



Student Engagement & Support through Studies Policy & Procedure

Policy owner	Northern School of Contemporary Dance: Leadership Team
Tier	1
Lead contact	Head of Student Support
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UK Quality Code	UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024), Principles 2 and 10.
OfS Conditions	Conditions B2 and B3
Equality & Diversity Considerations	This policy can be available in accessible formats as required

For queries relating to this policy please contact quality.office@nscd.ac.uk

This document was produced with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools for drafting and editing purposes. All content has been reviewed, amended where necessary, and approved by the author(s), who retain full responsibility for the final content.

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PART 1: POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) is committed to supporting every student to succeed. We know that being able to fully engage with your studies is central to achieving your potential and we also know that life doesn't always go to plan.
- 1.2 This policy sets out what we mean by engagement, what we expect of you, how we will support you if things get difficult, and what happens if concerns about your engagement or wellbeing cannot be resolved informally.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all students registered on a taught or postgraduate programme delivered and/or validated by NSCD. This includes students studying through a franchise partner institution.

Note: If you are studying with a franchise partner, your delivery provider may have their own specific requirements around attendance and engagement. Please check your Student Handbook or speak to your provider for details. The specific measures and thresholds described in Part 2 (Procedure) of this document relate to NSCD directly. Your franchise partner will follow the same overarching policy framework but may set different thresholds appropriate to your programme.

- 1.4 We expect all students to follow the NSCD Student Codes of Practice. If there are concerns that you are unable to meet these expectations, this policy may be used to provide structured support.
- 1.5 This policy:
- explains what we expect from you in terms of engagement and attendance
 - describes the support available to you if you are struggling
 - sets out the steps we will take if concerns about your engagement or wellbeing are not resolved informally
 - ensures NSCD can meet its legal obligations, including those relating to student visa sponsorship

2. Scope & Principles

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students on NSCD-delivered and validated programmes, including those studying through franchise partner providers.
- 2.2 We believe that regular engagement with your studies gives you the best chance of success and we have a duty of care to support you if your ability to engage with your studies is affected by ill health or other circumstances. This policy is designed to support you, it is not a disciplinary tool. Our aim is always to find a way forward that works for you, while keeping you and everyone around you safe.
- 2.3 We recognise that engagement takes many forms: attending classes, taking part in workshops and group work, engaging with online content, completing coursework, and contributing to assessments. We also recognise that there are times when students may not be able to engage in the usual way, for example due to illness or personal circumstances.

- 2.4 This policy is designed to be used supportively when an NSCD staff member believes that a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour may be having a detrimental impact on their studies, or could pose a wider risk to others.
- 2.5 Where you are struggling, we will work with you to put appropriate support in place. We will always try to involve you in decisions that affect your studies. However, where we are not able to reach an agreed solution, we may need to use the formal stages of this process to ensure we are meeting our duty of care to you and to the wider college community.
- 2.6 In some situations, a student may choose not to engage with the support we offer. We will always respect that choice. However, in those cases we may need to direct the student to alternative support, and NSCD will not be responsible for any costs associated with external support.
- 2.7 This policy will be applied in line with the Equality Act 2010. Where a student has a disability or support requirement, we will consider what reasonable adjustments can be made before taking any formal action.
- 2.8 Where there are specific requirements for a programme, variations to the standard expectations may be agreed and will be set out in programme documentation.

3. Definitions

1.1 These terms are used throughout this document:

- **Engagement** - your active participation in all aspects of your programme, including attendance, contribution to classes, completion of work, and communication with the School.
- **Attendance** - being physically present for timetabled sessions.
- **Absence** - missing a timetabled session, whether reported or unreported.
- **Authorised absence** - an absence that has been approved in advance or accepted after the event (for example, a medical appointment or professional development opportunity).
- **Intermission / Interruption of studies** - a temporary break from your studies, agreed with the School, with the expectation of returning at a specified date (usually the next academic year).
- **Withdrawal** - the permanent ending of a student's registration on a programme.
- **Support Through Studies Action Plan** - a written agreement between you and the School setting out the support available to you and the steps you will take to re-engage with your studies.
- **Case Conference Panel** - a formal panel convened under Stage 4 of this process to consider serious or unresolved concerns about a student's engagement or wellbeing.
- **Lead Contact** - the member of staff responsible for managing your case through the formal stages of this process, normally the Head of Student Support or Head of Faculty.
- **Franchise partner** - an institution that delivers NSCD validated programmes under a partnership agreement.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Your responsibilities as a student

- Attend timetabled sessions and engage fully with your programme.
- Report any absence as soon as possible, following your delivery provider's absence reporting process.

- Keep the School informed of any circumstances that are affecting your ability to engage with your studies.
- Engage with support that is offered to you and take appropriate steps to manage your own health and wellbeing.
- Follow the NSCD or franchise partner provider Student Codes of Practice.

