

UCEN Manchester Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure

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History**

Version	Date	New/Replacement	Summary of Changes
1	January 2025	Replacement	Addition of information around HE funding liability and a new process to ensure more robust compliance with our Student Loans Company contractual agreement.
1	February 2025	New	Addition of standardised letter templates to support the new process added around suspension of funding.

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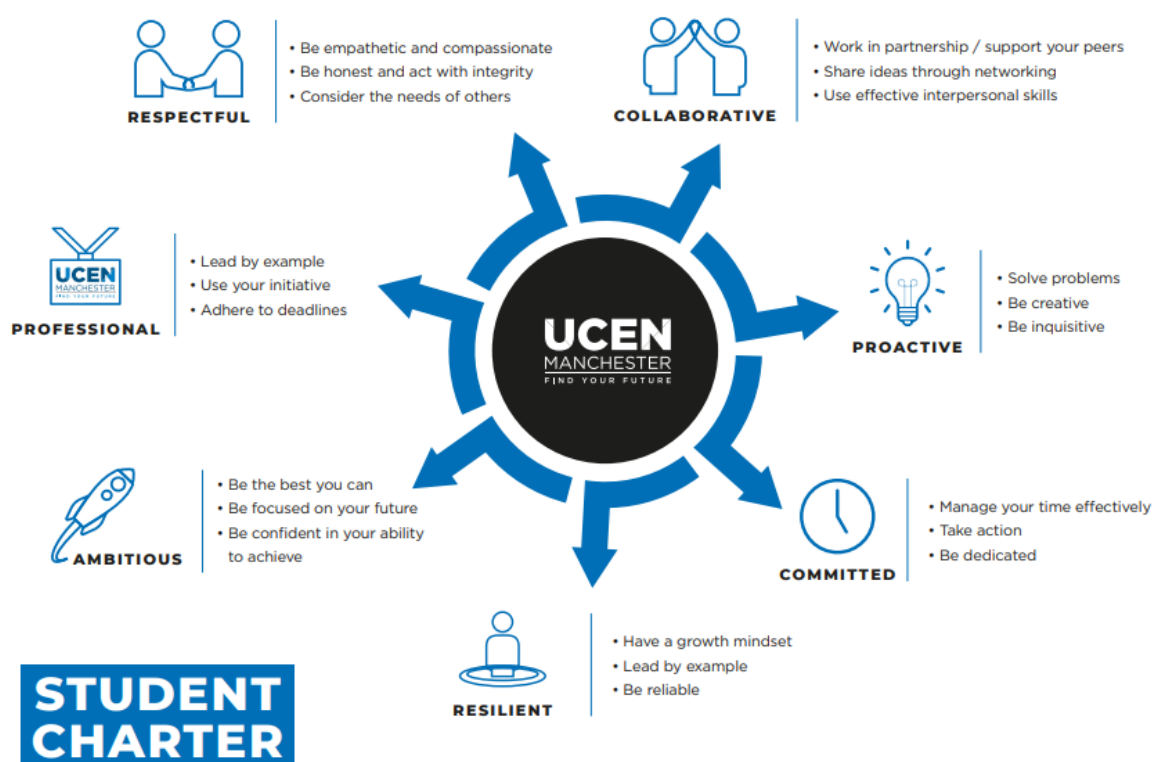
Scope

This Policy equally applies to all UCEN Manchester staff and students studying on or teaching on level 4 higher education programmes and adheres to the values of the LTE group's professional standards known as ARC behaviours and the Student Charter.

For staff these are:



For students these are:



The Office for Students (OfS) highlights the importance of student attendance as a key factor in academic success and engagement. Attendance is closely linked to higher rates of student retention, progression, and overall academic outcomes.

