



Senate

Paper Title	Student Learning Engagement Policy
Outcome requested	To approve the Student Learning Engagement Policy
Points for Senate members to note and further information	The policy sets out the options for the monitoring of student learning engagement and supportive interventions for schools and institutes to apply. The procedures and accompanying guidance are designed to be used flexibly to ensure that the most appropriate measures for each discipline are used.
Questions for Senate to consider	Is Senate satisfied with the policy?
Regulatory/statutory reference points	The aim of the Policy is to set out minimum requirements, expectations, and clear standards to ensure consistent support for student engagement, aligned with the OfS Conditions of Registration.
Strategy and risk	Ensuring the monitoring of student engagement will make it possible to identify students who could be at risk of not progressing and provide interventions and support to ensure academic success.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve
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Student Learning Engagement Policy

Introduction

1. Improving students' engagement with their learning is one of the four pillars of Queen Mary's Education Strategy and a key enabler to open the doors of opportunities and be the most inclusive university of its kind. To achieve this, we have formulated this policy to improve the educational experience for our learners, and by using Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA) to measure and analyse learner engagement data.
2. Learner engagement is a multi-dimensional concept strongly associated with learning, retention, attainment, and success. Measuring it can provide insights into the learner's experience on a module or programme.

Purpose

3. This policy requires schools and institutes to monitor student engagement, which will make it possible to identify students who could be at risk of not progressing and provide interventions and support to ensure academic success and a positive student experience.
4. This policy sets out the options for the monitoring of student learning engagement for schools and institutes to apply to their modules. The procedures will be used flexibly in order to ensure that the most appropriate measures for each discipline are used.
5. The policy aims to empower students to understand how their data is used in relation to their engagement and be partners in their learning process.

Scope

6. This policy applies to all students, other than postgraduate research students, unless the specific regulations of the programme dictate otherwise. All schools and institutes should follow this policy. Specific expectations placed on students with a Tier 4 visa are explained in Appendix 2.

Key Principles

7. This policy is governed by a [Statement of Principles](#) developed in consultation with staff and learners:
 - We will use LEA to help all learners reach their full academic potential.
 - We will be transparent about data collection, sharing, consent and responsibilities including to learners
 - We will abide by ethical principles and align with our university strategy, policies and values.
 - LEA will be supported by focused staff and learner development activities.
 - LEA will not be used to inform significant action at an individual level without human intervention.

- We will actively work to recognise and address any potential negative impacts of LEA.

Procedures

8. Engagement metrics may vary based on several factors, and since each module is different, each school and institute will utilise a range of engagement markers to gauge learner engagement accurately.
9. Schools will closely monitor learners' engagement and active participation in various activities that are pertinent to their programme. These activities include (but are not limited to):
 - Attendance at selected timetabled teaching events such as large or small group sessions, labs and/or relevant teaching placements
 - Assignment submissions (formative and summative)
 - Use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) (i.e. QMPlus) and engaging with the resources on the platform
 - Meetings with staff members such as academic advisors, supervisors and the student support team.
10. This monitoring *may* only apply to certain aspects of the relevant programme as deemed most appropriate by the school or institute, for example core modules, as long as a cross section is included sufficient to give an accurate presentation of engagement.
11. Insights from the engagement data will be used by schools and institutes in various ways to provide support to learners, which will enable them to prosper in their studies, for example through setting up meetings with Advisors, directing students to access specific learning resources or agreeing a referral to support services.
12. Learner engagement is measured primarily through the University's analytics platform. However various measures may be used if they are confirmed to provide accurate data. The measures used will be agreed by each School or Institute.
13. Where the data implies students are disengaging, interventions will be dealt with by the appropriate staff member in the school based on their agreed process, and this process will be communicated clearly to students. When an issue is highlighted in which intervention might be appropriate, there will first be discussion with colleagues about the nature and appropriateness of any intervention.
14. Interventions will be supportive and constructive to identify the support the student needs, confirm the reasons for the disengagement and the options for the student to re-engage.
15. If the data evidences that students are disengaging based on the measures outlined above then every effort will be made to contact them to clarify the facts, understand the cause of the disengagement and identify any support required. Every attempt will be made to establish contact and to re-engage them - including by university email, personal email, phone call, checking all digital data eg log ins, swipe access to buildings etc.
16. Students should respond to attempts to reach them as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances. If the student does not actively engage with any of these attempts and there is no evidence of any engagement for a sustained period of time

