Canterbury Christ Church University

UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure

Approved by:	Effective date:	Next review:
Academic Board	01 September 2023	01 September 2024, or when UK Visas & Immigration announce a change to the immigration rules

UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure

As a Higher Education Provider with a Track Record of Compliance, Canterbury Christ Church University is required to monitor the attendance and engagement of registered students who hold a Student Route Visa/Tier 4 Visa.

Who needs to know about the policy and procedure?

- Deans of Faculty and Pro Vice-Chancellors
- Heads of School
- Graduate College
- Faculty Registrars
- Registry Services
- Teaching Staff
- Faculty Administration teams
- Compliance Team
- International Partnerships and Development
- Finance
- Student Support and Wellbeing
- Students with a Student Route or Tier 4 visa sponsored by Canterbury Christ Church University

Purpose of the Policy and Procedure

The University is committed to upholding all the duties required of sponsor licence holders. It is also committed to fostering student engagement. The UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure outlines the procedures necessary to monitor student attendance and engagement and to identify and intervene in the case of non-attendance and non-engagement. It also sets out the consequences of continued non-attendance and non-engagement.

Contacts

The University's Compliance Team is responsible for:

- Providing advice and assistance on complying with our Sponsor duties

- Guidance and templates for communicating with sponsored students
- Training on Student Route/Tier 4 Visa compliance issues

The team can be contacted by emailing: ukvi.compliance@canterbury.ac.uk

Contents

UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure 4

1. Scope 4
2. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Principles 4
3. Specific Requirements by Course Group 5
4. Reassessments, Interruptions and Withdrawals 8
5. Authorised Absences and Temporary Leave from the UK 9
6. Compliance Action 10
7. Process Map 11

UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure

1. Scope

1.1. This policy applies to students studying at Canterbury Christ Church University in the following categories:

1.1.1. Applicants who have made a request for a Student Route visa in the UK using a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) assigned by Canterbury Christ Church University and are still awaiting a decision.

1.1.2. Students whose visa applications for the Student Route Visa made in the UK using a CAS number assigned by Canterbury Christ Church University were refused and the student pursued an administrative review and is awaiting a decision.

1.1.3. Students holding a Student Route or Tier 4 visa sponsored by Canterbury Christ Church University

2. Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Principles

2.1. Students are required to live within a reasonable commutable distance to the University. Although location and distance will differ depending on each student's individual circumstances, the student should be able to attend campus Monday to Thursday between the hours of 09:00 and 19:00 and Fridays between 09:00 and 17:00 as required.

2.2. Students are expected to be in attendance on campus for face-to-face learning for all timetabled events that take place on campus and all mandatory events, such as placements, that take place off-campus.

2.3. Students, Lecturers, Course Directors, faculty-based professional services teams, the Graduate College, International Partnerships and Development, and the Compliance team are expected to take an active role in monitoring attendance and engagement by facilitating and keeping up-to-date records.

2.4. The University utilises an electronic Attendance Monitoring System (TDS), and all teaching facilities are outfitted with card readers that enable students to digitally mark their attendance. Students studying taught courses are required to swipe into learning activities at the start of each timetabled session. Students who do not have their Student ID card need to ask the lecturer or member of staff

delivering the teaching activity to mark them manually as attended using the Attendance Monitoring System (TDS). Postgraduate research students' attendance and engagement is monitored using a different process, outlined in section 3.4, *Postgraduate Research*, of this policy.

2.5. Should there be a known fault with the room's card reader, instructors are expected to take manual attendance by either using TDS directly or uploading their manual attendance records into TDS in a timely fashion.

2.6. A student's attendance and engagement will be recorded and monitored in terms of in-person attendance on campus via TDS and via statistics from our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Blackboard, including logins, participating and assignment submission.

2.7. Students are expected to contact faculty-based professional services and their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) regarding any absence from class. If their absence is due to illness, the student should use the University's UKVI Student Absence Form. When relevant and appropriate, students must provide documentation to support the reason for their absence (for example, a doctor's certificate or letter).

