Hartpury University Student Engagement Policy

Excellent teaching practice will promote active pedagogies and innovative approaches to encourage student engagement and commitment to learning. We will generate conditions which motivate students to be fully involved in their learning, with a shared responsibility for engagement between teaching staff, the institution and the student. Students will participate, attend, submit and achieve (Hartpury University Academic Strategy 2020-2025).

1. Purpose

1.1 At Hartpury University it is our goal to purposively engage with all our students. We do this because we know that student engagement impacts positively on student success. Our Student Engagement Policy set outs our engagement and attendance approach that ultimately support student success and positive outcomes for all our student populations and support their personalised learning and student journey.

2. Scope

Hartpury Principles for Student Engagement

2.1 Academic and professional services staff will support a pervasive institutional culture of active engagement.

Our Student Charter sets out our ethos of how the University, the Student Union and individual students work collaboratively and in partnership. Ultimately the charter sets out a clear commitment to embracing the supportive culture of Hartpury where all students have access to professional opportunities, inclusive teaching and learning, and a holistic University experience that supports individual student and staff wellbeing.

2.2 The University will safeguard underrepresented and priority groups' effective engagement, participation, attendance, submission and achievement.

Hartpury has set out in its Access and Participation Plan its stated aim: *to increase a sense of belonging on our campus in so much that all members of our increasingly diverse student population can realise their potential. We are working with the industries we serve to share this philosophy, along with our experience and understanding of supporting equity, diversity and inclusivity (*Hartpury University - Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan*).* Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy demonstrates a clear public commitment to an inclusive environment where differences are celebrated and every individual is valued and

respected. This includes a commitment to monitoring and progress review to ensure a culture of equality and diversity is embedded in all aspects of our work (equality-diversity-and-inclusivity-policy-july-2021.pdf (hartpury.ac.uk)).

2.3   Academic Personal Tutors (APTs) will know their students and understand and respond to individual circumstances.

Hartpury University's Student Engagement and Attendance approach (see below) sets out a scheme for developing a growth mindset that focuses on the promotion of positive student engagement behaviours. It is about creating a personalised enhancement approach that focuses on the individual to maximise the benefits of their engagement with their academic and wider university life to support their overall wellbeing, a thriving University culture of engagement and their academic and professional success. Academic Personal Tutors (APTs) serve a critical role in understanding individual student's backgrounds and needs to best support and develop students, ensuring their engagement in attendance and participation in required activities, and active signposting to additional opportunities that lead to student achievement.

2.4   The University commits to reviewing the success of its Student Engagement Policy and regulations, and evolving its approach to engagement in response to changes in the physical, economic and social environment that may impact on student behaviour and engagement.

Through current and future Access and Participation Plans, Teaching Excellence Framework preparation, and internal monitoring and modelling we will continually review our approach and policy to engagement for all our student populations. We know from recent years changes, for example, from the pandemic and cost of living concerns have impacted our student populations and behaviours, and we will remain vigilant and responsive to provide effective student engagement and positive outcomes for all. We recognise all of Hartpury University's Strategies and Policies are interlinked, and a changing need to our engagement policy will instigate a review in other strategy and policy areas.
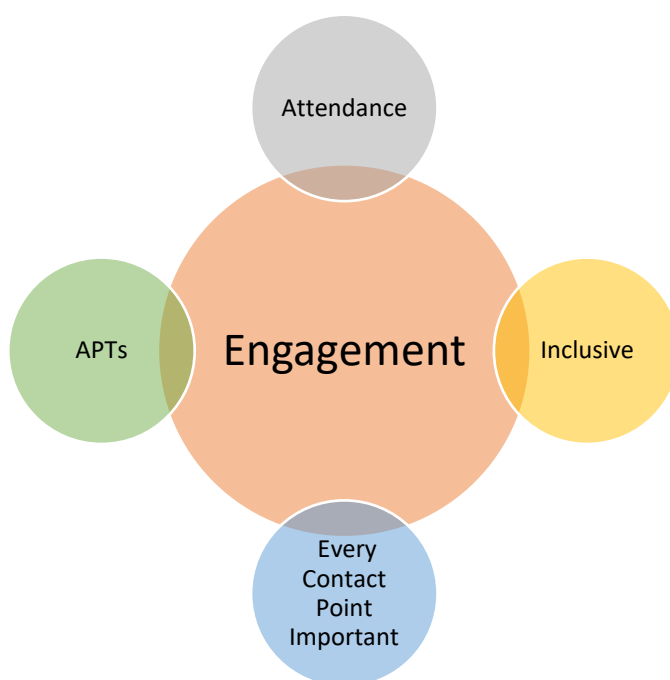

Figure 1 – Visual diagram of Hartpury Principles for Student Engagement

3.   Responsibilities

3.1   Student engagement is defined as the active commitment and purposeful effort expended by students towards all aspects of their learning, including both formal and informal activities. Positive engagement by students within their learning is an important factor in their success in higher education, as well as enhancing their satisfaction and overall wellbeing. This policy is applicable to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, although due to potentially different delivery patterns the operationalisation implementation of the escalation for postgraduate taught students may follow a different pattern as appropriate and determined by the Programme Leader.

