

Attendance and Engagement

About this policy and procedures

1. Backstage Academy wants its students to achieve to the best of their ability. It is widely recognised that attendance and achievement are strongly linked. We also want to enable you to achieve sustained work in the live events industries: your ability to work collaboratively and demonstrate a professional attitude and approach to working will help you to achieve this.
2. As a responsible institution, Backstage Academy has a duty to monitor attendance, and to act on non-attendance so that students can be supported to complete their course. Backstage Academy is required to monitor students' attendance and report as appropriate to the Student Loan Company (SLC) and UK Visa and Immigration (the UK Home Office) if required.
3. The Student Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedures set out here is intended to provide a clear and impartial process for dealing with matters relating to attendance and engagement that falls below expectations within a reasonable timescale having due regard to the spirit of natural justice. It has been written to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) and follows the QAA Advice and Guidance for Enabling Student Achievement.
4. You are expected to attend and engage with all scheduled learning activities because:
 - i. the promotion and achievement of collaborative learning, teaching and working is a principle of studying at Backstage Academy;
 - ii. you are expected to acquire a professional attitude to your studies, your peers and your tutors and are required to demonstrate a high level of commitment to the collaborative nature of Backstage Academy courses.

Expectations

5. It is a formal requirement of all Backstage Academy Courses that you attend all timetabled sessions. Failure to attend and engage with taught sessions without mitigation may result in penalties being applied.
6. In this context the following definitions apply:
 - i. **Attendance**
The physical presence on a timely basis of the student at teaching events or other required events as prescribed by the course of study.
 - ii. **Engagement**
The active involvement of students in their studies as evidenced, for example, by meaningful contributions to teaching events, appropriate preparatory work in advance of teaching events, and constructive work with fellow students as required by the structure of the course of study.
7. A register of attendance will be kept at each session and your non-attendance will be recorded.

8. We will review your attendance periodically and on completion of each module.

Notification of Absence

9. **Authorised short-term absence**

A student may request an authorised notified absence (leave of absence) by contacting the Module Leader **at least two working days** in advance of the scheduled session(s).

You must complete a leave of absence form available from explaining the reason for the absence available by emailing studentadmin@backstage-academy.co.uk

A planned notified absence will only be considered to have been granted where the Course Leader has confirmed this in writing to the student.

Leave of absence cannot be granted for an examination or other summative assessment, including practical work or assessed presentations.

10. **Unexpected or unplanned absence**

We recognise that there will be times when your late arrival or non-attendance is because of matters beyond your control or because of illness or some other unforeseen circumstance. If you are unable to attend, or arrive on time you must:

- i. email or telephone a member of the administration team before 9.30 am on the day of absence.
- ii. complete an Absence Form (which is available from xxx). You should submit the completed form to studentadmin@backstage-academy.co.uk within 5 working days of your return from absence. If you do not submit the form within 5 working days of the last day of absence, you will be marked as an unnotified absence.
- iii. if you are ill for more than seven consecutive calendar days, then you should obtain a statement of fitness to return to work (fit note) from your doctor.

Procedure for poor attendance

11. Regardless of whether an absence is notified or unauthorised, Backstage Academy regards attendance **below 80%** in a module as potentially endangering your progression and achievement since a substantial amount of material may have been missed. A poor attendance record will also be taken into consideration at Course Assessment Boards and Awards and Progressions Boards.
12. If you are not attending and engaging with your course of study on a regular and consistent basis then, in the first instance, tutors will raise the matter **informally**.

13. Where your attendance falls below 80% in a module or, you miss five consecutive contact points, the procedure outlined below will be followed. **It should be noted that both notified and unauthorised absences count towards the 80% threshold.**
14. **Stage 1.**
You will be invited in writing to attend a meeting with your relevant Course Leader to discuss your attendance; this may result in a formal written warning including an attendance plan. A copy of the letter will be held on your student record for a period of **three months** or to the end of the semester (whichever is the shorter) after which your attendance and engagement will be reviewed.
15. If you do not attend this meeting, you will automatically be progressed to Stage 2 of this procedure.
16. **Stage 2.**
If your attendance and engagement does not improve, or if you fail to attend the Stage 1 meeting, you will be invited in writing to a formal meeting with the Academic Director and your Course Leader. This may result in a formal written warning indicating that you are no longer deemed to be in 'good standing' and therefore ineligible to be considered for international exchange opportunities, external placement opportunities, or election as a student representative. This position will be maintained for a period of **six months** or to the end of the academic year (whichever is the shorter) after which your attendance and engagement will be reviewed.
17. If you do not attend this meeting, you will automatically be progressed to Stage 3 of this procedure.
18. **Stage 3.**
If there is still no improvement in your attendance and engagement following stages 1 and 2, or if you fail to attend the Stage 2 meeting, you will be invited in writing to attend a formal academic panel composed of the Head of Institution, Director of Student Experience and a Course Leader from another course of study.

This could result in:

- i. suspension or exclusion from classes or from the from Backstage Academy campus (or any part thereof) for a specified period;
 - ii. your being withdrawn from your course
19. If you do not attend this meeting, you may be withdrawn from your course and will be notified of this decision in writing.

Your right to review

20. You have the right to request a review decision made as part of this process. The Appeals and Review Board will not rehear the case afresh but will:
 - i. review the procedures followed to date;

- ii. establish whether any new evidence that is material and substantial has been presented;
 - iii. consider whether bias has been a contributory factor to the decision
- 21. Notice of your request for review should be sent to the Registry Manager at studentadmin@backstage-academy.co.uk in writing within **five working days** of the dispatch of the decision and you may submit a written statement for consideration by the Appeals and Review Board.
- 22. The Appeals and Review Board will meet usually within **14** working days. The manner in which the review shall be conducted, and the evidence heard will be entirely at the discretion of the Chair of the Board and in accordance with the terms of reference for the Appeals Board.
- 23. Having reviewed the case, the Appeals/Review Board may:
 - i. confirm the original decision
 - ii. uphold the appeal and quash the original decision
 - iii. substitute its own decision for the original one.
- 24. You will be notified in writing of the Appeals and Review Board's decision within 5 working days of that decision being made.
- 25. The decision of the Appeals and Review Board is final and there is no further process for review within Backstage Academy. You will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. This provides you with formal confirmation that you have completed all available stages of the Backstage Academy's internal procedures.

Other provisions

- 26. During the formal stages of the process and in the case of a review of a decision, you may be accompanied by a companion. This may be a students' union representative, parent, guardian, carer, friend or fellow student. You may not be represented by an external organisation. You will be notified of this right within the letter inviting you to the meeting(s). You should inform the person calling the meeting if you will be accompanied and by whom.
- 27. Your companion will be able to address the meeting in order to put your case forward, sum up the case, respond on your behalf to any view expressed and confer with you. The companion may not answer questions on your behalf but may provide clarification with the agreement of the Chair.

Further action

- 28. If after your review, you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided the complaint is eligible under its rules. Should you decide to make a complaint to the OIA, the OIA Complaint Form must be received by the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter

29. Information about the role of the OIA and the procedure for submitting complaints can be obtained from the OIA website: www.oiahe.org.uk