

University Centre Colchester

Attendance, Engagement and Progress Policy

Policy Details			
Policy Owner	UCC Academic Services		
CE Sponsor	Principal and Chief Executive Officer		
Date created this year	28 th June 2024		
Version:	Approved by:	Date approved:	To be reviewed:
3.0	College Executive	09 July 2024	September 2027

Version Control	
Version Number	Changes from previous 12 months policy
3.0	Minor updates to job titles and names of validating partners. Update the 'Consult the Dean' process to a 'UCC Review'. Intervention of unexplained absence at module level changed from 2 to 3 weeks.
	Changes to policy in year

Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of Policy: UCC Attendance, Engagement and Progress Policy

		Yes/No	Comments
1	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race or ethnicity	No	
	Disability	No	
	Gender	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	No	
	Gender Reassignment	No	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	No	
5	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

UCC ATTENDANCE, ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRESS BOARD POLICY

Students' academic progress is reviewed at the end of each academic year by a Board of Examiners and on at least one further occasion during the year by a mid-cycle Examination Board.

The UCC Attendance, Engagement and Progress Board Policy is proportionate to the size and shape of UCC and enables students to have confidence in the transparency of processes and the opportunity to challenge a decision taken within the framework of clearly defined criteria.

The policy below refers to in-year monitoring of student attendance, engagement and progress.

1 MONITORING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

- 1.1 A student's 'progress' shall be judged primarily in terms of their academic performance. However, attendance may also be considered.
- 1.2 Given the variety of reasons why a student's attendance, engagement or progress might be a reason for concern, the actions in the present document link to several policies, as set out in paragraph 2.2.4.

2 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

2.1 Capturing of Student Attendance

- 2.1.1 Programme Leaders (even if they do not teach all the timetabled sessions for their programme) are responsible for the accurate and timely completion of attendance registers on their course. The academic member of staff delivering the teaching session (module tutor) must complete the attendance register during the delivery of the session (using the online e-register, or a paper-based substitute if the former is not available). The Programme Leader will retain responsibility to ensure that the records are complete and that e-registers for all timetabled sessions are completed within 2 working days of the teaching event.
- 2.1.2 Attendance, either physically on campus or remote attendance online at timetabled sessions, is taken as a core indicator of engagement with the learning opportunities provided. As such attendance is used to trigger liability payments as per guidance in the UCC Fee Policy. The definition of 'engagement' within the UCC Fee Policy does not automatically determine that a student is 'fully committed to their programme' as per the requirements of this policy.
- 2.1.3 As outlined in the Student Charter, University Centre Colchester expects students to:
 - Be fully committed to their programme, its content and schedule;
 - Attend and participate in classes and keep appointments.
- 2.1.4 University Centre Colchester expects students to attempt to attend 100% of their timetabled sessions, whether physically on campus or via virtual sessions. The institutional performance indicator is a minimum of 85% participation. It is expected that all absences due to illness should be reported via the absence line at <https://absence.colchester.ac.uk/> or by calling (01206) 712160.
- 2.1.5 Where students do not attend sessions, whether for explained or unexplained reasons, this will impact on their learning experience, and potential to succeed. University Centre

Colchester will attempt to support learners where possible but will not provide additional tuition to students who do not attend timetabled sessions. Students should be aware that non-attendance of timetabled sessions may therefore impact on their level of achievement on their programme of study.

2.2 Monitoring of Student Attendance

2.2.1 University Centre Colchester will monitor students' attendance in the following ways:

- Any student who has three consecutive weeks of unexplained absences at module level will be contacted and requested to contact their Programme Leader to discuss their situation;
- Any student whose overall attendance drops below 50% (after week 6 of the programme) will be contacted and requested to contact their Programme Leader to discuss their situation.
- Any student who has four consecutive weeks of unexplained absences for all timetables activities will be automatically referred to the Head of Academic Services.

2.2.2 Where overall attendance falls below 50%, or a student has four consecutive weeks of unexplained absence, it is the responsibility of the student to evidence how they are continuing to 'fully commit' to their studies.

