



Code of Practice on Student Engagement and Reasonable Diligence

Approved by the Academic Regulations Committee 9th June 2022

1. Introduction

University College Birmingham (UCB) aims to provide an excellent student experience, in an environment that allows students to succeed academically, while developing skills towards chosen career paths. This is detailed in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy which was written by staff and students at the University. Active engagement with learning and teaching resources from both the University and our students, will enable us to realise its vision, ambition and opportunities. These resources include taught sessions, lectures, seminars, an Academic Skills Centre, HIREd, Library and Canvas. Research and data from both within UCB, and the wider higher education sector, has shown **that increased engagement between students and university resources has a positive impact on the probability of greater academic success and achievement** (Foster and Siddle, 2020; Summers, Higson and Moores, 2020; Clifft-Hindley, 2021). Therefore, the purpose of this Code of Practice is to provide a structured approach towards creating an environment that promotes success, achievement, and opportunities for our students, based on support, mutual decision making, and timely intervention.

2. Scope

This Code of Practice aims to establish an institutional framework for our approach towards ensuring students actively engage with the University and its resources in order to have a positive impact. The Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with the policies and procedures displayed in Section 9: Related policies and procedures.

2.1. This Code of Practice applies to the following groups of students:

- Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.
- Full and part time students, students on distance learning, collaborative provision programmes and placement.

2.3. Students undertaking a programme of study that is subject to fitness to practise and PSRB attendance requirements will be bound by the additional specific requirements for that programme as stated in the relevant Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise.

2.4. For the purposes of this Code of Practice, engagement will be defined as,

- Interaction with the virtual learning environment (VLE), which is currently CANVAS.
- Accessing the Athens online library.
- Attendance to all on-campus and online scheduled lectures and sessions.
- Active communication with academic members of staff and the Student Engagement team within UCB.
- Correspondence with Employability Tutors and placement supervisors.

3. Responsibilities of the University

3.1. UCB will endeavour to create an environment that provides students with an opportunity to perform to their maximum. This Code of Practice recognises that there are many single or combined factors that may affect engagement, and that it is important to identify and understand these factors to intervene and provide adequate support.

To enable this UCB will,

- Monitor engagement to identify students who may be faced with difficulty at the earliest opportunity.
- Contact students displaying what the University considers low engagement
- Ensure advice and guidance is available to students online, on request, and through direct contact.
- Publish information associated with programmes that is as accurate as possible, including timetables, and course materials.
- UCB staff should also ensure that Students are made aware of the sources of advice and support that are available to them while studying and on placement.
- Communicate changes to core information such as timetables effectively and efficiently.
- Support students who are experiencing challenging situations that may negatively impact their studies, where appropriate.
- Signpost students to relevant support.
- Take appropriate steps to bring to the attention of students the possible consequences of low engagement, and the requirement for Students to demonstrate satisfactory engagement with their programme of study. Such notifications should also indicate that failure to sufficiently engage with the programme may result in penalties and sanctions, as set out in the Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise and/or the Code of Practice on Discipline.

4. Responsibility of the student

4.1. Students are expected to engage with all elements of their programme and each of its constituent parts, including compulsory placements/work experience where appropriate.

This includes but is not limited to,

- Attending all scheduled lectures and sessions that are timetabled, whether scheduled in person or online.
- Accessing module materials weekly as these materials coincide with lecture delivery.
- Indicating any reasonable adjustments required that UCB will need to be aware of when organising and planning the delivery of the programme in line with the Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments.
- Monitoring their student email account to ensure essential information from UCB is received in a timely manner.
- Notifying UCB at the earliest opportunity of any pre-existing or new condition or circumstance, which may affect engagement with the programme.

5. Recording and Measurement of engagement

5.1. Engagement will be recorded and monitored by UCB and stored in accordance with UCB's Data Code of Practice. This will enable academic and support teams to undertake a proactive approach to identifying students that may require support. All Data Protection Policies and Privacy Notices can be found at <https://www.ucb.ac.uk/about-us/data-protection-resources-gdpr/>

5.2. CANVAS and Athens Library data will be monitored within UCB's Learner Analytics tool (StREAM). StREAM collects data from various data points from within the University, including CANVAS and Athens library, to create an engagement rating which will be used to classify students' engagement. Further details about the StREAM software itself can be found in the student guide in section 9, related documents.

5.3. Records regarding students' engagement information will be stored in StREAM. This includes notifications sent to students about their engagement, and any contact made to students by the Student Engagement team, regarding engagement. Academic teams may also use this information recorded in StREAM when undertaking tutorials, and place information back into Stream to allow the Student Engagement team to manage support in specific cases.

5.4. On-campus attendance will be recorded within the UCB Portal, and students can view and monitor attendance on the Student Dashboard on UCB Portal or via the U@UCB app. Attendance is available to view at module level and overall.

5.5. Overall responsibility for determining satisfactory engagement will reside with the relevant academic department, with support from the Student Engagement team. To determine satisfactory student engagement, the below contact points will be considered.

- StREAM engagement ratings at PARTIAL or above.
- Attendance above 80%.
- Successful completion of all individual tutorials.
- Submission of assessed work.
- Attendance to compulsory placement/work experience
- Registration for modules to the required credit value for the programme (including option modules).