4.2 NSCD's responsibilities

- Monitor student engagement and attendance in order to identify students who may need support.
- Provide timely and appropriate support to students who are struggling.
- Apply this policy fairly, sensitively, and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Keep records of engagement and decisions in line with our data protection obligations.
- Involve you in decisions about your studies wherever possible.
- Communicate clearly with you at every stage of this process.

4.3 Franchise partner responsibilities

Franchise partner institutions are responsible for monitoring the engagement and attendance of their own students in line with NSCD's overarching policy framework. Specific engagement thresholds and procedures may differ between delivery providers.

Partners must report intermissions and withdrawals to NSCD in accordance with the terms of their partnership agreement.

5. Communication of This Policy

- This policy is available on the NSCD website at nscd.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures and on the Student Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- It will be referenced during student induction and included in the Student Handbook.
- An accessible version of this document can be requested by contacting Student Services.
- Franchise partner institutions will be provided with this policy and are expected to make it available to their students.

6. Legal Framework

6.1 This policy is applied in accordance with the following legislation and regulatory frameworks:

- Equality Act 2010 - we will not discriminate against any student and will consider reasonable adjustments at every stage of this process.
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 - all records held under this policy are managed in accordance with our Data Schedules and Privacy Notices. Records will be retained for a minimum of 15 months and no longer than 6 years after the final action on a student's case.
- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) - for students studying on a Student Visa, NSCD is required to monitor and report attendance. Failure to engage with this process could result in a report to UKVI, which may affect your visa.

6.2 Information about your case will normally only be shared with people who need it in order to support you. We will seek your consent before sharing sensitive information with third parties.

In exceptional circumstances, where we believe there is a serious risk to your safety or the safety of others, we may need to share information without your consent.

6.3 Where you share sensitive information and do not want it passed on, we will explain to you how that may limit the support we are able to provide. Any decision to disclose information will always be made with care and in accordance with the law.

7. Appeals & Complaints

7.1 Right of appeal

If a Case Conference Panel (Stage 4) decides that you should be withdrawn from your programme, or makes another significant decision about your registration, you have the right to appeal. Full details of the appeal process are set out in [Annex A.4 Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure](#)

7.2 Complaints

If you wish to complain about any aspect of how this policy has been applied, you can do so through the NSCD Student Complaints Procedure, which is available on the NSCD website.

7.3 Procedural fairness

NSCD is committed to making sure this process is fair and transparent. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to involve an independent person from outside NSCD for example, to provide assurance against bias. Any person not employed by NSCD will not hold overall responsibility for the process, but their involvement can help ensure it is conducted fairly.

Where this process has created strain in working relationships, mediation may be offered as an additional option. Mediation cannot, however, replace a formal decision made by a Case Conference Panel.

8. Related Documents

8.1 This policy should be read alongside the following NSCD policies and procedures, all of which are available at nscd.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures

- **Interruption of Studies Policy** - if you need to take a temporary break from your course due to ill health or personal circumstances.
- **Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances Procedure** - if you are unable to complete a specific assessment due to ill health or personal circumstances.
- **Non-Academic Misconduct Policy** - if concerns relate to your conduct rather than your engagement or wellbeing.
- **Safeguarding Policy** – NSCD’s procedures for protecting vulnerable students.
- Policy on **Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Related Behaviours**.
- **Emergency Powers of Suspension** - used in exceptional circumstances where there is an immediate risk.
- **Criminal Records Policy** - in some cases, an assessment of criminal records information may result in a referral into this process.

8.2 This policy may run alongside, or be paused to allow, proceedings under any of the above. NSCD will always act in the best interests of the student and the wider School community.

9. Key Contacts

Name	Role	Email
Head of Student Support	Student Support	Ali.coleman@nscd.ac.uk
Quality Office	Policy oversight	quality.office@nscd.ac.uk
Student Services	Student support / general enquiries	studentservices@nscd.ac.uk

PART 2: PROCEDURE

This section sets out how the policy works in practice. It describes what we expect of you, how we track attendance and engagement, and the steps we will take if concerns arise.

Note: The specific measures in this section, including the attendance target, absence reporting process, and monitoring systems relate to NSCD directly. If you are studying with a franchise partner, your delivery provider will follow the same overall framework but may set different thresholds and use different systems. Please check your Student Handbook or ask your delivery provider for details specific to your programme.

2.1. What We Expect From You

2.1.1 Attendance & engagement

NSCD provides conservatoire dance training. We expect you to attend and engage with all timetabled sessions, tutorials, rehearsals, performances, and practical assessments. Regular attendance is one of the most important indicators of your engagement with your training and supports your professional development.

