Eligibility to study online (taught students)

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<td>Scope (applies to)</td>
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<td>Purpose</td>
<td>This policy applies to requests from students to study online for the academic year 2020/21.</td>
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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON ELIGIBILITY TO STUDY ONLINE (TAUGHT STUDENTS)

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the University’s policy on taught students' eligibility to study online for the duration of the consequences of the Coronavirus crisis.

1.2 It aims to support students in managing the challenges and demands of the current crisis and provides a means by which they can continue their studies in the event that they are unable to participate in in-person, face-to-face teaching.

2. Scope

2.1 The policy covers undergraduate and taught postgraduate students only. Students engaged in distance learning programmes such as the Global Online Year One, and students on the MA Combined Studies programme are excluded.

2.2 Student taking programmes in the School of Medicine (with the exception of returning ScotGEM students) where attendance in person may be required must complete the same application process, but in all cases the decision maker will be the School of Medicine. Medical students should contact the School for advice.

3. Policy

3.1 The policy outlines the University’s expectations on the types of circumstances which may prevent a student from participating in in-person, face-to-face teaching. The criteria for eligibility to study online, the evidence the student will be required to submit, the decision-making authority, and timescales for submission are outlined in the appendix.

3.2 Any requests to study online will be shared with other relevant staff in the University.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the student to submit an application to the University if they wish to study remotely, and to provide the necessary evidence. Returning students and entrant students will be contacted by the University giving them details on how to submit an application.

3.4 Studying online is not an automatic right for students, but it only available where there is evidence that it would not be feasible and/or appropriate to study in person.
4. **Prerequisites for studying online**

4.1 In order for the University to support online engagement with study, students must meet the published criteria for eligibility and meet two key IT prerequisites: access to a suitable device and a reliable broadband connection.

**Computers:** Student personal devices should meet the following system requirements:

- Windows devices should run Windows 10.
- MacBooks should be able to run a minimum of MacOS 10.14.
- Web browsers: student devices should run up to date web browsers for the best experience.

**Broadband connection:** For remote learning, students will need to have in their place of study, reliable broadband internet access with a recommended service of at least 3Mb/s.

4.2 Students based in China who have been given permission to study online will be advised that the University has little control over what online services may be available to them at any time.

4.3 Students who are eligible to work online but cannot meet the above prerequisites may apply to the Digital Inclusion Fund through moneyadvice@st-andrews.ac.uk; or may need to consider requesting permission to defer their studies or take a leave of absence.

5. **Decision on requests for studying online**

5.1 The Associate Deans (Students)\(^1\) and relevant staff members in Registry and Student Services will make decisions on requests from students to study online, exercising discretion to determine whether further evidence is required.

5.2 Recommendations for denials of permission to study online will be escalated by Student Services and/or Registry to the Associate Deans (Students) for a final decision.

5.3 The Associate Deans (Students) have the discretion to make the final decision as to whether the student meets the criteria for studying online.

6. **Review**

6.1 All approved cases for studying online will be reviewed in advance of Independent Learning Week (around week 4) and those students that are able will be expected, if possible, to join their studies in person after Independent Learning Week.

6.2 Students will be encouraged to come to St Andrews as soon as they are able and will be advised to consult with their School(s) about a sensible time to arrange to travel to St Andrews given assessment and study commitments. The ability to secure accommodation in St Andrews will be taken into account when establishing an expectation to travel.

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\(^1\) Within the School of Medicine the authority sits with the Director of Teaching.
7. Appeals

7.1 Students who are not permitted to study online have the right of appeal to the relevant Dean, whose decision will be final and not subject to appeal or review.

15 July 2020
Criteria for Eligibility to Study Online (Taught Students)

Criteria: Travel restrictions caused by government regulation in the country or region of departure (travel bans, closed border, travel advice invalidating insurance etc.); by UK or Scottish Government regulations or guidance or by restrictions in place from a home institution for study abroad students prevent travel to St Andrews.
Evidence: Government information combined with student home address on record; student expected to travel as soon as resolved.
Decision maker: Registry; Global Office for study abroad students. School of Medicine for medical students.
Deadline: No cut-off date for not arriving; student expected to travel as soon as is reasonable after the situation is resolved.

Criteria: Travel restrictions caused by continued disruption to means of transport (airport closures, airlines not operating) prevent travel to St Andrews.
Evidence: Travel information combined with student home address on record; student expected to travel as soon as resolved.
Decision maker: Registry. School of Medicine for medical students.
Deadline: No cut-off date for not arriving; student expected to travel as soon as is reasonable after the situation is resolved.

Criteria: VISA issues due to backlog.
Evidence: Student to engage with advint@st-and.ac.uk; visa@st-andrews.ac.uk;
Decision maker: Registry. School of Medicine for medical students.
Deadline: No cut-off date for not arriving; student expected to travel as soon as is reasonable after the situation is resolved.

Criteria: Accommodation not booked and not available due to late ability to travel.
Evidence: Government or travel information combined with student home address on record. Residential and Business Services, and local information on accommodation availability.
Decision maker: Registry. School of Medicine for medical students.
Deadline: No cut-off date for not arriving; student expected to travel as soon as is reasonable after the situation is resolved.

Criteria: Health reasons - requirement for shielding as defined by the NHS. For all other significant health concerns please contact Student Services for advice.
Decision maker: Student Services. School of Medicine for medical students.
Deadline: No cut-off date for not arriving; student expected to attend as soon as is reasonable once requirement to shield is removed.
Criteria: Caring responsibilities within the student’s family linked to Covid-19
(e.g. where the student needs to remain at home to look after or shield a family member but can engage in full-time online study).
Evidence: Student to provide a statement; Student Services to verify.
Decision maker: Student Services. School of Medicine for medical students.
Deadline: Student expected to join in person as circumstances allow.
Leave of Absence is also an option but study online for one semester could be an alternative; reviewed for each semester or earlier.

Criteria: Financial reasons linked to Covid-19
Evidence: Student Services to verify as unresolvable; student to explore with moneyadvice@st-andrews.ac.uk.
Decision maker: Student Services.
Deadline: Leave of Absence is also an option but study online for one semester could be an alternative; reviewed for each semester or earlier.

Some students have accommodation booked with Residential and Business Services but will arrive extremely late due to a valid reason linked to Covid-19. In this case Residential and Business Services is to notify student the cut-off date by which the arrangement of ‘no accommodation cost to student’ ceases.

15 July 2020