

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY
ATTENDANCE POLICY
Revised – November 2010

Preamble

The Student Attendance Policy is intended to assist the University in enabling students to achieve their learning potential. The University recognises the enormous investment that students make, both in time and money, in choosing to pursue a programme of Higher Education and, as a responsible Institution, believes it has a duty to follow-up promptly on matters of non-attendance so that students can be supported and given every opportunity to succeed. In addition, the University has a legal duty to report non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) students with Tier 4 visas to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) when the student has missed 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts. (See Canterbury Christ Church University's UKBA Compliance Procedures for guidance - Appendix A herewith).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The general expectations regarding Student Attendance are set out in this document, a link to which is provided in Student Handbooks and on the University's web pages.
- 1.2 This Attendance Policy relates to all University programmes. For those programmes leading to professional awards, where additional attendance requirements are specified by the relevant Professional Statutory Body (PSB) and **for those programmes where specific attendance requirements are detailed in the validation documents**, such requirements are published separately.
- 1.3 The Attendance requirements for students at a partner institution will be set out in writing in an annex to the Memorandum of Agreement with that partner. There is a presumption that the University Attendance Policy will apply to all students at UK partner institutions. Procedural variation may be allowed, if detailed in the annex, but must offer a student at that partner institution an experience equivalent to that of University-based students.
- 1.4 Programme Handbooks should include reference to the University Attendance Policy and give a link to the appropriate web pages.

2. Requirements regarding Student Attendance

- 2.1 Attendance at classes at the University is compulsory. Students are required to attend all classes, and where appropriate all practice placements, and to take responsibility for their own learning. Learning is a shared experience and students are expected to play a part in promoting collective understanding.
- 2.2 Attendance is necessary to help to:
 - enhance educational development within the area of study;
 - receive information about the programme;

- prepare for all assessments;
 - undertake any practical work or group work (including working with others in seminars).
- 2.3 Departments have a responsibility to remind students of the importance of attendance and especially the clear link between attendance and examination performance. This should be emphasised during induction and at initial meetings with personal tutors and also reinforced by module/course tutors.
- 2.4 The University has a legal duty to report non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) when the student has missed 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts. Departments have a responsibility to remind non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas of this duty and to make them aware of the implications of being reported to the UKBA. Please see the Canterbury Christ Church University's UKBA Compliance Procedures for guidance (Appendix A herewith).

3. Timetabled Commitments

- 3.1 The University timetable may include classes in the morning, afternoon or evening. These classes take place at a range of University locations (including campuses in Canterbury, Broadstairs, Medway, Salomons and Folkestone, together with Hall Place and other University owned premises or placement related accommodation).
- 3.2 The University timetable is published in advance on the University's web and is available to view via the Students Link from the Homepage. Students should check their timetable as soon as this is available.
- 3.3 To prevent timetable clashes, students following combined honours programmes within the General Modular Scheme and BA/BSc Scheme are required to choose any options available in their programmes of study from the relevant timetable option slot (e.g. X, Y or Z). Students are not permitted to take options which clash and should notify their tutors if they become aware of any timetable clashes.
- 3.4 Students should arrive on time for classes. Late arrival causes disruption to other class members and is unfair to the tutor.
- 3.5 Students should check notice boards (including Blackboard, if appropriate) and email communications regularly for information that may include important timetabling or room changes. Staff are asked to be mindful of students with disabilities when notifying them of timetable changes and to use the appropriate agreed means of communication – i.e. not a small notice on the notice board when there is a visually impaired student in the class.

4. Absence from Classes

- 4.1 Students should notify their tutors (or nominated administrator) of any absence from classes.
- 4.2 A student wishing to request a leave of absence, or returning from a period of absence, from their studies should complete Form LA1 (Student Request for Leave of Absence) and submit this to the Director of Student Support and Guidance via

email to secretary.ssg@canterbury.ac.uk. It should be noted that such formal leave of absence is normally granted only in cases of emergency or exceptional circumstances, and where supported by appropriate evidence.

http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/registry/examsandrecs/exams/absence_and_concessions.asp

4.3 In addition, for longer periods of absence, where there is a likely negative impact upon study, or when the absence falls at a time of assessment (for example, essays, reports, presentation deadlines or examinations) and the student wishes to request concessions, the 'Concessions Request Form' should be used. This form is available to download from http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/registry/examsandrecs/exams/absence_and_concessions.asp and should be submitted, with appropriate evidence (such as a medical certificate) as directed.