Engagement includes participating in on-site teaching, group work, workshops, and online content, as well as completing coursework and assessments.

We treat attendance like the professional world: you are expected to be present unless something prevents you, such as illness. If you cannot attend, please tell us as soon as possible.

If you cannot participate physically in a session, we encourage you to attend and engage creatively where possible, unless there is a reason this would not be appropriate (for example, where your health makes it inadvisable).

If full attendance is not in your best interest at a particular time, the Head of Student Support will discuss alternatives with you, such as a reduced timetable or an action plan.

2.1.2 Students under 18

If you are under 18, you must complete an absence form before 9am on the day of absence where possible. If you are absent without notice, we will try to contact you, and if we cannot reach you we will contact your Emergency Contact.

2.1.3 Students on a Student Visa

If you are studying in the UK on a Student Visa, your attendance will be monitored weekly. NSCD is required to report non-attendance to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), which could affect your visa. If you need to request leave in advance, you can do so via the absence form on the VLE.

2.2. How to Report an Absence

2.2.1 Reporting process (NSCD students)

If you cannot attend a timetabled session, report your absence using the Absence Reporting form in the Student Handbook on Moodle. Whilst same-day reporting is preferred, forms can be submitted after the event.

You can self-certify your absence for up to 5 days. For absences of more than 5 days, we may ask you to provide evidence, depending on the circumstances.

Please report your absence on each day that you are away, so we can keep accurate records and provide the right support.

2.2.2 What happens if you are absent without contact?

- If you are absent for more than 5 consecutive days and we cannot contact you, we will try to reach your emergency contact (for students over 18).
- If you have not reported your absence or given an expected return date after two weeks, and you have not responded to our communications, your case will be referred to Stage 4 of this procedure (Case Conference Panel).

2.2.3 Professional development absences

You may apply in advance for absence to attend professional development opportunities, including company classes, auditions, teaching placements, and professional projects or workshops. You can do this using the Professional Development Absence form in the Student Handbook. Full details of when such requests are approved or declined are set out in the handbook.

2.3. How We Monitor Attendance

Note: This section describes NSCD's specific attendance monitoring approach. Franchise partner institutions will have equivalent processes suited to their delivery model.

2.3.1 Taking registers

Registers are taken for most timetabled classes using our timetable system (ASIMUT) and are monitored by the Quality Office. Some sessions, such as directed study, may not be registered.

Attendance is calculated on a termly basis. At the start of each term your record resets. There are four types of attendance record:

Present	You were in class and engaged.
Reported	You let us know you could not attend. This affects your attendance percentage but will be taken into account when we review your record.
Absent	You were not in class and we have no record of why. This will affect your attendance percentage.
Authorised	Your absence has been approved by the Quality Office, Head of Faculty, or Student Support Manager. This does not affect your attendance percentage.

2.3.2 Attendance on placement or exchange

If you are studying externally, for example on placement or exchange, your partner institution or company is responsible for recording your attendance and must notify the NSCD Quality Office of any unreported absences. Regular contact with your placement tutor at NSCD will also count as evidence of engagement.

2.3.3 Your attendance target (NSCD)

You should aim to achieve at least 90% attendance in each term. Your attendance will be checked at the half-term point, and if you are below 90% at that stage we will contact you informally to let you know and offer support where needed.

After the end-of-term review, if your attendance is below 90% you will receive a formal Raise of Concern notification by email (see Stage 1 below).

You can check your current attendance at any time by contacting the Quality Office or Student Services.

At the end of the academic year, if your overall attendance has not met the expected level, you may be placed on a supportive action plan at the start of the following year.

2.4. The Support Through Studies Process

There are four stages in the Support Through Studies process. Most cases will be resolved at Stage 1 or Stage 2. The process is designed to be supportive, not punitive, and we will always try to work with you to find the right solution.

Any member of staff can refer a student into this process if they have concerns about their health, safety, or wellbeing. A student can also refer themselves, or another student can raise a concern with a member of staff (who will then make the referral).

You can be accompanied to any meeting at any stage by a friend, family member, or fellow student. We will always tell you clearly which stage your case is at, and why.

Stage	Overview
Stage 1	Informal Raise of Concern & Support Referral (informal)
Stage 2	Initial or Emerging Concerns (formal)
Stage 3	Persistent or Significant Concerns (formal)
Stage 4	Highly Serious or Significant Concerns - Case Conference Panel

Note: Franchise partner providers will be expected to report stages 1, 2 & 3 to NSCD but manage these internally. Any cases that reach stage 4 must be managed by NSCD.

2.4.1 Stage 1: Informal Raise of Concern & Support Referral

This stage is used when a student's attendance or engagement drops below the expected level for the first time, or when a concern is identified that does not yet require formal action.

