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**GBS Student Engagement, Attendance and
Withdrawals 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, Attendance and Withdrawals 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.

1.2. The student withdrawals referred to herein specifically exclude both of the following:

- 1.2.1. Student-led withdrawals (Self-withdrawals)
- 1.2.2. Withdrawals by Assessment Boards following academic failure.

1.3. In order to do this, GBS monitors levels of student attendance and engagement with the aim of:

1.3.1. Encouraging and supporting students to fully engage with their studies so that they develop the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to succeed.

1.3.2. Monitoring and acting, where appropriate, on student attendance and engagement to put support mechanisms in place and to help students to achieve their qualification.

1.3.3. Identifying students who may be at risk of not keeping up with their studies, which may result in them being withdrawn from, or failing, their program of studies.

1.3.4. Ensuring GBS meets its obligations to its partners, and to statutory and regulatory bodies, including the Office for Students and the Student Loans Company (SLC).

1.4. 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.

- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. This policy applies to all students registered on programmes delivered by GBS. Students may also be subject to the attendance monitoring process applicable at partner awarding bodies.

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 regulatory requirements and supports student wellbeing and 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.
- 2.2. The information arising from the application of this policy alongside other data sources enables GBS to withdraw students who fail to attend timetabled classes as expected to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Student Loan Company (SLC).
- 2.3. 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.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. Student attendance is defined as the presence of a student for most of a scheduled teaching and learning activity during a teaching block, term, semester and/or the full academic year, as most appropriately applicable.

- 3.2. Attendance at a session is normally expected to be in person but may in exceptional circumstances be virtual: for example, where there are approved mitigating, extenuating or special circumstances, or where additional support sessions are provided outside of normal teaching sessions. Where virtual sessions are provided these are normally expected to be synchronous.
- 3.3. Student engagement is defined as active participation by a student with their studies. Alongside attendance, engagement may include the use of learning resources, including the GBS virtual learning environment (VLE) to support their learning, the completion of formative and summative assessments, and both synchronous and asynchronous consultations with lecturers, Student Success Tutors and other academic support services.
- 3.4. An absence is when a student fails to attend any scheduled teaching and learning activity.
- 3.5. An Informed Absence is when a student has informed GBS in advance that they are unable to attend a scheduled teaching and learning activity. Informed absences will not count for SLC attendance reporting but will enable GBS to support students in making up missed academic work arising from short-term absences. Informed absences cannot be used to cover or support extended periods of time.

4. Student Responsibilities

- 4.1 Students Responsibilities: 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 services) with regards to their attendance and engagement when necessary.

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 VLE, for example, accessing materials and participation in discussion board activities on GBS VLE.
- Attendance 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 books, and accessing e-books or journal articles.
- Students informing GBS as soon as practicable of absence or other matters, such as physical and mental health and wellbeing issues that may affect their studies.
- Timely responses to emails, phone calls, text messages and other communications from GBS

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 give cause for concern GBS will intervene in line with the process outlined below.

6. Absence from Scheduled Teaching and Learning Activities

6.1 GBS monitors student attendance and engagement to act in cases where records indicate that students may be experiencing difficulties with their studies, either for academic reasons and/or because of personal issues. GBS's 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 GBS does not offer online teaching/distance learning; students must attend scheduled learning and teaching activities and to be in England to remain entitled to SLC funding. Submitting work does not count as attendance for the purposes of receiving SLC maintenance loan funding and/or preventing withdrawal.

6.3 Students whose circumstances mean they are unable to attend repeated scheduled classes will be directed to interrupt their studies to ensure compliance with the Student Loan Company.

6.4 Attendance registers are checked every session and, when a student is absent without informing GBS:

- The student will be contacted at the earliest opportunity by the Retention Team. If there is no success in reaching the student with the first attempt, subsequent attempts are made, and an email sent.
- GBS will use a variety of methods to contact students, including telephone, email and text messaging services, such as WhatsApp or other methods.
- Further attempts at contact are made regularly for the first two weeks of absence if the student has not returned to their studies.

6.5 If the student continues to be absent, the Retention Team and/or the Faculty will email the student to alert them that they are at risk of being withdrawn unless they make contact with the aim of re-engaging.

