2 consecutive weeks or you miss 2 consecutive days without giving notice of your absence), the lecturer will contact the student copying in Student Support Team (SST) and highlight the concern with attendance and engagement. The student will be encouraged to re-engage and will be signposted to seek additional support through SST Student Support Team (SST) and [HISA Advice Service](#) where necessary.

3.3 Stage 2 – Second Missed Engagement

If a student fails to meet the attendance and engagement threshold for a second time, the SST team will be advised. SST will then contact the student with the relevant lecturer/s copied in. This communication will make the student aware of the consequences of low attendance and engagement and will invite student to meet with SST and lecturer to discuss their engagement. A student can seek support from the [HISA Advice Service](#).

At this meeting the student and SST & lecturer will agree a re-engagement plan, detailing the steps the student will undertake to re-engage, and the support that UHI Shetland will provide to assist them. This re-engagement plan will be forwarded to the Head of Section for information.

3.4 Stage 3 – Third Missed Engagement

At the point a student:

- fails to meet the minimum attendance and engagement threshold for a third time,
- fails to engage with SST at the previous stage, or
- fails to fulfil the requirements of their agreed re-engagement plan

The student will be invited to another meeting by SST to explain why they haven't been able to engage with the improvement plan. They may declare

any mitigating circumstances at this point. The meeting will involve the lecturer and Head of Section. A student can seek support from the [HISA Advice Service](#).

- 3.5 Should the student fail to attend this meeting the student will be sent an Assumed Withdrawn letter and given two weeks to respond before being withdrawn from the programme by the Head of Section. The student will be provided with further support, for example help accessing mental health support, support from the [HISA Advice Service](#) or other external agency support. The Deputy Principal will be copied into all communication as part of Stage 3.
- 3.6 There may be a financial impact of students not attending their courses, for example if students are receiving a bursary or EMA. Students who do not complete their course may have to pay back fees if they do not complete their course. If you're worried about the financial impact of withdrawal, Student Support can advise on bursaries, EMA, and other financial help. Please contact our team at support.shetland@uhi.ac.uk.

4. Exceptions

Depending upon the circumstances of the absence, the Head of Section may decide to address the issue of attendance in line with other policies as listed below.

If you let us know about mitigating circumstances, the process may be paused, and additional support or adjustments will be offered before any withdrawal is considered [APPENDIX H - MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES](#).

Students can request to be considered for mitigating circumstances at any stage of the policy. If you think this may apply, please view the attached guidance or speak to one of your lecturers.

A student may declare a disability or additional need at any time that may affect their ability to participate in their studies. If you think this may apply, please contact Student Support at student.support@uhi.ac.uk. Our Student Support Team will meet

Where learning means more

with you and it may be appropriate to draw up a Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP). We would encourage students affected to seek an early appointment so that any reasonable adjustments can be put in place, especially those that may affect your attendance.

5. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, and Other Resources

- [Student-Disciplinary-Procedure.docx](#)
- [Support for Study Procedures 2021/22](#)
- Mitigating Circumstances [full-asqr-2024-25.pdf](#) (Appendix H), [APPENDIX H - MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES](#)
- Inclusive Practice Network [Inclusive Practice Links](#)
- Bursary/EMA [ema-terms-and-conditions](#)

6. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	30/07/25	Academic Board, SMG		Head of Health, Care and Society, Depute Principal