2.8. Specific requirements for different groups of students are detailed in section three, *Requirements by* Specific *Course Group* of this policy.

2.9. Coherent and complete attendance and engagement records should be kept on an on-going basis by each faculty in the event of Home Office queries, an audit, and to comply with UK immigration rules.

3. Specific Requirements by Course Group

3.1. International Foundation Programme (IFP), Pre-sessional English, and General English (English as a foreign language) courses

3.1.1. Students studying are taught over a minimum of fifteen course hours per week on campus during the daytime (08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday) by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education.

3.1.2. If a student has not reached the required attendance rate of 85% in a four-week period, then the Course Administrator and Course Director should record the reasons for the student's absences and the steps taken to improve attendance.

3.1.3. If a student's attendance rate falls below 85% for two weeks without authorisation, the student will be warned about their non-engagement by the Course Director. The student will also be invited to a face-to-face meeting to discuss any issues that stop them from attending, any support required, and to re-engage the student.

3.1.4. If a student's attendance and engagement fall below 75% during a four-week period, the student will be issued a warning from the Head of School, and the student will be referred to the Compliance Team for follow up.

3.1.5. If a student's attendance and engagement does not improve following the formal warning from the Head of School, and the student does not attend and engage with their classes, then the student will be subject to withdrawal from their course and visa sponsorship withdrawal.

3.1.6. If a student's attendance per month falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the student's sponsorship will be withdrawn, and they will be withdrawn from their course.

3.2. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Courses

3.2.1. Students are expected to attend and engage with all elements of their course, including face-to-face lectures and seminars, practical labs, placements, and elements of blended learning delivered via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

3.2.2. Students whose attendance is lower than 70% for any one-week period will receive an attendance reminder from their faculty advising them of their insufficient attendance and providing details of relevant support services available.

3.2.3. If attendance continues below 70% for a further two weeks (three weeks total), the student will receive a letter of warning from their faculty.

3.2.4. If attendance continues below 70% for a further week (week four of unacceptable attendance), the student must attend a formal meeting with their Course Director to discuss their insufficient attendance as well as receive a formal letter of warning. If a student does not attend their meeting with the Course Director, the process in 3.2.5 should be followed.

3.2.5. Should a student continue with insufficient attendance for a further week (week five), the student will need to attend a meeting with faculty-based professional services officer and a Compliance Officer. At the meeting, the student will be informed of the consequences of continued non-attendance and be required to sign an attendance agreement.

3.2.6. Should a student continue with insufficient attendance for a further two weeks, the student's visa sponsorship to study with the University will be withdrawn, and the student will be withdrawn from their course.

3.2.7. Notwithstanding 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 above, if a student receives more than two automated emails during one term, then they should automatically be referred to their Course Director for a meeting, as per 3.2.4, above.

3.2.8. The Course Administration team for each faculty are expected to monitor the attendance and engagement of Student Route Visa/Tier 4 students undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes.

3.2.9. Engagement with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) must be monitored by Course Directors and Faculty Administration teams on an on-going basis.

3.2.10. Students in their dissertation period need to be monitored by monthly, face-to-face, on campus meetings with their supervisors. Documentation of these meetings must be held by the faculty.

3.3. Placements

3.3.1. Students undertaking placements need to be monitored for attendance and engagement for the entirety of their placement.

3.3.2. The details of the placement provider should be reported to the Compliance team by the Placement Unit Administrator before the student starts their placement.

3.3.3. The student should keep in regular contact with their Personal Academic Tutor, whilst they are undertaking their placements. Details of these contacts should be recorded and shared with the Compliance team.

3.3.4. Placement providers need to report any instances of non-Attendance to their designated Placement Unit Administrator. Placement Unit Administrators should monitor attendance trends. Attendance below 85% for any two-week period should be referred to the Compliance Team for action.

