

Student Absence and Attendance Policy

POLICY DETAILS:

Purpose of this policy	Outlines expectations for monitoring and reporting of student absence and attendance, supporting students at risk of not progressing in their studies, and ensuring compliance with external reporting requirements.
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Approving body	Academic Council
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Author	Head of Academic Registry
Responsible Executive Group area	Secretary and Registrar
Related policies and documents	GSA Code of Assessment Leave of Absence Guidance Safeguarding (Adult & Child Protection) Procedures Support to Study Policy & Procedure Student Withdrawal Procedure Reasonable Adjustment Policy UKVI Student Visa Policy Student Pregnancy & Maternity Support Policy
Benchmarking	Current sector practice QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024

STUDENT ABSENCE & ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. Purpose

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is committed to providing all students with an exceptional learning experience and to ensuring they are fully supported to engage with and succeed in their studies. GSA recognises that regular attendance and active engagement are fundamental to student achievement and progression.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and structured framework for identifying and supporting students who may be at risk of not progressing or withdrawing due to poor attendance or low engagement. It ensures timely intervention, appropriate support, and a consistent approach to escalation where non-attendance continues.

This policy aims to:

- Clearly articulate GSA's **expectations** for monitoring and reporting absence and student attendance.
- Provide a consistent framework for **identifying and supporting students** who may be at risk of not progressing or withdrawing from their studies.
- Outline the **process for escalation** due to unsatisfactory attendance.
- Ensure **compliance** with external reporting, accreditation and UKVI requirements relating to student attendance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all enrolled students across undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

3. Definitions

Reported absence: an absence that has been formally requested or submitted by the student and acknowledged by the Programme Leader (or nominee).

Unreported absence: an absence that has not been requested, and the reason for non-attendance is unknown.

Attendance: confirmed participation in a scheduled learning, teaching, or other requisite course or programme activity, verified through an approved method (e.g., QR code or attendance register). Attendance includes, but is not limited to:

- Lectures, seminars, tutorials, and workshops
- Studio-based learning activities
- Scheduled meetings with academic or professional services staff
- Placements, fieldwork, and other required off-campus learning activities

Engagement: active and meaningful participation in learning activities that support academic progress and development, whether undertaken independently or collaboratively with peers or staff. Engagement includes, but is not limited to:

- Participation in scheduled learning and teaching activities
- Submitting formative and summative assessments
- Accessing, using, and interacting with online learning resources and Canvas (e.g., viewing lecture recordings, downloading learning materials, participating in discussion forums)
- Participation in groupwork
- Making appropriate use of learning support and resources (such as the library, study groups, and technical workshops)
- Attending scheduled meetings with academic or professional support staff

Programme Leader: throughout this document, reference is made to contacting the Programme Leader, who holds overall responsibility for students enrolled on a programme. The term Programme Leader should be understood to include the Head of Department, Stage Leader, Year Tutor, or Personal Tutor as appropriate. Information on the designated first point of academic contact will be provided during programme induction.

4. Attendance Expectations

GSA expects students to attend all learning and teaching activities associated with the programme on which they are enrolled. As members of the GSA academic community, students are expected to engage with and contribute positively to the shared learning environment.

Students are required to attend all examinations, tutorials, and activities that contribute to either summative or formative assessment. Where a student is unable to attend an examination or meet an assessment deadline due to exceptional or unforeseen personal circumstances, they should refer to the Code of Assessment guidance relating to requesting extensions and submitting a Good Cause claim.

Students may record attendance only for themselves. Fraudulent recording of attendance for another student will result in both parties being subject to the Student Conduct Policy and Misconduct Procedure.

Attendance will be deemed unsatisfactory where it falls **below 75%** over a monitored period of three-four continuous weeks. Attendance is normally recorded for all credit-bearing courses and monitored at both course and programme level.

5. Reporting and Evidence Requirements for Absences

Students should provide advance notification of any planned absences in writing (by online form or email).

Acceptable reasons for planned absences include attending a funeral; a medical appointment; an unavoidable work commitment that cannot be reasonably rearranged; unforeseen caring responsibilities; religious festival; conference attendance or representing GSA externally.

Where advance notification is not possible, the student must inform their Programme Leader within 1 working day.

Where an absence results in a missed summative assessment, such as an examination or a submission deadline, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the GSA Code of Assessment.

When reporting an absence, the following requirements apply:

- No evidence is required for absences of up to **five working days**, provided the absence has been reported to the Programme Leader.

