Attendance Policy & Procedures

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Summary of Changes between previous and current version	Page Number
Minor changes to formatting	Page 4
Change from HEAT to AASP	Page 5

DGHE Attendance Policy and Procedures

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Student Attendance Policy

1.   Rationale

This policy is a response to the quality agendas and requirements presented by the Office for Students. It also takes account of the Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA) and the College's aim to fulfil its commitment to comprehensive student engagement. The College is committed to offering opportunities for the development of all students in ways that meet individual needs. One aspect of this is a commitment to improving retention and achievement through raising standards of attendance and punctuality.

Note: The current policy is not applicable to International students. For students that require a visa as prescribed under Tier 4 of the UKVI (United Kingdom Visa and Immigration) a separate attendance monitoring policy will apply.

2.   Aim

This policy aims to assist all students to take responsibility for their full and prompt attendance which will enhance their learning experience, develop their personal skills and promote retention, achievement and progression.

There is a strong correlation between good attendance and academic progress and therefore the College recognises the need to closely monitor attendance for all of its students, irrespective of their visa status and educational/academic level of study.

3.   Principles on which the policy is based

There are four principles underpinning the College's approach to student attendance:

a.   Student attendance should be managed across the College;
b.   Targets for student attendance rates should be set and monitored across all College programmes;
c.   Punctuality and full attendance at lessons should be a benchmark by which the quality of the College's teaching and learning is judged;
d.   Every effort should be made to maximise punctuality and attendance.

4.   Students' Entitlements

Students are entitled to the best opportunities to be successful in their studies. If a student's general attendance and punctuality give the College cause for concern and there is a worry that the student may not complete his/her studies successfully, the student will be contacted by the College Administrator to discuss their situation. An attempt will be made to identify any problems or difficulties and arrangements may be made for special help from the teaching staff or for tutorials and support. The College Administrator will listen to any problems raised and will try to give the support and guidance needed to help the learner to be successful. It is part of the student's entitlement that lessons start and end promptly. Every effort will be made to give warning of unavoidable changes or cancellations to classes.

5.   Students' Responsibilities

The College requires students to attend all classes punctually according to their signed learning agreement and course timetable. Students should not knowingly miss a class for anything other than illness or exceptional circumstances. It is not usually permitted for students to take holidays in term-time. If a student needs to miss a class, the following will apply:

a. If you have a planned absence, email attendance@dghe.ac.uk to inform the member of staff who teaches the lesson(s), in advance, (e.g. for a doctor's or dentist's appointment);
b. If you fall ill unexpectedly, phone the Student Services Officer, as soon as possible, to explain the reasons for your absence. They will ask for details and for how long the absence is expected to last;
c. In addition: Explain by letter or email the reasons for absence due to illness lasting more than one week.
d. The student must make arrangements to catch up on any work missed during the absence.

6.   Teaching & Administrative Staff's Responsibilities

All Teaching Staff are required to:

a. Mark attendance, absence and lateness in the online register and ensure it is submitted promptly after the end of taught classes
b. Arrange for contact with the student, via the Student Services Officer, wherever there is cause for concern;
c. Start and finish classes on time.

The Student Services Officer is required to:

a. Monitor and report on students' attendance and punctuality using the online attendance system.
b. Refer unresolved issues concerning attendance and punctuality to the   Head of School/Programme Manager/Advice and wellbeing team;

c. Ensure paperwork regarding student attendance is scanned and uploaded online onto the student record.
d. Send text messages to students, who are absent from classes
e. Email attendance warnings to students
f. Inform the College Administrator about the students to be withdrawn for non-attendance

7.   College Management's Responsibilities

The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy and that students have been inducted into it. In addition, the Head of Centre will be responsible for setting annual targets for attendance rates across all College programmes. In conjunction with the management information from the online register system, the Operations Manager is responsible for facilitating the

production of regular timely and accurate attendance data and reports, to allow staff to take prompt action for the benefit of students.

8. Standards by which the success of this policy can be evaluated

    a. Annual targets for attendance are met;
    b. Continually improving attendance and punctuality;
    c. High levels of attendance and punctuality when measured against relevant benchmarks;
    d. Swift action to support students with below acceptable levels of attendance and punctuality;
    e. Improved student success;
    f. Staff compliance with the policy during quality audits;
    g. Positive feedback in self-assessment reports.

9. Responsibility for implementing this policy

    a. The Head of Centre is responsible for overseeing the operation of this policy in the DGHE Centre;
    b. The Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring that teaching staff, and administrative staff, collaboratively address the requirements of this policy;
    c. The College staff, which includes subject specialists, together with appropriate support staff, are responsible for meeting student entitlement.

10. Review of this Policy

The Academic Administration and Support Panel (AASP) is responsible for the regular review of this policy in order to make sure that it is in full compliance at all times with the relevant laws and regulations.