3.4. Postgraduate Research

3.4.1. All Student Route Visa/Tier 4 postgraduate research students are required to attend monthly, in-person meetings with their supervisor on campus.

3.4.2. The monthly supervisor meetings are recorded on Research Space by both student and supervisor and a separate Student Route Report Form for Student Route Visa/Tier 4 students is sent to the Graduate College. The Graduate College checks and records the Student Route Report Form and shares the report with the Compliance Team, if the student is non-compliant or an issue is identified.

3.4.3. Only in exceptional circumstances is it permitted for a monthly meeting to be conducted virtually or over the phone and this should be recorded on the Student Route Report Form and reported to the Compliance Team.

3.4.4. Should other exceptional circumstances arise e.g., short-term sickness, serious illness, the supervisor will inform the Graduate College who will contact the Compliance team at the earliest opportunity.

3.4.5. If a student misses a supervisor meeting, the supervisor should report this to the Graduate College who will inform the Compliance Team.

3.4.6. PhD students are also required to attend the Researcher Development Programme (RDP). Attendance at RDP events must be booked via Research Space, enabling attendance records to be kept by the Graduate College.

3.4.7. Research students are entitled to a maximum of 8-weeks holiday (including Bank Holidays) per annum. Holiday requests must be agreed between the supervisor and the student. Periods of holiday must be recorded on Research Space and monitored to ensure they meet the prescribed allowance.

3.4.8. Students may apply for an absence from their course for a maximum of 59 days. The student must discuss the reasons for absence with their supervisor and the supervisor will inform the School Director of Research and the Compliance Team who will approve or reject the request. If approved by the Compliance Team, the request may be submitted to Research Space for Research Degrees Board approval. Should an interruption last 60 days or longer, the Compliance Team are required to withdraw the student's visa sponsorship, and the student would be required to exit the United Kingdom.

4. Reassessments, Interruptions and Withdrawals

4.1. Students on taught courses required to undertake reassessments can undertake Reassessment with Attendance in-country if their current Student Route/Tier 4 Visa allows sufficient time. The Progression and Award Boards will confirm the nature of a student's reassessments. It is the responsibility of the Course Administrator to check that the student can complete their course, and receive their results, before their visa expires.

4.2. Students who need to undertake Reassessment with Attendance in-country, and postgraduate research students required to undertake corrections or resubmission, lacking sufficient time on their visa may be eligible to receive a new CAS to make a visa extension application in the UK.

4.3. Only students with adequate attendance and engagement, as outlined in the *UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure*, and who are eligible for a CAS as per current Home Office Student Route Visa immigration rules will be granted a subsequent CAS.

4.4. Students on taught courses undertaking Reassessments in-country and postgraduate research students undertaking corrections or resubmission holding Student Route/Tier 4 Visas are required to have at least one, formal on-campus contact point per 60-day period.

4.5. If, during the period of reassessment, a student is not required to engage with their studies for a 60-day period or longer, the student is required to exit the UK. For example, if a student must repeat certain modules that only run in Semester 2, they cannot stay in-country during Semester 1 while they await the commencement of Semester 2.

4.6. Postgraduate research students required to undertake corrections or resubmission can remain in-country if their current Student Route/Tier 4 Visa allows sufficient time. The Graduate College should confirm the student's visa expiry date.

4.7. Students who take an interruption of 60 days or longer, or students who choose to withdraw from their course, will have their sponsorship withdrawn, and they will be required to exit the UK.

4.8. Students who need to exit the UK are required to send the Compliance Team proof of their exit from the UK in order to comply with UK immigration rules. Students who fail to do so will not be eligible for any further CAS from the University.

4.9. If an interrupting student wishes to return to the UK to continue their course, they may be granted a CAS for a further Student Route Visa depending on their circumstances and their adherence to the *UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure*.

