



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

# **Student Engagement, Interruption and Withdrawal Policy**

**Version Number 1.3**

**Effective from 1 September 2023**

**Author: Director of Student Administration  
Student Administration**

## 1.0 Purpose

The University is committed to supporting students and seeks to promote an environment that enables you to engage with your studies and become a confident and successful learner. Student attendance at scheduled teaching events as well as their participation with the range of learning resources and environments are known to be key factors in student success.

This Policy sets out our expectations of you and your responsibilities in relation to engaging with your study and steps which we may take if your engagement falls below accepted standards.

This Policy also outlines the steps which you must follow if your circumstances mean you no longer wish to continue your studies and withdraw from your programme or if you are temporarily unable to maintain the level of engagement necessary to support success and need to interrupt your studies for a period of time.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all students who are undertaking a taught or research programme that is awarded and delivered by the University of Salford.

It does not apply to students who are studying towards an award that is delivered by a partner institution, except where its application may be stipulated under the relevant partner agreement. In all cases where it does not apply, collaborative partners are responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to support and monitor students' engagement, achievement and success.

## 3.0 Definitions

**Apprentices** are students who are registered on Higher or Degree Apprenticeship programmes.

**Withdrawal from study** means that a student has either decided to discontinue study at the University with no intention of returning or that the University has withdrawn a student's registration for reasons which include unsatisfactory engagement with their programme. Where at a later point a student wishes to return to the university, they can apply to do so via the usual admission route.

**Interruption of study** means a formal break from study for a specific period of time with the intention to resume study at a future date which has been agreed with the University. For students registered on a higher or degree apprenticeship programme, an interruption of study may also be referred to as a 'break in learning'.

## 4.0 Student Responsibilities

In line with the [Student Charter](#), you are expected to commit to:

- Attending all timetabled teaching events, including lectures, seminars and tutorials whether delivered on-line or on-campus.
- Participating in learning activities as guided by your tutors outside of timetabled events.
- Attending or submitting assessments.
- Participating in field trips or other activities which are a core element of your programme.

- Accessing Blackboard (the virtual learning environment) and the University Library.
- At postgraduate research level, adhering to the Learning Agreement drawn up with your research supervisor and attending all scheduled meetings with your supervision team.

## 5.0 Student Data

The University collects data about your engagement and participation including:

- Attendance at timetabled classes such as lectures, seminars, practicals, laboratory sessions and placements. Since monitoring and reporting requirements vary between programmes, and may have to comply with specific criteria applied by external professional bodies and other agencies, your programme team will inform you of the attendance and engagement arrangements that apply to you.
- Postgraduate research students are expected to attend regular research meetings with your supervisor.
- Submission of summative and formative assessments.
- Use of Library services, Blackboard (the virtual learning environment) and student email accounts as indicators of how you are participating in your programme outside of timetabled classes, and how frequently these learning resources are used.
- Engagement with employability and related opportunities through the Salford Advantage system.

The University is legally required to collate specific information about the attendance and study activities of international students on behalf of UKVI, and about students on certain programmes that are accredited or funded by one or more professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

The University collects individual student data and also datasets which cover groups of students such as whole programmes and levels of study. These data are collected and used in accordance with the terms and conditions of student registration, the Data Protection Act and our Information Security Policy.

### We use the data we collect in the following ways:

- The professional services and academic staff teams within our academic Schools are responsible for using attendance and engagement data to support students' study.
- The University maps student attendance and engagement information against other datasets, e.g. student achievement and entry tariffs, to help us improve the educational provision and support services we provide.
- In references to prospective employers and other external organisations, such as further study destinations.
- To comply with our reporting obligations to external agencies e.g. UKVI, Student Finance England etc.

## 6.0 Unable to Engage

If you experience circumstances which are preventing engagement with your programme, you must seek advice and support as soon as possible from one or more of the following sources to avoid the possibility that your registration will be cancelled:

- Personal Tutor/Academic Progress Review tutor

- Programme Leader.
- Supervisor or Personal Tutor (research students only).
- Student Progression Administrator.
- askUS.
- The Home Office Compliance Team (for students on a Student Visa).

If your attendance and engagement does not satisfy programme requirements, the University will contact you to explore any issues which are affecting attendance and engagement and may cancel your registration if attendance and engagement does not improve. If your registration is cancelled you have the right to appeal against the cancelled registration using the [appeal against cancellation of registration form](#). The process is outlined in Appendix A. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate for your situation to be managed through the University [Fitness to Study Policy](#).