As part of the UCEN Manchester approach, staff and students work respectively and collaboratively together to ensure that students achieve excellent outcomes and remain highly satisfied with their educational experience. Therefore, in this context, attendance and engagement, is described as:

- Attending all scheduled sessions, including tutorials where possible.
- Arriving to sessions punctually.
- Staying on track and submitting work to the deadlines given.
- Communicating clearly and professionally when absent.

Scheduled sessions may include and is not limited to face-to-face sessions, virtual online sessions, and remote study. Students are expected to attend, participate, and engage in all scheduled sessions.

UCEN Manchester offers a wide range of accessible and differentiated support for students experiencing challenges due to mitigating or exceptional factors, whether this be pastoral, through the Personal Tutorial Model or the Future U Student Support Services or the Academic Services Department through applying for mitigating or exceptional factors.

Nonetheless UCEN Manchester expects a minimum of 85% percent attendance / engagement as recorded through our register system, due to external requirements such as the Student Loan Company and monitored through our Student Status Policy and Procedure.

Students who attend lectures and tutorials do better than those who do not. While independent learning remains the cornerstone of higher education, lectures provide direction for students facilitate key concepts and provide a forum for discussion and other activities that can enhance understanding. (Advance HE,)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly define UCEN Manchester's expectations and procedures that need to be adhered to. It also outlines the specific procedures for maintaining and marking registers in accordance with internal and external financial and auditable expectations.

Context within HE

1. What is Attendance and Punctuality?

- Attendance refers to the presence and participation of a student in scheduled face-to-face teaching, blended study and other learning related activities as per the agreed delivery mode for that programme.
- Engagement refers to the active involvement of and commitment of a student in their learning, including attending sessions, participating in discussions, completing assignments and utilising available resources, regardless of delivery mode.
- Punctuality refers to the consistent practice of arriving on time for scheduled sessions and other learning related activities, regardless of delivery mode.

2. Why it matters to UCEN Manchester?

Attendance and engagement are key to academic success, and this is particularly important to UCEN Manchester because we exist to ***“deliver first-class technical and professional higher-level skills to meet the priorities of the Greater Manchester region and beyond.”***

3. How this policy contributes to UCEN Manchester's Strategy?

This policy contributes to the wider UCEN Manchester Strategy by fostering a culture of responsibility and accountability ensuring that students are actively engaged in their learning experience. By promoting regular attendance and participation, this policy further aligns with

the Student Engagement Strategy as it encourages consistent interaction with course material, and the wider student experience activity, leading to improved academic performance, retention rates and student satisfaction. Ultimately, this policy is intended to strengthen the commitment to delivering high-quality educational outcomes for all students of UCEN Manchester.

The overall aims of this policy are to:

- a) Promote and encourage strong student engagement and participation.
- b) Ensure both staff and students have a clear understanding of the expectations of UCEN Manchester and the process which must be followed and adhered to.
- c) Provide an understanding of the circumstances under which exceptions to the policy may apply and how to request them (e.g. medical or personal emergencies, application of approved exceptional and or mitigating circumstances)
- d) Outline the consequences of poor attendance and the impact this may have on a student's progress.
- e) Provide guidance to ensure consistent and accurate application of register marks to meet auditable requirements.

4. How this policy contributes to our Access and Participation Plan?

Many students do not experience equality of opportunity in higher education. This is true across the three main stages of a student's higher education journey: **access, participation and progression**. The Office for Students, as part of the Access and Participation Plan through the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) identifies 12 sector-wide risks that may affect a student's opportunity to access and succeed in higher education. The EORR asks providers to consider which, if any, of their prospective or current students are likely to be affected by the risks, and how these might be mitigated. These are:

- **Risk 6 Insufficient academic support:** "Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome" (Office for Students, 2024).
- **Risk 7 Insufficient personal support:** "Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome" (Office for Students, 2024).
- **Risk 8 Mental Health:** "Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.
- **Risk 9 Ongoing Impacts of Coronavirus:** Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Risk 10 Cost Pressures:** Cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete or obtain a good grade. They may also result in an increasing number of students undertaking part-time or full-time employment alongside their studies, reduced attendance on-course, and less time to study.