then the School or Institute will invoke the [Enhancing Support for Students' Fitness to Study Policy](#).

Making supportive interventions

17. The University recognises that analytics can never give a complete picture of an individual's learning and may not take into account personal circumstances. It also recognises the importance of individual conversations alongside data analysis to obtain a more complete view of a situation. Steps will be taken to ensure that trends, norms, categorisation or any labelling of students do not bias staff, student or institutional perceptions and behaviours towards them, introduce discriminatory attitudes or increase power differentials.
18. Learning analytics systems and interventions will be carefully designed and regularly reviewed to ensure that:
 - Students maintain appropriate levels of ownership and autonomy in decision making relating to their learning, using learning analytics where appropriate to help inform their decisions;
 - Opportunities for "gaming the system" or any benefit to the student from doing so are minimised through use of large data sets, and monitoring of trends and patterns;
 - Knowledge that their activity is being monitored does not lead to non-participation by students or other negative impacts on their academic progress or wellbeing;
 - Adverse impacts as a result of giving students and staff information about the students' performance or likelihood of success are minimised;
 - Staff will have an opportunity to engage in the understanding of legal, ethical and unethical practice.

Roles and Responsibilities

19. Each School or Institute will identify a learner engagement lead to monitor delivery within the school or institute who will be provided with appropriate training and guidance.
20. It is the responsibility of each school and institute to ensure the Student Learning Engagement Policy is implemented effectively across programmes. Faculties will monitor this implementation via learner engagement leads.
21. It is recognised that implementation will include differentiation across programmes and modules and that appropriate levels of engagement and intervention will be agreed at School/Institute level and applied by relevant leads.
22. Schools will be responsible for communicating to their learners in multiple ways – eg Student Handbooks, Module Tutor briefings, QM Plus, slides in classes, emails to module groups - what the minimum expected levels of engagement are with the chosen metrics, and what the interventions will look like, including who will make them.
23. Students will have access to their data and it is their responsibility to access it if they wish to. They will be given support and guidance on how to do this.
24. For students studying on joint and interdisciplinary programmes it is the 'Home School' who has the responsibility to address engagement concerns and be responsible for communicating with the 'Contributing School(s)' wherever necessary.

The 'Contributing School(s)' should still monitor the academic engagement for the modules and if these students are not engaging with their studies should alert the 'Home School'. The 'Home School' should then reach out in a pastoral capacity to help the student to re-engage.

Support requirements and signposting services

25. Student Support operates within the framework of the university's core function as an educational institution. Our aim is to facilitate and empower students to actively participate in all aspects of their student lives, eliminating obstacles as needed. This is to ensure they can reach their maximum potential and thrive in both their academic pursuits and life beyond Queen Mary, University of London.
26. Our primary student support contacts, usually known as 'Student Support Officers', or sometimes 'Student Support Managers', are based in our schools and institutes. Among their functions is to monitor student engagement and, where appropriate, signpost students to the range of specialist support services which are based in central Professional Services directorates such as Student Experience (<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/student-experience/>).

Complaints

27. If a learner would like to complain about the way their engagement is monitored or the interventions proposed have been handled then they may complain through the [Student Complaints Procedure](#), although informal resolution via the school or institute is always preferred

Use of Data

28. All personal data will be treated strictly in accordance with our [Data Protection Policy](#) and data protection legislation.