Appendix: Student Attendance Procedures

i)   Rationale

Students have made a commitment to work towards achieving academic success by enrolling on their programme of studies. In order to achieve success it is important that they participate in, and engage fully with, all their scheduled activities such as lectures, workshops and seminars. The College, therefore, regards attendance as an essential part of students' studies. Further, the College is required by law to have robust systems in place in order to keep track of its students. In order to achieve this, the College monitors attendance very strictly so that it is able to ensure that students are not in breach of their legal duties.

ii)   Procedure for Recording Attendance

Attendance is recorded using an online system. The procedure must follow the guidelines below:

    a.   The Student Services Officer monitors the attendance at each class.
    b.   The Lecturer will access the online register via their Quercus login.
    c.   The link for the attendance register is available on the Lecturer's Calendar within Quercus.
    d.   Class attendance is registered by the Lecturer for the first and second half of the session.
    e.   There is a section for comments that both the Student Services Officer and the lecturer can make use of.
    f.   If a student has an excused late arrival, it will be pre-populated by the administrator, under the comment section. If a student is allowed to leave the class early, it will be populated by the administrator after the class has ended.
    g.   Lecturers must mark the attendance to the class using 1 (Present), 0.5 (Late) and 0 (Absent).
    h.   Students arriving more than 15 minutes late will need to wait for the first break so they do not disrupt the class.

iii)   Definition of an "expected contact" (Required Hours to Attend)

DGHE attendance expectations is guided by the Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH) provided by each specification unit of the awarding body, Pearson or the collaborative university partner in the case of a validation or franchise agreement.

Guided Learning Hours (GLH) are defined as the time when a tutor is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a programme. This definition includes lectures, tutorials and supervised study. Guided Learning also includes any supervised assessment activity; this includes invigilated examination and observed assessment and observed work-based practice. Therefore our attendance policy conforms to these guidelines:

David Game College, Higher Education Centre defines an expected contact as 100% of attendance to all classes that meet the required contact hours for each course provided at the Higher Education Centre. The College recognises that 100% attendance may not be achievable, due to personal circumstances, and therefore the policy of the College is to accept an overall attendance not lower than 80%.

iv) Examples of Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Authorised absence may include absences for reasons such as the following:
a. Illness
b. Medical and dental treatment
c. Wedding or bereavement of family members
d. Short-term exceptional domestic circumstances
e. Certain days of religious observance
f. Court appearances

In any such cases, the College will require *bona fide* evidence of such reasons, such as a doctor's certificate or other evidence in writing.

Unauthorised absence may include absences for reasons such as the following:
a. Holidays taken in term-time without prior approval by the College
b. Unsubstantiated illness, medical or dental treatment
c. Any unexplained absence

v) Punctuality

Students may be excluded from classes if they arrive more than 15 minutes late.

vi) Procedure for Authorised Absence

If a student is unable to attend a class, he/she must do the following:

a. In case of planned leave, students must email attendance@dghe.ac.uk with any documentary evidence.
b. In case of unplanned absence, inform the Student Services Officer as soon as possible (preferably on first the day of absence), to explain the reasons. You may be asked to produce evidence.
c. The College Administrator or Head of Advice and Wellbeing, will be responsible for the sanctioning of any leave. Records of authorised absence will be retained on the student's file.

vii) Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

The College Administrator is responsible for ensuring continuous and effective implementation of this attendance policy. The HEAT monitors the operation of this policy on a termly basis by receiving regular reports on student attendance. The following is the procedure for staff to monitor adherence to the Attendance Policy:

a. The College Administrator reviews the daily report and necessary action is taken. Students who have missed 1 week of classes without authorisation are telephoned to ascertain the reason(s) for the absence. If the attempted call is not successful an email is sent.

b. An official warning email is issued to students who have attended below 80% of the classes.

c. A student whose attendance falls below 60% will be issued a final warning informing them of the College's intent to withdraw them from the course. This is sent by email and they will have 5 days to respond. Such cases will be reported, via the completion of a withdrawal form, to any organisation actively collaborating with the College in the delivery of the relevant higher education programme, and Student Finance England (SFE).

d. The Student Services Officer reviews attendance each week and discusses any student who has received a warning letter with the Head of Admissions or Head of Advice and Wellbeing.

e. Unacceptable attendance and punctuality may also affect eligibility for examination entry.

f. A register of those students reported is maintained by the Registrar. A log of all the communications with students is maintained for future reference and follow-up by the Head of Centre or their representative.

g. An interview conducted with a student about attendance/absence or any warning sent to the student must be recorded in the online student record. The reasons and evidence for any authorised absences being granted will also be recorded.

h. The College will take all possible actions in its power to track the whereabouts of any students who have continuously failed to attend or have had their places withdrawn.

viii)   Class changes and cancellations

For timetable changes which occur on the day (e.g. where a class is cancelled because a lecturer calls in sick on the day of the class) DGHE will send students an email, text or phone call. If a timetable change occurs before the day of a class, an email will be sent to the student. It is therefore essential that students regularly check their email inboxes and texts. It is also essential that students keep their contact details up to date with DGHE. In order to change contact details students should get in touch with Student Services.