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| <b>Name of Document:</b>             | Attendance and Engagement Policy                 |
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| <b>Summary of Changes between previous and current version</b>                                                        | <b>Page Number</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Multiple edits to tighten up wording around international sponsored students' attendance expectations and monitoring. | 2,3,4              |

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

1.1 David Game Higher Education/University Centre at David Game College ('the College') is committed to an academically challenging and supportive environment giving our students the best opportunity to succeed on their programme. Central to our commitment to students is the recognition of the link between student success and their on-course engagement and attendance, with good engagement/attendance tending to lead to better outcomes. In addition, poor engagement/attendance can be an indicator that a student may need support of some kind to achieve success. The terms of the SLC loan (where applicable) include a requirement to attend classes and for the College to confirm attendance, which we monitor weekly throughout the year.

Failure to do so puts a student's loans entitlement at risk. Likewise, those with a "Student Route" visa type are required to meet certain minimum levels of attendance in order to remain compliant with UKVI expectations. Students sponsored under the UK Student Route are also required to maintain satisfactory attendance and academic engagement. The College is required to monitor sponsored students' attendance and academic engagement throughout their studies and, where necessary, take action in accordance with this Policy and the Sponsored Student Policy and Procedures.

1.2 It is the intention of this policy to provide a framework for identifying students who may require additional support to complete their studies and to specify when interventions take place.

1.3 The policy defines 'engagement' and 'attendance' and describes the expectations on students, and what actions may be taken by the College if a student fails to meet those expectations. It applies to all students enrolled on a taught programme delivered by the College.

1.4 The policy forms part of the College's overall academic framework and should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and regulations, including the Student Sponsored Policy and Procedures, Student Fitness to Study Policy, and the Non-academic Misconduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedures for Students. Students sponsored under the UK Student Route are subject to additional attendance and engagement monitoring requirements in accordance with the College's obligations as a licensed Student Sponsor. These requirements are mandatory and operate alongside the academic requirements of this Policy. Where applicable, sponsored students will also be subject to the provisions of the Sponsored Students Policy and Procedures. Any deliberate attempt by a student to circumvent this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter and the Student Fitness to Study Policy and Non-academic Misconduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedures for Students may be enacted.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 'Attendance' includes the activity of being present, whether on campus or online, at scheduled synchronous learning, teaching and other activities as required by the module and/or course. Students are expected to arrive at learning activities punctually and remain present for the duration. For students sponsored under the UK Student Route, attendance is normally required in person. Online classes (remote learning) do not constitute scheduled teaching for Student Route sponsored students and are not timetabled as part of their programme, except where the College has authorised remote delivery in exceptional circumstances (for example, severe disruption to public transport, campus closure or other circumstances approved by the College).

Learning activities may include:

Physical attendance at face-to-face scheduled teaching and/or other learning events (e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials, fieldtrips and examinations);

Virtual attendance at synchronous teaching and/or other learning events (e.g. video conferencing of live sessions, synchronous participation in an online forum and online examinations);

Attending meetings with Personal Tutors or other designated staff.

2.2 'Engagement' includes participation in guided independent or group study activities, assessment and feedback, and any other activities required, including:

Submitting assessments by the agreed deadline;

Accessing and/or interacting asynchronously with module materials, including viewing recap recordings and completing tasks in virtual learning environments.

### 3. UNEXPECTED ABSENCES

3.1 The College accepts that on occasion it may not be possible for a student to attend all scheduled teaching activities. Where a student is unavoidably absent, they must advise the Student Services staff ([attendance@ucdg.ac.uk](mailto:attendance@ucdg.ac.uk)) (that they will be absent for a short period. Advising the College of an absence is not the same as having that absence authorised by the College. For students studying on a Student Visa: If your absence extends beyond 5 consecutive teaching days, you must also contact the Compliance Team at [compliance@ucdg.ac.uk](mailto:compliance@ucdg.ac.uk)

3.2 All published assessment submission dates will stand regardless of the student's absence. The Mitigating Circumstances Procedures should be followed where a student requires an extension.