2.2.3 Students whose attendance is monitored as being below 50% may be referred to the Head of Academic Services for automatic consideration under the Progress Board, Fitness to Study or Fitness to Practice policies, depending on the information available to the Head of Academic Services when the student's case is brought to their attention.

2.2.4 Generally, unexplained absences are processed by **Progress Boards** whereas unexplained absences and academic concerns may result in a **Fitness to Study** meeting. Any matters relating to unexplained absences for programmes with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) accreditation may result in a **Fitness to Practice** meeting.

2.3 Ongoing 'Explained Absence'

2.3.1 **University Centre Colchester Review (UCC Review)**. Even if absences are 'explained' a programme team may have concerns about a student's attendance record and/or their ability to engage or catch up with studies. In these circumstances the Programme Leader should implement course level interventions, such as an Improvement Agreement (see UCC Disciplinary Policy) in the first instance. If these interventions do not have the desired impact they can be escalated to a UCC Review via UCC Academic Services.

2.3.2 Any UCC Review request that is escalated in this way should be accompanied by a clear rationale of the issue, its impact, evidence of previous interventions and the outcome the course team desire.

2.3.3 The Head of Academic Services shall then consider the request, which will then be either accepted or returned to the course team with advice of alternative next steps.

2.3.4 If the request is accepted the Head of Academic Services, or their nominee, shall invite the student to an initial **UCC Review** meeting to discuss their situation.

- 2.3.5 Following the initial meeting, the Head of Academic Services may decide the following action(s):
- i. take no further action as it is important for students not to miss teaching events. However, the programme team should continue to monitor the student's attendance, engagement and/or progress;
 - ii. refer the student to appropriate student support services;
 - iii. invoke a **Progress Board/ Fitness to Study/Fitness to Practice** or other disciplinary procedure in respect of a student whom the Head of Area or their Programme Leader, has confirmed as potentially being unfit.
- 2.3.6 **Note:** Where physical attendance is not evidenced, submission of assessed work and interaction with on-line learning resources may be considered as evidence of on-going commitment in some circumstances. University Centre Colchester reserves the right to determine if such remote engagement constitutes full commitment to the programme at both the initial review and after the student has been referred to a UCC Review.

3 PROGRESS BOARD (incl. FITNESS TO STUDY and FITNESS TO PRACTICE)

3.1 Overview of Progress Board/ Fitness to Study/Fitness to Practice

- 3.1.1 The purpose of monitoring students' progress is to ensure appropriate interventions may be made, and appropriate guidance may be provided, to assist the academic progress of potentially faltering students. Progress Boards are a key element of University Centre Colchester strategy to increase retention and achievement through formally documented supportive actions.
- 3.1.2 Students considered by the above panels may be subject to the **UCC Student Disciplinary Policy** in response to a student's ongoing academic performance in class, and the resulting concerns about their ability to achieve on their programme of study.
- 3.1.3 The Disciplinary Policy can be invoked by a Programme Leader at any time in the academic year and is designed to address unsatisfactory academic performance by means of a range of measures.
- 3.1.4 The Progress Boards must be informed of any students subject to the Student Disciplinary Policy and provided with all relevant correspondence and associated documentation.

3.2 University Centre Colchester Progress Board: Composition, Procedure and Powers

- 3.2.1 A student who is referred to the University Centre Colchester Progress Board for unsatisfactory progress will be informed in writing of their referral and a copy of the letter will be kept on record. The letter to the student will indicate the reason for the referral to the University Centre Colchester Progress Board and they may be accompanied to the meeting by a student of UCC, or a member of staff of UCC nominated by the student.
- 3.2.2 The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will be chaired by the Head of Academic Services or his/her deputy: and membership will normally consist of the Head of Academic Services, (and/or their deputy) and a member of academic staff. A note-taker will be provided by the UCC Academic Services Office. The quorum for the University Centre Colchester Progress Board is three.

3.2.3 The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will consider any supportive actions taken previously by the programme team.