Appendix 1

Guidance for implementation for Schools and Institutes

The Student Learning Engagement Policy aims to serve as a supportive mechanism for students, emphasising early intervention rather than retrospective measures to address concerns before they escalate throughout the academic year. This applies to all students including those students who are sponsored on a student visa.

Decision Flow Chat

Please refer to this flowchart to assist you in implementing the policy.



STEP SIX: ACTION

If student engagement is below the defined threshold, then the following interventions should be actioned:

- Contact student using [QMAs model communications for learners](#) (adapt if needed, to include supportive measures) evidencing engagement levels.
 - Before moving through the stages of communication, try other methods of communication to ensure the student has received the first communication – e.g. use a personal email address, phone call etc.
- Track students who have been identified and monitor the impact of the interventions.
- Escalate to the next model communication within 2 weeks of the latest contact.



STEP SEVEN: FURTHER ACTION

If no improvement after a minimum of all stages of QMAs model communications.

- Students should respond to attempts to reach them as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances. If the student does not actively engage with any of these attempts and there is no evidence of any engagement for a sustained period of time then the School or Institute take follow up action.
- If non engagement is considered to be the result of an underlying health or wellbeing issue, invoke the [Enhancing Support for Students' Fitness to Study Policy](#).
- Where a student's engagement does not improve, it may be necessary to send an [engagement warning letter](#).
- Where a student does not meet the published requirements for engagement without good reason, they may be deregistered from the programme. ([Academic Regulations](#) 2.58-2.63)

Case Study

The School's student engagement team, consisting of the Learner Engagement Lead, Student Support Officer, and Senior Tutor/Director of Student Experience or equivalent, meets in August to determine the 2-4 modules in each semester of each programme year that will be used to track student engagement. Working with programme teams and the school's education committee, the engagement team identify the markers for selected modules. For example:

- Module 1: attendance at interactive large group sessions (Attendance Web Application), submission of formative assessments, QMplus weekly videos, accessing reading lists (QEngage/QMplus).
- Module 2: attendance at small active learning groups (QEngage), completion of weekly quizzes and summative assessment in weeks 6 and 12 (QEngage/QMplus).

Once the markers have been identified, the module teams ensure that the [engagement markers](#) have been set up correctly and that the student engagement team has access to the engagement marker data.

Once the semester starts, the student engagement team meets weekly to review engagement and determine interventions to support students including:

- Advising all students of monitoring using the [LEA level 0 email template](#) and information in the Student Handbook.

- Contacting new undergraduate and taught postgraduate students who have not accessed their welcome pages.
- Emailing students not accessing QMplus in week 1.
- Using the [LEA level 1 email template](#) to prompt students not reaching engagement thresholds in week's 1 and 2 (noting if elective modules it will be necessary to capture students changing their modules at the beginning of the Semester).
- Referral to Advisors to follow up with their advisees.
- Monitoring students' responses and engagement, sending the [LEA level 2 email template](#) as necessary.
- Telephone calls to students not responding to emails.
- Contacting students whose engagement remains a concern using the [LEA level 3 email template](#).
- Inviting students continuing to fall below engagement thresholds to a case conference with the Senior Tutor/Director if student Experience or equivalent and Student Support Officer, in accordance with [Enhancing Support for students – fitness to study policy](#).

Attendance capturing tools

[Campus M](#)

Room scanners

Opticon Scanners (hand-held barcode scanners)

Attendance web app (for smaller classes)

e-Clio

Support and guidance

QMPlus for setting up engagement markers – provided by TELT

QEngage – provided by ITS

[Fundamentals of Learner Engagement Analytics](#)

[QMplus and Learner Analytics](#)

[QEngage overview](#)

[Campus M](#)

Stakeholders



Faculty Education Managers

- Enable frameworks for embedding the Learner Engagement Policy within Schools.
- Facilitate establishing Faculty practices.

QM Academy Learner Engagement Analytics (LEA) Fellows

- Contribute to the reviewing and enhancing of Queen Mary's approach to LEA.
- Providing Academic leadership, engaging with internal stakeholders including Learner Engagement leads and Student Support Officers.
- Take a lead role in LEA adoption and scholarship, including training.