### **7.0 Withdrawal from study due to unsatisfactory engagement (University Initiated Withdrawal)**

Where your level of attendance or engagement falls below an acceptable level (appendix A), as determined through an evaluation of the range of available data, you will be contacted by your School to attend an engagement review to consider the reasons for your current level of engagement and, where appropriate, agree remedial action or support. During the engagement review you will be asked to complete an engagement agreement which will define the level of engagement necessary to support your successful continuation with your programme.

If you fail to respond to the invitation to attend an engagement review, you will be notified of the intention to cancel your registration and the date upon which this will become effective. If your registration is cancelled you have the right to appeal against your cancelled registration using the [appeal against cancellation of registration form](#). The process is outlined in Appendix A.

Where following an engagement review your engagement continues to fall below the level articulated in your specific engagement agreement, you will receive notification of the breach and be invited to attend a further engagement review. If you fail to respond to the invitation to attend the engagement review or where your engagement does not improve to an acceptable level, you will be notified of the intention to cancel your registration and the date upon which this will become effective. If your registration is cancelled you have the right to appeal against your cancelled registration using the [appeal against cancellation of registration form](#). The process is outlined in Appendix B.

### **8.0 Interruption of Study (Break in Learning)**

In some instances, where the barriers to successful engagement are temporary in nature, you may wish to request or be advised to take a formal break in learning for a specific period of time. Interruption of study is not an automatic process and will be used only where there is a reasonable probability that the issues preventing your successful engagement with learning can be addressed prior to the proposed date of your return. Before submitting a formal application for an interruption, you should seek advice and support to ensure that an

interruption is the most appropriate course of action. Advice and support are available from the sources listed above.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of any implications for funding, visas or accommodation if you are contemplating an interruption.

### **9.0 Process to Request an Interruption**

A formal request for interruption, including the proposed period of interruption, must be submitted to your School using the online [student portal service](#) along with any relevant evidence of the circumstances relating to the reason for interruption. If this is not possible, you should submit a request to your School in writing using your University of Salford email account. Upon receipt of a formal request, a check will be undertaken to determine whether you have taken reasonable steps to seek advice and guidance about the possibility to continue your studies at this time and the implications of any interruption. If, without good reason, you have not sought appropriate support you are more likely to have your request turned down.

If you are registered at a partner institution, staff at the partner institution must ensure that any requests for interruption are notified to the University once you have discussed your request with an appropriate member of staff.

### **10.0 Process to Consider and Confirm an Interruption Request**

For students on taught programmes, requests for interruption will be considered by the Associate Dean (Academic) or nominee within your School. For students on research programmes, requests for interruption will be considered by the Postgraduate Research Director or nominee within your School and noted by the School's Research and Enterprise Committee.

An interruption of study is a serious step for any student, so all requests are considered on an individual basis. The following are examples of circumstances which may be acceptable circumstances for an interruption. This list is not definitive and even if a circumstance is listed, it does not mean that a request for interruption will be approved:

- Significant changes to your health or wellbeing;
- Significant illness of a close family member;
- The death of a close family member or friend;
- Significant changes in your caring responsibilities;
- Extreme family or financial circumstances which have had a significant impact on your ability to study;
- Military service including undertaking military service as reservists;
- Jury service, where this can't be deferred;
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave;
- Elite athletes who are required to attend sporting events/fixtures on behalf of their country;
- Significant changes in work commitments;

- Situations where you are unable to progress academically such being unable to find a placement or delays with third party processes such as DBS checks.

Interruptions would not normally be approved for the following circumstances:

- If a programme is being withdrawn and there are no future cohorts for a student to join upon return from an interruption;
- Where an interruption is requested immediately before the start of examinations or submission of assessments, simply as a means of avoiding failure in or postponing assessments, as this would provide you with an unmerited advantage, if there is a genuine reason why you cannot complete an assessment, it may be appropriate to use the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure;
- Vacations;
- Employment that does not contribute significantly towards a programme of study;
- Poor planning and time management;
- Falling behind with your studies and assessments due to poor attendance or engagement;
- Lack of motivation or to consider future engagement with a programme or subject.

The University will confirm the outcome of the interrupt request in writing, including the start and end date of the period of interruption.

### 11.0 Access to Services During a Period of Interruption

During a period of interruption, a student's registration status changes and they will not have the same entitlements as fully registered students. It is however important that you are able to maintain appropriate contact with the University during your period of interruption to allow you to prepare for your return to study and to retain contact with your programme. The nature of this engagement will differ depending upon the circumstances that necessitated your interruption and will be contained in the return to study plan agreed at the point of interruption and reviewed at agreed periods.

