



University of  
St Andrews

## Location of studies

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Policy</b>
<b>Scope (applies to)</b>	All students
<b>Applicability date</b>	31/03/2016
<b>Review / Expiry date</b>	31/07/2027
<b>Approved date</b>	25/07/2024
<b>Approver</b>	Senate Policies
<b>Document owner</b>	Administrative Officer
<b>School / unit</b>	Education and Student Experience
<b>Document status</b>	Published
<b>Information classification</b>	Public
<b>Equality impact assessment</b>	None
<b>Key terms</b>	Academic policies/Learning and teaching/Location of studies
<b>Purpose</b>	This policy relates to the expectation that all students reside at a term address within a commutable distance. The policy excludes Distance Learning students.

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose / changes</b>	<b>Document status</b>	<b>Author of changes, role and school / unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.4	Updated following ESMG approval – clarifying existing practices to make it clearer	Approved	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	July 2024

# 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. Permission can also be granted for non-academic purposes, although this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students.

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 Student Visa Sponsors to hold the latest address of study for students as well as an historic trail of previous addresses. 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 Student Visa, 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 visa 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 programme of study, or prior to changing address<sup>1</sup>. 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

---

<sup>1</sup> Routine change of address requests are not subject to this policy and can be completed using the Personal Details tool in MySaint.

Students. This policy does not override the regulatory requirement<sup>2</sup> for student attendance with respect to absence from taught modules.

Overseas students must seek expert advice on the conditions of their 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.

Cases in which permission to change location of studies has not been sought or has not been approved will be referred to the University Compliance Team if the student holds a visa.

In cases where it becomes apparent that a student has changed their location for a period exceeding the maximum limits stated in this policy without obtaining permission, this should be referred to the relevant Associate Dean Students or Associate Provost and the relevant Registry Officer for consideration. It may also be necessary for the Student Immigration Compliance Team to be consulted if the student is a visa-holder.

### 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 two weeks or 10 consecutive academic days outside of teaching weeks (weeks 1-12) (all students) and during the summer period (Taught Postgraduate students) **at any time during their programme of study** must first seek approval<sup>3</sup> by submitting a change of location request through MySaint. 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, a student must first seek the support of their School and agree mechanisms for continued academic support. The student must then submit a change of location request through MySaint to be considered by the Registry Officer, who will offer advice in consultation with Student Services and the Student Immigration Compliance Team (where applicable). The Registry Officer, acting on behalf of the Associate Deans (Students)/Associate Provost Students, can grant approval only in exceptional circumstances for a student to be resident outside the commutable distance from St Andrews for non-academic purposes. Complex cases will be referred to the relevant Associate Dean (Students) or Associate Provost Students.

Student visa-holders should be aware that if a change of location is approved for non-academic reasons, the University may be required to withdraw visa sponsorship to comply with UK Visa and immigration (UKVI) requirements. Student visa-holders considering a change of location should seek advice on the immigration implications of any change prior to requesting it, by contacting the International Advice Team ([advint@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:advint@st-andrews.ac.uk)).

---

<sup>2</sup> Undergraduate Senate Regulations: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/rules/ugsenateregulations/>

<sup>3</sup> 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 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

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 Research Studies (DoPGR). If the case is complex, the DoPGR can refer the decision to the Registry Officer who can consult the Associate Provost Students. 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 (including weekends), 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 during the Christmas vacation period. Students do not need to submit a change of location request in this instance.

Students who will be away from their term address for longer than a period of 28 consecutive days (including weekends) or more than 38 consecutive days when the University is closed during the Christmas vacation period must submit a change of location request through MySaint to seek approval from the School's Director of Postgraduate Studies and have the request ratified by the Registry Officer and Student Immigration Compliance Team (where applicable). Once approved, the consent and new address must be placed on the student record maintained in Registry.

Students who wish to take annual leave for *non-academic purposes* are permitted to take up to 37 days annual leave per year as outlined in the [PGR Length of Study Policy](#). Students taking approved annual leave within this allowance will be taking their leave within the bounds of UKVI requirements and their student visa will not be affected. Students should check and discuss their annual leave with the School prior to submitting a change of location request. Remote study will not be permitted during a period of annual leave.

#### Guidance on requesting a change of location

Students at all levels of study can find further guidance on requesting a change of location at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/academic/changelocation/>

#### Registry Officer Contacts:

Undergraduate & Taught Postgraduate  
Research Postgraduate

[reg-support@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:reg-support@st-andrews.ac.uk)  
[reg-support-pgr@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:reg-support-pgr@st-andrews.ac.uk)

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role	Date
----------------	-------------------	-----------------	-------------------------	------

			<b>and school / unit</b>	
1.0	Revision to UG and PGT section	Updated	-	March 2019
1.1	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated		February 2021
1.2	Changes to Associate Provost title		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	August 2021
1.3	Clarification of rules regarding PGR students studying remotely	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	05/01/2023
1.4	Updated following ESG approval – clarifying existing practices to make it clearer	Approved	Administrative Officer Education and Student Experience	July 2024