3.2   In the context of the vocational and applied nature of the degree programmes at Hartpury, unless undertaking a programme designed to be taught offsite, students will engage on campus to fully participate with their learning, often through practical or hands-on scheduled sessions. By being in attendance and practically engaged, the student learning experience is enhanced as is the development of their Hartpury graduate attributes.

3.3   The regulations are clear that attendance will be required in line with programme and module specifications and may be required during evenings, weekends and outside standard term time. Students are not permitted to undertake a distance learning mode of attendance unless the programme or module on which they are registered has been formally approved for delivery via distance learning and Hartpury has given written permission that the student may do so.

3.4   Students should be aware that the main communication channels used by Hartpury to provide accurate, relevant and timely information are the virtual learning environment (VLE) and student email account. Students are expected to check the VLE and their Hartpury student email account at least twice a week. If students do not activate and check this account, or choose to automatically forward emails to a different email account, then Hartpury will not be responsible if important information such as details about classes, assessments, examinations, fees, enrolment etc. is missed.

3.5   The Student Engagement and Attendance approach is a model with a growth mindset that focuses on the promotion of positive behaviours regarding student engagement and attendance. Indeed, the underpinning ethos of this strategy is to support students in enhancing their engagement with their academic studies (as well as wider university life), for the betterment of their university student experience, and ultimately their academic success. The Student Engagement and Attendance approach (see Figure 2) comprises two key elements: 'organisational tools' and 'personalised actions'.

3.6   Organisational Tools
        Hartpury has established expectations regarding student engagement and attendance. Students are made explicitly aware of these expectations by Subject/Programme teams, who brief students on the importance of engagement and attendance (including the completion of online registers) as part of their Spiral Induction programme. Module Leaders remind students in scheduled sessions. Academic Personal Tutors (APTs) reinforce the importance of attendance and engagement through a personalised approach, making use of the online register system

during group and 1:1 tutorial sessions. Information about the importance of student engagement (and the need to attend) is included in the Student Handbook and Student Charter.

ORGANISATIONAL 'TOOLS' (Proactive Interventions)

Student Engagement Strategy: An individual 'personalised' approach

Programme Experience
- Programme team approach
- Academic Personal Tutoring
- Timetabling

Module Delivery & Assessment
- Authentic
- Relevant
- Challenging
- Engaging

Student Support Services
- Achievement & Success Centre (ASC)
- Innovation Careers Enterprise (ICE)
- Wellbeing Centre
- Student Assistance Programme
- University Learning Centre

PERSONALISED 'ACTIONS'

Academic Personal Tutors (1:1 tutorials + Group sessions)

APT is aware of and satisfied with the situation of a student (*no further action needed*)

APT is concerned / unaware of the reasons (*initiate 4 Stage Escalation Process*)

4 STAGE ESCALATION PROCESS

APT is concerned / unaware of the reasons (*initiate 4 Stage Escalation Process*)

Stage 1	Informal contact by APT with the student
Stage 2	Formal tutorial with their Programme Manager
Stage 3	Escalation of case to Head of Department
Stage 4	Take formal action: • Suspension • Withdrawal