3.3 It is the student's responsibility to catch-up missed sessions. Staff are not required to provide additional support to students who do not attend learning activities.

3.4 **An Authorised Absence** is an absence from a scheduled learning activity that has been approved by the College or accepted following the submission of satisfactory evidence. Examples of Authorised absence include:

- a. Illness
- b. Medical and dental treatment
- c. Wedding or bereavement of family members
- d. Short-term exceptional domestic circumstances
- e. Court appearances

In any such cases, the College will require *official* evidence of such reasons, such as a doctor's certificate or other evidence in writing. An Authorised Absence is not counted for the purposes of an attendance percentage calculation.

3.5 An unauthorised absence is an absence from a scheduled learning activity that has not been approved by the College or is unsupported by satisfactory evidence. Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- a. Holidays taken in term-time without prior approval by the College
- b. Prolonged periods of unsubstantiated illness,
- c. Unsubstantiated medical or dental treatment
- d. Any unexplained absence

### 4. MONITORING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE

4.1 Amongst other things, monitoring student engagement and attendance enables the College to:

Improve retention and student wellbeing;

Increase student commitment to the course and improve academic outcomes;

Mitigate against the impact that low participation has on a student cohort;

Support the College in meeting its obligations to stakeholders including UKVI, relevant Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), student finance providers, DfE, Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Office for Students.

4.2 Student engagement and attendance data will be used by College staff to supplement knowledge of student activity and will not be used as the sole basis for an intervention.

4.3 Interventions will be in accordance with the thresholds described below, noting that some students are subject to different standards to meet PSRB or UK Home Office stipulations.

4.4 Student activity will be monitored throughout the academic year by Student Services staff and other staff with responsibility for student wellbeing.

4.5 Interventions for students sponsored under the UK Student Route are as follows:

4.5.1 Those recorded as having missed more than 2 consecutive classes are contacted to ascertain the reasons for absence and remind them of their obligations under this policy. Those recorded as having missed 1 week of consecutive classes will be reminded of their responsibilities to attend and engage in studies. They will be sent the template email called "Warning of missed classes 1 (INT)"

4.5.2 Those recorded as having missed 2 weeks of consecutive classes or are recorded as having not met the submission deadline for up to 2 assessments, will be required to meet with their Programme Manager (or other appropriate staff) to discuss underlying reasons for non-submissions/attendance. They will be sent the template email "Warning of missed classes 2 (INT)"

4.6 Where a UK Student Route sponsored student meets one or more of the criteria below, the case will normally be referred to the Attendance Review Panel in accordance with the Sponsored Student Policy and Procedures. Following the outcome of the Attendance Review Panel, the College's Withdrawal Procedures will be initiated, unless there are approved mitigating circumstances, for any sponsored student who:

4.6.1 Fails to submit 3 or more assessments by the expected due date.

4.6.2 Is deemed to have disengaged following a review of their activity.

4.6.3 Does not respond to meeting requests in relation to 4.5.2

4.6.4 Has an attendance below 75% and does not demonstrate improvement.

4.6.5 If a student fails to re-engage with their studies for 60 days the College will withdraw sponsorship (except in exceptional circumstances). If a student is not engaging the whole warning process takes no longer than 60 days (excluding holiday periods).

4.7 Interventions for all other students (i.e. non-international) are as follows:

4.7.1 Those recorded as having missed 2 weeks of consecutive classes will be reminded of their responsibilities to attend and engage in studies. They will be sent the template email called "Warning of missed classes 1 (UK)"

4.7.2 Those recorded as having missed 4 or more weeks of consecutive classes or are recorded as having not met the submission deadline for up to 2 assessments, will be required to meet with their

Personal Tutor (or other appropriate staff) to discuss underlying reasons for non-submissions/attendance. They will be sent the template email called “Warning of missed classes 2 (UK)”

4.8 The College’s Withdrawal Procedures will be initiated, unless there are approved mitigating circumstances, for any non-sponsored student who:

