



University of
St Andrews

Location of studies

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Purpose	This policy relates to the expectation that all students reside at a term address within a commutable distance. The policy excludes Distance Learning students.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
01	Revision to UG and PGT section	Updated	-	March 2019
02	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON LOCATION OF STUDIES (UG, PGT and PGR students excluding Distance Learning students)

1. Rationale

All students are expected to reside at a term address within a commutable distance from St Andrews during their study unless they have formal permission from the University of St Andrews for their study location to be outside St Andrews. This permission can be granted for academic purposes: for example, to conduct essential research. This permission can also exceptionally be granted for non-academic purposes at Undergraduate or at Taught Postgraduate level with the support of the School and with agreed mechanisms in place for continued academic support. The relevant Associate Dean Students can be involved when the request is complex or when the School refers a case to the Registry Officer.

The University has a duty of care to all students and therefore must be able to contact all students at any point during their programme of study. In addition, the University must hold the current address for all students as well as an historic trail of previous addresses. It is also expected that students can readily access academic advice throughout academic study and that agreed mechanisms are in place to support this.

For students requiring a visa to study in the UK, the Home Office has introduced regulations also requiring Tier 4 Sponsors to hold the latest address of study for students as well as an historic trail of previous addresses¹. The University must be able to show that the address we hold for a student, who has leave to remain in the UK on a Tier 4 licence, is accurate and that where students are not resident in St Andrews in term-time, they have permission to be outwith St Andrews. We must also demonstrate that students can engage appropriately with their studies at this location. Non-compliance with these Home Office regulations could entail a loss of the University's Tier 4 sponsor licence and seriously affect our ability to admit overseas students. In response to these requirements the University has introduced procedures to monitor where students are located during the course of their studies.

2. Policy

The address at which a student lives while pursuing academic study is known as the “**term address**”. The UK term address must contain a full valid postcode for reporting purposes. Students must ensure that their term address is up-to-date and accurately reflected on their student record.

Students who are “**resident in St Andrews for the purposes of study**” should reside at a term address within a commutable distance from St Andrews.

The University defines “**commutable distance from St Andrews**” as a distance from St Andrews permitting students to attend the University during core working hours on a daily basis if required to do so. This is usually understood to be within 75 miles of St Andrews.

All students who require their **term address** to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews for any reason must seek formal approval prior to the commencement of their

¹ UK Visas and Immigration, Tier 4 PBS Guidance, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301138/3_Sponsor_Duties_and_Compliance.pdf

programme of study, or prior to changing address². All students who require to be away from their term address; for example, to engage in fieldwork or research away from St Andrews, for a period must have the permission of the relevant Associate Dean (Students) or Associate Provost Postgraduate (Taught/Research). This policy does not override the regulatory requirement³ for student attendance with respect to absence from taught modules.

Overseas students must seek expert advice on the conditions of their Tier 4 visa prior to leaving the UK for any reason, eg leave of absence, fieldwork. Students who are on fieldwork or undertaking a placement as part of their academic studies must be approved via the normal channels. Students should consult the [Guidance on travel and fieldwork risk assessments](#). PGR students should also consult the [Fieldwork for postgraduate research students](#) policy. All students who are on fieldwork for longer than 28 days must inform Registry of their intended location. A reliable local contact must be declared on the risk assessment form.

3. Formal Approval Process for Undergraduate or Taught Postgraduate students

Undergraduate or taught postgraduate students who wish their term address to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews or plan to be away from their term address for a period of more than 10 consecutive days **at any time during their programme of study** must first seek approval⁴. Permission for a change of location of studies can be granted by the Director of Teaching (DoT)/Director of Taught Postgraduates (DoPGT) for *academic* purposes such as research in another laboratory, access to libraries, and fieldwork. PGT Students in the dissertation/project stage should seek approval from their supervisor *before* submitting a request to the DoPGT.

For *non-academic* purposes, the request must be forwarded by the School to the relevant Registry Officer, who will offer advice in consultation with Student Services. Complex cases will be referred to the relevant Associate Dean (Students) or Associate Provost Postgraduate (Taught).

Cases in which change of location of studies requests have not been sought or have not been approved will be referred to the University Compliance Team, if the student holds a UKVI Tier 4 visa.

The Registry Officer, acting on behalf of the Associate Deans (Students)/Associate Provost Postgraduate (Taught), can grant approval only in exceptional circumstances for a student to be resident outside the commutable distance from St Andrews for non-academic purposes. Postgraduate taught students are expected to reside at their term address for the duration of their programme, including the dissertation period. If permission to reside outside the permitted distance is granted, on academic or non-academic grounds, an agreed mechanism for continued academic support must be in place, together with an approved study plan, agreed with student and supervisor, giving key dates for supervision and production of assessed work, including dissertation. Once approved, the consent and new address must be placed on the student record maintained in Registry.

4. Formal Approval Process for Postgraduate Research students

² Routine change of address requests are not subject to this policy and can be completed using the Personal Details tool in MySaint.

³ Undergraduate Senate Regulations: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/rules/ugsenateregulations/>

⁴ This does not apply to students participating in an approved Study Abroad, External Placement or Collaborative Degree Programme which requires them to study away from St Andrews, for which the university has established a written agreement that specifies the alternative location(s) of study.

Postgraduate research students who wish their term address to be outwith the commutable distance from St Andrews must seek approval prior to the commencement of their programme of study or prior to changing address. This approval must be sought in writing, stating the grounds, from the School's Director of Postgraduate Studies. If the case is complex, the Director of Postgraduate Studies can refer the decision to the Registry Officer who can consult the Associate Provost Postgraduate (Research). Once approved, the consent and new address must be placed on the student record maintained in Registry.

Students who are away from their term address for any reason, for more than 5 consecutive working days and up to 28 days, should inform their supervisor and School as a matter of routine. The period of absence from the term address can be extended to 38 days if this includes time when the University is closed.

Students who will be away from their term address, for longer than a period of 28 consecutive days (including weekends) must seek approval from the School's Director of Postgraduate Studies (a period of 38 days will apply where this time includes time when the University is closed). Once approved, the consent and new address must be placed on the student record maintained in Registry.

Registry Officer Contacts:

Undergraduate & Taught Postgraduate
Research Postgraduate

reg-support@st-andrews.ac.uk
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