Learner Engagement Leads

- Lead the delivery of the Student Learner Engagement Policy within the School including guidance from the faculty.

- Make recommendations to the School's Education Committee on monitoring eg. key modules monitored, assignment submissions identified, QMplus engagement, attendance etc.
- Liaise with Module Organisers to set engagement markers specific to modules.
- Facilitate regular communication within the School to ensure timely interventions eg. weekly engagement data meetings.
- Chair a regular meeting with other stakeholders.

Student Support Officers

- Provides interventions as directed by the Learner engagement lead.
- Follow up with students not meeting the engagement thresholds using [QMAs model communications for learners](#).

Others involved in the process who may attend meetings within the school:

School Student Experience lead, Senior Tutor, Director of Wellbeing, Engagement Officer.
(These titles may differ per school).

Others involved in the process (not expected to attend regular meetings):

Advisors

- Discuss engagement scores within Advisor meetings, highlighting good engagement and supporting students with low engagement scores.

Module Organisers

- Identify engagement markers within their module.
- Facilitate access to module data to stakeholders.

Programme Directors

Faculty Representative (to allow continuity across schools)

Appendix 2: Sponsored Student Learning Engagement Monitoring

Introduction

As an immigration sponsor, Queen Mary is obliged to adhere to its sponsor duties in order to retain a Student sponsor licence and continue recruiting international students.

One key duty is the requirement to effectively monitor the engagement of those students who are sponsored on a Student visa (previously known as a Tier 4 student visa).

In order to comply with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements, the university must be able to demonstrate a single and robust academic engagement policy that applies consistently to all international students across the institution. It can be the same policy that applies to all students and may differentiate between levels of study (for instance, doctoral and masters by research students will likely have their engagement recorded in a different way to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students).

Sponsors must be able to produce their academic engagement policy on request and demonstrate:

- how it is being applied
- that systems are in place to monitor academic engagement
- what information is being recorded to confirm that students are academically engaging
- what actions are expected when a lack of academic engagement is identified
- the maximum period of non-engagement before intervention takes place does not exceed 60 days in duration (excluding postgraduate research and doctoral students)
- that they have a robust system in place to identify any student who has ceased to engage with their studies and the action they will then take to support the student to re-engage
- that they have a clear policy on when non-engagement will lead to withdrawal of sponsorship.

For students sponsored on a Student visa by QMUL, the University is required to maintain attendance records and to report absence in accordance with its sponsor duties to the UKVI. The University must be able to evidence sponsored Students' engagement records to demonstrate that engagement is recorded and that non-engagement is acted upon in the event of a UKVI audit.

Each School/Institute will set their own expectations for appropriate attendance and engagement levels. This will be reflective of the nature of the programmes being delivered in that area, as well as the requirements of any professional, statutory or regulatory body. Engagement Monitoring Plans will therefore be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with requirements.

Sponsored Students are permitted to apply for an interruption in studies from their programme for personal or medical reasons. They may also request a short period of authorised absence. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Guidance and advice on these processes can be sought from the appropriate School/Institute contacts (academic advisor / Student Support team / supervisor).

For absences and breaks in study of more than 60 days, as well as failure to meet the minimum requirements as set out in this guidance, the University must withdraw sponsorship

of the student's visa and deregister them for lack of academic engagement (except in exceptional circumstances).

This guidance sets out measures for sponsored Student engagement monitoring as per UKVI requirements.

Academic engagement requirements for higher education providers

Band 1 – Study at a higher education provider at RQF level 5 and below

Students studying courses below degree level must be required to attend a minimum of 15 hours daytime (08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday) classroom-based study per week.

Where the student has not reached 85% attendance of their classroom-based study in any given month, the school/institute must review the reason for the student's absence. The student's record must then be annotated with the reason for the non-attendance and the steps being taken to improve the student's attendance.