This policy aims to address these risks through; early intervention, personalised support, coordinated support services and timely decision-making which are all monitored through the Student Status Policy.

How we monitor Risks 6-10 as part of this policy:

- a) on-course attainment rates
- b) continuation rates
- c) completion rates
- d) student records
- e) proportions of students progressing to further study
- f) proportions of students progressing into employment

Promoting a whole institutional approach

This policy promotes a whole Institution approach to monitoring engagement, which adheres to our staff and student professional behaviours and expectations and emphasising continuously that all members of UCEN Manchester share the responsibility of creating a safe, supportive environment conducive to studying, living and working. Staff are encouraged to address any engagement concerns promptly by following the procedures outlined in this policy and utilising early intervention strategies such as the Student Status Policy and Procedure or the Support for Continuing Studies Policy and Procedure. Collaboration with dedicated our student support teams and Personal Tutorial Model and scheme is essential.

Who is responsible for what?

All UCEN Manchester Managers have a responsibility to:

- a. Ensure that all staff are made aware of this Policy and associated policies.
- b. Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy.
- c. Manage the implementation and review of this policy.
- d. Including accurate and timely recording of registers and register marks.

UCEN Manchester staff have a responsibility to:

- a. Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required.
- b. Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing UCEN Manchester.
- c. Support fellow staff in their awareness of this policy.
- d. Make students aware of the consequences if they are found to be in breach of this policy through following the Student Status Policy and Procedure.
- e. Complete any relevant training provided.

UCEN Manchester's Students Union has a responsibility to:

- a. Ensure that students are aware of this policy.
- b. Be involved in the co-creation and evaluation of the policy where it impacts on the student body.
- c. Actively support the implementation of this policy.
- d. Engage collaboratively with UCEN Manchester and to provide feedback helpful to developing services in support of the policy.
- g. Ensure that communications with students regarding are accurate.

UCEN Manchester's students have a responsibility to:

- a. Arrive on time for all scheduled sessions and scheduled academic activities, regardless of delivery mode.
- b. Engage with and participate in scheduled classes and other scheduled academic activities.
- c. Inform UCEN Manchester in advance if they are going to be absent from sessions, providing a valid reason as per this policy.
- d. Catch up on any missed content as a result of being absent from classes and/or other scheduled academic activities.
- e. Stay on track by submitting work to deadlines, unless, exceptional or mitigating circumstances are granted.
- f. Conduct self and independent work outside of scheduled session.

How UCEN Manchester measures the impact of this policy

UCEN Manchester is committed to the effective evaluation and measurement of the impact of this policy and reporting on it regularly. The policy has many strands, and the impact will necessarily be assessed in a number of different ways, including monitoring and reporting as follows:

- a. Periodic attendance checks and student records
- b. SSM caseload referrals
- c. Academic performance data
- d. Student retention data
- e. Student Loans Company annual audit

How this policy is communicated

UCEN Manchester will ensure that:

- All students receive an accessible version of this policy at induction.
- The impact of this policy is circulated through UCEN Manchester and Students Union channels.
- This policy accessible to all members of UCEN Manchester.
- Staff are informed when a particular activity aligns with this policy.
- Staff and students are empowered to actively contribute to and provide feedback on this policy.
- Staff and students are notified of all changes to this policy.

Attendance Expectations

All UCEN Manchester students are expected to attend **all** scheduled sessions on time when they are fit and able. Attendance below 85% will be reviewed and may lead to further actions, including the implementation of the Student Status Policy. Mitigating circumstances will always be considered.

This is inclusive of all UCEN Manchester-related activity, including on campus teacher-led off site and blended learning.

The accepted UCEN Manchester data source for attendance tracking, monitoring and reporting is PowerBI with approved reports available on EBS Reports.

