

# Compulsory Withdrawal Procedures: Unsatisfactory Attendance

PROCEDURES

**HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY**  
**PROCEDURES TO SUPPORT STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Policy on Student Attendance available at: <http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/StudentAttendancePolicy.pdf>

It is the responsibility of each School to put processes in place to monitor student attendance at all Heriot-Watt University campuses and on all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research programmes where attendance is expected. It is also the responsibility of each School to ensure attendance requirements are clearly communicated to students.

### Procedures for Overseas Campuses

These procedures are based on the current Heriot-Watt University academic year structure (as shown in *Learning and Teaching Briefing Paper 13, Structure of the Academic Year*). For programmes at overseas campuses which have intakes at different points in the academic year, the timeframes provided within these Procedures still apply, i.e. week 1 is the first week of teaching.

### Possible consequences of non-attendance

The Attendance and Performance section of Regulation 1 (and repeated in the relevant regulations specific to courses/programmes of study) state that students shall attend regularly, perform satisfactorily and take all assessments for their particular course of study. If a student does not meet these requirements the following steps may be taken<sup>1</sup>:

- A. Compulsory withdrawal from the course assessment
- B. Compulsory withdrawal from the programme of study, and therefore the University.

#### A. Compulsory Withdrawal from Course Assessment

In cases of absence without good reason, where a student's attendance fails to meet the minimum required to achieve the learning outcomes of the course as published in the course descriptor, the student may be excluded from the assessment and be graded IA (*ineligible for assessment due to unsatisfactory attendance/participation; further opportunity may be permitted*) in the course. If an IA grade is awarded, the student may have the opportunity of repeating the course with attendance, with permission from the Head of School, and paying the full course fee, without further grade penalty.

#### B. Compulsory Withdrawal from the programme of study, and therefore the University

In cases of continued absence without good reason, where attempts to address the problems have been unsuccessful, a student may be prevented from continuing with his/her programme of study and compulsorily withdrawn from the University. This would normally occur where there has been a prolonged period of absence or absences equating to at least 50% of the courses in the current stage of study. This can be measured in time period or credit equivalent, and relates to the requirements for attendance as determined by and notified to students in the appropriate School.

## 2. PROCEDURES FOR COMPULSORY WITHDRAWAL FOR UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE

### A. Compulsory Withdrawal from Course Assessment Procedure

1. Notification of the recommendation for withdrawal will have been preceded by an initial letter from the Head of School sent no later than the end of Week 5 (see *Appendix B and C*), notifying the student of unsatisfactory attendance, providing advice on available support and informing the student of possible consequences of continued non-attendance (withdrawal from the course assessment or withdrawal from the University) if the student does not improve attendance or respond by the deadline date.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that for international students, more stringent attendance requirements must be applied in accordance with local government regulations, e.g. students with Tier 4 visas.

Prior to a recommendation for withdrawal from course assessment being made within the School, the student will be informed, in writing, no later than Week 9 (see *Appendix D*), that such a recommendation is being considered and will be given an opportunity to make a case to the School. The student will be given 5 working days in which to respond in writing/email from the date on the letter detailing the recommendation for withdrawal, and will provide details of any mitigating circumstances.

2. Recommendations for withdrawal from the course assessment should be made on the 'Compulsory withdrawal from a course' form (see *Appendix E*) by the Programme Director in conjunction with the student's Course Co-ordinator, mentor and the Head of School offering the course), and should be submitted for approval to the Head of the student's home School. The form should include the rationale, and be accompanied by such evidence as is available (including details of unsatisfactory attendance) and any statements made by the student detailing mitigating circumstances.
3. If the Head of School does not approve withdrawal from course assessment, the form and associated paperwork will be placed on record in the student's file with confirmation of the rationale for not approving the withdrawal. The student will be informed of the outcome by the School.

