



# Student Attendance & Withdrawal Framework

**2023 – 2025**

Student Attendance Policy  
Student Withdrawal Policy  
Voluntary Withdrawal Policy  
Appeals

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## 1. Attendance Policy Statement

- 1.1 Elizabeth School London (ESL) is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that students have the opportunity to successfully complete their programmes. ESL has a commitment to ensure that within this general framework, all students are treated fairly and equitably. The aim of this policy is to:
- support and encourage students to achieve their full potential in their studies
  - enhance and promote community cohesion by encouraging active participation in all areas of their study
  - monitor academic engagement and performance and provide guidance and support to students in the event of need
- 1.2 ESL expects students should achieve 100% attendance but recognises that from time to time, situations occur which prevents this from being realised. This policy outlines the steps that the School will take to ensure students meet their obligations, and is applied to all partner university courses (unless otherwise specified).
- 1.3 Students are expected to take responsibility for organising their studies and ensuring they are aware of their timetable and expectations for attendance at all activities relating to their programme of studies. It is the students' responsibility to check regularly for information that may include important timetabling or room changes (e.g. via email, Blackboard, Moodle , Individual Student Timetables (ISTs), and other communication methodologies).
- 1.4 The School has a duty to follow-up promptly on matters of non-attendance so that students can be supported and given every opportunity to succeed.
- 1.5 This policy should be read with reference to the ESL Commitment, Student Code of Conduct and Progression Policy, all of which will be provided to the student at the start of their programme.
- 1.6 The following outlines the conditions under which a student may be withdrawn from the Programme:
- A withdrawal on the basis of attendance;
  - A withdrawal on the basis of progression;
  - A Voluntary withdrawal;
  - A Withdrawal on the basis of disciplinary action.

## 2. Attendance Recording

- 2.1 Teaching staff are required to record attendance within 30 Minutes of the start of the class on the School's online attendance recording system. If a student leaves before the end of the scheduled class without prior authorisation, they will be given an additional mark as 'left early'. The categories for recording attendance are:
- Present
  - Absent
  - Left early
  - Authorised absence
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that all registers are completed in a timely and accurate manner. To ensure full compliance, the School's Academic Registry Office will monitor daily and provide weekly reports to the Programme Leader and Academic Manager.
- 2.3 In the event where a member of staff is unable to record attendance online at the time of the lesson, they must keep a record of attendance and retrospectively complete the register within 24 hours of the lesson taking place.

### 3. Attendance Review & Monitoring

- 3.1 ESL adopts a risk based approach to the monitoring, reviewing and reporting of attendance, using the following three average attendance rate bands to inform interventions:

**Between 100%-70% (Low risk)**

Students whose average attendance rate is within this band will receive occasional reminders of their attendance rate and information on support offered. In the event of a sudden decline in attendance, they may receive more frequent correspondence, in an attempt to ensure they do not fall behind in their academic studies.

**Between 51%-69% (Medium risk)**

Students whose average attendance rate falls below 80% will be placed on an 'at risk' register, with the appropriate interventions detailed in the procedure below.

**Below 50% (High risk)**

Students whose average attendance rate falls below 50% will receive a final warning, and in the event of a failure to respond or a continued decline in attendance, will be withdrawn from the course.

- 3.2 The pattern and frequency of engagement will depend on a number of factors, including:
- A student's average rate of attendance
  - A student's response to intervention measures
  - A student's academic progress
- 3.3 The Campus Manager/Co-ordinator, in liaison with the Student Support & Welfare Team, will be responsible for monitoring attendance rates at their campus and taking the appropriate interventions (as detailed in the procedure below).
- 3.4 Students recommended for withdrawal will be submitted in accordance to the withdrawal procedure.

### 4. Attendance Reporting

- 4.1 ESL's central Academic Registry Office will run weekly attendance reports for each Campus, with information taken from ESL's online student registry system.
- 4.2 Each Campus Manager, in liaison with the Campus Student Support & Welfare Team, will have the responsibility for reviewing and maintaining their respective campus 'at risk' register. They will also be responsible for sending out all correspondence between the School and the Student and recording this on the 'at risk' register.