5.6. Satisfactory engagement of students studying less than 3 modules a semester for example, project/dissertation module only, will be determined by,

- Attendance 80% or above
- Successful completion of all individual tutorials.
- Submission of assessed work.
- Attendance to compulsory placement/work experience

5.7. Where a taught student is undertaking a work placement that does not require them to attend campus more than 1 day per week, or utilise the VLE, satisfactory engagement will be determined by,

- Attendance within their given placement, as recorded by the Placement Tutor or on placement supervisor.
- Contact with the Placement Tutor as agreed between the student and the Placement Tutor.

5.8. International students should refer to the General Student Regulations and requirements of Student visa's regarding additional engagement requirements they may need to fulfil. Further information can be found by sending a request to Visa-Compliance@ucb.ac.uk.

6. Authorised absence

6.1. UCB recognises that unforeseen circumstances may arise that may influence a student's engagement. Students' welfare and interests are always in the forefront of decision making for both academic and support teams within UCB, meaning that support options will always be the first point of call when managing engagement concerns.

6.2. If a student is unable to attend on-campus or online teaching, or to engage with the VLE as detailed in section 5, they must notify the academic team, or the Student Engagement team if they are having difficulty with contacting the academic team; if this is not done, the absence will count as a missed point of contact and may affect the student's engagement. If it is accepted as an authorised absence, an exemption should then be recorded and placed in StREAM by the staff managing the case.

6.3. If a student believes that an unforeseen event may affect the completion of any assessment, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the academic team as the first point of call, or the Student Engagement team if they are having difficulty with contacting the academic team. The student should also notify the University by applying for the consideration of extenuating circumstances. Full details of the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances can be viewed [here](#).

6.4. Where possible, a request for authorised absence should be made to the relevant academic team at the earliest opportunity, this will allow UCB to provide the most appropriate advice, guidance, and support.

6.5. However, where an absence may have a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress, or where absence levels are already of concern, such requests may not be granted – this could lead to procedures in accordance with the Code of Practice on Discipline.

7 Engagement monitoring escalation procedure

7.1. UCB will always act in the best interest of the student to strive towards maximising achievement and success, attempting to intervene as early as possible if there are concerns that a situation may be detrimental to a student's welfare, future career ambitions, or financial bearing. Every effort will be made to avoid having to initiate the formal engagement escalation procedure. However, if informal attempts to contact and re-engage a student are unsuccessful, or available support will not help resolve the students' specific situation, the following procedure will apply:

If engagement is below expectation (as detailed in section 5) for 14 consecutive days, the Engagement monitoring escalation procedure will come into effect.

Stage 1.

1. The student will be contacted by the Student Engagement team to assess the situation and offer support. If the student feels they do not require support, or if the student does not respond, the student will be reminded of the engagement Code of Practice, and the engagement escalation procedure.
2. The Head of Department for the students' programme (or their nominee) will be notified.
3. If the students' engagement has not improved within a further 7 days, the student has not provided an explanation for their current engagement, or an agreement with UCB has not been made, stage 2 proceedings will begin.

Stage 2.

1. The academic Head of Department (or their nominee) will contact the student to request a formal meeting in accordance with the withdrawal Code of Practice.
2. Specific conditions will be discussed, and agreed upon by the student and staff, to allow continuation of studies.
3. If the academic Head of Department (or their nominee) decide that support plans will not be beneficial to the student, deferral or withdrawal options may be discussed.
4. This will be recorded on the student's dashboard on the UCB portal, and the Student Engagement team will be notified.

Stage 3.

1. If the student does not respond to the stage 2 meeting request within 5 working days or does not follow the steps agreed within the meeting with the academic team, a formal letter will be sent to the student explaining that withdrawal proceedings will now begin due to lack of engagement.
2. Continuation with the program may be possible if the student meets with academic team, and it is agreed that achievement is possible, though the student would be required to follow a strict support plan.

7.2. The first two weeks of each semester will be recorded and monitored, although the Engagement Monitoring Escalation Procedure will not be initiated, as UCB understands that some students' may be adjusting to the new semester.

7.3. If a student disagrees with any decision made because of engagement, they should contact the Student Engagement team if it is a general query.

7.4. A student may appeal against the stage three decision of the process via the Assessment Appeal Procedure.

Related policies and documents

Disability Code of Practice

<https://www.ucb.ac.uk/media/yxaljnbk/disability-statement-ucb.pdf>

StREAM user guide

<https://portal.ucb.ac.uk/download/StREAM/ucb-stream-student-guide-1.pdf>

Students Complaint procedure

<https://www.ucb.ac.uk/media/vfkpstt5/ucb-student-complaints-procedure-1222.pdf>

References

Ed Foster & Rebecca Siddle (2020) The effectiveness of learning analytics for identifying at-risk students in higher education, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 45:6, 842-854.

R. Clift-Hindley (2021) [Differences in Attainment by Level \(1\) - Google Docs](#)

Robert J. Summers, Helen E. Higson & Elisabeth Moores (2020): Measures of engagement in the first three weeks of higher education predict subsequent activity and attainment in first year undergraduate students: a UK case study, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*.