If the Head of School approves withdrawal from course assessment, the **School** is responsible for:

- processing the recommendation for withdrawal in accordance with agreed procedures
- placing the original and associated paperwork on the student's file
- entering the grade of IA and updating further opportunities in the student records system (SAS)
- informing the student, in writing, of his/her ineligibility for assessment and any subsequent opportunities for assessment, including details of appeals procedures (<http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/complaints/student-appeals.htm>)
- providing a list of all students withdrawn from course assessments by the end of week 9 to the Examinations Officer.

On behalf of the Academic Registrar, the **Examinations Officer** is responsible for:

- removing from examination timetables and examination seating plans the names of students withdrawn from course assessments
- providing invigilators with the names and HWU person numbers of students withdrawn from course assessments
- adding a note on the examination attendance lists confirming students who have been withdrawn.

The **Invigilator**, on behalf of the Examinations Officer, and in cases where the excluded students' names and HWU person numbers have been brought to his/her attention, is responsible for:

- inviting students who have been withdrawn from the course assessment, but have turned up to take the examination, to leave the examination room prior to the start of the examination, and, once they have left, recording this information on the Examination Report form
- in the case of withdrawn students who refuse to leave the examination room, recording details of the refusal to leave on both the student's examination paper and the Examination Report form

4. The student must be provided with opportunities to defend his/her case at appropriate stages and must be informed of their entitlement to appeal against the IA grade in accordance with procedures detailed in Regulation 36: Student Appeals, see <http://www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/>.

## B. Compulsory Withdrawal from a Programme of Study, and therefore the University

*Cases of Compulsory withdrawal from a programme must be approved by the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Studies Committee (USC or PSC) as relevant and notified to the Senate for information. A Calendar of Relevant Dates for communications is provided at Appendix A.*

1. Notification of the recommendation for withdrawal must be preceded by an initial letter from the Head of School, or his/her nominee, normally sent no later than the end of Week 5 (see *Appendix B and C*), notifying the student of unsatisfactory attendance, providing advice on available support and informing the student of possible consequences of continued non-attendance. A further letter will have been sent in Week 9 (see *Appendix D*), informing the student that he or she has been recommended for withdrawal from the programme of study/ University.

Prior to a recommendation for withdrawal from a programme being made within the School, the student will be informed in writing that such a recommendation is being considered and will be given an opportunity to make a case to the School. The student will be given 5 working days in which to respond in writing/email from of the date on the letter detailing the recommendation for withdrawal, and will provide details of any mitigating circumstances.

2. A 'permanent voluntary withdrawal' form should be included in any correspondence with the student (form at <http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/leaving/withdrawing-from-university.htm>), in cases where the student has opted to leave the University and has simply not informed the relevant parties. In such instances, if the student returns the 'voluntary withdrawal' form, normal procedures for 'voluntary withdrawal' will apply and a recommendation for compulsory withdrawal from a programme need not be progressed.
3. Recommendations for withdrawal from a programme should be made on the 'Compulsory Withdrawal from a Programme' form (see *Appendix F*) submitted by the Programme Director (following consultation with the Course Co-ordinator and the student's mentor) to the Head of School for consideration. The form should include a proposed date of withdrawal, the rationale, and be accompanied by such evidence as is available (including details of unsatisfactory attendance) and any statements made by the student detailing mitigating circumstances. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure the involvement of the appropriate Programme Director.
4. If the Head of School does not consider that the student should be compulsorily withdrawn from a programme, the form and associated paperwork, including the Head of School decision and rationale for that decision, will be placed on record in the student's file. The student will be informed of the outcome by the School.

### **Application for Compulsory Withdrawal from a Programme**

1. If the Head of School considers that the student should be compulsorily withdrawn from a programme and the University, a recommendation for the withdrawal, including rationale and supporting evidence, should be submitted on the appropriate form (see *Appendix F*) to the USC or PSC, as appropriate, for consideration.
2. In all cases of withdrawal, whether approved or not, the **School** is responsible for:
  - processing the recommendation for exclusion in accordance with agreed procedures
  - submitting the appropriate form, plus accompanying paperwork, to USC or PSC
  - placing the originals of all documentation on the student's file
  - providing the student with the opportunity to defend his/her case at appropriate stages
  - informing the student, in writing, of the School's intention to submit a recommendation for compulsory withdrawal, including details of the process and course of action available to