- 6.6 For students on programmes validated by the University of Suffolk, if the student is still absent by the end of week 3, formal notification is sent electronically on behalf of the Academic Registrar informing them that they will be withdrawn.
- 6.7 For students on all other programmes, if the student is still absent by the end of week 4, formal notification is sent electronically on behalf of the Academic Registrar informing them that they will be withdrawn.
- 6.8 All students who are at risk of attendance-related withdrawal will be emailed so they know they are at risk of withdrawal. Students should fully engage with these communications at this stage as no further warnings of withdrawal will be sent to them.
- 6.9 After 5-working days (for University of Suffolk programmes) or 10-working days for all other programmes, the student has not contacted GBS and fully re-engaged with their studies, they will be withdrawn. An email will be sent confirming they are now withdrawn.
- 6.10 If a student has valid reasons, with supporting evidence, as to why they should not be withdrawn they should submit an appeal to the Academic Registrar as indicated in the confirmation of withdrawal email. This is the only route by which to submit an appeal.
- 6.11 A successful appeal will consider all the options available to the student but will not necessarily result in their return to studies at that point in time.
- 6.12 All interactions with students are recorded and tracked.
- 6.13 All confirmed student withdrawals will be reported to appropriate agencies, such as the SLC, and the relevant awarding body will be notified.
- 6.14 Students may be held responsible for any fees or other charges that may arise from their withdrawal from their programme of study.

7. Attendance and Engagement Concerns

7.1. Where GBS is concerned that the levels or patterns of a student's attendance and engagement may impact their ability to successfully complete their programme of study, they will be contacted by the Retention Team and/or the Faculty to discuss their attendance with, and progress on, their programme, and to offer support to fully engage with their studies.

7.2. Patterns of attendance that might give a cause for concern include, but are not limited to:

- routinely arriving late for, and/or leaving scheduled teaching and learning activities early,
- poor engagement with their studies and/or occasional and irregular patterns of attendance.

7.3. If a student's attendance fails to improve, the student will be contacted again by the Retention Team and/or the Faculty, who will work with the student until their attendance is no longer a cause for concern.

7.4. 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.

7.5. All interactions with students are recorded and tracked and if, following the intervention of the Retention Team and/or the Faculty, a student's patterns of attendance continue to give cause for concern, they may be withdrawn from the programme in accordance with paragraphs 6.9-6.15 above.

7.6. All confirmed student withdrawals will be reported to appropriate agencies, such as the SLC for Pearson students, and the relevant awarding body will be notified for all other students.

7.7. Students may be held responsible for any fees or other charges that may arise from their withdrawal from their programme of study.

8. Informed Absences

8.1. GBS recognises that from time-to-time students may miss the occasional teaching and learning session for reasons beyond their control, such as illness, the illness of a dependent, medical appointments or bereavements. If a student is unable to attend a teaching and learning session, they should contact their Student Success Tutor as soon as possible to let them know. Informing GBS of an absence is not only a professional courtesy, but it also helps lecturers and Student Success Tutors to provide whatever help and support students may need to keep up to date with their studies. Students should note that whilst informing us of an absence is a sign of positive engagement, any absence, whether GBS is informed or not, is still counted as an absence under this policy.

8.2. Where a student anticipates they may have to be absent from their studies for a prolonged period, they should seek advice from their SST who may advise that the student interrupt their studies and return at an appropriate point to pick up their programme. Interruption of studies would normally mean informing the SLC and the student being temporarily put on a break in study. Upon return from the period of interruption of studies, GBS and the student must inform the SLC to enable financial support to be resumed for the remaining period of studies.

9. Suspension of Student Loan

9.1. Notwithstanding the preceding sections, where GBS has reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is not actively continuing to pursue their studies, GBS may inform the Student Loan Company and suspend all future payments to the student. Such measures help ensure that students do not receive loan payments for which they are not entitled and which they may subsequently be required to refund.

10. Right of Appeal

10.1. Students have the right to appeal against withdrawal as notified in any confirmation of withdrawal. The final decision resides with the Academic Registrar.

11. Communicating with Students

- 11.1. Students are expected to review their messages regularly and respond as necessary in a timely fashion to formal communications from GBS. A critical element of continual engagement with GBS is for students to ensure that GBS is informed as soon as possible of any changes to their contact details.
- 11.2. GBS communicates with students via a variety of mechanisms, including phone, SMS, email and letter using the contact details held on the GBS student record system.
- 11.3. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that GBS is aware of all changes to contact information.
- 11.4. Where hard-copy correspondence is required, it will be sent to the student's registered home address as recorded on GBS student records system.

12. Monitoring and Review

- 12.1. Academic Board shall receive reports to monitor attendance rates and trends in attendance and engagement.
- 12.2. 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 the Governance Team at governance@globalbanking.ac.uk.

13. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 13.1. 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).

- 13.2. 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.

14. Alternative Format

- 14.1. 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 Governance Team at governance@globalbanking.ac.uk.