4.8.1 Fails to submit 3 or more assessments by the expected due date.

4.8.2 Is deemed to have disengaged following a review of their activity.

4.8.3 Does not respond to meeting requests in relation to 4.7.2

## 5. STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

### 5.1 Procedure for Recording Attendance

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

- 5.1.1 The Student Services Officer monitors the attendance at each class.
- 5.1.2 The Lecturer will access the online register via their Quercus login.
- 5.1.3 The link for the attendance register is available on the Lecturer’s Calendar within Quercus.
- 5.1.4 Class attendance is registered by the Lecturer for the first and second half of the session.
- 5.1.5 There is a section for comments that both the College administrative staff and the lecturer can make use of.
- 5.1.6 If a student has an excused late arrival, it will be pre-populated by the administrator, under the comment section.
- 5.1.7 If a student is allowed to leave the class early, it will be populated by the administrator after the class has ended.
- 5.1.8 Lecturers must mark the attendance to the class using 1 (Present), 0.5 (Partial) and 0 (Absent). The “AA” option signifies an authorised absence and is only to be used by administrative staff.
- 5.1.9 Students arriving more than 15 minutes late may need to wait for the first break so they do not disrupt the class.
- 5.1.10 For classes delivered online, there is a requirement to keep the camera switched on to be marked as present in class. The College reserves the right to ask a student for an ID check during an online class.

### 5.2 Definition of an “expected contact” (Required Hours to Attend)

The College’s attendance expectations are 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:

The College expects students to attend all their classes however we recognise 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% for undergraduate courses and 75% for postgraduate courses.

In cases where a non-sponsored student has a prolonged absence from synchronous delivery, their regular engagement with online resources via the VLE will be considered favourably in any potential decision to withdraw.

### 5.3 Punctuality

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

### 5.4 Procedure for Authorised Absence

If a student is unable to attend a class, they must do the following:

- a. In case of planned leave, students must email [attendance@ucdg.ac.uk](mailto:attendance@ucdg.ac.uk) with any documentary evidence.
- b. In case of unplanned absence, inform the College administrator as soon as possible (preferably on the first day of absence), to explain the reasons. They may be asked to produce evidence.
- c. The Student Services Officer, or Head of Student Experience and Wellbeing, will be responsible for the sanctioning of any leave for non-sponsored students. The Compliance Manager will be responsible for the sanctioning of leave for Sponsored students. Records of authorised absence will be retained on the student's Quercus record.

### 5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

Responsibility for ensuring continuous and effective implementation of this attendance policy lies with the Student Services Officer (for non-sponsored students) and the Compliance Manager (for sponsored students). The Academic Administration and Support Panel (AASP) 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 and Engagement Policy:

- a. The College administrator reviews attendance regularly. Students who have missed multiple classes without authorisation are sent messages reminding them of this policy and to ascertain the reason(s) for the absence.
- b. An attendance report (covering all provision) is automatically sent to all Programme Managers, and the Compliance Manager every week.

- c. Attendance warnings are sent by email and students 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 College administrator reviews attendance each week and discusses any student who has received a warning letter with the Head of Student Experience and Wellbeing.
- e. Unacceptable attendance and punctuality may also affect eligibility for examination entry.
- f. A register of those students reported to SLC as withdrawn, is maintained by the Head of Student Finance.
- g. A log of all the communications with students is maintained for future reference and follow-up by the Head of Centre or their representative. Communications to students are kept in both the Student Notes section and the Communications section of the students' record on Quercus.
- h. An interview conducted with a student about attendance/absence or any warning sent to the student must be recorded in the online student record on Quercus. The reasons and evidence for any authorised absences being granted will also be recorded.
- i. 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.
- j. In accordance with the College's Sponsored Student Policy and Procedures, the UKVI will be notified within the required timeframe when a sponsored student is withdrawn for non-attendance.

## 5.6 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) the College 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 the College. To change contact details students should get in touch with Student Services.

## 5.7 Data retention

Attendance records are kept for 5 years after the registers are completed in case of the need for audit by the UKVI or other authority.