the student

3. The **Clerk of USC or PSC** will inform the student in writing of the date on which the Committee is due to consider the recommendation for withdrawal and will invite the student to make a statement regarding the case. The student will be given 5 working days in which to respond in writing/email from the date on the letter from the Committee Clerk, and will provide details of any mitigating circumstances.
4. If USC or PSC determines that the application for withdrawal should not be approved, the Head of School and the student will be notified in writing by the Clerk of the Committee's decision within 10 working days of the meeting. All paperwork including the rationale for the U/PSC decision will be placed on record in the student's file. The Head of School will ensure that the student is provided with advice and support in continuing his or her programme of study.
5. If USC or PSC approves the recommendation for withdrawal, The **Clerk of the Committee** will be responsible for:
  - Informing the Student Records Officer of any such withdrawals
  - notifying the Head of School, in writing, of the Committee's decision
  - informing the student, in writing, of the Committee's decision regarding withdrawal within 10 working days of the meeting
  - notifying the student of the appeals procedures  
<http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/complaints/student-appeals.htm>)
  - in all of the above, the date from which the withdrawal is effective will be specified

On behalf of the Academic Registrar, the **Student Records Officer** will be responsible for:

- recording the decision of 'compulsory withdrawal' on the student's record, including date of withdrawal
  - notifying, with date of withdrawal, appropriate funding authorities as required, and the Home Office, if appropriate
6. The student will be entitled to appeal against a decision of exclusion from continued study in accordance with procedures detailed in Regulation 36: Student Appeals, see <http://www1.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/regulations.pdf>

### 3. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

**Schools** – School Offices, Mentors, Course/Year Co-Ordinators/Programme Directors

**Academic Registry** – Lord Balerno Building, 0044 (0)131 451 3727 or [registry@hw.ac.uk](mailto:registry@hw.ac.uk)

**Student Support** - Hugh Nisbet Building, 0044 (0)131 451 3386 or [studentsupport@hw.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@hw.ac.uk)

**Student Union Advice Hub** - Hugh Nisbet Building, 0044 (0)131 451 4535 or [advice.hub@hw.ac.uk](mailto:advice.hub@hw.ac.uk)

**Dubai Campus** – Academic Administration Office, 00 971 4 435 8631 or [dubaiaao@hw.ac.uk](mailto:dubaiaao@hw.ac.uk)

**Malaysia Campus** – Student Service Centre, +603 8894 3610 or [MYstudentcentre@hw.ac.uk](mailto:MYstudentcentre@hw.ac.uk)

## APPENDIX A: Calendar of Relevant Dates

Academic Session Week No. <sup>2</sup>	Semester Week	Activity	Actions - CW from a Course	Actions - CW from a Programme
1	1	Student not attending as required		
2	2			
3	3			
4	4			
5	5		Warning Letter from Head of School sent to student.	
6	6		Check for improvement or response from student.	
7	7	Student still not attending as required	Programme Director completes course withdrawal form and sends to Head of School for approval.	
8	8			
9	9		CW from Course Assessment Letter from School sent to student. 'IA' grade given to student. List of excluded students from School to Examinations Officer.	
10	10		Examinations Officer excludes student from examination seating plan.	
11	11	Student fails to attend at least 50% of the courses associated with stage of study		School writes to student confirming continued absence could lead to withdrawal. Student has 5 working days to respond.
12	12	Student does not respond or complete PVW form		Programme Director completes exclusion from continued study form and sends to Head of School for approval. School informs student. Form with supporting evidence sent to Clerk of USC/PSC. Clerk writes to student giving 5 working days to respond.
13				If USC/PSC approves, Clerk informs student, School, Student Records Officer. Student Records Officer updates student record.
14		Assessment	Examinations Officer informs invigilators of excluded student.	
15		Break 1		
16				
17				
18	1			
19	2	Student not attending as required		
20	3			
21	4			
22	5		Warning Letter from Head of School sent to student.	
23	6		Check for improvement or response from student.	
24	7	Student still not attending as required	Programme Director completes course withdrawal form and sends to Head of School for approval.	
25	8			
26	9		CW from Course Assessment Letter from School sent to student. 'IA' grade given to student. List of excluded students from School to Examinations Officer.	
27	10		Examinations Officer excludes student from examination seating plan.	
28	11	Student fails to attend at least 50% of the courses associated with stage of study		School writes to student confirming continued absence could lead to withdrawal. Student has 5 working days to respond.
29	12	Student does not respond or complete PVW form		Programme Director completes exclusion from continued study form and sends to Head of School for approval. School informs student. Form with supporting evidence sent to Clerk of USC/PSC. Clerk writes to student giving 5 working days to respond.
30				If USC/PSC approves, Clerk informs student, School, Academic Registrar and Student Records Officer. Student Records Officer updates student record.
31		Break 2		
32				
33				
34		Assessment	Examinations Officer informs invigilators of excluded student.	
35				
36				
37 to 52		Summer Break		