4.4 Programme Directors are responsible for ensuring that an accurate record of student attendance is kept.

5. Action in the Event of Non Attendance

5.1 For any University programme (whether leading to a professional award or otherwise), where there is systematic non attendance, University procedures will be enacted. If the absence is for 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts, the Cause for Care and Concern Procedure will be implemented directly, (Appendix B herewith). Where there is a cause for care and concern at any time this procedure should be initiated without delay. If the absence is persistent but non-consecutive, the student will, in the first instance, be contacted by the relevant Programme Director.

Such contact will:

- Remind the student that classes have been missed;
- Remind the student of the importance of attending all classes;
- Request an explanation as to why classes have been missed;
- Invite the student to discuss with their personal tutor and/or programme director any problems they might be experiencing that could be the cause of their poor attendance.

This contact should be undertaken throughout the programme, but with an appreciation that the early weeks of a programme may be more critical to a student's retention by the University. Contact should be via both letter and e-mail (and also possibly by SMS text or other appropriate means).

5.2 A student referred through the Cause for Care and Concern procedure to Student Support and Guidance (SSG) will be contacted by SSG as per the usual procedure but, if the referral is for absence for 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts and the student is a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa, SSG will send a copy of the referral form to the Registry. The Registry will verify the absence with the referring Department, check that the student is non-EEA and has a Tier 4 visa, and, as appropriate, report the student to the UKBA.

- 5.3 Where a student is identified as having persistent poor attendance, programme directors reserve the right to refer the student to the Head of Department.
- 5.4 Where students are referred to the Head of Department on grounds of poor attendance, the Head of Department will first reconfirm and offer appropriate support to assist with any difficulties experienced by individual students. Students will also be encouraged to seek support from central services, the Student Union and Student Support and Guidance Services as appropriate.
- 5.5 The Head of Department will also ensure that persistent absentees are notified in writing of the action that may be taken by the University in the event of continued non attendance. This will include informing students that they are unlikely to receive a sympathetic hearing from Boards of Examiners, in the exercise of any discretion that may be permissible, where there is evidence of significant non attendance.
- 5.6 The Head of Department will arrange for each individual student referred on grounds of poor attendance to be seen; the absence procedures will be explained and an Attendance Agreement drawn up. This will constitute a signed Agreement between the student and the University, and will be copied to relevant Programme Director(s) and placed on the student's central record.
- 5.7 Students will also be advised of the services available from the Department of Student Support and Guidance and, where appropriate, referred to those services.
- 5.8 In the event that a student does not turn up to see the Head of Department or non-attendance continues, the Academic Registrar will be informed and the student will be sent a letter stating that they are 'assumed to have withdrawn'. Their record will be amended accordingly unless they contact the Head of Department/Registry. The letter from the Registry will include reference to the independent advice available from Student Support and Guidance Services and the Students' Union.

Canterbury Christ Church University UKBA Compliance Procedure: Guidance for Staff

Background

The UK Border Agency (UKBA), which is part of the Home Office, has been established to support the Government's five year strategy for managing migration. A new Immigration System is in operation covering the mobility of non-EEA people in the UK. Non-EAA refers to people who are from beyond the European Economic Area.

Higher Education institutions are the largest volume users of the new system across both staff and student recruitment. The new system replaces 80+ work and study routes to the UK which are now consolidated into a 5 tier Points Based System (PBS).

The employment dimension of the system, Tiers 2 and 5, have been in operation since November 2008 and the student dimension Tier 4, will be introduced in full from February 2010.

Tier 4 of the Points Based System allows licensed sponsors to bring to the UK students that have a proven track record in studies who will benefit from the UK Education System.

