UK Visas and Immigration Student Visa Compliance Statement

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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
1.3	Policy approved for the new academic year (2023/24).	Published	Heather McNeill, Deputy Academic Registrar	13/09/23

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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 legacy endorsements
- Innovator route legacy endorsements
- 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, the Compliance Advisory Panel and the UKVI Operations Group under the oversight of the Vice Principal (Governance) as the Authorising Officer.

Decisions made at the UKVI 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 stops academically engaging, or where they have failed to attend one of the registration checkpoints each year (matriculation and UKVI confirmation event) without good reason.
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 within the University student record system.
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 Holders

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 comply with the University's policy on Location of Studies and to request approval in advance of any change of location of study which may impact their visa status.
4. 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 timely copies of new/extended visa and passport information.
5. To inform the University immediately if their Immigration status changes at any time and provide 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.
6. 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.
7. To submit by required deadlines all coursework and other assignments required for the programme.
8. To maintain the required level of academic attainment and progression throughout the duration of the programme.
9. To adhere with and comply to the conditions of their visa at all times.

10. 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 approved channels designated by the UKVI 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-vision 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
1.2	Policy approved for the new academic year (2022/23).	Published	Heather Dudek, Unit Administrator, Registry	02/08/22
1.3	Policy approved for the new academic year (2023/24).	Published	Heather McNeill, Deputy Academic Registrar	13/09/23