Student action (at any stage):
■ Withdrawal

Student action (at any stage):
♦ Re-engage
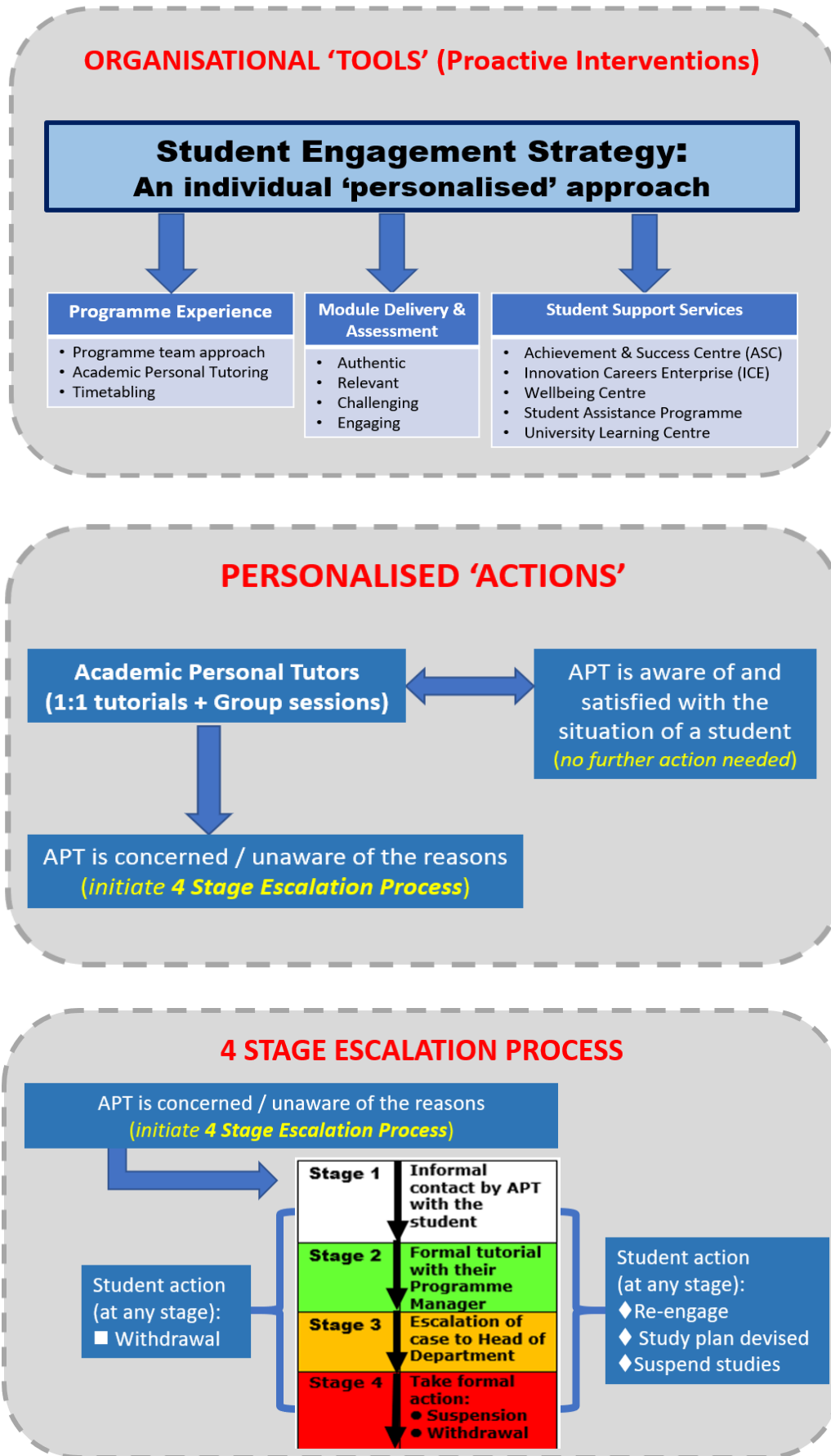♦ Study plan devised
♦ Suspend studies

Figure 2: Hartpury University Student Engagement Approach.

It is expected that all students:

- Take personal responsibility for entering the 3 word online attendance code, to register their attendance for each scheduled session they attend;
- Be aware, and reflect upon, the impact of their attendance on the learning experiences of their fellow students, as well as themselves;
- Contact their APT if they are experiencing issues and challenges with their ability to attend scheduled sessions in-person;
- Respond promptly (i.e. within 5 working days) to academic staff who contact them, if the escalation process has been initiated.

Students' engagement with their APT through both group-based sessions (either embedded in modules or separately timetabled) and 1:1 tutorials is imperative and will provide positive interactions including: creating a platform for self-reflection and critical-reflection; signposting to wider student support services; and a deeper level of understanding, support and motivation for an individual student's success.

The work of APTs is directed by four guiding principles, shown in Figure 3:

  i. Knowing their students;
 ii. Supporting their development;
iii. Signposting them to appropriate support services;
 iv. Preparing them for life beyond their university studies.

The main purpose of both group-based sessions and individual 1:1 tutorials is for APTs to facilitate a student-centred and student-driven approach, which incorporates a co-creation approach to group and 1:1 session content design. APTs will principally act as a facilitator and will create a safe space for students to engage. At the same time, students will act independently and take responsibility, as they engage in a range of activities, focused upon self-reflection and critical reflection activities.

As part of our institutional strategy to further support student engagement and attendance consideration is given to timetabling patterns for students and to limit where possible scheduled sessions over the course of the whole working week. We aim to do this to provide students with the time and space to manage other commitments.

