



ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Home Office UK Visas and Immigration Compliance for
students on Student Route Visas

NB. This policy is available on the University of Cumbria website and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.

POLICY SCHEDULE	
Policy Title	Academic Engagement Policy
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Policy Lead Contact	Admissions Manager (Compliance)
Date of Approval	11/07/24
Date of Implementation	01/08/24
Version no.	5.0
Related Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Practice etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions Policy• Academic Regulations and Procedures• Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure
Review Interval	July 2026 - SSQAC

Academic Engagement Policy - Student Route VISA
Home Office UK Visas and Immigration Compliance

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Background to Policy

From 1 January 2021, EU / EEA and Swiss nationals coming to the UK for the first time, and wishing to study for more than 6 months, will be required to obtain a Student Route visa. Any EU / EEA, Swiss and international student sponsored by the University for a Student Route visa will be subject to the monitoring requirements outlined in this Policy

In compliance with the Home Office - UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), as a Sponsor the University of Cumbria is under a legal obligation to keep a record of the registration and attendance and engagement of all students under the University's sponsorship of their Student VISA. The University will withdraw sponsorship and notify the Home Office UKVI following either a student's failure to register, or their continued non-engagement with their programme of study, as set out in this Policy.

In accordance with the Home Office UKVI Sponsor Guidance, the University will maintain up- to-date records (electronic and/or paper) for all Student Route Visa students:

1. a copy of the all the data pages in the passport, including immigration stamps/visas showing entry to UK
 - a. including a copy of current UK Student Route Visa showing UoC sponsorship
2. a copy of the Biometric Residence Permit/e-Visa/Right to Study confirmation via a Share Code
3. a full admissions record, including entry and English Language qualifications
4. all contact details in the UK
5. a record of Academic attendance and engagement including any and all actions and outcomes following any period of non-engagement
6. cumulative engagement records

Scope

This policy covers the requirements for Academic Attendance and Engagement with the programme of study once the student has successfully registered – 5 and 6 above.

Failure to comply with the Academic Engagement policy will result in deregistration from the University, withdrawal of Student Visa sponsorship and curtailment of the student's right to remain in the UK.

The University recognises that the welfare of its students is paramount and follows this policy in the interests of student personal and academic well-being, as well as Home Office UKVI compliance. This policy should therefore also be read in conjunction with the University's Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy.

On Programme

Following registration, students are required to engage with their programme of study to

progress and succeed in that study.

They must:

- a) Notify us if they will be absent for any reason from a university session or event
 - i. This can be done using the online reporting tool on “My Student Details” available via the student hub here: <https://hub.cumbria.ac.uk/dashboard/student> or by contacting your personal tutor via email.
- b) Notify their Personal tutor or the Programme Administration Office prior to the event if they are unable to engage with:
 - i. a work placement
 - ii. are unable to meet any assessment deadline
 - iii. are unable to make any expected appointment
- c) Notify the Programme Administration Office of any and all changes to contact details whilst on programme.

Engagement Monitoring and Reporting for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

At the beginning of each semester a plan of expected contact points will be made by the personal tutor and the programme administrator. These points should reflect that a student is engaging with their programme of study. An academic engagement plan can be used to help this process; if the student study pattern is not regular or the student is carrying out any non-taught study the plan can be used to identify contact points. A template for an attendance/engagement plan can be seen in section 11 of separate Guidance for Staff.

Examples of expected contacts or activities include:

- scheduled tutorial, lecture, workshop or other practical session
- supervisory support session,
- module session
- placement
- progress review,
- a programme-related appointment
- assessment deadline.
- registration
- induction sessions

- course related visit or trip
- Supervisor/Personal tutor meeting in person or via teams/other online system
- examination/OSCE, other meeting with academic staff member
- course related conference or other event
- submitting work
- engagement in a forum on the module or programme blackboard site

If a student is currently completing a dissertation and has completed their taught sessions and none of the above apply, contact points should be set and monitored to ensure continued engagement with study.

If a student is spending a period as a student union sabbatical officer a key academic tutor is identified and a minimum of 10 contact points agreed to ensure engagement with the role during the sabbatical period.