Canterbury Christ Church University has successfully applied and received a Grade A sponsorship licence and has discussed with the UKBA our obligations and compliance with the new system.

This guidance is prepared in line with the current advice issued by the UKBA.

The UKBA's advice is constantly evolving, and so it is expected that the University's response to it will also have to evolve to ensure we are compliant.

Please be aware that the University will reissue this guidance, and other documentation, as it becomes necessary to do so. This version has been prepared in December 2009.

The University's legal responsibilities

Currently the University has five main legal duties in relation to making reports to the UKBA:

- The first is a legal duty to report non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas to the UKBA when the student has missed 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts. Being reported to the UKBA for non-attendance will have serious implications for the student's immigration status and their ability to remain in the UK. The University is not released from its obligation to report a student to the UKBA even if a student interacts with the University after this point. Being reported to the UKBA in this way will lead to

the student's automatic withdrawal from their programme and a withdrawal of the University's support for the student's visa.

- The second is a legal duty to report to the UKBA any change in circumstance, however minor, relating to a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa. This includes changes of programme, non-progression to the next period of study, and extension, interruption or withdrawal. Where a student interrupts or withdraws, the University will advise them to leave the UK and return home, and apply for a new visa if/when they are ready to resume their study. The act of reporting the student in these circumstances means that their visa will be cancelled because the Immigration Rules are no longer being met the student needs to return home otherwise they will become an illegal 'over-stayer' and this may have an adverse affect on any future immigration applications they may make.
- The third is a legal duty to report to the UKBA any information the University has become aware of which suggests that a non-EEA student on a Tier 4 visa is breaching the conditions of their visa.
- The fourth is a legal duty to ensure that, if there is a gap between expected student learning contacts of 60 days or more, for any non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa, the University reports this to the UKBA and advises the student to leave the UK and return home.
- The fifth is a legal duty to report to the UKBA when a non-EEA student who has been issued with a Tier 4 visa to study at Canterbury Christ Church does not register with the University for their programme of study.

The University is legally obliged to make any reports on the areas outlined above to the UKBA within 10 working days of the occurrence.

If the University does not comply with this system and its reporting requirements it will be breaking the law, and the downgrading or withdrawal of our sponsorship licence will seriously affect our ability to recruit and enrol international students

Heads of Department and Programme Directors' responsibilities to help the University meet its legal responsibilities

Heads of Department (who may delegate to Programme Directors) are responsible for determining what constitutes a 'student learning contact' for their Programme and for ensuring that there is never more than a 59 day interval between expected student learning contacts. It is recognised by the University, and accepted by the UKBA, that there will be variance between Programmes.

Programme Directors are responsible for making their students aware of the definition of a student learning contact through the Programme Handbook and other means.

Programme Directors are also responsible for monitoring and recording attendance in line with their Programme's definition of a student learning contact. Programme Directors are responsible for reporting non-attendance by initiating action in line with the University's Attendance Policy and the University's Cause for Care and Concern procedure.

The University's Attendance Policy and the University's Cause for Care and Concern procedure have been revised by the University in light of our new legal duties and the new versions can be found on the University's webpages at <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/student-support-services/staff/guidance-procedures/index.asp>

As the University may be subject to audit by the UKBA at any time, Programme Directors should ensure the process of determining what constitutes a student learning contact and its communication to staff and students is transparent and readily available for inspection as necessary.

Programme Directors are responsible for reporting **immediately**, through the mechanisms advised in this guidance, on the areas outlined in the section above to enable the University to verify the information being reported and to make the report to the UKBA within the UKBA's 10 working day reporting requirement.

What is an 'expected student learning contact'?