If you are unable to attend for any reason, you should use the relevant contact information below:

CAMPUS	ADMINISTRATION CONTACT DETAILS
CITY CAMPUS MANCHESTER	0161 674 1907 0161 674 1908 attendanceCCM@ucenmanchester.ac.uk
OPENSHAW	0161 674 2962 0161 674 2282 attendanceOpenshaw@tmc.ac.uk
SHENA SIMON	0161 674 3629/3543 attendanceSS@tmc.ac.uk

Attendance and Student Finance

The UCEN Manchester policy in terms of fee liability mirrors the SFE or Student Loan Company methodology (except where an employer / sponsor pays the fees), whereby a student's total fee liability is determined by confirmation of attendance at three liability points during the academic year;

Date of liability	Fee liability
Start date of term 1	25%
Start date of term 2	50%
Start date of term 3	100%
(Higher Education Provider Services (HEP), 2024)	

To be eligible for financial support through Student Finance England, students must remain actively engaged in their studies and it should be noted that poor attendance can have significant implications. The funding contract is directly between the student and the funding body, and UCEN Manchester's role is limited to providing accurate information to allow the release of these funds.

At UCEN Manchester, all students are expected to maintain a minimum attendance of 85%. If a student's attendance or course participation falls below this level and they do not engage with support or interventions from the curriculum team or wider UCEN Manchester services, the institution may report this to the relevant funding body. This could lead to a reduction, repayment, or suspension of funding.

In the event of a SFE funded student temporarily withdrawing after an attendance confirmation point no refund of fees will be made. Students who temporarily withdraw with an agreed break in study are required to remain registered with UCEN Manchester throughout the period of the break in study. The balance of the year's fees for the outstanding modules that remain to be completed will be due once studies recommence. **It should be noted that an agreed break in study differs to a suspension of funding.**

Suspension of Funding

UCEN Manchester reserves the right to suspend funding if attendance falls below expectations, in line with our service standard agreement with the Student Loans Company; this ensures students are not paying or receiving funds they are not entitled to due to non-attendance. It's important to note

that this action does not necessarily suspend a student's place on their course, however, ongoing failure to attend/engage may affect their status in accordance with other UCEN Manchester policies and may ultimately result in a full withdrawal from the programme. If a student has not attended for four consecutive weeks, their funding may be suspended. However, interventions should have been implemented before reaching this stage, in line with the 85% attendance expectations and relevant supporting policies.

There are three types of suspension regarding student finance: temporary suspension, health suspension, and permanent suspension.

- a) **Temporary Suspension:** This occurs when a student's attendance of engagement drops below the expected level but can be reinstated once the student demonstrates improved participation or attendance. During this period, the funding may be halted but the student's place on the course remains secure.
- b) **Health Suspension:** A health suspension allows a student to temporarily pause their studies due to health-related issues, providing them the opportunity to focus on their physical well-being without the pressures of academic commitments. During this period, students typically retain their place on the course and can return once they are ready. It is essential for students to communicate openly with UCEN Manchester about their circumstances, as this facilitates necessary support and helps manage funding arrangements appropriately. It should be noted that this health suspension is different to a Break in Study. Upon returning from a health suspension, the student and curriculum team are responsible for working together to agree on an appropriate action plan to help the student catch up on any missed work due to their absence.
- c) **Permanent Suspension:** This happens when a student fails to engage over an extended period or does not meet the necessary criteria for continued funding. In this case, the student would no longer be eligible for financial support from the Student Loans Company (SLC), which can impact their ability to pay for the course.

It is essential that students remain engaged to avoid these suspensions as they directly affect their financial support while ensuring that funding is allocated appropriately.

