

Gisma University of Applied Sciences

ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Gisma
University
of Applied
Sciences



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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the regulations and processes employed by Gisma University of Applied Sciences to monitor student attendance and engagement on all programmes of study. It needs to be read within the context of the University's efforts to enhance student success and retention, and the strategic initiatives deployed across the whole breadth of the student experience, both within and outside of the curriculum.

Engagement and attendance monitoring is valued for its potential to indicate those students at risk of leaving their course early and/or failing their programme of study. The University aims to improve the engagement and attendance of all students as the programme of study is designed to provide students with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully complete their course.

2. Attendance Requirements

- Students are expected to attend every element of the programme of study. This refers to lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions and any form of summative or formative assessment.
- Attendance requirements are inclusive of all sessions whether completed as a large group in lectures, small group for tutorials, or one on one sessions (such as dissertation supervision or work placements).
- Attendance is expected for all sessions whether they are on-site or online. Students who are studying in Germany on a face-to-face basis, must attend all sessions on campus.
- Students should refer to their timetable, Course and Module handbooks and Canvas for information on lectures/seminars and all other expected attendance.
- Students' attendance and engagement will be monitored and recorded.

3. Recording engagement and attendance

Students are active participants in their learning experience and are expected to take responsibility for achieving their potential through engaging fully with those experiences and with the requirements of their chosen course of study. Through such engagement students are able to demonstrate industry, diligence and a positive attitudinal approach to their studies.

In order to alert staff to students who may be experiencing difficulties, all students will have their engagement and attendance monitored.

Information about engagement and attendance will be gathered as follows: In class or online (if students are in their home countries).

- Using analytics of engagement through Canvas, including formative and summative assessments delivered asynchronously.
- Student engagement will additionally be monitored through the analysis of assignment submission
- and performance, assessment offences, Extenuating Circumstances (EC) submissions, missing credits, numbers of modules with clashes, use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

This data will be used to collate information on students' engagement and attendance and will help to identify students who may be at risk of not completing their studies. It will also aid the University to assess student performance.

Information is recorded and stored on a secure third-party system (SEA) and internal system for the Learner Analytics Dashboard (LAD). Reports from the system will be analyzed and monitored by authorized academic and administrative. This will enable the University to monitor engagement and contact students who are neither attending nor engaging in any other course related activity.

Academic staff will have access to reports on attendance for the modules for which they have responsibility.

If it is identified that a student has swiped into class, ftf or online, but was not in attendance, their record will be amended and the absence recorded. Where a student is found to have continually swiped into class but was not in attendance then disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

4. Absence

Short-term absences of up to 20% of the synchronous contact hours do not need to be authorised, but it is advised that students inform the academic registry if they are not able to attend a fixed teaching session or individual supervision meeting. Longer periods should be covered by a medical certificate.

Instances of illness or other severe and unforeseen circumstances that affect an assessment must be reported to the University, and where relevant, an Extenuating Circumstances claim made online and completed with the relevant evidence (e.g. doctors or hospital note). Further details are found in the Extenuating Circumstances Regulations.

Continued absence from scheduled activities will trigger a process of communication and support, which will encourage students to resume their studies. The University will endeavour to identify the reason for the absence and provide appropriate support if this is required.

In accordance with the Academic Regulations, students who are no longer attending will be presumed withdrawn.

5. Engagement with Asynchronous Material

Asynchronous components of course delivery do not require all students to be active in the online environment at the same time. Students are given units to complete within a certain timeframe, usually a week. As long as assignments are submitted by the deadline, students can complete the work on their own schedules.

A well-designed asynchronous component of a module requires a significant time investment on both the part of the student and the instructor. The instructor creates and facilitates the learning experience and environment, which the student then navigates. Our asynchronous delivery is designed with a student-centered approach. Rather than use a "sage on the stage" model, we have found that students are more engaged when they are able to explore small chunks of material in different formats (video presentations, podcasts, slides, readings, exploration of websites and other sources). While students may be assigned short video lectures, much of their learning happens when they engage in their readings and assignments.

Our goal to expand access to a quality education is what motivated us to structure our programme around asynchronously delivered components. Students appreciate the ability to pause the lecture to take notes or review challenging concepts. Lectures broken into smaller segments can support the many learners who find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. Besides video lectures, asynchronous discussion offers students nervous about participating in classroom discussions or have different cognitive strengths, more time to organise their thoughts and participate.

5.1 Gamification

Gamified learning management systems are training platforms that apply gamification strategies or play elements to the learning experience of students. They provide features that enable you to make learning fun, resulting in increased engagement. Our new Canvas includes various learning strategies into its features to make learning feel like a game and not another mundane task. To make courses interactive, it combines microlearning and gamification strategies. Microlearning breaks down overwhelming learning content into short-form lessons while gamification applies game elements to the lessons to engage learners. Please note that all students are required to go through the asynchronous material on a weekly basis. All sub-units need to be marked as completed before students can proceed to the upcoming units.

6. Rewarding attendance and engagement

Gisma University will reward in class attendance and engagement with asynchronous content at a rate of 30% per module.

Students attending $\geq 80\%$ (factoring on possible extenuating circumstances) of their synchronous classes as per their due mode of delivery, will gain 15% towards their final module mark.

Students successfully engaging with asynchronous material on the gamification/microlearning path and completing all summative assessments in the asynchronous environment, will equally gain 15% towards their final module mark.

The above also entail that, students falling below 80% of attendance, although they will be still allowed to submit, they will have their final mark capped at 85/100. Equally, if they fail to engage with the asynchronous material and complete the short summative assessments included in specific checkpoints during each term (usually 4), their module mark, irrespective of their engagement and participation in synchronous delivery, will drop by a maximum rate of 15%.

Maximal value of a final assignment will be thus set at 70% of integrated module mark.

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