



University of
St Andrews

Location of studies

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All students
Applicability date	31/03/2016
Review / Expiry date	31/07/2024
Approved date	17/01/2023
Approver	Senate Policies
Document owner	Deputy Head / Academic Policy Officer
School / unit	Education and Student Experience
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Academic policies/Learning and teaching/Location of studies
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
1.3	Clarification of rules regarding PGR students studying remotely	Approved	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	05/01/2023

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 address¹. 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

¹ 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 requirement² 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 visa.

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 approval³. 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 request must then be forwarded by the School to the relevant Registry Officer, who will offer advice in consultation with Student Services. 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.

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

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

³ 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.

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, 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
reg-support-pgr@st-andrews.ac.uk

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
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