- Student learning contacts can be a blend of any or all of the following:
 - University teaching, tutorials or practical sessions;
 - placements external to the University;
 - submission of assessed and formative work;
 - and, attendance at assessed and formative examinations, tests and vivas.
- It is acceptable to cluster several student learning contacts occurring on one day so the sum total of the separate contacts counts as one student learning contact.
- An expected student learning contact is one which the student could have been reasonably expected to attend. Examples of when a student could not have been reasonably expected to attend are:
 - if staff sickness results in a student learning contact being cancelled, or bad weather prevents one or more students from attending, the attendance at the learning contact cannot be reasonably expected and it would therefore **not** count as non-attendance.
 - if a student has requested a leave of absence through the formal University procedure (Form LA1 (Student Request for Leave of Absence) available to download from the Registry's webpages) and has submitted this to their teaching department office, or made contact with their Programme Director, tutor or a nominated Programme Administrator to report sickness, the attendance at the student learning contact cannot be reasonably expected and it would therefore **not** count as non-attendance.

- There should never be more than a 59 day interval between expected student learning contacts as this will constitute a breach of visa conditions for a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa and require them to leave the UK and return home.

What about students on collaborative programmes?

All overseas students on collaborative programmes must be recruited following Canterbury Christ Church University's International Office Admission and Financial procedures. These can be found at:

<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/international/admissions-procedures.asp>.

In addition, collaborative partners should be directed to the UKBA to familiarise themselves with the points-based visa system for immigration. Information can be found at: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/managingmigration/points-based-system/>

The Attendance requirements for students at a partner institution will be set out in writing in an annex to the Memorandum of Agreement with that partner. There is a presumption that the University's Attendance Policy will apply to all students at UK partner institutions. Procedural variation may be allowed, if detailed in the annex, but must offer a student at that partner institution an experience equivalent to that of University-based students.

The responsibility for reporting to the UKBA will rest with the institution which has sponsored the student's visa. Where the University will be responsible for reporting to the UKBA, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure immediate communication between the collaborative partner and the University. This guidance, the University's Attendance Policy and its Cause for Care and Concern procedure can be shared with the collaborative partner.

What do I need to monitor and how should I monitor?

- The legal duty to monitor, record and report comes into force on 22/02/2010.
- By 01/02/2010, you should have determined what constitutes an expected student learning contact for your programme and made your students aware of the definition and of 22/02/2010 being the implementation date.
- From 22/02/2010 forwards, you should monitor, record and report on student attendance at expected student learning contacts for your Programme.
- Programme Directors whose programmes include placements should also establish a procedure for the recording, monitoring, and reporting of non-attendance at placement.

- Programme Directors on the BS/BSc or GMS schemes whose programme is studied in combination with another programme should use a shared mechanism to record and monitor attendance.
- Programme Directors of other programmes should determine the best mechanism for their programme to monitor and record attendance.
- Programme Directors are responsible for ensuring that their records of attendance are available at all times for internal and external scrutiny and that they are both accurate and verifiable.

How do students know what they and the University have to do?

- Programme Directors are responsible for making their students aware of the University's responsibilities through the Programme Handbook and other means as appropriate.
- Programme Directors should direct students to the University's Attendance Policy and the University's Cause for Care and Concern procedure for advice.
- Programme Directors should also direct students to the University's guidance for students, (attached to this guidance as Annexe A).
- Students can seek advice from the Student Advisor (International) in Student Support and Guidance and Programme Directors may find it helpful to refer students for support.

What do I need to do if a student is not attending?

- Please refer to the University's Attendance Policy and the University's Cause for Care and Concern procedure for the action to take in the event of non-attendance.
- Programme Directors are responsible for taking action or reporting **immediately** as per the Cause for Care and Concern procedure to enable the University to meet the UKBA's 10 working day reporting requirement.
- Programme Directors will be able to identify which of their students are non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas via a GOLD report from the University's student records system, QL. Further details will be announced in due course.

What do I need to do if a student wants to change their programme, interrupt, withdraw, extend their programme or they do not progress to the next period of study?

- Prior to agreeing any change in circumstance mentioned above for a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa, the Programme Director is responsible for seeking advice from the

International Office about whether the proposed change would impact negatively upon the student's visa status or require the student to make an application to the UKBA for a visa extension.