Reporting and Monitoring Funding Suspension

If it is agreed that a student's funding should be suspended owing to non-attendance, the process below should be followed:

- Student should be notified of the suspension of funding as per the process in the Student Status Policy and Procedure. Communication should only be sent (by the Director of Curriculum) once a final decision has been made to suspend funding and all other avenues to re-engage have been exhausted.
- A ticket should then be logged via Top Desk (either by the Student Engagement and Participation Manager through the Student Status Meetings or by the Director of Student Experience and Engagement through the Student Panel).
- The Data Services Officer will then notify the Student Loans Company of temporary suspension of funding owing to non-attendance.
- The Student Engagement and Participation Manager will then monitor the student's attendance/engagement through the Student Status Meetings or other appropriate staff member through the Student Panel.

If the student re-engages:

A student must attend a full academic week, with positive register marks to reflect this for them to be considered re-engaged and for the funding suspension to be lifted. If the suspension is to be lifted:

- The Student Engagement and Participation Manager or the Director of Student Experience and Engagement must raise a ticket through TopDesk to request that the Data Services Officer contacts the Student Loans Company to reinstate the funding.

If the student does not re-engage:

The withdrawal process should be followed as per normal circumstances and the student informed using the letter template in the Student Status Policy and Procedure.

Register Marks

Register Mark	Impact on Attendance	Rationale	Person Responsible	Access
/	Positive	Present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended classroom-based learning. • UCEN-teacher-led online learning, in line with funding guidance. • The student must be seen at the designated date and time by the HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor on camera • Students who attend trips, visits or activities that are teacher-led 	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor/Admin
L	Positive	Late	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor/Admin
0 (zero)	Negative	Absent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not attend classroom-based learning • Did not attend teacher-led online learning at the timetabled slot or within same week. 	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor/Admin
S	Negative	Sickness	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal

				Tutor/ Admin
I	Positive	Only to be used in the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has been directed to study or partake in planned online learning outside of their timetable session within the same week of delivery. • A student who is suspended but is directed to complete planned learning at home. • Exceptional circumstances and is directed to complete planned learning at home. 	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor/Admin
P	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is attending pre-arranged work experience/placement in their subject specialism and has provided evidence of this. 	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor/Admin
R	Neutral	Religious Holiday	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor	HE Lecturer/Personal Tutor/Admin
T	Negative	Transfer This is for course only – not to be used for transfer between individual lessons/sessions. Ensure that transfer has taken place via OnTrack or TopDesk	DS	DS
N	Neutral	Achieved qualification early. Note: Only when the achievement has been claimed can this mark be used. Ensure student is completed OnTrack	DS	DS
C	Neutral	UCEN Manchester closure	DS	DS
N	Neutral	Not expected (see examples below)	DS	DS

Guidance about Application of Register Marks

- Students should be marked **PRESENT (/)** on an official register linked to the timetable when they are **ATTENDING** all timetabled lessons – classroom based or blended study. When the session is online, the student must be in camera for the duration of the session.
- If a student accessed an online session at another time in the same week outside of their timetabled session, then the student should be marked with an **I**.
- Students arriving **LATE (L)**, either in person or online, should be recorded as **L**, along with the number of minutes missed from the official lesson start time.
- Lateness should be monitored in accordance with industry standards, as outlined in course-specific handbooks or academic regulations.
- If a student is **ABSENT (0)** from a scheduled session, whether classroom based or online, this should be recorded as a **0**. This includes students pending withdrawal.
- Unexplained absences should be documented by staff and the relevant Personal Tutor should try to make contact in the first instance either by phone or email.
- The Student Engagement Officer may be contacted to assist in further attempts to make contact should the Personal Tutor not be successful in the first instance.
- If the Personal Tutor and/or Student Engagement Officer is unable to contact the student, the student may be referred to the **Student Status Policy and Procedure** for intervention and monitoring outside of this policy.
- Persistent absence will instigate the Student Status Policy or the Disciplinary Policy depending on the circumstances.
- **Short-Term Sickness:** When a student reports an absence due to sickness (e.g., medical appointment or health issue, no evidence required), it should be as an **S**. If the student informs the Attendance Punctuality Campus Contact, the Campus Administration Team will mark the students' classes as **S** for the period of absence. This can be amended by the tutor if the student attends.
- **Extended Sickness:** For sickness lasting more than 7 working days (or two timetabled weeks for part-time students), a medical note should be provided, and a Return to Study meeting with the Personal Tutor should be held and documented on Pro Monitor.
- Sickness that extends beyond the above should be considered for Health Suspension as per the service standards agreement with Student Loans Company. More information on SFE suspensions can be found below or in the **Student Status Policy and Procedure**.
- Where issues with engagement are thought to be related to a health condition or disability, the student can be referred for support and referred to Support for Continuing Studies Policy.
- For students participating in a work or industry placement, the register mark **P** should be used.
- For other supervised or organised learning activities, students should be marked with an **I** to indicate that they are engaged in learning but not physically present in class. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Curriculum related Volunteering
 - Engagement and Participation related activity
 - Curriculum related Trips and visits
 - Study related enrichment
 - Medical conditions (if over 7-day absence with evidence of completed work provided)