### 5. Student Absence

- 5.1 Students have a duty to notify the School's Student Support & Welfare Team in the event of any planned or unplanned absence from classes.
- 5.2 Students who need to take an unavoidable absence from their studies for any period of time must inform the School immediately by using the relevant **Formal Leave of Absence Request Form**, and submit this by email or in person to the Student Support & Welfare Team at their main campus of study at least 14 days in advance.
- 5.3 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. Authorised absence will not be granted for events such as holidays or weddings during term time. Other non-urgent travel will also not be authorised. Any absences due to work commitments will be seen as unauthorised and recorded on the system as such. A request for a period of authorised absence will only be approved if the School is satisfied that the student will not be missing critical elements of their programme and that on their return the student will be

able to resume their studies without having to repeat any previous period of study. Students are responsible for completing any outstanding academic work during a period of authorised absence.

- 5.4 While absence notifications may be taken into account when considering a student's overall attendance profile, as the University expects all enrolled students to be fit to study, it does not guarantee that no further action will be taken.
- 5.5 For absences relating to medical reasons longer than 7 days, a student must submit to a medical certificate or other third part evidence in support of their absence.
- 5.6 Guidance and advice on this process can be sought from their Personal Tutor or the Student Support & Welfare team.

## 6. Long term or indefinite periods of illness

- 6.1 If students are experiencing serious personal, financial or medical difficulties that are disrupting their attendance, or where a longer period of absence is expected, they will normally be advised to take a break from their studies.
- 6.2 In this instance, the student may return at a specified time in the future, normally in the following academic year, that will enable the student to resume the programme appropriately.
- 6.3 If the School considers a student to be suffering serious ill health and they have chosen not to seek medical help and advice, the School can request that the student be declared to be medically unfit to continue their programme of study and will consult the validating university.
- 6.4 If the student is required to withdraw under this procedure, they will be recorded as temporarily withdrawn from the University for reasons of ill health. However, they will retain the right of readmission in the future, if medically fit to do so and within the maximum registration period for the programme.

## 7. Short-term absence

- 7.1 Students who miss learning opportunities or who are unable to engage fully with their studies, due to short-term illness or personal circumstances (less than 7 days) must complete a **Student Self-Certification of Absence (ESL SC1)** form. Students are responsible for completing any outstanding academic work during a period of authorised absence.
- 7.2 This form must be submitted to the School's Student Support & Welfare office as soon as possible following their return from absence, or in advance if they plan to be absent beforehand (e.g in the event of a planned medical procedure).
- 7.3 Longer periods of absence due to illness (more than 7 days) must be covered by a sick note from a GP. In this case students may need to claim exceptional circumstances in relation to their learning and assessment (see Absence during times of assessment).

## 8. Absence during times of assessment

- 8.1 Where the absence falls at a time of assessment (for example essays, reports, presentation deadlines or examinations) and the student wishes to request extenuating circumstances, the School will follow the relevant validating University's guidance. In each instance, a University **Extenuating Circumstances Request Form** should be used. This should be submitted with appropriate evidence (such as medical certificate), to the Student Support & Welfare Office at the main campus of study.

## 9. Student Engagement & Intervention Procedure

9.1 Depending on their average rate of attendance, students will receive a series of reminders and other interventions.

9.2 Non-Attendance on the day of absence:

An automated SMS text message is sent to the student if they do not attend one or more modules in a day. The message requests they contact the Student Support & Welfare Team within 24 hours with a reason for their absence, to avoid further action.

9.3 *Attendance between 100 – 70%*

The Student Support & Welfare Team at each campus will send students reminder emails of their attendance rate and information on support offered, if their attendance causes concern. In the event of a sudden decline in attendance, they may receive more frequent correspondence, in an attempt to ensure they do not fall behind in their academic studies.

9.4 *Attendance between 51 – 69%*

In the event of a student's average attendance falling below 80%, they will be placed on an 'at risk' register and the following procedure will apply:

### Stage 1

Within 1 week, an email is sent by the Student Support & Welfare Team at each campus, reminding them of the need to improve their level of attendance and offering support. This is logged on the student attendance reporting register.

### Stage 2

If their average attendance rate does not improve within 3 weeks or they fail to respond to the stage 1 email, a second reminder email is sent, with an invitation to meet the Programme Leader (or nominated alternative) to discuss how their attendance can be improved and whether they require any support. This is logged on the student attendance reporting register.