- Students can seek advice from the Student Advisor (International) in Student Support and Guidance and Programme Directors may find it helpful to refer students. The Student Advisor (International) can offer a student support to make an application for a new visa or an extension to an existing visa.
- Programme Directors need to be aware that, under the terms of their visa, **non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas are not permitted to study part-time.**
- Programme Directors also need to be aware that there are UKBA restrictions on sit/resit and submission/resubmission opportunities for non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas. **Non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas are only permitted a total of three attempts per unit of assessment** ie, each examination or assignment within a module. After this point, the University is not allowed to continue sponsoring a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa.
- If a change is agreed or occurs, the Programme Director is responsible for ensuring this is reported to Registry immediately to enable the Registry to update the student's record and to report to the UKBA within 10 working days of the date of the change. Programme Directors should report the change to the appropriate Records and Examinations team within the Registry and clearly state in their correspondence that it relates to a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa.

Who do I contact for further advice or support?

For matters relating to the Points Based System and the UKBA please contact the Visa Compliance Officer in Registry, Julie Samarasinghe: ukba@canterbury.ac.uk, 01227 782297.

Advice and support for students in respect of their visa enquiries is available from the International Student Adviser, Laura Spencer: laura.spencer@canterbury.ac.uk, 01227 782675.

Canterbury Christ Church University Cause for Care and Concern (C4C&C) Procedure

Canterbury Christ Church University is concerned for the welfare of its students. Additionally, the University now has a legal duty to monitor the non-attendance of non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas and to report to the UKBA any student in this category who is absent for 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts. To ensure that appropriate advice and support is offered to students in a timely manner, the Cause for Care and Concern Procedure should be applied for **all** students about whom there is a cause for care and concern, and this should be triggered at the earliest opportunity. (There is separate guidance for Programme Directors on Canterbury Christ Church University's UKBA Compliance Procedure: Guidance for Staff in relation to determining what constitutes an expected student contact).

The attached flowchart illustrates the procedure, and there are specific procedures for students who are a cause for care and concern as a result of their absence from expected learning contacts, and these are outlined below.

Procedures for Student Absence

Students who have any unexpected absence should, in the first instance, be invited to meet with their Programme Director or Head of Department in order to discuss the situation and hopefully resolve it (see Section 5.1 of the Attendance Policy). If the student is from a non-EEA country and studying here on a Tier 4 visa, it is important that they understand the requirement to attend and the consequences of failing to meet their visa requirements – this information is provided for them in separate [guidance](#) (see Appendix A).

If, having been invited to meet with their Programme Director or Head of Department, the student fails to attend and this raises a cause for care and concern, or they do attend and it transpires that they would benefit from further advice and support, then they can be referred to Student Support and Guidance (SS&G) using the appropriate **C4C&C form**.

It is advisable that, if the absent student is a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa, they are referred to SS&G before they reach the 10 consecutive absences that will trigger reporting to the UKBA. Clearly, the more time there is for SS&G to intervene and seek to get an absent student attending again, the more likely it is that this will be successful. Consequently, any referral for this purpose **should occur immediately after 7 missed expected learning contacts**.

It is very important that there is written communication, with non-EEA students on Tier 4 visas after seven missed consecutive learning contacts, in order to give the student the opportunity to re-engage with their programme and to notify them of the implications if they do not do so. There is a suggested text (attached herewith) for an email or letter to ensure all students are provided with the same basic information. Departments may supplement this as they wish but are advised to send an email and a letter and to keep a record of this, in addition to any telephone or face-to-face contact. Departments should use the appropriate **C4C&C form** to copy SS&G into the process so that they can also initiate their procedures to contact the student. If necessary, students will be advised

about submitting concessions evidence to the Academic Registrar or their Programme via the Programme Director or Programme Administrator.

As soon as any student has been absent for 10 consecutive expected learning contacts, they should be referred again through the Cause for Care and Concern Procedure using the appropriate **C4C&C form for 10 consecutive absences**. The procedure is initiated by the Programme Director or the Head of Department completing the Cause for Care and Concern pro forma and emailing it to studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk. This form, together with other referral forms, is available from Student Support and Guidance at: www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/student-support-services/staff/guidance-procedures/index.asp, under the section for 'Referral Procedures'.