5. Authorised Absences and Temporary Leave from the UK

5.1. Should a student require a short-term absence due to their circumstances, they need to seek approval from their school, faculty and the Compliance team. Reasons for excused short-term absences may include illness, pregnancy, or exceptional personal circumstances.

5.2. Absences authorised will not count negatively against the student’s attendance rate and should be recorded as such in the Attendance Monitoring System (TDS).

5.3. Absences due to illness require the student to complete the University’s UKVI Student Absence Form. Absences of two weeks or longer should be accompanied by a doctor’s letter.

5.4. Students who need to return home during term-time need permission from their faculty and the Compliance Team to do so. Unless the absence is short-term, it will be considered an interruption of study.

5.5. Students holding a Student Route Visa and studying below degree level or at the undergraduate or postgraduate taught level cannot study online while abroad, whether during interruption or a short-term absence.

5.6. Postgraduate Research students may attend fieldwork and research conferences outside of the UK required for their course.

5.7. Absences 60 days or longer require the Compliance Team to withdraw visa sponsorship. Students undertaking such prolonged absences should be referred to the Compliance Team.

6. Compliance Action

6.1. All students referred to the Compliance Team for non-attendance and non-engagement will receive a formal warning by email and be invited to attend a meeting to discuss their attendance.

6.2. The Compliance Team will use emails, phone calls and meetings to facilitate the student re-engaging with their studies.

6.3. Students referred to the Compliance Team for non-attendance and non-engagement will be warned that failure to rectify their attendance and engagement may result in the withdrawal of their visa sponsorship and subsequent curtailment of their visa.

6.4. Students whose attendance fails to meet requirements set out in this policy will have their visa sponsorship withdrawn from UK Visas and Immigration.

6.5. At the time of visa sponsorship withdrawal, the Compliance Team will contact the student to advise them of withdrawal of their visa sponsorship and any further actions necessary, including exiting the UK. The Compliance Team will also notify Student Records and the faculty's administration to facilitate the formal withdrawal of the student from their course of study.

6.6. Students required to exit the UK will be asked for evidence of their exit, which can be in the form of boarding passes or exit stamps from UK Visas and Immigration.

7. Process Map

7.1. Visio: UKVI Attendance and Engagement Monitoring - draft UKVI process.vsdx

Type	System Managed Monitoring			Case Management				
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Warning Email 1	70%							Withdrawal
Warning Email 2		70%						
PAT / CD Meeting				70%				
UKVI Meeting					70%			
Attendance Agreement						70%		
Policy reference	3.2.2	3.2.3		3.2.4	3.2.5	3.2.6		

UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure

Document Information	Description of Document Information
Document Title	UKVI Sponsored Students: Attendance and Engagement Policy
Department Owner	Compliance team, Admissions, Marketing and Planning Department
Document Category	**Administrative Practice -** Documents of an administrative or operational nature **Ethics and Compliance -** Documents concerning appropriate conduct or compliance with legal or regulatory requirements
Document Owner	Director of Marketing and Communications
Document Manager	Head of Admissions Operations and Compliance
Related University Policies	Interruptions Policy Student Engagement in Learning Policy Terms and Conditions of Registration
Related University Procedures	Withdrawal Process for Student Route Sponsored Students
Approved by	Academic Board, minute 61
Date Approved	27/03/2023
Date of Commencement	01 September 2023
Review Date	01 September 2024, or when UK Visas & Immigration announce a change to the immigration rules
Version	Version 3
History of revisions of the Document	Version 1, draft prepared and circulated for comments before submission to Academic Board. Version 2, 27/03/2023, approved by Academic Board, minute 61. Conditions of the approval included clarification to 2.5 regarding TDS card readers that are inoperable and an additional clause to 3.2 addressing students who do not attend the meeting with their Course Director.

Document Information	Description of Document Information
	Version 3, 19/06/2023, submitted to Quality.
Web Address	• Policy Zone • Attendance Monitoring (StaffNet)