3.3 Conduct of the Progress Boards

3.3.1 The University Centre Colchester Progress Board will follow the following procedures:

- i. The Progress Board will consider each case referred by a UCC Review;
- ii. The Board should receive papers fully setting out the case. The Head of Area or their nominee should be responsible for gathering the required information;
- iii. The student should receive copies of all the papers that are presented to the Progress Board, unless the confidentiality of a document precludes showing it to the student, in which case the Head of Academic Services or their deputy may inform the Board and the student of the existence and general content of the document without divulging the details. The papers will be available to the student when they are available to members of the Progress Board, normally in advance of the meeting;
- iv. When the student is accompanied by a student of the University Centre, or a member of staff of the University Centre, it must be noted that the person is present to act as the student's advocate and for no other reason;
- v. Meetings of Progress Boards will be conducted in accordance with the Order of Proceedings;
- vi. The decision of the Progress Board may be communicated orally to the student at the conclusion of the meeting. Formal notification of the outcome will be sent to the student in every case.

3.4 Progress Board: Order of Proceedings

3.4.1 Pre Meeting – A presenting officer presents the case to panel members then leaves the proceedings. A presenting officer will usually be the Programme Leader or Head of Area.

3.4.2 The proceedings are then likely to follow the pattern outlined below, although there may be some variation at the discretion of the Chair.

- i. The Chair opens the meeting by introducing themselves and establishing the names and functions of those in the room;
- ii. The Chair will check that the student has received the details of the case and any supporting documentation;
- iii. The order of proceedings will be explained to the student;
- iv. The case for referral to the Progress Board will be outlined to the student;
- v. The student will be invited to put forward a case orally, if they wish to do so;
- vi. The Chair will invite the members of the Board to put questions to the student;
- vii. The Chair will invite the student or their representative to put forward any additional statement;

- viii. The Chair will invite the student to state what their preferred outcome would be;
- ix. The student and their representative will then be asked to leave the room. The decision of the Progress Board may be communicated to the student orally either immediately after the meeting, or at another pre-arranged time. Students will be sent written confirmation of the decision of the Progress Board.

3.5 Adjournment

3.5.1 The Board may adjourn:

- i. In order to enable the student or the student's representative to be present;
- ii. Where this is necessary to obtain further information.

3.5.2 The Board shall meet to consider an adjourned case as soon as it is feasible and not later than two months after the adjournment, although the case need not be determined at the resumed meeting. If necessary, the Head of Academic Services or their nominee may co-opt additional members to replace any member not able to attend the reconvened meeting, including a new Chair. If there are two new members, the reconvened meeting shall proceed as a new hearing.

3.5.3 If there is one new member, the student may request that the meeting proceed as a new hearing.

3.6 Powers of University Centre Colchester Progress Boards

3.6.1 After consideration of the case, the Progress Board will make one of the following decisions:

- i. that the student be permitted to proceed, with or without specific conditions;
- ii. a pending withdrawal that may take effect if the student's engagement continues to be unsatisfactory within a specified period;
- iii. that the student be required to withdraw permanently.

3.6.2 In certain circumstances the Progress Board may deem it appropriate to:

- i. permit the student to transfer to another appropriate degree course;
- ii. recommend to the validating body of the course that the student be intermitted for a period of time before proceeding.

3.6.3 The Progress Board may also attach such conditions as seem likely to assist the future progress of the student.

3.6.4 Minutes of the University Centre Colchester Progress Board and a record of decisions made will be kept in the UCC Academic Services Office.

3.6.5 Students who are referred to the University Centre Colchester Progress Board will be informed in writing of the recommendations made and/or actions taken by the Board.

4 APPEALS

4.1 A student who wishes to appeal against the decision of a UCC Review or Progress

Board decision must do by submitting a Progress Appeal Form to UCC Academic Services The appeal form should fully state the grounds of the appeal and be received by UCC Academic Services within ten working days of the date that the original outcome was confirmed in writing to the student. If the student can show that circumstances beyond their control prevented this time limit being adhered to and that injustice would result from adhering to it, UCC Academic Services may extend the time limit in which an appeal may be lodged normally up to the period of twenty working days from the date on which the final decision was confirmed to the student in writing.