What happens:

- If your attendance falls below 90% (at NSCD) without appropriate communication, reporting, or mitigating circumstances, NSCD will issue a Raise of Concern notification by email.
- The email will highlight that your attendance is below the expected level and point you to the support available.
- If you or your tutors have concerns in response, you will be offered a meeting with the Head of Student Support. An informal Engagement Action Plan may be put in place.

- If your attendance remains low or you continue to experience difficulties, the Head of Student Support may decide to move your case into the formal stages (Stage 2, 3, or 4 as appropriate).

In some cases, where concerns are already serious, Stage 1 may be skipped and a formal stage started straightaway. We will always tell you clearly which stage you are at.

2.4.2 Stage 2: Initial or Emerging Concerns (Formal)

Stage 2 is the first formal stage. A Lead Contact will be appointed to manage your case, usually the Head of Student Support or Head of Faculty.

What happens:

- The Lead Contact will meet with you to discuss the concerns and explore ways to move forward. You can bring a support person to this meeting.
- A written record of the meeting and the agreed outcome will be kept.

Possible outcomes:

- The matter is resolved, no further action needed.
- A Support Through Studies Action Plan is agreed, setting out what support is available and what steps you will take. This may include referral to additional support services. A time frame for the Action Plan will be agreed with you.
- The case is escalated to Stage 3, or directly to Stage 4 in serious cases.

2.4.3 Stage 3: Persistent or Significant Concerns (Formal)

Stage 3 is used when concerns are ongoing or more serious, for example when attendance has been low for a long period of time, or where staff have significant concerns about your health and wellbeing. The Lead Contact and a senior member of staff will meet with you.

What happens:

- The meeting will focus on finding an agreed way forward with a clear timeframe.
- Notes from the meeting will be shared with you for confirmation (usually within 48 hours).

Possible outcomes:

- A revised Support Through Studies Action Plan is agreed, with a set review date. After the review, the case may continue at Stage 3, drop back to an earlier stage, or be closed.
- You choose to take a break from your studies (interruption), with an agreed plan for returning.
- The Lead Contact and senior member of staff may decide to escalate to Stage 4 of the process and you will be informed that you could be at risk of being withdrawn from the course.

If you and the School cannot agree on a way forward, the matter will be referred to Stage 4. If needed, the Stage 3 meeting may be paused to give you time to consider the options before reconvening.

2.4.4 Stage 4: Highly Serious or Significant Concerns: Case Conference Panel

Stage 4 is used when concerns are serious for example, when a student is thought to be a risk to themselves and/or others, when concerns remain unresolved, or where you have been absent for more than two weeks without making contact. A Case Conference Panel will be convened.

Before the Panel

- You will be given at least 5 working days notice of the Panel meeting, along with the names of the Panel members and details of how the meeting will be run.
- You can submit a written statement to the Panel explaining your situation and providing any supporting evidence.
- You have the right to attend the meeting and to bring a support person (friend, family member, or representative). If you cannot attend for a good reason (e.g. illness or bereavement), you can request a deferral, which the Panel Chair will consider.
- Please let the Lead Contact know in advance (at least 48 hours) who will be accompanying you.

2.4.5 Panel membership

The Panel will normally include at least four members: the Chair (Director of Studies or nominee), a Secretary from the Quality Office, a senior academic member of staff (usually the Head of Faculty), and the Head of Student Support.

We recognise there may be times where external involvement in the procedure may be of benefit to the student and panel. We have close links with similar, small specialist higher education providers who we may work and consult with, in order to provide independent oversight and assure against bias.

In the Case of a Franchise partner, the Quality Office will ensure the panel includes a senior member of staff from NSCD.

2.4.6 What the Panel will consider

- Any Support Through Studies Action Plans or Engagement Action Plans that have been agreed.
- Records of your absence and any communications between you and NSCD.
- Your written statement and any supporting evidence.
- Whether all agreed reasonable adjustments under your Personal/Learning Support Plan (if you have one) have been made.

2.4.7 Possible outcomes

- You continue your studies on an agreed Support Through Studies Action Plan, with a review date.
- You are offered interruption - a temporary break from your studies - with a plan for returning.
- You are withdrawn from your programme. Where applicable, you will receive credit for work already completed.

2.4.8 After the Panel

- The Quality Office will write to you with the Panel's decision and information about how to appeal within 5 working days.
- All documents relating to your case will be made available to you at this point.
- Interruption and withdrawals will be reported to the Board of Examiners and recorded on the Student Cases Log.

- A student will be informed of how they can complain or appeal against the decision directing them to the [Student Complaints Policy](#) and [Annex A.4 Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure](#)

The Panel will always consider the Equality Act 2010 when reaching its decision, including whether reasonable adjustments can be made.

Appendices

The following appendices support this document and are available separately:

Appendix 1 Support Through Studies Action Plan template