Whilst on an interruption of study you will be able to access the following services to facilitate return to study:

Service	Outline of Service Provided
Information Technology/Services	Student email and Office 365
Student Experience and Support	Assistance from AskUS including: Wellbeing and Counselling Services Careers and enterprise advice and information Finance and money matters Disability Inclusion Service Home Office Compliance Team (Student visas)

Service	Outline of Service Provided
	Diversity and faith support
Library Services	Access to all library services and resources (Please note, access to the Clifford Whitworth Library will only be possible between the hours of 9:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday)
School	Access to Programme Leader and/ Personal Tutor/ Academic Progress Review tutor / post-graduate research supervisor
Access	Access to University buildings during normal working hours to facilitate the above services

During a period of interruption, you will not be able to:

- Attend classes;
- Access tutorial support or supervision;
- Continue with research;
- Undertake or submit assessments;
- Remain in the UK if you are on a Student visa sponsored by the University and the period of interruption is for 60 days or more.

### 12.0 Period of Interruption

For students on taught awards, the period of interruption is normally up to one year, in exceptional circumstances you may be able to request a second one year period of interruption. For students studying for a Post-graduate Research degree interruptions are normally agreed for periods of three months to a maximum of one year, the duration of interruption will vary to reflect the specific circumstances of each applicant. Where a programme can accommodate an interruption for a period of less than one year, Schools have discretion to approve an interruption of this kind.

You need to be clear about the financial impact of your period of interruption, especially if you are in receipt of funding from Student Finance and you interrupt for less than a full year.

### 13.0 Returning to a Programme Following an Interruption

Programmes are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, and there may be changes to your programme when you return. Your programme team will be able to advise you of any changes.

### 14.0 Students Undertaking Degree Apprentices

If you are registered on a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship programme you may take a formal 'break in learning' if you plan to resume your studies at a later date. Any breaks in learning must be requested, either through the process outlined in section 9, or directly from your employer. The decision to take a break in learning, the reason for the break and the expected

duration must be agreed with your employer. As an apprentice you must return to the same apprenticeship programme after a break in learning.

When you take a period of leave as an apprentice from your work due to personal mitigating circumstances, this will be a break in the training they are to receive (a break in learning). You and your employer should revise the date in the apprenticeship agreement on which the apprenticeship is expected to have been completed to account for the duration of the break.

You should ensure that you are clear about any financial impact due to a break in study.

### **15.0 Student Visa Holders**

The University is required to notify the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office of interruptions for students sponsored under the Student Route of the Points Based Immigration System where the University has issued Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). [Details of the specific engagement requirements for Student Visa holders can be found in the Engagement Policy for Student Route and Tier 4 Visa Holders on the University's [Policies and Procedures page](#). If you hold a Student visa and you interrupt your studies you **will be required to leave the UK**, even if interrupting because of personal or medical reasons, if your interruption is for a period of 60 days or more. This means you will need to return home and apply for another Student visa to come back when you are ready to return from your interruption.

If you are sponsored under the Student Route and interrupt your studies for less than 60 days, you do not need to surrender your visa; however, you forfeit the right to an extension to your programme.

Further advice is available from the Home Office Compliance team using [HomeOfficeCompliance@salford.ac.uk](mailto:HomeOfficeCompliance@salford.ac.uk) or 0161 295 0023 (option 3, option 2).

### **16.0 Last Date of Attendance for Students on an Interruption of Study and Financial Implications**

Your last date of attendance/engagement before an interruption must be agreed during the interruption process and will usually reflect the date that the interruption is confirmed and not the first date upon which it was requested. Back-dated interruptions will not normally be considered and cannot be for those students holding a Student Visa. Where relevant, that last date of attendance/engagement will be notified to funding bodies/organisations. If you are in receipt of funding whilst not attending or engaging with your studies, this may be considered as fraud.

You are required to pay any outstanding tuition fees up to the agreed last date of attendance/engagement prior to the interruption.

### **17.0 Communication with Students during an Interruption**

During a period of interruption, we will, at periodic intervals indicated in your return to study plan, communicate with you via your University of Salford email account to provide relevant information and seek reports on progress towards your readiness to return. In addition, we will also communicate with you approximately six weeks in advance of your return to studies to make arrangements to return following your period of interruption. This may include a return to study meeting or appropriate contact from your Programme Leader, Supervisor or other relevant member of staff. On return to the University, you will be provided with an appropriate induction. Depending on your programme this may include attendance at sessions to update



your knowledge, an update on programme changes or other issues which may impact on your studies. You will be required to confirm your intention to return one month before the expected return date. If you do not confirm your intention to return and subsequently re-register, you will be withdrawn from your programme.

