

EU & Ireland ISC Attendance Policy

This document refers to the policy and minimum standards expected to be followed within the 2022/23 academic year.

Document Control

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Associated Documents

Names	
Attendance Management Operational Procedures	Critical supporting document that identifies the detailed procedures for use when managing Attendance
ISC Safeguarding Policies	Critical supporting document that identifies the minimum standards for ensuring standards of Safeguarding and Welfare
Visa Compliance processes (huddle site)	Storage area that contains related Visa Compliance documentation

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1 Purpose

This policy document (and the associated Standard Operating Procedures) set out the Provider's minimum standards for monitoring attendance to synchronous classes and learning activities in all EU & Ireland International Study Centres for the 2022-23 academic year. This policy applies to the management of all students.

Note: Asynchronous learning activities are not monitored using this attendance policy. Further descriptions of synchronous and asynchronous activities are noted in the definitions section below.

2 Definitions

- 'ISC' is an abbreviation for 'International Study Centre', a specific centre or college of study within the network of study centres across UK and Europe. For clarity, all references to 'ISC' and 'ISC network' within this document include Sheffield International College.
- 'Provider' is a term which is used to define the legal entity of Study Group (Study Group Limited) and its leadership that governs the ISC network (<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/>).
- 'Student' is a term used to define a person that is currently or intending to be enrolled on a course of study within the ISC network, and the term is used to describe an individual during the sales, admissions, pre-arrival and post arrival in an ISC.
- 'Parent' is a term used to describe the parent or guardian of a Student.
- 'HoC'/'CD' is an abbreviation used to describe the Head of Centre or College Director within an ISC.
- 'DSL' an abbreviation used to describe the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' within an ISC.
- 'ISC Attendance Monitoring' is a term used to identify the everyday processes used within an ISC to manage and record attendance and absence
- 'VLE' is a Virtual Learning Environment.
- 'Synchronous' is a term used to identify a live event that occurs in real time, typically a lesson or similar teaching activity that is proactively scheduled for a student to attend either face to face or via online means.
- 'Asynchronous' is a term used to identify an event that can occur at any time during a nominated period, typically a teaching or learning activity that is made available for a student to attend or complete via online means.
- 'MCP' or 'Missed Contact Point' is defined as zero instances of attendance in scheduled synchronous lesson or activity in a day.

3 Policy statement – Managing Attendance

At Study Group, we believe the best way students meet their potential and achieve high quality outcomes that allow progression to their chosen HEI is attendance in all classes and supporting teaching & learning activities, as described by the course documentation and literature.

The purpose of this document is to set out the Provider's minimum standards that are in place across the ISC network to: -

- Provide clarity on managing student attendance and to ensure that attendance issues are managed in a fair and consistent manner
- Ensure that teaching and Student Experience staff are aware of and action their responsibilities for recording attendance within synchronous and asynchronous activities, and observing the links between absences and the Safeguarding and Child Protection policies
- Ensure that the regulatory obligations and responsibilities are maintained

4 Informing students of the attendance procedures

It is a minimum requirement that each ISC produces student facing communications in order to inform them appropriately of the expectations contained within this policy. Students are to be informed of the relevant provisions and practices in regard to attendance during the normal centre induction activities at the start of their course of study.

In addition, students must have access to a documented set of guidelines in regard to attendance and absence management (usually in the form of an absence recording procedure, or notes within the appropriate sections of the provided student handbook, or similar document), which would be supplied within the usual induction activity.

Students must be informed of the expected levels of attendance on their course, namely that 100% attendance of synchronous activities is expected during their studies. In Ireland, the minimum attendance requirement as defined by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is 85% and may be set differently by other regulating bodies in the EU.

Students aged under 18 must be informed that absence from scheduled activity could result in the Welfare Team being involved as noted in the ISC Safeguarding Policy.

Students must be informed that attendance of their synchronous and asynchronous activities is a requirement, and that poor attendance may lead to a termination of the course of study and impact any visa.

Sponsored students must be informed that attendance records will be shared with sponsors on a regular basis, including details of all warnings that are issued. Students aged under 18 must be informed that attendance records will be shared with parents/guardians as required, including details of all warnings that are issued – unless, at the discretion of the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead, sharing these records would put the student at risk.

Note: Granular details of how attendance is managed and recorded by staff are not appropriate to be revealed to students, as this may lead to abuse of the attendance procedures. Therefore, the guidance issued to students will be distinct and only for reference by students, and the guidance to staff must not be shared with the student body.

5 Informing staff of the attendance procedures

5.1 Staff involved with managing attendance

It is a minimum requirement that staff are informed appropriately of this policy and the supporting Standard Operational Procedures document in preparation for the start of the academic year, or during their induction period. It may be

necessary to also create local operating procedures that are compliant with this policy and the supporting Standard Operational Procedures document.