### Stage 3

Failure to respond to the stage 2 email within 2 weeks and/or a continued decline in their attendance rate, will result in the student receiving a **stage 3 formal written letter** from the Academic Dean outlining the conditions on which they can remain on the programme.

### Stage 4

In the event of the student failing to respond within 2 weeks of receipt of the formal letter from the Academic Dean (Stage 3), a final warning letter is sent to the student informing them that they are being withdrawn from the programme.

9.5 If the student responds to any of the interventions detailed above, they will be required to agree **an Action Plan** or **Temporary Learning Agreement** to help them improve their attendance. During this period, they will remain on the 'at risk' register until such time their average attendance rate improves to 80% or above. The student may also apply to either take a period of study leave or defer their studies.

9.6 The intention for the 4 stage procedure is to bring about improvements to attendance. If a student responds to this intervention, but after a period of time, sees their attendance rate decline again, the Student Support & Welfare team at the relevant campus can send correspondence associated with any stage (depending on the severity of the case), in order to bring about an improvement.

9.7 *Attendance below 50%*

If a student's average attendance rate falls below 50%, and they fail to respond to correspondence from the School, they will receive a final Attendance Warning letter from the Academic Dean (as in Stage 3).

## **10. Student Withdrawal Procedure**

- 10.1 With the final Attendance Warning letter, the student's name will be entered on a *withdrawal list* which will be sent to the Academic Dean for action. In the event of any mitigating circumstances being presented, the Academic Dean will convene a Withdrawal Committee meeting, comprising of the Academic Registrar, Head of Academics/Academic Manager and Head of Student Support & Welfare. The Panel will review all recommended withdrawals and any mitigating evidence before making the final decision. In the event of no additional mitigating circumstances being presented, the Academic Dean will sanction any withdrawals and inform the Academic Registrar.
- 10.2 If a student is to be required to withdraw, the Academic Registrar will inform the relevant University partner (via agreed processes), the School's Student Finance Advisor (to update Student Finance England) and the School's IT Team (to suspend their email and access to the VLE). The University will inform the student that their registration has been terminated.
- 10.3 This action will be taken on the student's behalf as a result of the lack of response and could leave the student liable to pay back any tuition fees to the Student Loans Company received for their studies. The right is reserved to communicate the student's enrolment and attendance history to the Student Loans Company so a fair assessment can be made.
- 10.4 The partner university will write to the student informing them that their registration has been terminated.

## **11. Withdrawal of Students through non-attendance**

- 11.1 If a student fails to attend the induction and the first 2 weeks of scheduled lectures, ESL will write to the student informing them that unless there are mitigating circumstances for their absence during this period, they will be withdrawn from the programme with immediate effect.

## **12. Withdrawal of Students on the Basis of Progression**

- 12.1 ESL encourages students to progress in their chosen course of study where they will be able to complete their course in a timely manner. Students **MUST** take the first opportunity to be assessed for each of the modules they follow each semester.
- 12.2 The only exclusion is if the student is having extenuating circumstances where there is a need to formally request the school to treat the individual student's situation as a case that falls under the partner university's policy on extenuating circumstances.
- 12.3 Any student who does not take the first assessment opportunity will be referred to the Assessment Board. The Programme Leader will confirm relevant remedial action and responses recorded.
- 12.4 There is an opportunity for the student to attend a Review of Academic Performance Meeting which will be organised by the Programme Leader to support and recognise any issues and propose any remedial actions to improve progression.
- 12.5 If a student misses the second assessment opportunity without a proper reason, the student will be withdrawn from the course and will be given the opportunity to either defer to a later group or to withdraw entirely. Based on the response, SFE will be notified.

## **13. Withdrawal of Disabled Students due to Academic Progress**

- 13.1 ESL records all the involvement it has with students and where the appropriate support has not been fully implemented, Disability Services will intervene. When the Student Support & Welfare team has seen all possible support administered, but the Programme Leader ultimately recommends the withdrawal of the student, the decision does not relate to disability but is based on the fact that the student's academic progress does not satisfy the appropriate level.
- 13.2 Student Support & Welfare staff will participate on a Withdrawal Panel where the student in

question is disabled or it is suspected that they may have a disability or learning difficulty.