For absences of more than five working days, a medical certificate or other suitable documentation must be provided. Reported and unreported absences count towards the overall attendance monitoring threshold. However, where an absence has been reported, this will be considered when determining the appropriate escalation stage and communication approach.

Any absence exceeding four weeks will normally require consideration of a Leave of Absence or, where there are significant capacity concerns, the Support to Study Policy and Procedure.

Any absence exceeding four weeks must be reported to Academic Registry to ensure compliance with student visa and other regulatory requirements.

6. Escalation Framework for Non-attendance

Where attendance is unsatisfactory, the following staged process will apply. Timeframes represent maximum thresholds and earlier intervention may occur where concerns arise, particularly in cases of significantly low or no attendance or engagement.

If there are significant concerns relating to wellbeing or safety, the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure supersedes this framework and should be initiated immediately.

If there are concerns relating to wellbeing or illness, the Leave of Absence Procedure and Support to Study Procedure can be discussed with the student at any stage.

Stage	Trigger	Actions
Stage 1- Early	Threshold of unsatisfactory attendance	The Programme Leader (or nominee) will contact the student to discuss and explore the reasons for their

Outreach	met. Less than 75% attendance over a 3–4-week period <i>or</i> 2 consecutive weeks of significantly low/ no attendance or evidence of engagement <i>or</i> 2 missed contact points for studio-based courses.	absence. Initial communication will be sent to the student’s GSA email account; if there is no response, follow-up can be made via personal email and by telephone. A short plan (typically two–three weeks) will be agreed, including clear attendance expectations. If an ongoing health or welfare concern is identified, consideration should be given to a Leave of Absence or referral to Student Support. If the student does not respond, engage with the check-in, or if attendance does not improve, the case will progress to Stage 2.
Stage 2- Formal Warning	Unresolved Stage 1	Cases are referred to the Academic Registry for formal warning. Students will receive an email from Academic Registry notifying them that their attendance has been formally recorded as unsatisfactory and they are at risk of not progressing or being withdrawn from their programme. Students will have five working days to respond. Where a student engages at this stage, explains the circumstances affecting their attendance and confirms their commitment to meeting attendance expectations, a short plan (typically two–three weeks) will be agreed with their Programme Leader. Where unsatisfactory attendance or engagement is linked to underlying circumstances, or where the volume of missed learning and assessment is substantial, consideration may be given to a Leave of Absence or initiation of the Support to Study Procedure. If the student does not respond within the given period, Academic Registry will issue a second letter warning of the formal probation period, which may result in withdrawal from studies.
Stage 3- Probation instigated	Unresolved Stage 2	If there is no response or improvement following the second warning letter from Academic Registry, probation will be implemented for a period of four teaching weeks. During this time, students are expected to meet agreed attendance and engagement expectations. It is recommended that progress is monitored weekly, with a final review of attendance and engagement during

		the probation period conducted by the Programme Leader. Probation Outcomes (agreed with Programme Leaders, Academic Registry and, where relevant, Student Support) Successful completion of probation: student is supported to return to their studies and Programme Leader will discuss an academic support plan to address missed learning and assessment. Extended period of probation: attendance has improved, however, expectations are not fully met. Recommended extension period of two weeks. Unsuccessful completion of probation: attendance during the probation period does not satisfy requirements and the student will be withdrawn from their studies. Depending on the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance or engagement, consideration of a Leave of Absence or Support to Study Procedure may also be appropriate at any stage during the probation period.
Stage 4- Withdrawal	Persistent non-attendance/failed probation OR serious UKVI compliance issue	Students will be formally notified that, due to continued unsatisfactory attendance, they will be withdrawn from their degree programme. Withdrawal means that enrolment status is permanently terminated and access to IT accounts and buildings will be withdrawn. Any eligible exit award at the point of withdrawal will be confirmed (for example, an Ordinary Degree).

7. Additional Circumstances

7.1 Support for Students with a Disability

Students who have a long-term medical or mental health condition, specific learning difference such as dyslexia, or a physical or sensory disability that may impact on their learning or ability to participate are encouraged to register with Student Support & Development Services.

For students who have completed a Learning Needs Assessment with Student Support, their individual learning requirements are communicated to Programme Leaders via the Reasonable Adjustment Report (RAR). Students are encouraged to contact Student Support (studentsupport@gsa.ac.uk) as early as possible to ensure that appropriate support can be arranged in a timely manner.

Reasonable adjustments are intended to support access to learning and engagement and do not remove the requirement for students to participate in their programme to the extent reasonably possible. However, individual circumstances recorded in the Reasonable Adjustment Report will be considered at all stages of the escalation framework.

