

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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| Scope and Purpose          | This document outlines the attendance policy applying to students on validated courses at Belfast School of Theology (BST). |
| Policy Owner               | Head of Education                                                                                                           |
| Policy Approval and Review | This Policy is approved by the Board and will be reviewed at the end of each academic year or more often as required.       |
| Date last reviewed         | June 2026                                                                                                                   |
| Date next review           | June 2027                                                                                                                   |

### 1. Belfast School of Theology Goal and Mission

Belfast School of Theology's goal is to equip 21st century disciples through theological education that is orientated towards a lived-out faith that impacts the world.

The mission of BST is therefore to offer students a range of academic, spiritual and practical avenues of biblical formation and training for global mission and church-based ministry facilitating each student to achieve their full potential.

With this in mind, BST will want all students to benefit from their time here and we believe that comes from fully engaging in timetabled classes, independent study and community life.

### 2. Policy Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with documents such as the following .

- BST School Handbook

- BST Programme Handbooks
- BST Students at Risk Procedures
- BST Code of Conduct
- BST Undergraduate Student Consent

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

### **3. Policy Principles**

As stated in the Belfast School of Theology Code of Conduct, BST expects students to be academically diligent in their approach to learning. Examples of academic diligence are attendance at lectures, punctuality and submission of work on time, as well as diligence in setting aside personal study time.

Students are expected to attend all classes and attendance should not fall below 80%. For those students on a Student Visa, UKVI regulations are that attendance should not drop below 90%.

The expectations regarding student attendance are set out in this document and also provided in the BST School Handbook.

### **4. General Requirements regarding student attendance**

All students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, are expected to take responsibility for organising their studies and ensuring they are aware of their timetable and expectations for attendance at all activities relating to their programme of studies. Students should arrive on time for all classes or synchronous sessions.

Students are required to attend and make themselves available to undertake all activities related to their programme of studies during the semester dates published by

the BST. All undergraduate students are encouraged to engage in the community life of BST, including weekly Chapel attendance, and other organised community life activities. (There is also an expectation that students will attend any examination or assessment that takes place outside of semester dates.)

## **5. Attendance Monitoring**

BST ensures through the BST Student Handbook that students are aware of their attendance requirements.

BST has a responsibility to remind students of the importance of attendance and especially the clear link between attendance and assignments and/or examinations and performance. This is emphasised during orientation and at initial meetings with Personal Tutors and reinforced throughout the year by Module Leads.

For undergraduate students, teachers record attendance in Moodle at the beginning of each class. Students are responsible for ensuring their attendance is recorded if they are late. The attendance register in Moodle will be checked in the case of a fire or other emergency on site.

Monitoring for each student's attendance levels will take place on a regular basis.

For Classroom activity including placements

Where appropriate, students must inform the relevant administrator in advance for any intended absence. Retrospective excusable absences must be reported within one day of return to study. The relevant administrator will inform the Module Tutor as appropriate.

Absences will be excused if shown to be for one of the following reasons:

1. Illness of student (for prolonged illness, a student may be asked to provide a certificate from a Medical Practitioner)
2. Emergency medical/ dental appointment
3. Serious illness of close family member
4. Bereavement of close family member
5. Funeral of close family member/friend
6. Domestic crisis
7. Wedding of close family member/friend
8. Obligation to attend any appointments with government bodies, including UKVI
9. Interview related to post-study employment or further study (UK and EU nationals only)

However, where reported absences accumulate to a student missing more than 20% of class, the student can arrange a meeting with the Programme Lead.

## **6. Action in the event of non-attendance**

An email will be sent to the student when their attendance drops below the required 80% attendance in any given semester, advising the student of the student support services available at BST. If an International student on a UKVI Student Visa has unexcused absence rising above 10% the UKVI Level 1 is informed to arrange a meeting to discuss. Student attendance below 60% in any given semester requires a meeting to be arranged with the Programme Lead. It is the student's responsibility to respond to these emails and attend the meetings.

**Further information regarding attendance for Student Visa students can be found under the UKVI Student Visa: Arrival & Attendance Monitoring Processes.**

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## **7. Action in the event of concern for a student's well being**

Academic support is offered first through the Personal Tutor. Further confidential support and advice is also available from the Programme Lead with regard to academic support. This support can be accessed by students at any stage. Please see also the Student Guide to Student Support and Pastoral Care, Fitness to Study and Student Emergency and Trusted Contacts Policies.

## **8. Data protection**

All student attendance records are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. See the BST Data Protection Policy for details.

In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, students are entitled to a copy of all their personal data held by us.

## **9. Responsibilities, Policy Approval and Review**

This document, as well as all other policy, procedure and guidance documents relating to students studying at Belfast School of Theology, will be available to all, monitored regularly and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

The Head of Education and Education Committee will review this policy annually or more often as required and the Board has overall responsibility for its approval.

The Academic Registrar has responsibility for overseeing the monitoring of attendance.

## **10. Policy Communication**

This policy will be included in staff and student induction.