Detailed Operational Procedures must be granular, only for reference by staff, and separate to the more generic guidance that is shared with the student body.

5.2 Staff involved with recording attendance

It is a minimum requirement that staff who are involved with the taking of registers and recording of attendance information will be trained in the relevant practices, including access to the centrally managed Progresso training materials.

5.3 Confidentiality

Provider level and ISC staff will not share or access confidential information in regards to attendance unless required to do so within the attendance management procedures, the disciplinary management process, within the complaints management procedure or if engagement or absence raises a safeguarding concern (or when managing any arising actions).

Attendance management issues will be recorded within Progresso within the Interventions Module (and may also be noted within the Behaviour Module in regards to specific welfare issue), and where it is necessary to discuss or summarise issues or actions across the ISC network or to outside agencies the information must be anonymised wherever possible.

All members of staff are expected to behave in line with the principles noted within the Global Code of Conduct, as noted in the associated documents section.

All students are expected to behave in line with the principles noted within the appropriate student handbook or other locally produced documentation.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

The noted roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance management are as noted below. Failure to adhere to the noted responsibilities may result in capability and/or disciplinary action as noted within the Global Code of Conduct.

6.1 Heads of Centre (or Centre Director)

Overall accountability for the attendance monitoring of students lies with the HoC/CD. The HoC/CD is expected to take reasonable steps to ensure compliance to this policy and the supporting Standard Operational Procedures by all appropriate staff.

6.2 Teaching staff

All ISCs have a requirement to actively manage a register of all students. For the purposes of the attendance policy, it is the responsibility of teaching staff to maintain the registers for synchronous lessons that they are delivering, within the provided Progresso system.

6.3 Student Experience staff

Student Experience staff are responsible for managing and monitoring attendance across the ISC network, and to support the Personal Tutor or designated person as appropriate to manage individual student issues. Changes to

timetables and scheduled activity are owned by administrative staff to ensure segregation of responsibility from teaching staff.

Student Experience staff may have varying job titles across the ISC network and are also typically involved with the set-up and operation of the ISC Progresso system.

6.4 Personal Tutor

The Personal Tutor is typically responsible for reviewing and managing attendance as a first point of contact with a student, including identifying the underlying issues behind poor attendance as this could indicate a safeguarding issue.

In some ISCs, a Personal Tutor may not be assigned but the duties in relation to attendance may be assigned to an alternative administrative staff member.

6.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Any attendance related matter that is identified as a safeguarding concern (or requiring a safeguarding related intervention) will be referred to the DSL as per the Safeguarding Policy, as noted in the Associated Documents section.

In the event that a student with special needs or a disability has an attendance problem, the DSL will ensure that the student is supported throughout all of the attendance management processes.

7 Minimum standards of reporting absence

All ISCs have a minimum requirement to provide a robust mechanism for students to report absence, and students must be made aware of the need to report absences as soon as possible and wherever possible before the start of a lesson or scheduled activity.

The reporting mechanism may be via email, phone or alternative methods, as indicated by centres in LOPs. Student Experience staff must monitor the reporting mechanism periodically each day and update the Progresso system and notify teaching staff where appropriate.

8 Minimum standards of recording attendance

8.1 Timetables and registers within the Progresso system

All ISCs have a minimum requirement to actively manage a timetable and by extension a register within the Progresso system. The Progresso system has a supporting framework of maintenance and technical support to ensure the system is available when required and is appropriately backed-up on a regular basis.

The timetable must proactively schedule and record the distinct individual synchronous scheduled events that students are required to attend in real time (typically these are lessons, lectures and other 'live' activities). Teachers who deliver these synchronous events are required to record the register within the Progresso system.

8.2 Taking of registers

It is a minimum requirement that teaching staff complete registers, and wherever possible these must be recorded in the provided Progresso system in real time, and during the specific lesson. Where real time recording of attendance is not possible (e.g. Progresso system malfunction) the register must still be taken in an alternative written record and transferred to the Progresso system as soon as is practical, and within the same working day wherever possible. Failure

to transfer a register to the Progresso system within a week of the synchronous event must be considered a compliance breach may result in in capability and/or disciplinary action as noted within the Global Staff Code of Conduct.

It is a minimum requirement that teaching staff complete registers using the prescribed codes for attendance and lateness that are specified in the detailed Standard Operating Procedures document.

If anomalies are identified with the timetable in the Progresso system that prevent a register being taken within the Progresso system, the register for affected students must be captured in an alternative written record. These must be passed to the appropriate Student Experience staff to remedy as soon as possible.

Failure to maintain an effective and accurate register may result in in capability and/or disciplinary action as noted within the Global Staff Code of Conduct.