- Job / apprenticeship interviews.

Register marks to be used by request to Data Services

- UCEN Manchester accepts that there are occasions when it is not expected that a student attend, and under certain circumstances it is acceptable for **not expected** (an authorised absence) and this should be marked as **N** on the register. Students' Pro Monitor record must be updated to reflect the reason for the authorised absence. Professional judgement should be used, but appropriate examples might be:
 - Bereavement
 - Hospital appointments
 - Agreed 'Support for Continuing Studies' amendments for lessons where students are expected to be working at home but not attend the lesson on campus.
- When a student is absent due to celebrating a **religious holiday**, the **R** mark should be used.
- In cases where students are on a two-week trial pending transfer between departments, the tutor should request that the register is marked with a **T** until the **transfer** is completed. At this point, these marks will be removed by DS as the transfer will be from the original date of attendance on the new programme/course.
- Where the student has **ACHIEVED** and is no longer to attend a class, module or course, the student should be completed on OnTrack, the register should be marked with an **F** in the immediate instances and then once the completion has been actioned, the future register slots will then be automatically deactivated by DS for the registers related to the qualification achieved. The student should attend all lessons until all modules and qualifications are verified, claimed and achieved.
- Where the classes are **cancelled** by UCEN Manchester, then registers will be amended centrally by DS to reflect UCEN Manchester closure, and a mark of **C** will be used. Reasons for closure could include (but are not limited to):
 - Force majeure
 - Power failure

Marking Registers

Accurate and timely completion of a register is a contractual obligation for all staff members.

Registers **must be marked at the start of each lesson and then submitted**. The register represents auditable evidence that teaching and learning has taken place. Lessons for classroom-based learning and online learning sessions should start at the time stated on the register and should finish at the designated time. Online directed or independent learning must take place within the week planned. In some circumstances, the register can be used as evidence in judicial proceedings. Failure to accurately mark registers may impact on the personal welfare of student's and could lead to prolonged absence and possible disciplinary action for the teacher/tutor responsible.

It is expected that all registers will be completed within the first 5 minutes of the timetabled lesson starting. Any difficulties preventing this should be notified to the Head of Department on the day. If 'Finish Later' is selected when marking the register, the register can be recalled up to 48 hours after the lesson has finished in order to update a register mark (for instance with details of a student's lateness).

Blank registers will not count in the overall attendance where a student starts a course after the actual commencement, all dates prior to the first date of attendance do not count and must be marked as not required (DS will deactivate these slots automatically when the start date is updated).

Students not on the register may be added in for up to two weeks as per the trial period of students pending transfer. Adding a student who is not enrolled to the course to a register does not automatically create an enrolment. This will be monitored weekly through a departmental validation report and all names provided by DS to Resource Managers.

How to Access Registers guidance can be found on Hub; including details of how teachers/tutors are able to access the register system and mark registers via their mobile device.