<sup>2</sup> PGR students may enter at different points in the Academic Year. For non-standard intakes, i.e. HWUM Foundation Programme or Dubai Degree Entry Programme, week 1 is the 1<sup>st</sup> week of teaching.



**APPENDIX B:** Used by the Head of School to inform student that poor course attendance has been noted by week 5. Sent with Appendix C.

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxx

**Attendance and Performance for Academic Year 2014/15 (Semester X)**

I am writing to advise you of the University's concern that you are not attending regularly or performing satisfactorily in the following course(s):

Course Code and Title: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Therefore, in accordance with Regulation 1, paragraph 6, I have to advise you that if this continues, you may not be allowed to be assessed or present yourself for examination in the above course(s), at the next diet of examinations or at any subsequent diet. This is in accordance with the Regulations on Attendance and Performance. As a consequence, you may not be able to continue with your studies on this programme.

**If you are experiencing any difficulties with this course or your studies in general, please contact me or complete the attached proforma as soon as possible. You may also wish to discuss your situation with the staff in the Student Support and Accommodation office (you can find contact details at <http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing.htm>), or with staff in the Student Union Advice Hub. If you are a student at the Dubai or Malaysia campuses you may wish to contact the Academic Administration Office (Dubai) or Student Service Centre (Malaysia).**

If I do not hear from you by [*5 working days from date of letter*], I regret that I may have to take the necessary action under the Regulations, to ensure that you will not be able to present yourself for the appropriate examination(s).

For further information on the Regulations of the University, please refer to [www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/regulations.pdf](http://www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/regulations.pdf).

Yours sincerely

xx

**APPENDIX C:** Sent to student with letter in Appendix B.

Issues Affecting Your Attendance and Performance

It has been noted that you are not attending regularly or performing satisfactorily. The enclosed letter provides further details. **If you are experiencing difficulties with the course(s) listed or your studies in general, or if there are other reasons, please complete this form and return to your School Office within 5 working days.**

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Person ID:</b>	
<b>School/Institute:</b>			
<b>Programme:</b>		<b>Year of Study:</b>	

<b>Course(s) Affected:</b> <i>(Please list Course Code and Title)</i>	

The University is keen to give support and help to enable students to succeed in their studies. By completing this form and returning it promptly, you will help us to help you to address any problems you are having which could impair your ability to reach your full potential. Please tick the boxes that are relevant:

Programme/course change		Issue/problem with course(s)		Illness	
Accommodation difficulties *		Employment difficulties		Other cause(s) for non-attendance	
Family/personal problems *		Financial problems *			

Where applicable, please explain further the issue(s)/problem(s) you are experiencing which is/are affecting your attendance/performance on the course(s) noted above:

*\* The Student Support and Accommodation office provides a counselling service covering personal matters. For students with special needs and disabilities, a team of special needs advisers is available for advice and support. **Student Loans** and the **Hardship Funds** are also administered from this office. For contact details please go to [www.hw.ac.uk/support](http://www.hw.ac.uk/support). Information and support is also available from the Student Union Advice Hub. If you are a student at the Dubai or Malaysia campuses, please contact either the Academic Administration Office (Dubai) or Student Service Centre (Malaysia) for advice.*

<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Contact Details:</b>			

Please return form to your School Office, Heriot-Watt University.