8.3 Recording changes to registers and authorised absences

It is a minimum requirement that Student Experience staff (and not teaching staff) make changes to timetabled classes, such as in the instance of cancelled classes or scheduled activity, ISC closure days, or through authorised absence. Where a class is moved, attendance must be entered against the moved class and not for the originally timetabled slot.

It is a minimum requirement that Student Experience staff make changes to timetables using the prescribed codes for attendance and lateness that are specified in the detailed Standard Operating Procedures document.

8.4 Proactively authorising student absence

HoCs/CDs have the ability to use their discretion to approve a requested Special Leave of Absence. The procedure to do this must be documented and students made aware as noted in the Informing Students and Informing staff sections. The proactive approval of any authorised absence must be stored in the Progresso system and be retrievable for future reference by Student Experience staff.

As a minimum standard, the ability to retrospectively amend a Progresso record from unauthorised absence to an authorised absence (or other reason) must be limited to Student Experience staff only and not teaching staff or Personal Tutors.

8.5 Missing Registers

Student Experience staff must liaise with teaching staff to ensure that missing registers are entered into the Progresso system as soon as possible.

As a minimum standard, Student Experience staff will monitor and chase up missing registers from the Progresso system on a weekly basis. However, best practice would be that missing registers are identified and entered into the Progresso system on a daily basis for the full term.

For daily updates, Student Experience staff should run reports from the Progresso system no later than the following morning and chase up missing registers from the previous day with the appropriate teaching staff. Student Experience staff will then ensure that missing registers are added to the Progresso system by the end of that day.

If weekly updates are in place, it is suggested that Student Experience staff should run reports from the Progresso system no later than the Monday morning of each week and chase up missing registers from the previous week with the appropriate teaching staff. Student Experience staff will then ensure that missing registers are added to the Progresso system by the end of the day.

Whilst procedures and timeframes to chase missing registers and manage attendance will vary from centre to centre, it is expected that staff maintain sufficient control and due diligence over registers. As a minimum standard, Student Experience staff are expected to escalate instances of missing registers that have been outstanding for longer than a week to the Head of Student Experience (or equivalent) as a compliance breach to be dealt with at a senior management level.

Failure to maintain an effective and accurate register may result in capability and/or disciplinary action as noted within the Global Staff Code of Conduct.

9 Overview of the Attendance Management process

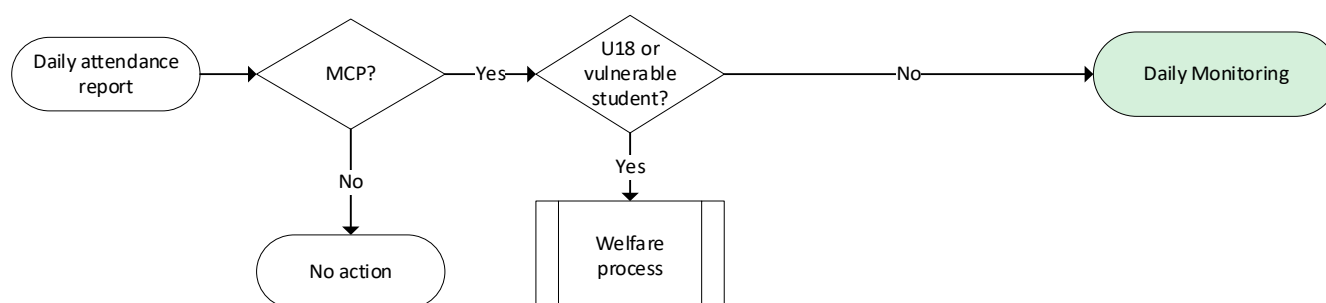
It is a minimum standard that the Attendance Management procedures in each ISC are operated in line with the process flow as described below, and in line with the supporting detailed Operating Procedures document.

Provision is enabled within the Operating Procedures to enable the Attendance Management processes to be expedited, should this be required for students who have absconded or have particularly poor attendance.

10 Minimum standards of managing attendance

10.1 Daily attendance monitoring

It is a minimum standard that a daily observance of attendance is completed, in line with the process flow as described below, and also in line with the supporting detailed Operating Procedures document. If a student aged under 18 years of age or who has been previously classed as vulnerable is reported absent, then this will be referred to the DSL as per the Safeguarding Policy, as noted in the Associated Documents section.



10.2 Monthly attendance monitoring

It is a minimum standard that at least a monthly cycle of attendance management is completed, in line with the process flow as described below, and also in line with the supporting detailed Operating Procedures document. Monthly here is defined as a calendar month and not the equivalent number of weeks.

HoCs/CDs have the ability to use their discretion to increase the frequency of the cycle of attendance management if required (so as to identify and operate a particular attendance management action, that may have been triggered within the usual monthly cycle). However, the frequency should be fairly applied to all students, unless a specific action has been triggered within an individual student attendance management plan.

Attendance Management Process

Calendar Month