Please refer to the UCEN Manchester Student Status Policy and Procedure for tracking, monitoring, and interventions or the Support for Continuing Studies Policy depending on the circumstances of the individual student. The Disciplinary Policy may be instigated if the processes in the aforementioned policies do not find resolutions and repeated absence occurs.

Appendices

Please see Appendix A for the Attendance and Punctuality Campus Contact

Associated Policies, Procedure and Strategies

- UCEN Manchester Student Status Policy and Procedure
- UCEN Manchester Support for Continuing Studies Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy

Location and Access to this Policy

- Staff Intranet – Hub
- UCEN Manchester website

Appendix A

Template 1: Initial Notification of Temporary Funding Suspension

[Date]

[Student Address]

Subject: Important: Temporary Suspension of Student Finance Due to Non-Attendance

Dear [Student's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. We are reaching out to you regarding your recent attendance and engagement with your studies at UCEN Manchester.

As per our Attendance and Engagement Policy, students are required to maintain a minimum of [80% attendance/engagement] to remain eligible for financial support from Student Finance England. Our records indicate that your attendance/engagement has fallen below this required threshold.

As a result, we are required to notify the Student Loans Company of a **temporary suspension of your student funding**. Please note that this **does not** mean you have been withdrawn from your course; however, failure to improve your attendance and engagement may lead to further actions, including permanent withdrawal.

To reinstate your funding, you must attend all scheduled sessions for at least **one full academic week**, ensuring that your attendance is recorded accurately on our system. If you are facing challenges affecting your ability to engage with your studies, please contact your Personal Tutor in the first instance. Your Personal Tutor will be able to provide you with support resources and/or the relevant support contacts which may help you to re-engage with your studies.

If you believe this notification has been issued in error or would like to discuss your circumstances further, please reply to this email or arrange a meeting with [relevant staff contact] at your earliest convenience.

We strongly encourage you to take immediate action to avoid any long-term impact on your academic progress and financial support.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

Programme Leader

UCEN Manchester

Appendix B

Template 2: Follow Up Notification After Continued Non-Engagement

[Date]

[Student Address]

Subject: Urgent: Funding Suspension and Next Steps

Dear [Student's Name],

Further to our previous communication regarding your attendance and engagement, we note that there has been no significant improvement in your participation.

As a result, your student funding remains **suspended**, and you are at risk of **permanent withdrawal** from your course. If you do not take immediate action to re-engage with your studies, UCEN Manchester may be required to inform the Student Loans Company of a permanent suspension, which could impact your ability to access financial support in the future.

If you wish to **reinstate your funding**, you must demonstrate full engagement with your course by attending all scheduled sessions for at least **one full academic week**. Please contact your Personal Tutor or the Student Engagement Team as soon as possible to discuss your options and any support available to you.

If you do not respond or take action by [insert deadline], we will proceed with the withdrawal process as outlined in UCEN Manchester's Student Status Policy.

If you need further guidance or support, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

Head of Department
UCEN Manchester

Appendix C

Template 3: Confirmation of Withdrawal Due to Non-Engagement

[Date]

[Student Address]

Subject: Final Notification: Confirmation of Withdrawal from UCEN Manchester

Dear [Student's Name],

We are writing to formally confirm that, due to continued non-attendance and lack of engagement with your studies, as well as no response to our previous communications, UCEN Manchester has processed your **withdrawal from your course**.

As a result of this withdrawal, your student funding will not be reinstated, and we have notified the **Student Loans Company** accordingly. Please be aware that this may have financial implications, including potential repayment of any funding received to date.

If you wish to discuss your options for returning to study in the future, or if you require further guidance on the implications of this withdrawal, we strongly encourage you to contact [insert details of appropriate staff contact].

We regret that this decision has become necessary but must ensure that all students remain actively engaged in their education.

We wish you the best in your future endeavours.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

Director of Curriculum
UCEN Manchester