



The Inns of
Court College
of Advocacy

Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

Version 1.0

1 Introduction

Student attendance and engagement on the ICCA Bar Course (the Course) covers three broad interrelated areas: student academic success, student welfare and legal compliance. This policy is aimed at fostering a positive learning environment for all students, providing staff with the necessary resources to support students and enabling the ICCA to meet its legal requirements.

Part 2 of the ICCA Bar Course has been designed to enable students to cumulatively develop the skills that they will need in their first years as a practising barrister. The learning and teaching techniques employed on the Course require students to practise and develop key skills, individually or in small groups, building on the feedback they receive from their tutors and their peers. For this reason, it is essential that students attend all teaching and learning sessions and participate fully throughout the entire programme of study.

The effective monitoring of attendance and engagement also aids the identification of students who are facing difficulties, enabling appropriate, timely interventions and facilitating the delivery of pastoral care and any specialist wellbeing support that would help a student to remain engaged with their programme of study. Experience has shown us that many students benefit from inquiries and prompts about their behaviour, and often use these to begin to address challenges or problems.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Expected Contact Points** are key academic activities within the Course that provide evidence of engagement. They will typically include attendance at a meeting with a personal tutor or attendance at a teaching and learning session.
- 2.2 **Engagement** is satisfactory participation with study, which may include, but is not limited to the following:
- The active and regular use of available resources by the student to support learning, which includes accessing course-related materials via the VLE; lecture capture and use of library resources.
 - Participating in a teaching and learning session (for example, preparing and delivering a submission in an advocacy workshop).
 - Submitting coursework.
 - Meeting with a Personal Tutor.
- 2.3 **Compulsory teaching and learning sessions** are scheduled seminars, lectures or tutorials at which attendance will be recorded for the purposes of monitoring compliance with the minimum attendance requirement.
- 2.4 **The minimum attendance requirement** is the requirement for students on Part Two of The Course to attend 80% of compulsory teaching and learning sessions (see paragraph 4.4.2. (vi), below).

3 Scope

In the interest of consistency and ensuring equality of treatment, this policy applies to all students. Attendance and engagement will be monitored in the same way. The purpose for which the data is used will vary (see **section 6** of this policy).

4 Policy

- 4.1 **Identifying Expected Contact Points and Compulsory Teaching and Learning Sessions.** The ICCA is required to identify, and document expected contact points in accordance with the requirements of the programme and to identify and document teaching and learning sessions that will be designated as being **compulsory** for the purposes of the minimum attendance requirement. Records of attendance will be taken at all compulsory teaching and learning sessions.
- 4.2 **Applicability of Expected Contact Points and Compulsory Teaching and Learning Sessions.**
- 4.2.1 **During Recognised Vacation Periods.** Expected contact points are not required during recognised vacation periods (periods outside of term-time during which there are no designated teaching and examination weeks) Compulsory teaching and learning sessions will not be scheduled during recognised vacation periods.
- 4.2.2 **During Authorised Periods of Interruption.** Expected contact points are not required during authorised periods of interruption, i.e. when a student is formally permitted to defer their studies for an agreed period. However, the Course Leader may opt to maintain contact as deemed appropriate. Students will not be expected to attend compulsory learning and teaching sessions during authorised periods of interruption.
- 4.3 **Record Keeping Requirements.** The ICCA is required to maintain accurate and complete records for all students to ensure that attendance and engagement is monitored effectively. As a minimum standard, attendance and engagement data must:
- i) be recorded locally and consistently by the ICCA in accordance with sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this policy;
 - ii) provide reasons for absence where appropriate, for example, where a student has reported that they are not able to attend or engage due to illness, they should be marked as 'absent due to illness' rather than absent for other reasons;
 - iii) be aggregated and made available within a reasonable timeframe.

4.4 **Managing Instances of Non-Attendance/Disengagement**

4.4.1 **Identifying a Cause for Concern.** In accordance with the requirements of the ICCA Governing Body and the relevant ICCA Committees, the Course Leader must identify and define the number of missed expected contact points and/or missed attendances at compulsory sessions in respect of its student body. The ICCA must act in accordance with 4.4.2 below where there is a period of missed contact points or missed attendances which represents a 'cause for concern'. As a minimum requirement, that period must not exceed one week (four days of face-to-face teaching).

4.4.2 **Responding to a Cause for Concern**

- i) Where the defined period has been reached, the student must be contacted immediately by their Personal Tutor or, in their absence, the Course Leader.
- ii) The student may be invited to attend a meeting with their Personal Tutor or with the Course Leader to help identify any contributing factors adversely affecting their attendance/engagement, and to ensure that appropriate support is provided to any student facing difficulties. This may include, for example, academic support or a referral to any of the specialist support services listed in the Student Handbook.
- iii) The ICCA must set clear conditions and expectations to students with unsatisfactory attendance/engagement.
- iv) Where a student's welfare is a cause for concern, i.e. where their health, wellbeing or behaviour is having a detrimental effect on their ability to meet the academic requirements of study or impacting on the wellbeing of other students and staff, the Interruption to Support Wellbeing measures set out at paragraph 54 of the Academic Regulations will be invoked.
- v) In the case of continuing unsatisfactory attendance/engagement or persistent failure to respond to the ICCA's communications or instructions, the Dean of the ICCA or nominee acting on behalf of the Dean may terminate a student's registration under paragraph 53 of the Academic Regulations.
- vi) A student, whose attendance falls below the minimum attendance requirements on Part Two of the ICCA Bar Course (to attend 80% of compulsory teaching and learning sessions) may be deemed to be ineligible for summative assessment under paragraph 9 of the Academic Regulations.
- vii) The Cause for Concern Procedure must be followed in the event of a student's disappearance from study.

5 **Staff Responsibilities**

5.1 **The Course Leader or ICCA staff with delegated responsibility must ensure that:**

- i) The Course Handbook clearly describes:

- all expected contact points and mechanisms for reporting absence;
- the escalation mechanism, with respect to cases of continuing **non-attendance/disengagement**;
- ii) accurate and complete records are maintained and how student attendance and engagement is monitored effectively;
- iii) students who are disengaged or facing difficulties are referred to appropriate support mechanisms.

6 Use of Data

The ICCA is committed to handling student data with care and ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, which sets out the legislative framework for managing personal information. The ICCA's Data Protection Policy is available to read online. The way in which student attendance and engagement data is used will vary. This may include but is not limited to, for example, anonymising data for research purposes, for which the ICCA will develop a clear, ethical framework in consultation with staff and students, while ensuring that its Student Data Collection Notice is updated to cover the collection and use of all relevant data. The ICCA will carefully consider any implications for data protection in collaboration with the COIC Director of Operations and the Audit and Risk Committee.

Associated Procedures, Regulations and Guidance

- Student Handbook
- Academic Regulations
- Cause for Concern Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Student Data Collection Notice

Links to Relevant Support Services can be found in the Student Handbook.