The University holds all personal information subject to the provisions of the UK Data Protection Act (1998). Your personal details will be kept strictly private and confidential and no part of your university record will be released without your permission.



**APPENDIX E:** Should be used by School for internal records.

## Compulsory Withdrawal from a Course(s) due to Unsatisfactory Attendance/Participation

If in the opinion of the Programme Director<sup>3</sup> and in conjunction with the student's Course Co-ordinator and Mentor, a candidate fails to satisfy the minimum attendance required to achieve the learning outcomes of a course, the student, after due warning, may be excluded from participating in the next available assessment opportunity.

Please complete this form and forward to the student's Head of School and the Head of School offering the course (if different) for authorisation.

<b>Student Name:</b>		<b>Person ID:</b>	
<b>School/Institute:</b>			
<b>Programme:</b>		<b>Year of Study:</b>	

<b>Course code(s):</b> <small>(please ensure separate forms are used for each School)</small>		<b>Course title(s):</b>	
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### **Declaration**

In accordance with the appropriate Regulations and procedures, I hereby recommend that the student named above should be ineligible for assessment in the affected course due to unsatisfactory attendance/participation and I declare:

- (i) that the student was informed, in writing at the appropriate time that such a recommendation would be considered, was given an opportunity to make a case to the appropriate School, and received details of the appeals procedures.
- (ii) that, where appropriate, I have attached any evidence as was available and any statements made by the student detailing mitigating circumstances. Evidence attached – Y / N *(please circle)*

Please give rationale below including any subsequent opportunities for assessment and timing of such opportunities - *continue on a separate sheet if necessary*

<b>Signature of Programme Director/:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature of Head of School (or nominee) offering course:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature of Student's Head of School (or nominee) (where different):</b>		<b>Date:</b>	<b>Approved? Y / N</b>

Student must be informed in writing and a copy of all documentation placed on student file, regardless of outcome.

For School/Institute use:

SAS updated:		Student informed of outcome:	
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<sup>3</sup> or Year Co-ordinator in the case of the School of Management of Languages

**APPENDIX F:** Used by School for USC/PSC to compulsory withdraw student after continued poor attendance.



## Compulsory Withdrawal from a Programme due to Unsatisfactory Attendance/Participation

If in the opinion of the Programme Director, following discussion with the Course Co-ordinator and the student’s Mentor, a candidate fails to satisfy the minimum attendance requirements, the student, after due warning, may be excluded from continuation on his/her programme of study and compulsorily withdrawn from the University.

Please complete this form and forward to the Clerk, Undergraduate/Postgraduate Studies Committee (U/PSC), Academic Registry, Heriot-Watt University, Lord Balerno Building, Edinburgh EH14 4AS, for consideration.

<b>Student Name:</b>		<b>Person ID:</b>	
<b>School/Institute:</b>			
<b>Programme:</b>		<b>Year of Study:</b>	
<b>Effective Date of Withdrawal:</b>			

### Declaration

In accordance with the appropriate Regulations and procedures, I hereby recommend that the student named above should be excluded from continued study and withdrawn from the University and I declare:

- (i) that the student was informed, in writing at the appropriate time that such a recommendation would be considered, was given an opportunity to make a case to the appropriate School, and received details of the appeals procedures.
- (ii) that, where appropriate, I have attached any evidence as was available and any statements made by the student detailing mitigating circumstances. Evidence attached – Y / N (*please circle*)

Please give rationale below - *continue on a separate sheet if necessary*

<b>Signature of Programme Director</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature of Head of School:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Chair of USC/PSC:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

<b>USC/PSC Approval?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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Student and Head of School to be informed, in writing, of outcome following consideration by USC/PSC. Copy of all documentation must be placed on student file, regardless of outcome.

