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GBS Student Engagement and Attendance Policy

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Related GBS policies

- GBS Data Protection Policy
- GBS Equality and Diversity Policy
- GBS Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy
- GBS Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- GBS Support to Study Policy
- GBS Student Charter
- GBS Student Code of Conduct
- GBS Privacy Policy
- GBS Extenuating Circumstances Policy

External Reference Points

1. Information Commissioner's Office, Accessed online at: <https://ico.org.uk/>
2. UK Public General Acts, *Data Protection Act 2018*, Accessed online at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>

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Global Banking School Student Engagement and Attendance Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Global Banking School (GBS) acknowledges that there is a strong link between student attendance and engagement with their studies, and student continuation, achievement and progression. Therefore, GBS actively supports and encourages students to be active learners, attend and fully participate in all timetabled learning sessions and to engage with associated learning activities offered by GBS. In order to do this, GBS monitors levels of student attendance and engagement with the aim of:
- Encouraging and supporting students to fully engage with their studies so that that they develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to succeed.
 - Monitoring and acting, where appropriate, on student attendance and engagement to put support mechanisms in place and to help students to achieve their qualification.
 - Identifying students who may be at risk of not keeping up with their studies which may result in them being withdrawn from, or failing, their programme of studies.
- 1.2. Early identification of, and timely intervention with, students experiencing difficulties regarding engagement and attendance enhances retention, achievement and student wellbeing. Students showing an irregular pattern of attendance or prolonged period of non-attendance is often an indication of problems that may lead to underachievement, failure to continue in their studies, or withdrawal.
- 1.3. GBS has a duty to monitor the attendance and engagement of its students to fulfil its legal obligation to inform relevant external agencies of their registration status.¹
- 1.4. All decisions taken under GBS Student Engagement and Attendance Policy will be made on a case-by-case basis to ensure that each student is offered support according to their needs.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent approach to the monitoring of attendance and engagement, which ensures that GBS is compliant with external

¹ This includes GBS' responsibility to Pearson as awarding body, our partner institutions, the Student Loans Company, the UKVI when relevant and the Office for Students.

regulatory requirements and supports student wellbeing and the learning experience. Robust attendance and engagement monitoring will support timely interventions to provide effective student support and maximise the potential for individual students to succeed.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all students registered on all programmes delivered by GBS. Students may also be subject to the attendance monitoring process applicable at our partner awarding bodies.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. Student attendance is defined as the presence of a student at scheduled teaching and learning activities during a teaching block, term, semester and/or the full academic year, as most appropriately applicable. Attendance at a session is normally expected to be in person, but may, for example where there is approved mitigating, extenuating or special circumstances, or where additional support sessions are provided outside of normal teaching sessions, be virtual. Where virtual sessions are provided these are normally expected to be synchronous.
- 4.2. Student engagement is defined as the active participation by a student with their studies and the use of learning resources, including the GBS virtual learning environment (VLE) to support their learning. This includes:
- Attendance at all scheduled learning and teaching sessions and associated activities, including project supervisory meetings
 - Use of library facilities and VLE learning resources.
 - Engagement with formative assessments and submission of formative and summative assessments to specified deadlines.
 - Attending additional support sessions, such as resubmission support
 - Attendance at examinations or time-constrained assessment activities.
 - Responding in a timely manner to formal communications from GBS, such as letters, emails, text messages and telephone calls.

5. Monitoring and Recording

- 5.1. GBS monitors student attendance and engagement and may draw upon the following records to inform an overall profile for a student:
- Submission of assessment tasks and meeting assessment submission deadlines.

- Engagement with GBS Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), for example, accessing materials and participation in discussion board activities on GBS VLE.
 - Student registers taken during lectures, seminars, and other scheduled learning activities, or during formal examinations or class tests.
 - Usage of GBS Library and other learning resources, for example, borrowing of books, and accessing e-books or journal articles.
- 5.2. All information will be held and processed in accordance with GBS Data Protection Policy.
- 5.3. Where a student's attendance and engagement pattern gives cause for concern GBS will intervene in line with the process for unauthorised absence outlined in section 6.

6. Unauthorised absence

- 6.1. GBS monitors student attendance and engagement in order to act in cases where records indicate that students may be experiencing difficulties with their studies, either for academic reasons and/or personal issues in their lives. GBS' initial focus will be to provide academic and/or pastoral support, as appropriate to the student's needs. Communication with students is designed to encourage them to re-engage with their studies.
- 6.2. Attendance registers are checked one hour into each session and, when student absence is detected:
- The student is contacted immediately by phone by the Retention Team.
 - If there is no success in reaching the student with the first call, subsequent calls are made, and an email sent. GBS may also use text messaging services, such as WhatsApp to contact students.
 - This process is repeated for any absence in the first two weeks.
 - If the student is absent for a third week, the retention team emails the student to alert them that they are at risk of being withdrawn unless they make contact with the aim of re-engaging within seven days.
 - If the student has not re-engaged by the end of week 4 then a formal letter is sent via recorded delivery informing them that they will be withdrawn and that they will be suspended by the Student Loans Company.