Following a referral for 10 **consecutive** absences by non-EEA students, SS&G will refer the matter to the Academic Registrar and the student will be sent further correspondence from the Academic Registrar prior to their student status being changed to withdrawn. SS&G will also notify the International Office, who will provide the Registry with information concerning the student's agent and/or sponsor. The Registry will make certain of the student's Tier 4 visa status and verify with their Department that they can evidence the student's absence for 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts. On conclusion of these checks, the Registry will write to the student to notify them of the date that the University will report to the UKBA, make the change to the University's student records system, and, if appropriate, notify their funding body or Student Loans Company of their withdrawal. Registry is required to report the matter to the UKBA within 10 working days of the 10th absence.

If the C4C&C referral is also for something other than unexplained absence, SS&G will make continued attempts to contact the student before the student is referred to the Academic Registrar for withdrawal from the University. If necessary, students will be advised about submitting concessions evidence to the Academic Registrar or their Programme via the Programme Director or Programme Administrator. However, interaction between the student and SS&G **does not** release the University from its obligation to report a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa to the UKBA if they have been absent from 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts.

Suggested text for email and letter to be sent to students at the point when they have missed 7 consecutive expected learning contacts.

Dear x

I am contacting you because we have recorded that you have missed expected student learning contacts and we are concerned about your absence.

It is important for your studies that you resume attendance and you are advised to contact your Personal Tutor or your Programme Director to discuss this matter and to enable you to re-engage with your studies. If you have concerns that you feel warrants advice and support from Student Support and Guidance, then you can contact them by emailing studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk or by going through the i-zone@canterbury.ac.uk (01227 782222).

We need to make you aware that the University will enact its Cause for Care and Concern Procedure if your absence continues and you miss 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts and that this may result in your being assumed as being withdrawn from your programme.

Additional text for non-EEA students with Tier 4 visas

As you are a non-EEA student with a Tier 4 visa, we are reminding you that the University has a legal duty to report your absence to the UK Border Agency if you miss 10 consecutive expected student learning contacts. This will have serious implications for your immigration status and your ability to remain in the UK. It is essential that you resume your studies immediately. If you feel you need advice and/or further support, please make contact with the International Student Adviser in Student Support and Guidance – email studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk or make contact through the i-zone@canterbury.ac.uk (01227 782222).

I am copying this correspondence to Student Support and Guidance so that they will be aware that you may contact them for advice and/or support.

Cause for Care and Concern (C4C&C) Forms

Referral forms under C4C&C are available from Student Support and Guidance at:
www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/student-support-services/staff/guidance-procedures/index.asp

The following form is available for use when students have missed 10 consecutive learning contacts, as outlined in the Registry 'Guidance for Staff in relation to determining what constitutes an expected student contact'.

Cause for Care and Concern Referral (Attendance, 10 missed contacts)

From:	Name*:
	Programme Director/Pathway Leader etc for*: [insert name of programme/pathway]
Re:	Student full name*: Date of birth*:
	OR
	Student ID number*:

*These fields **must** be completed

I confirm that I have advised the above-named student that I am referring them as a 'cause for care and concern' and that they expect to be contacted by the Student Support Services. YES

This student is registered as being at the University on a Tier 4 student visa YES¹ NO

I am referring this student for non-attendance² because:

Please use the space below to give details of their non-attendance and the interventions you have already made to re-engage them in their studies.

Signed:

Date:

Print name:

Please complete the form in *WORD* and email it to secretary.ssg@canterbury.ac.uk, putting 'Cause for Care and Concern' in the subject line.

¹ It is essential to quickly identify students who are on Tier 4 student visas, since an absence of 10 or more expected engagements triggers an automatic referral to the Registry.

² Please note that where a referral is solely for non-attendance, the Student Support Services will endeavour to make contact with the student as soon as possible but cannot guarantee that the student will then re-engage with their studies. We will, however, notify you of the outcome of any contact we make.

Flowchart for action under Cause for Care and Concern Procedures.

