ATTENDANCE MONITORING POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of this *Student Attendance Policy* is to enhance a supportive learning environment for students to achieve their full potential. (See Strategic Plan, *Enhance Student Experience / Value highest standards in teaching and learning*, Goal 2.4.10) The Pontifical University remains mindful of its obligations to a duty of care and protection of privacy.

Rationale

Class attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Attendance is a vital element in maintaining student retention, progression, achievement and employability. Students who actively participate by attending classes are more likely to

    a. have a rewarding experience,
    b. successfully complete their course and
    c. achieve better results.

This policy therefore complements the Policies and Initiatives on *Student Success and Retention* (2017).

The following policy proposes establishing consistent monitoring practices for attendance. Keeping an overview of attendance helps to

- increase individual focus and engagement, and enhance and facilitate group dynamics
- encourage a better student experience by identifying students with issues (academic or personal) and facilitating a proactive response. This has been demonstrated to support retention and student wellbeing.
- mitigate against first year students leaving university prematurely. A systematic approach to monitoring attendance from the start of a programme fosters a culture of attendance in subsequent years
- It helps students to build work patterns appropriate for their time after university.

Having an established Attendance Policy therefore enables programmes to facilitate the Graduate Attributes of the Pontifical University. (See http://maynoothcollege.ie/files/images/Graduates-of-the-Pontifical-University-PDF.pdf)

Consistent monitoring allows for early intervention. Students who are identified as regularly absent from class may be contacted in order to offer supports or to have the consequences of absenteeism outlined.

Academic Staff are encouraged to incorporate formative assessment within the modules to encourage student engagement and learning.

Policy

Attendance will be taken at all lectures, by way of a student register (or similar means) which will be recorded on the Moodle page of the relevant module. Anyone not attending will be checked absent, no matter what the reason. Non-attendance for medical reasons requires a medical certificate to be provided to the Pontifical University Office. Absences for medical reasons will be noted on the record when the medical certificate has been provided.

Paid employment is not an acceptable reason for non-attendance.

Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

1. Attending all learning and teaching sessions associated with their programme
2. Knowing if there are specific attendance requirements for individual modules
3. Ensuring that they have been signed into the attendance register. Late arrival may lead to students being marked absent
4. Maintaining a record of their own attendance
5. Notifying lecturers or tutors in advance if they expect to be absent from timetabled classes
6. Providing a medical certificate to the Pontifical University Office, where required
7. Informing the tutor or lecturer in advance if, due to exceptional circumstances, a student is obliged to leave a session before it concludes
8. Obtaining all the information presented by the lecturer or tutor during the missed class.

Academic staff are responsible for:

1. Reminding students of the importance of regular attendance
2. Recording student attendance
3. Writing to students who are exhibiting patterns of absenteeism. (See table below)
4. Alerting Academic and Pastoral Support Co-ordinator to 'at risk' students. (See table below)
5. Enrolling the Academic and Pastoral Support Co-ordinator as a "non-editing lecturer" to the module Moodle page.

The Academic and Pastoral Support Co-ordinator is responsible for:

1. Contacting 'at risk' students
2. Facilitating students' access to student support services

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that:

1. teaching staff maintain a record of student attendance
2. appropriate systems are in place to maintain a student attendance record
3. appropriate systems are in place to facilitate notification by students of absence
4. Students are informed of the Attendance Policy
5. Students are advised of available supports
6. Students are warned of the consequences of persistent non-attendance.

Contacting Students

By and large, non-attendance occurs early in a module. As a principle, students need to be contacted Students as soon as the pattern becomes discernible, and followed up as appropriate, if it persists.

The following tables are *indicative*.

For a five credit module.

Week	Absent	Action
1-3	3 sessions	Email from the lecturer, cc to the APS Coordinator
1-4	4 sessions	Email from and meeting with the APS Coordinator
1-6	6 sessions	Email from and meeting with The Registrar

For a 2.5 credit module

Week	Absent	Action
1-3	2 sessions	Email from the lecturer, cc to the APS Coordinator
1-6	3 sessions	Email from and meeting with APS Coordinator / The Registrar

Please note: If a student shows patterns of non-attendance later in the module they should also be identified and contacted.

Where a student's attendance is identified as a cause of concern, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

1. The student will be asked for an explanation
2. Students will be invited to discuss with the Registrar / Academic and Pastoral Support Coordinator how their attendance will be improved and whether further support is appropriate
3. Students will be issued with a formal written warning about their attendance
4. Staff writing references for students may refer to students' record of attendance
5. Exam boards may take into account students' attendance in exercising discretion in matters of progression and grading.

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