- 13.3 Withdrawals are made on the basis of academic performance, attendance or behaviour. Under no circumstances will a student be involuntarily withdrawn on the sole basis of a disability or learning difficulty as this would constitute discrimination. Whilst Student Support staff may contribute information to a withdrawal committee, it will not be directly involved in the withdrawal of a student.
- 13.4 As a standard practice, where a disabled student is withdrawn, this will take place after:
- The Student Support & Welfare Office has exhausted its resources to implement support;
  - The Programme Leader has adhered to the support recommendations as effectively as possible;
  - The Programme Leader has conducted careful review of the student's academic progress and deemed it unrealistic for the student to catch up or to pass the minimum requirement of the course;
  - Or, a Disciplinary Panel has considered the student unsuitable, despite having the necessary provisions already in place.

## 14. Voluntary Withdrawal

- 14.1 Students who are considering withdrawing from the Programme are advised to discuss the matter with their Programme Leader or Head of Academics/Academic Manager before they make a final decision. Depending upon the reasons the student has for considering withdrawal, the Programme Leader may be able to refer the student to sources of specialist advice and guidance within ESL, including the Student Support & Welfare Team, SFE support services, and the meeting with the Student Representative Co-ordinator.
- 14.2 Students who wish to discuss the detailed financial implications of withdrawal should be advised to contact student the Student Finance Office in the first instance.
- 14.3 Where a student tells a member of academic staff that they are considering withdrawing from the Programme, the member of academic staff should inform the relevant Programme Leader as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the Programme Leader may either arrange a meeting with the student or contact the student by e-mail to draw their attention to the range of advice, guidance and support that is available.
- 14.4 If a student decides to withdraw, they should complete a **Notification of Withdrawal** form, which should be countersigned by both the Programme Leader and the Academic Dean. The School will then follow the procedure as outline in section 10.2.

## 15. Withdrawal on the basis of Disciplinary Action

- 15.1 The Student Conduct policy is in place to ensure students and staff can work in a safe and congenial environment. In the event of any major contravention to the policy, students will be subject to the School's disciplinary proceedings. In the most severe cases of misconduct, action may be taken to withdraw the student from their programme.
- 15.2 Such breaches of the Student Code of Conduct include but are not limited to:
- Aggressive or violent behaviour;
  - Damage or the perceived threat to damage School buildings, students and/or staff and/or their property;
  - Any activity involving the unauthorised use of drugs or alcohol;
  - Tampering with safety equipment (e.g. discharging of fire extinguishers, setting off building alarms deliberately and without valid cause, etc.)
  - Breaches of School policies with particular reference to Harassment/ Bullying or Equal Opportunities;



- 15.3 Under such circumstances an investigating officer will be appointed to gather all information relating to the case. This will be presented to a Student Disciplinary Panel who, on the basis of all evidence and the surrounding circumstance will decide an appropriate course of action. The final decision of the panel will be informed by the nature of the offence, the specific circumstance surrounding it, the frequency of occurrence or whether it is a first offence, and ultimately the risks of allowing the student to remain enrolled with the School. If the risks are found to be intolerable, only then panel will move for the withdrawal of the student from studies
- 15.4 No formal disciplinary outcome will be concluded unless a disciplinary meeting has been held. Formal withdrawal from a study programme is an absolute last resort of any disciplinary proceedings.

## **16. Appeals**

- 16.1 All students required to withdraw have the right of appeal through the Programme Leader to an Appeal Panel. The right of appeal relates only to the withdrawal decision and not to the results of any examination or academic assessment on which the decision may be based.
- 16.2 Students required to withdraw are given written notice, by the Withdrawal Committee, of their right to appeal. Appeal must be made in writing within 10 working days to the Appeals Committee through Programme Leader and shall state the grounds on which the appeal is being made and provide evidence to support it.
- 16.3 In the event of withdrawal through disciplinary action, an appeal must be made to the Student Disciplinary Panel within 10 working day of the decision. The student will be invited to attend the Appeal Panel and relevant academic staff members will be invited to the hearing (usually the Programme Leader or Head of Academics).
- 16.4 The Appeal Panel, in reaching a conclusion on a student appeal, may accept, reject or assign specific conditions to the continuance of the course of study by the student. The Appeal Panel will inform the appellant of the Committee's decision within 24 hours by email or telephone, and confirm in writing to the student providing reasons for the judgment reached in relation to submissions made at the hearing, within five working days of the hearing taking place.