

## **Student Attendance and Engagement Policy 2025-2026**

### **Policy Statement**

This policy recognises that the external environment is subject to change and that unforeseen circumstances may arise during the academic year. As such, the **Senior Management Team (SMT)** is authorised to make reasonable and proportionate amendments to the implementation of this policy, where necessary, to ensure it remains fair, relevant, and effective.

### **1. Purpose**

#### 1.1 Commitment to Attendance and Engagement

Shockout in partnership with the **University of Greater Manchester** and **Bolton College** are committed to providing students with the best possible opportunity to succeed in their programmes of study. Consistent attendance and active engagement with scheduled sessions and activities are essential to academic achievement, personal development, and professional readiness.

Evidence demonstrates that regular participation in structured learning activities enhances student outcomes and fosters collaborative working between students, tutors, and peers.

#### 1.2 Communication and Support

Shockout recognises that students may occasionally be unable to attend or engage with sessions due to legitimate personal circumstances. In such instances, effective communication with the relevant Head of Year or Student Support Team is essential to ensure appropriate support measures are put in place.

#### 1.3 Policy Intent

This policy outlines:

- Institutional expectations for attendance, engagement, and punctuality.
- Procedures for recording, monitoring, and responding to absence.
- The steps to be taken when attendance falls below acceptable thresholds.
- The support and disciplinary measures that may apply.

#### 1.4 Punctuality

Punctuality is a key element of professional behaviour. Arriving on time demonstrates respect for peers, tutors, and the learning process. Persistent lateness or early departure disrupts learning and may be subject to further intervention as outlined in this policy.

## **2. Scope**

### 2.1 Applicability

This policy applies to all students enrolled on taught programmes of study at Shockout Arts and Shockout Academy.

### 2.2 Programme-Specific Requirements

Some programmes, such as those governed by **professional bodies or apprenticeship frameworks**, may have additional or more stringent attendance requirements. In such cases, these take precedence, and students are expected to comply fully with those standards.

## **3. Attendance and Engagement on Taught Programmes**

### 3.1 Recording of Attendance and Engagement

Students are expected to fully attend and engage with all scheduled sessions and activities, including:

- Face-to-face or online lectures, seminars, and workshops
- Tutorials, group work, and project supervision
- Work-based learning, rehearsals, and placements
- Independent learning sessions and digital learning activities listed on the **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

Where a student cannot attend for valid reasons, they must notify their **Year Leader's mailbox** and catch up on missed work.

### 3.2 Notification of Absence

#### *3.2.1 Authorised Absence*

Students who are unable to attend for valid reasons should request an **authorised absence** by emailing their Year Leader. The request must include a brief explanation of the reason for absence.

Normal work commitments or holidays are **not** considered valid reasons for absence.

#### *3.2.2 Evidence Requirements*

The **Head of Years / Student Support Team (SST)** may, where appropriate, request supporting evidence to validate the reason for absence (e.g. medical certificate, official letter).

If a student is unable to attend sessions or complete assessments for an extended period, they should submit a **Mitigating Circumstances** form with supporting documentation. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the student to **pause (suspend)** their studies until they are able to re-engage.

### 3.3 Absence Monitoring Procedure

Shockout views all absences—authorised or unauthorised—as potentially impacting a student’s learning and progression. To ensure timely intervention and support, the **Absence Monitoring Procedure** (Annex A) is applied consistently.

#### 3.3.1 Early Intervention

- Tutors and the SST will monitor attendance regularly.
- Emerging patterns of absence will be discussed in one-to-one tutorials.
- Students may be referred to support services to address barriers to engagement.
- Strategies to improve attendance will be agreed collaboratively.

#### 3.3.2 Stage 1: Absence Concern Email

If attendance falls below **95%** in any given month (without legitimate reason), the SST will issue an **Absence Concern Email**, outlining the implications of continued low attendance and available support options.

#### 3.3.3 Stage 2: Initial Absence Concern Meeting

If attendance remains below **95%** for two weeks following the concern email, the student will be invited to an **Absence Concern Meeting** with their Year Leader, Programme Leader/Coordinator, or a Senior Manager.

- The meeting may be held in person or online.
- The SST will review reasons for absence and any supporting evidence.
- If necessary, a **Formal Absence Warning** and an **Attendance Contract** will be issued.
- Non-attendance at this meeting without valid explanation will result in the meeting proceeding in the student’s absence.

#### 3.3.4 Stage 3: Final Absence Concern Meeting

If attendance does not improve within a given timeframe:

- The student will be invited to a **Final Absence Concern Meeting** with the SST and a Senior Management representative.
- If valid reasons are not provided, a **Final Formal Absence Warning and an attendance engagement plan** will be issued and agreed upon.
- Failure to attend this meeting without valid reason will result in action being taken in the student’s absence.

### 3.3.5 Stage 4: Notification of Intention to Withdraw

If attendance and engagement do not improve following the final warning:

- A **Notification of Intention to Withdraw** will be issued by a Senior Manager or the Principal.
- Students who have not attended or engaged at all within the first **six weeks** of study may also receive this notification following investigation.
- The right to **request a review or appeal** is outlined in Section 5.

*Note:* Attendance thresholds may vary between programmes. Specific requirements will be confirmed during induction and detailed in Programme Handbooks.

### 3.4 Recording Communications and Actions

All contact, interventions, and meeting outcomes must be logged promptly on the **student record system** (MySchool) to ensure an accurate record of support and action taken.

## **4. Attendance, Engagement and Assessment Decisions**

Failure to meet attendance and engagement expectations may impact a student's academic progress.

Assessment Boards reserve the right to:

- Require a student to **repeat** a period of study, or
- **Withdraw** a student from their programme in accordance with assessment regulations.

## **5. Review and Appeal Process**

### 5.1 Review of Withdrawal Decisions

Students who receive a **Notification of Intention to Withdraw** may request a **review** of the decision within **two weeks** by writing to the **Principal**.

The Principal may, at their discretion, offer **re-admission** on the condition that the student signs and complies with an **Attendance and Engagement Plan**.

### 5.2 Appeal Against Withdrawal

If a student's review is unsuccessful—or no review is requested—they may submit a formal **Academic Appeal** in accordance with institutional procedures.

A successful appeal may include reinstatement on the condition that the student agrees to an Attendance and Engagement Plan.

## **6. Punctuality**

### 6.1 Expectations

Students are expected to arrive on time and remain for the full duration of scheduled sessions. Persistent lateness or early departure is considered unprofessional and may result in sanctions at the tutor's discretion.

### 6.2 Procedure

- Tutors will refuse entry to students who arrive late or leave early without prior notice.
- Students who anticipate being late should notify their **Year Leader** by email as soon as possible.

## **Annex A: Absence Monitoring Procedure**

| <b>Stage</b>    | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b>              |
|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Routine</b>  | Tutors and Year leaders monitor attendance  | Tutors and Year Leaders            |
| <b>Informal</b> | SST arranges early intervention meeting to discuss absence and support options.       | Year Leader / SST                  |
| <b>Stage 1</b>  | Absence Concern Email sent when attendance <95% over one month.                       | SST                                |
| <b>Stage 2</b>  | Initial Absence Concern Meeting; warning and action plan if no valid reason provided. | SST & Programme Leader             |
| <b>Stage 3</b>  | Final Absence Concern Meeting; final warning and revised plan issued.                 | SST & Senior Management            |
| <b>Stage 4</b>  | Notification of Intention to Withdraw issued after continued lack of attendance.      | Senior Management Team / Principal |