### **18.0 Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes**

The [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#) and the [Academic Regulations for Research Regulations](#) will provide guidance on which regulations apply following a period of interruption.

### **19.0 Retrospective Interruptions**

Interruptions cannot normally be submitted retrospectively and will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

### **20.0 Withdrawal from Studies at the Request of a Student**

If you wish to withdraw from study you must formally notify your School as soon as possible using the online [student portal service](#). If this is not possible, you should submit a request to your School/partner institution in writing using your University of Salford email account.

Before submitting a formal application withdraw from study, you should discuss your circumstances with staff listed in section 6.0. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully aware of any implications for funding, visas or accommodation if you are contemplating a withdrawal from study.

For students on taught programmes, requests for withdrawal will be considered by the Associate Dean (Academic) or nominee within your School. For students on research programmes, requests for withdrawal will be considered by the Associate Dean (Research) or nominee within your School and noted by the School's Research and Enterprise Committee. Once a request has been processed, the University will confirm to you in writing that your withdrawal has been processed and your last date of attendance/engagement.

If you have withdrawn, we will review your academic profile to determine if sufficient credits have been accumulated to award you an intermediate terminating qualification in line with the Academic Regulations.

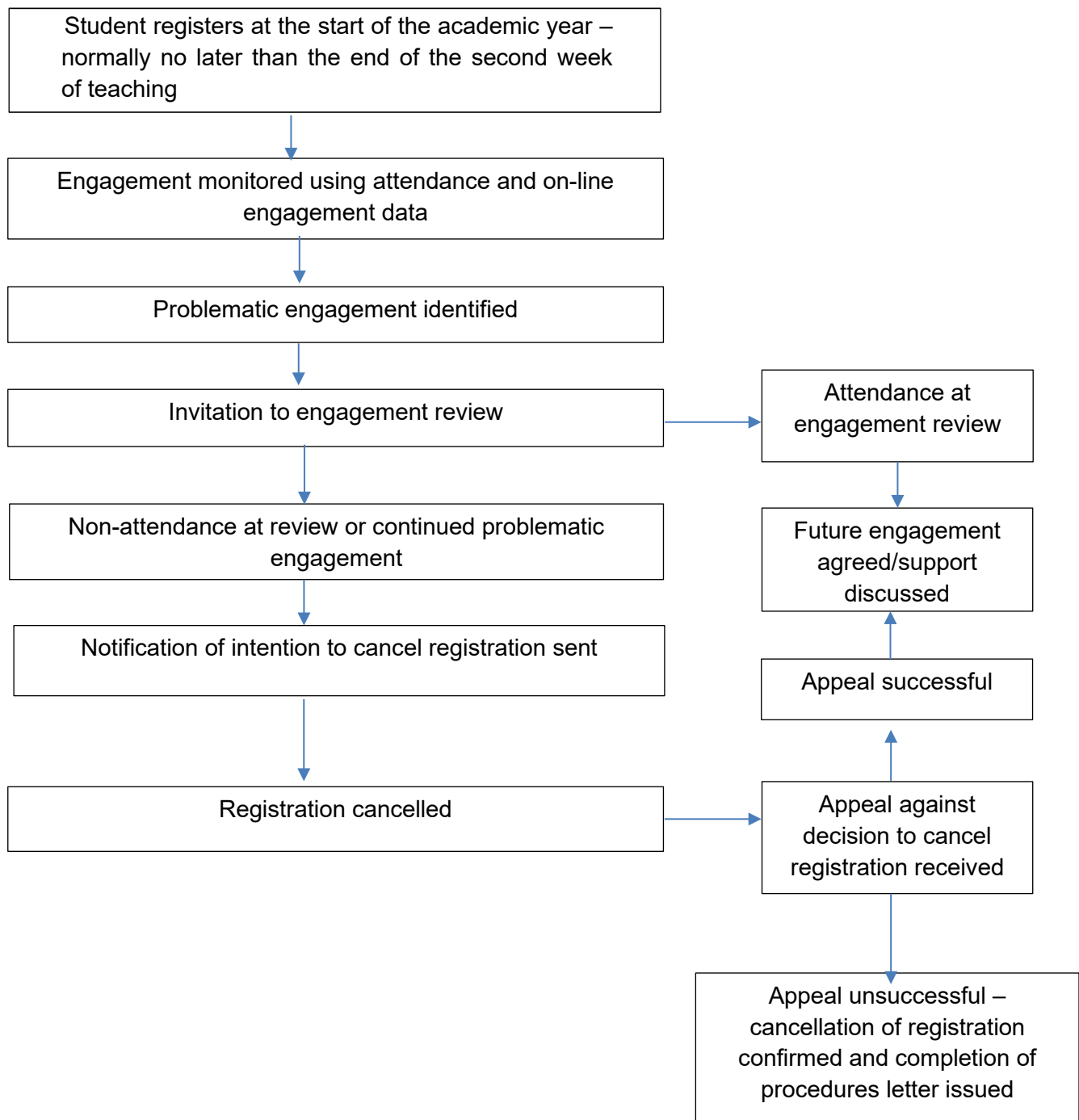
### **21.0 Last Date of Attendance for Withdrawn Students and Financial Implications**