Where a student's attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the sponsor must withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for the non-attendance (e.g. illness).

Band 2 – Study at a higher education provider at RQF level 6, RQF level 7 (Taught and Research) and RQF level 8

Schools/Institutes are expected to be able to evidence engagement for those who are registered on a Taught programme (i.e. a bachelors or masters degree). However, during the masters dissertation period, monthly confirmation of engagement is permitted.

For UG/PG Taught students, engagement evidence should be retained and monitored via attendance input through systems feeding into the University's analytics platform.

For PG Research students, engagement should be recorded in line with the Attendance and Supervision sections as defined by the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

Academic engagement evidencing a student's academic participation with their programme is indicated by activities including (but not limited to):

- Attending required lectures, seminars or tutorials
- Undertaking required laboratory work
- Undertaking research or fieldwork
- Submitting essays, assignments, projects and attending examinations

This is not an exhaustive list and not all programmes will contain all these study elements. Additional forms of engagement are outlined in the main Student Learning Engagement Policy and can also include:

- Records of supervisory meetings
- Attending progress reviews (to include upgrade/downgrade recommendation meetings)

- Attending Viva Voce examination

The academic engagement policy must also set out the sponsor's policy for retaining contact with students:

- on work placements/research programmes/field research trips if the student is studying at RQF Level 6 or above
- on Postgraduate Doctor or Dentist courses
- on study-abroad programmes (outward from the UK)
- during dissertation periods, where the student has no taught elements during this period
- whilst undertaking official roles as Student Union sabbatical officers

Where a student opts to or must defer their studies for more than 60 days, sponsors are required to notify UKVI and withdraw sponsorship (unless exceptional circumstances apply).

Band 3 – Exceptions

During the following periods, sponsors are not required to monitor academic engagement of their students in any way for immigration purposes:

- During published/programme vacation periods
- During the post-study period (immigration permission between expected course completion date and visa expiry date)

Non-engagement

Any sponsored Student who fails to engage with any of their scheduled classes or meetings, without authorised absence or extenuating circumstances, risks their sponsorship being withdrawn, whether they are in the UK or overseas. Students should therefore contact their School/Institute if they are unable to attend scheduled teaching events or meetings.

The Immigration Compliance Team carries out its monitoring reports and continues to check for evidence of non-engagement. We will contact academic departments and expect to receive information pertaining to students regarding instance of non-engagement. The maximum period of non-engagement before intervention takes place must not exceed 60 days in duration (calendar days as confirmed by the UKVI) otherwise we must withdraw sponsorship and they will be de-registered from their programme.

Should Schools/Institutes become aware of a sponsored student with unsatisfactory attendance/engagement and/or failure to re-engage after exhausting all opportunities, they should contact the Immigration Compliance Team on immigrationcompliance@qmul.ac.uk.

REMINDER:

It is a criminal offence, punishable by fine and/or imprisonment, for anyone to provide, or offer to provide, immigration advice and services without being approved to do so by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) (or is otherwise covered by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999).

The Immigration Compliance Team and Advice and Counselling Service are therefore the only departments permitted to provide immigration advice to students.

Queries

Schools/Institutes with queries about attendance/engagement and the associated policies, please contact the Immigration Compliance Team on immigrationcompliance@qmul.ac.uk.

Students with immigration queries should be referred to contact the [Advice and Counselling Service](#).

Graduate Route Eligibility

For sponsored Students who intend to apply for the Graduate Route upon successful completion of their programme, they will need to meet the Study in the UK requirement of the eligibility criteria.

This means for students whose programme is 12 months or less in duration, they should spend the full duration of the course in the UK on Student immigration permission.

Students who are absent from the UK during a required study period (during term time) may find that their eligibility for the Graduate Route is at risk if they chose to undertake a period of study activity/their dissertation/project while outside the UK or take a period of authorised absence even if permitted to by the School/Institute and we continue to sponsor their visa.