7.2 Significant Concerns Relating to a Student

Anyone with a significant concern for a student's imminent wellbeing, safety or capacity to study must follow the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. This procedure supersedes the thresholds outlined in section 6 and can be initiated immediately.

For longer term support, the Support to Study Policy and Procedure can be initiated once attendance is deemed satisfactory, however, there are significant concerns relating to capacity to study.

7.3 UKVI Sponsored Students

Student visa holders are subject to a number of conditions with which they must comply. As their UKVI sponsor, GSA is responsible for ensuring that these conditions are met.

One of the requirements of a student visa is regular attendance and engagement in all aspects of the programme of study. To comply with immigration law, GSA must monitor the attendance and engagement of student visa holders and report to the Home Office any student who fails to meet the attendance or engagement levels outlined in this policy.

If UKVI requirements are updated beyond the standards set out in this policy, the UKVI requirements will take precedence and must be adhered to.

8. Retrospective Leave of Absence

GSA recognises that a range of factors may affect student attendance and engagement, and that these factors may also impact a student's ability to respond to or engage with the formal probation and withdrawal process.

Where extenuating circumstances can be evidenced as having prevented a student from responding or engaging between Stage 2 and Stage 4, students withdrawn under this policy may apply, retrospectively, for a Leave of Absence. Applications must normally be submitted within **one month** of the formal withdrawal date.

The Leave of Absence Guidance should be adhered to when reviewing applications and communicating decisions. Requests should be reviewed by the Programme Leader, Student Support Services and Academic Registry.

9. Complaints Handling Procedure

Any student who is dissatisfied about this policy, or the outcome of this policy, is entitled to raise a complaint.

Please refer to the GSA Complaints Handling Procedure.

10. Responsibilities in Relation to This Policy

Effective implementation of this policy relies on shared responsibility.

Students are expected to:

- Attend and engage in all learning and teaching sessions associated with their programme of study.
- Notify their Programme Leader in advance if they are unable to attend a session. This may be done in person, by phone, or by email.
- Notify their Programme Leader of any planned absence during term time.
- Notify their Programme Leader of any unplanned or unforeseen absence within **1 working day**.
- Maintain communication with their Programme Leader throughout any period of absence.
- Check their GSA student email account regularly and respond to all emails relating to attendance.
- Contact GSA Student Support where appropriate for guidance or assistance.

Programme Leaders are expected to:

- Remind students of the importance of attending all learning and teaching sessions.
- Ensure students receive clear, advance notification of all learning and teaching sessions.
- Refer students to GSA Student Support where appropriate.
- Ensure appropriate systems are in place within their area of responsibility for students to notify planned absences or report unexpected absences.
- Make students aware of the system for notifying absences.
- Identify any patterns of non-attendance and discuss these with the student.
- Undertake regular reviews of students' progress, including attendance, completion of assessments, and academic achievement.
- Take appropriate action to support students in achieving their academic aims or, where students are failing to engage, provide suitable guidance. This may include consulting with Learning Support or developing support or action plans for students at risk of not progressing or withdrawing.
- Attempt all reasonable means of engaging with the student prior to escalation (email, telephone, meetings).
- Escalate cases to Academic Registry when formal intervention is required.
- Have appropriate mechanisms in place for recording student attendance.
- Consult and agree with Academic Registry, in advance of the academic session, any attendance arrangements which are exceptional to the requirements in this policy, for example blended or hybrid delivery.

Academic Registry is expected to:

- Coordinate communications and outcomes between Programme Leaders and students involved in stage 2- 4 of the escalation process.
- Provide guidance to staff and students on GSA Attendance Policy and Absence Procedures.
- Update a student's record to reflect any period of absence including any supporting evidence provided.
- Ensure records are up to date with outcomes and all compliance requirements are met.

APPENDIX A

Useful links related to this policy

- **GSA Code of Assessment:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Code-of-Assessment.pdf>
- **Safeguarding Process:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Adult-Protection-Procedure-November-2025.pdf>
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Child-Protection-Policy-November-2025.pdf>
- **Support to Study Policy & Procedure:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Support-to-Study-Policy-and-Procedure-2023-2.pdf>
- **Leave of Absence Guidance:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Leave-of-Absence-Guidance.pdf>
- **Student Withdrawal Procedure:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Student-Withdrawal-Procedure.pdf>
- **UKVI Student Visa Policy:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UKVI-Student-Visa-Policy-1.pdf>
- **Student Pregnancy & Maternity Support Policy:**
<https://gsadocuments.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Student-Pregnancy-and-Maternity-Support-Policy.pdf>