The process of withdrawal typically takes 10 working days to complete, and the University will normally use the last date of attendance/engagement confirmed by your School, as the final date of attendance/engagement to determine tuition fee balances.

The last date of attendance/engagement will also be notified, where relevant, to funding bodies/organisations to determine any student loan or bursary overpayments. If you are in receipt of funding whilst not attending and engaging with their studies, this may be considered as fraud.

**22.0 Appendices**

Appendix A: Process for cancellation of registration for non-engagement



## **Appendix B Identifying Unacceptable Levels of Engagement for students on taught awards**

As programmes differ in their pedagogic approach and in some cases are subject to PSRB requirements, it is inappropriate to set a single threshold to define what level of engagement would trigger intervention under this policy. Engagement will be reviewed in a number of ways to identify where there may be cause for concern. At the first engagement review meeting an individual engagement agreement will be produced to set the specific requirements for your specific circumstances. This will form the basis of future engagement reviews.

Your engagement will be reviewed on a regular basis this will include for example:

Student Progression Administrator (SPA): **Weekly** Review of engagement via the University's engagement analytics platform

Module Leader / Programme Leader / Supervisor: **Periodic (monthly)** review of engagement

Personal Tutor / Academic Progress Review Tutor: **Twice per trimester** review of engagement

### **Typical Triggers for an engagement review meeting:**

#### **Via Weekly Review by SPA**

##### **Aim to identify non/very low engagement**

No engagement with Blackboard over previous seven days

Non-attendance at time-tabled sessions in previous seven days

Non-submission of assessment(s) due that week

Failure to respond to intervention request

#### **Via Monthly Review by Programme or via Personal Tutor / Academic Progress Review Tutor or Supervisor:**

Sporadic pattern of engagement within specific modules

Non-attendance at key programme / module or other activities

Non-submission of formative assessment

<b>Document Control Information</b>			
<b>Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorised &amp; Date</b>
Annette Cooke	Clarification of timescale used for calculating last day in relation to fee refunds.	V1.3	Editorial amendment 4 August 2023
Annette Cooke	Updates to terminology used for student vivas and updates to system names.	V1.2	Editorial amendment 10 August 2022
Annette Cooke	Links updated, changes to terminology (removal of reference to tier 4) and addition comment that programmes may change during a student's period of interruption.	V1.1	Editorial amendment 1 July 2021
Annette Cooke	This policy replaces the Student Interruptions and Withdrawals Policy and the Student Engagement, Participation and Attendance Policy	V1.0	SELTEC July 2020
<b>Policy Management and Responsibilities:</b>			
Owner:	This Policy is owned by Student Administration		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All students who are undertaking a taught or research qualification that is awarded and wholly delivered by the University of Salford, all staff who are involved in teaching, supervising or supporting these students are responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.		
<b>Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:</b>			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR)	1. <i>This is mandatory. Specify date completed and brief outcome. Completed EA to be emailed to <a href="mailto:Equality@salford.ac.uk">Equality@salford.ac.uk</a></i>		
Legal implications (LPG)	2. <i>N/A</i>		
Information Governance (LPG)	3. <i>N/A</i>		
Student facing procedures (QEO)	4. <i>Throughout development of policy</i>		
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	5. <i>Throughout development of policy</i>		
<b>Consultation:</b>			
Staff Trades Unions via HR	N/A		
Students via USSU	Completed		
PGR Forum	Feedback included		
Relevant external bodies (specify)	N/A		
<b>Review:</b>			
Review due:	3 years by 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2023		
Document location:	University Student Facing Procedures page <a href="https://www.salford.ac.uk/governance-and-management/student-facing-policies-and-procedures">https://www.salford.ac.uk/governance-and-management/student-facing-policies-and-procedures</a>		
<b>The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.</b>			