In accordance with the Home Office UKVI Sponsor Guidance, as Sponsor:

- records are made by academic staff of Student Route Visa student attendance/engagement and/or absence at every taught session, placement and other expected contact
- absence is recorded as either notified or non-notified. Notified absence is one in which the student informed the university either using the on line reporting tool on “My Student Details” available via the Student Hub here: <https://hub.cumbria.ac.uk/dashboard/student> or by contacting their personal tutor via email.
- A notified absence, for a religious event for example, can be authorised following discussion in advance with the personal tutor who signs off the absence, by email or in writing, as appropriate and agrees any work required to ensure the student does not fall behind due to the absence.
- Engagement is confirmed by tutors to Programme Administration.
- Where a student is on a placement programme, e.g. for health or education professional placements, engagement is monitored regularly via the placements office and reported to Programme Administration.
- For other placements, e.g. placement years, an attendance/engagement plan is agreed between the personal tutor and the student showing planned contact points throughout the period of placement prior to the student starting placement.
- Full details of any placement are confirmed to the Admissions Manager (Compliance) on the first day of placement for reporting to the Home Office within 10 days including:
 - Location of Placement; Organisation Name (include type of ward if appropriate); Full Address of placement; Start date; Expected End date

The University will report to the Home Office UKVI a student as being in breach of the conditions of their Student Route Visa when the pattern of absence has breached the university's Academic Regulations and Student Code of Conduct, and where they have not given reasonable notice, or the University has reasonably not given permission.

This has two consequences:

1. Deregistration of the student from the programme of study will take place
2. Student Route Visa sponsorship of the student will therefore be withdrawn

If the student's permission to stay in the UK under their Student Route Visa has in the meantime expired or been cancelled by the Home Office UKVI, the student will have to apply for new permission to remain before they can return to programme.

Engagement Monitoring and Reporting for Postgraduate Research Students

Due to the independent learner model for Postgraduate Research Students a pattern of engagement should be agreed between the student and the supervisor at the start of the programme.

Expected contacts or activities, which may be online or face to face, can be made up of any of the following:

- supervisory meetings, which may be conducted face-to-face, by Teams, or telephone. Supervisions by email are also acceptable, where the email exchange is a substantial discussion of the student's progress;
- progress review;
- any programme-related appointment;
- attendance at the PgR Summer School;
- attendance at a Viva Voce examination;
- submission of work;
- Registration;
- Induction;
- scheduled taught session, lecture, workshop or other practice session (face to face or online), where attendance is recorded;

In accordance with the Home Office UKVI Sponsor Guidance, as Sponsor:

- a record will be made by the student's supervisor of student attendance at, engagement with or absence from every expected contact. In line with the Graduate Research Office policy, an appropriate activity is expected to take place every two weeks, minimum
- absence is recorded as either notified or non-notified
- agreed periods of holiday are listed by the supervisor in the attendance record
- postgraduate research students studying outside the UK as part of their research, who wish to retain their Student VISA status must continue to engage at the same frequency
 - the attendance record will be kept in the same way, with the supervisor noting that the student is studying outside the UK
 - the student must update their contact details in ICON for the period of their study outside the UK
- the Graduate School shall liaise as appropriate with supervisors and tutors to ensure information is communicated to the programme administrator
- attendance and absence records are entered onto the individual student profile by programme administrators and monitored as appropriate.

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The Role of the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure

The key aim of the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure is to aid student retention and achievement by discussing and addressing concerns at the earliest opportunity. The Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure will therefore commence as soon as a student under University Student VISA sponsorship fails to engage with their programme by missing a point of contact (see section above).

The Student Progress Review is the supportive stage in the procedure and may be called at any point should a tutor be concerned regarding a student's engagement or behavior.

Failure to attend the Review appointment and/or to fulfil the action plan therefore constitutes a missed point of contact and a breach of the Student Code of Conduct.

The Student Code of Conduct outlines the University’s expectations relating to the behavior of its students including legislative and regulatory compliance. The University’s Disciplinary Procedure is a disciplinary procedure invoked following any breach of the Code of Conduct.

A student can be found to have breached the expected engagement if they do not attend expected sessions without prior notification, if they persistently do not engage or if they level of engagement if intermittent could indicate a lack of engagement in their study. The student disciplinary procedure, alongside other relevant procedures, may be used to follow up any such lack of engagement.

The sanction for a proven breach of the Student Route Visa Engagement Monitoring Policy by a student under University of Cumbria Student Route Visa sponsorship is deregistration and withdrawal of sponsorship. The student’s right to remain in the UK under the Student Route Visa will then be curtailed by the Home Office UKVI.

**UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA
POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL SCHEDULE**

All University of Cumbria Policies must include a completed Policy Document Control Schedule consisting of the Policy Schedule (see front cover), Review Schedule and Drafting Schedule (see below) which should be completed as appropriate

REVIEW SCHEDULE				
Review no	Due date	Reviewed by	Approved by	Completion date
1 – update following Oct 2020 release	November 2020	Amanda Holmes		10/11/2020
2 – review and confirm for 22-23				2021
3 – review and confirm for 23-24 including removal of covid specific section	July 2023	Amanda Holmes		
4- add specific placement year term to section on tracking placement	July 2024	Amanda Holmes	Compliance Manager	11/07/2024

5. Amendment to terminology and role titles	September 2024	Sharon Blaylock		
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