Know	Support
• Building positive academic and professional working relationships, through positive and personalised interactions. • Developing awareness of students. • Being mindful of students' academic and support needs. • Being inclusive. Valuing all students as individuals. • Attending to the challenging and complex individual issues that students present. • Helping students to develop their learner identity.	• Providing relevant and timely support. • Being an inclusive and constructive 'critical friend' / 'supportive ear'. • Respecting the student voice. • Listening to student's issues or concerns sensitively. • Providing encouragement. • Engaging students in critical thinking. • Enabling students to participate in critical reflection. • Nurturing independent learning. • Co-creating learning and development solutions through a student-staff partnership. • Providing a space for students to utilise and demonstrate their Hartpury University Graduate Attributes.
Signpost	**Prepare**

• Directing to appropriate expert Hartpury University support services, including (as required):
   o Study skills, academic guidance and learning support.
   o Careers, employability and enterprise services.
   o Advice on processes e.g. extenuating circumstances, disciplinary procedures
   o Mental health support and counselling support services.
• Reporting issues and/or concerns
• Directing to Student Union
• Sharing information about relevant external support opportunities and relevant organisations.
	• Supporting students in planning for life beyond their university studies.
	• Stretching and challenging students to achieve more.
	• Championing lifelong learning.
	• Developing the critical skills required for lifelong learning.
	• Making connections between their current interests and future goals.
	• Supporting students to develop their employability (transferable) skills.
	• Engaging with employability support within group-based sessions.
	• Acting as a referee for their students.

Figure 3: Features of the four guiding principles of the APT process.

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3.7 Personalised actions

The use of feedback tools allows for the early identification of students at risk, who may be struggling with their attendance/academic studies, and who may require additional support and assistance. Feedback tools such as existing data sources, including, HE entry status (i.e. Level 3 grades), demographic data, ASC screening, fitness to practice questionnaires, HU accommodation questionnaire, etc., can be utilised to identify, early, those students at risk. Another key feedback tool is the monitoring of student attendance, which is conducted via the use of the online student registers. Register completion is compulsory on all undergraduate and postgraduate modules.

The Hartpury University expectation is for a minimum of 80% attendance of scheduled sessions across their programme for undergraduate students. If a student does not meet this expected attendance requirement, then the student may be unable to participate in practical-based module assessments due to professional expectations and/or health and safety concerns.

For postgraduate students, attendance data should be utilised to facilitate 1:1 tutorials with their APT, and programme teams should consider this data at an individual student level.

To provide delivery of personalised actions, APTs are required to develop a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances for each of their tutees. In order to do so, APTs will require feedback and updates as appropriate from academic colleagues, including Programme Managers and Module Leaders. In addition, feedback and updates from professional services staff (e.g. ASC, ICE) help build a complete awareness of their tutees' circumstances.

There is also a requirement to be aware of the academic achievements of their tutees via a monitoring of their assessment activities, including submission records and grade attainment.

This 360 approach to understanding the circumstances of individual students allows for early personalised intervention needs to be identified and support put in place on the student journey and avoid retrospectively trying to retrieve less than ideal circumstances.

3.8 APTs will monitor each of their tutees' attendance against the 80% attendance target. As such, they will be provided with a weekly attendance report, specifically identifying those students who have fallen below the 80% attendance target. Information and data regarding the attendance behaviours of students will be available to staff.

3.9 If an APT is aware of, and satisfied about, the reasons why a students' attendance is below 80% target, then no further action is needed … until a point is reached whereby the APT is no longer aware of, or satisfied, and feels the need to initiate the escalation process. However, if a student falls below the expected requirement of 80% attendance of scheduled sessions, and their APT is unaware of the reasons why student attendance is below the 80% target, then an escalation process – for those students flagged as a cause for concern due to their levels of attendance – will be initiated.

3.10   At any point during escalation process, a student has various options open to them, as they can:
- re-engage with their studies (demonstratable by their attendance moving above the 80% attendance target);
- facilitate re-engagement with their studies by adhering to a study plan designed for them;
- suspend their studies;
- choose to withdraw from their programme.

3.11   If a student does not satisfactorily engage with the escalation process and align their attendance with Hartpury policy the student is likely to receive notification they are being withdrawn from their programme of study.

4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

4.1   As with all Hartpury policies and procedures, due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all students regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender status.

4.2   The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding Hartpury's commitment to providing equality to all.

4.3   Hartpury is committed towards promoting positive mental health and aims to create a culture of support where students can talk about mental health problems without the fear of stigma or discrimination.

Document Approval and Review Cycle

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