



University of
St Andrews

UK visas and immigration student visa compliance statement

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All students
Applicability date	31/07/2020
Review / Expiry date	31/07/2022
Approved date	02/08/2021
Approver	Deputy Academic Registrar
Document owner	Administrator
School / unit	Academic Registry
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Student administration/Conditions of study
Purpose	This document outlines the approach that the University of St Andrews takes in managing and maintaining compliance with all Student visa requirements, and details the structures used to deliver this approach, as well as the responsibilities of the University and Student visa holders.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.1	Policy approved for the new academic year (2021/22).	Published	Heather Dudek, Unit Administrator, Registry	02/08/21

UK Visas and Immigration Student Visa Compliance Statement

Background

All International students who wish to study in the UK must apply for entry clearance to study in the UK under the Student route of the Points-Based Immigration Framework, which is managed by UK Visas and Immigration, within the Home Office. In order to be granted leave to study in the UK potential students must have a sponsor. This sponsor is an education provider that offers programmes of study within the UK and has a licence to sponsor students under the Student route Framework. Institutional Sponsorship provides evidence to the UKVI that the student will study for an approved qualification and also places duties on the sponsor that it must abide by. All Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that wish to sponsor students must apply for a sponsor licence and maintain sponsor status. To maintain sponsor status approved HEIs must be seen to have a good history of compliance with their sponsor duties as prescribed by the UKVI.

The UKVI consider that as direct beneficiaries of migration, all sponsors must fulfil certain duties to ensure that immigration controls remain effective, to facilitate the identification of patterns of student behaviour that may cause concern and to monitor sponsors' and students' compliance with immigration rules. HEIs must be able to demonstrate that they are able to meet these sponsor duties in order to maintain sponsor status.

Purpose

The University takes UKVI compliance duties and responsibilities seriously and has implemented structures and operating procedures to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to demonstrate best practice in monitoring, reporting and other compliance activity.

This document outlines the approach that the University of St Andrews takes in managing and maintaining compliance with all Student visa requirements, and details the structures used to deliver this approach, as well as the responsibilities of the University and Student visa holders.

Scope

All compliance activity is managed through a single structure and covers compliance within the following areas:

- Sponsorship Maintenance
- Recruitment and Admissions and Applicants
- Student activity and compliance
- Record keeping duties
- Graduate Route
- Start Up Visa
- Innovator route
- Management of agents and external partners

University Governance and Review

Compliance activity, policy and process framework governance, complex case decisions, and risk assessment are managed through the formal structures of the UKVI Compliance Group and the UKVI Operations Group under the oversight The Vice Principal (Governance) as the Authorising Officer.

Decisions made at the Compliance Group are risk assessed. Those which would result in the acceptance of notable additional risk to the Institution are escalated to the Principal's Office for sign off prior to implementation.

University Sponsorship Duties

The University's duties as a Sponsor are as outlined below:

1. To report details of any agents used in recruiting international students
2. To report details of all partner institutions
3. To offer courses to international students which comply with the Home Office conditions
4. To assign CAS only to those students that the University reasonably believes will meet all requirements of the UKVI Student route framework, including ATAS where appropriate
5. To validate and store a copy of all Student route students' passports, visa vignettes and Biometric Residence Permits showing evidence of their entitlement to study and the period they have permission to stay in the United Kingdom, prior to matriculating as a student at the University of St Andrews
6. To maintain each student's contact details and update them as necessary
7. To report any students who fail to matriculate on their course within 10 working days of the end of their prescribed matriculation period
8. To report any unauthorised absences where the student has missed 10 "expected contacts" or where they have failed to attend without good reason, one of the registration checkpoints each year (matriculation and UKVI confirmation event)
9. To report any students who discontinue their studies (including any deferrals of study) or who stop attending the University because they have been withdrawn or suspended from their course, within 10 working days of this being confirmed.
10. To report any significant changes in students' circumstances, for example if the length of a course of study shortens, a student completes their studies earlier than the expected end date of the course which was stated on their CAS, a student secures a visa other than a Student visa (i.e. a work visa), or the location of a study/work placement changes
11. To refer to the police any information we have about students engaged in terrorism or other criminal activity
12. To maintain any appropriate accreditation and educational oversight required for sponsor status.
13. To report any students in breach of their Immigration responsibilities.

Responsibilities of Student Visa Students

1. To produce a valid passport and visa for verification and recording by Registry prior to matriculating each year, and as required at other points throughout the year
2. To maintain up-to-date personal and contact details through the Student Personal Details system
3. To ensure that all visa documentation is valid and up-to-date, including applying for extensions to their leave to remain in good time and to provide copies of new/extended visa and passport information
4. To inform the University immediately if their Immigration status changes at any time and provide us with copies of all correspondence that they receive from the Home Office in relation to their current immigration status or if they leave the UK permanently or switch into another immigration category.
5. To attend all compulsory elements of their programmes, including as appropriate; lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory sessions, examinations and other activities which form part of their programme of studies
6. To submit by required deadlines all coursework and other assignments required for the programme
7. To maintain the required level of academic attainment and progression throughout the duration of the programme.
8. To adhere/comply to the conditions of their visa at all times
9. To adhere to working restrictions throughout the duration of the programme.

Communication

The University Key Contact is responsible for all communication relating to UKVI and will use appropriate mechanisms to ensure effective communication.

The University will manage communications with the UKVI via our Premium Customer Service Team and through the use of the UKVI Sponsor Management System (SMS) managed through the Level 1 users of the system and overseen by the Key Contact.

The University will manage specific communications with applicants and Student visa students via University email systems and using University e-visas tools where appropriate.

General communication relating to Student visa policies and processes with the University will be managed through the University web pages.

Policy Document Revision

The University will review and update all UKVI policy documents annually by end of June and as appropriate after every major legislative change.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Current policy placed into Governance Zone template.	Published	Heather Dudek, Unit Administrator, Registry	21/04/21
1.1	Policy approved for the new academic year (2021/22).	Published	Heather Dudek, Unit Administrator, Registry	02/08/21