- If, following, the issuance of notice of withdrawal, the student wishes to re-engage with their studies, they will be required to sign a learning agreement, committing to continue their studies.
 - All interactions with students are recorded in the contact tracker.
- 6.3. If, following all interventions, a student is deemed, without good reason, to be no longer actively engaging with their studies, their registration will be withdrawn and they will be reported, as appropriate, to the Student Loans Company, the UKVI, their employer or sponsor. Where relevant, GBS will remove the student's registration with Pearson as the awarding body or will inform the relevant HE partner as the awarding body. Students will be held responsible for any fees or other charges that may arise from the decision to withdraw them from their programme.
- 6.4. Where appropriate, students are signposted to the GBS student services for advice, support and guidance, including using the GBS Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

7. Authorised and informed absences

- 7.1. Students may request authorisation for short periods of absence for personal or religious reasons via their Student Success Tutor. Authorized absences are only granted in specific circumstances, such as illness (including illness of a dependent), medical appointments or bereavement of a close relative. Authorized absence will normally only be granted when supporting evidence is provided by the student. Where longer-term absences are envisaged, such as long-term sickness, a student may be advised to interrupt their studies.
- 7.2. Informed absence is recognized where a student has informed GBS in advance of a short-term absence, and continued engagement is indicated and 'an intent to return' provided, but an authorized absence is not approved,. Where this is indicated and the student does not return before or on the date of return set, the student's absence is counted from the last date of their attendance. Repeated instances of 'informed absence' may, where it is deemed to be affecting a student's ability to complete the programme successfully, result in the student being withdrawn for non-engagement.
- 7.3. Requests for absences of more than two weeks will be considered as exceptional due to the potential impact on a student's studies. Such requests must be made in writing with independent supporting evidence provided to the Level Leader. Where requests are

granted, it is the student's responsibility to catch up and complete any outstanding academic work.

- 7.4. Requests for absence will be assessed on an individual basis, and where relevant, students may be advised to use the GBS Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
- 7.5. For cases of absence beyond four weeks students must seek advice from their Level Leader (as appropriate) who may advise that the student should interrupt their studies and return at an appropriate point to pick up their programme. Interruption of studies would normally mean informing the Student Loans Company and the student being temporarily suspended. Upon return from the period of interruption of studies, GBS and the student must inform the Student Loans Company to enable financial support to be resumed for the remaining period of studies.
- 7.6. GBS reserves the right to refuse any request for authorised absence where the student's pattern of attendance and engagement already gives cause for concern. In such cases reasons for the decision to refuse an authorised absence will be given.

8. Student Rights and Responsibilities

- 8.1. Students are expected to participate in their learning, to take responsibility for their own development and, through such engagement, to demonstrate a positive attitude to their studies. Specifically, students are expected to:
 - Attend and actively contribute to all scheduled learning and teaching activities forming part of their programme of study.
 - Attend punctually and for the full duration of all scheduled teaching and learning activities.
 - Make full use of the available learning resources, including the VLE, to support learning.
 - Complete both formative and summative assessment tasks at the first opportunity and, where appropriate, to stated deadlines.
 - Communicate with the relevant GBS staff member (academic or professional) with regards to their attendance and engagement when necessary.
- 8.2. Students have the right to appeal against withdrawal from their studies under this policy. Appeals should be submitted in writing to their Level Leader within five working days of

the notification to the student and should be accompanied by appropriate evidence. The final decision resides with the Dean.

- 8.3. GBS will treat any deliberate attempt by a student to circumvent this policy, for example, by asking another student to register attendance on their behalf, extremely seriously. Any such attempt may lead to disciplinary action being taken using GBS Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

9. Communicating with Students

- 9.1. GBS communicates with students by phone, email and letter using the contact details held on our student record system.
- 9.2. Where hard copy correspondence is required, it will be sent to the student's registered home address as recorded on GBS student records system.

10. Student Illness

- 10.1. Short-term absence due to illness (1-2 days) does not need to be authorised, but the student should contact their Student Success Tutor to inform them if they are not able to attend a scheduled activity together with the likely date of their return. For longer periods of illness (3-5 days) students should submit a self-certification form.
- 10.2. Where sudden illness affects assessment, for example, assessment submission deadlines not being met, students should apply for extenuating circumstances to be taken into consideration using the GBS Extenuating Circumstances Policy. The extenuating circumstances form should be completed, with supporting documentary evidence provided as appropriate, and these submitted to their Student Success Tutor.
- 10.3. Where a student's health or wellbeing causes GBS concern regarding their fitness to study on a course, the student may also be referred under the GBS Support to Study procedure and Student Welfare Team as appropriate. The Student Success Tutor will deal with any such circumstance in the first instance.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1. Academic Board shall receive reports to monitor attendance rates, trends in attendance and engagement.

- 11.2. This policy may be amended by GBS at any time and will be reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose. Any issues related to the monitoring and review of this policy, please contact asqo@globalbanking.ac.uk.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 12.1. GBS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a Data Controller. Details of the School's registration are published on the Information Commissioners website. GBS as a Data Controller shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure that processing of personal information is performed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).
- 12.2. All GBS staff and students should be clearly informed about the limits of confidentiality in terms of information sharing in line with data protection law. Please refer to GBS Data Protection Policy for further guidance.

13. Alternative Format

- 13.1. This policy can be provided in alternative formats (including large print, audio and electronic) upon request. For further information, or to make a request, please contact the Academic Standards and Quality Office at asqo@globalbanking.ac.uk.