4.2 The grounds on which a student may appeal are:

- i. that there were **procedural irregularities** in the arrangements for the meeting with the Head of Academic Services or their nominee or conduct of the Progress Board (including alleged administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had they not occurred;
- ii. that there was **evidence of extenuating circumstances which could not reasonably have been made available** to the Head of Academic Services or their nominee, of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.

4.3 Any appeal will be referred to a designated senior academic or administrative member of staff who has no previous involvement with the case, hereafter referred to as the **Appointed Officer** who may consult such persons as they think fit, including the appellant, in arriving at a decision as to whether or not the appeal is well-founded.

4.4 If the **Appointed Officer** decides that the appeal is not well-founded, they shall inform the student in writing, stating their reasons for so deciding. The communication of this decision shall, in such cases, constitute the formal dismissal of the appeal. If the Appointed Officer decides that the appeal is well-founded then the case shall be referred to a Progress Appeal Panel consisting of the Appointed Officer and two members of staff from outside the student's course who have no connection with the case.

4.5 The student shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Progress Appeals Panel and may be accompanied by a student of UCC, or a member of staff of UCC nominated by the student.

4.6 If the student is unable to attend the meeting of the Progress Appeal Panel, the meeting will proceed, and the decisions taken will be valid.

4.7 The student and the members of the Progress Appeal Panel will have the papers that were made available for the original UCC Review or Progress Board decision, together with the student's written statement of the appeal, and any documentary evidence to support any extenuating circumstances put forward. It will be open to the Progress Appeal Panel to call such witnesses as it thinks fit. The Head of Academic Services or their nominee who took the original decision or a representative of the original committee (normally the Chair) will normally be required to appear before the Progress Appeal Panel.

4.8 After consideration of the case the Progress Appeal Panel shall either dismiss the appeal or decide on one of the courses of action defined under the Powers of Progress Boards listed in section 3.6 of this document.

4.9 The decision of the Progress Appeal Panel may be communicated orally to the student at the conclusion of the meeting. Written notification of the outcome will be sent to the student in every case. This concludes the UCC Appeals Process.

- 4.10 When University Centre Colchester's internal procedures for dealing with appeals has been exhausted, University Centre Colchester will issue a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 4.11 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within twelve months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures letter.

PROGRESS BOARD APPEAL FORM

This form is to be completed by Undergraduate or Postgraduate students studying at University Centre Colchester, who wish to appeal the outcome of a Progress Board decision.

Once completed this form should be returned to University Centre Colchester Academic Services in room HE103.

Please complete all sections of the form. Incomplete forms will NOT be processed.

Student Name (Capitals)	
Student Identification Number (as shown on your UCC ID card)	
Course Title, Year	
Course Code	
Correspondence Address	
Contact Telephone Number	
Contact email address	

Grounds on which this appeal is made:

		Please tick
Ground (i)	Procedural Irregularities	
Ground (ii)	Extenuating Circumstances	

What is the decision against which you are appealing, and what are the grounds for the appeal?

Please detail in full your reasons for this appeal and attach if appropriate supporting evidence. Please remember that it is your responsibility to provide the panel with evidence. The panel will not request evidence on your behalf, nor approach third parties for confirmation of claims.

DECLARATION:

By submitting this appeal form I am agreeing to University Centre Colchester holding and processing the information provided within this form and in any documentation I have provided to support my claim. I understand that although the information provided will be used primarily for the purposes of this request. University Centre Colchester reserves the right to utilise the information for any relevant purpose linked to my studies as a UCC student. This information will be retained in line with the University Centre Colchester retention policy which can be found at www.colchester.ac.uk and may be shared with external bodies such as but not limited to, the Office for Students (OFS), Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Signed:

Date:

Once completed please return this form, and any accompanying supporting evidence, to UCC Academic Services by emailing a copy to uccacademicservices@colchester.ac.uk or to Room HE103.

Office use only	Appeal outcome
Signature of Appointed Officer	
Date:	