

Student Visa Engagement Policy

This policy applies to all students who are sponsored by the University for a Student Route or Tier 4 Visa.

1. What is engagement?

- 1.1. When we use the term engagement, we are covering a number of ways in which you can interact with your programme of study. Engagement opportunities will include attendance at lectures, seminars and other teaching and/or assessment activities. It can include use of learning resources such as the library, virtual learning environment and electronic journals. It may also include taking opportunities to interact with your tutors, academic advisors and/or supervisors.

2. What is the purpose of an engagement policy?

- 2.1. We expect all students to engage with their programme of study. There is no exact expectation about the extent to which you are required to engage, or specifically how you engage. Your programme handbook (and individual module descriptions) will give guides as to the likely time that will be required to dedicate to various activities designed to meet the learning outcomes, but these will only ever be guides.
- 2.2. Everyone will approach their learning in the way that suits them best, and this may vary as your learning techniques evolve over time. This is why we do not set a prescribed engagement measure to ensure success. Throughout this policy we will refer to minimum levels of engagement, and this should not be thought of as a minimum level that will ensure a passing grade, but a minimum level that we will use to identify where we may need to take action to support you.
- 2.3. We believe that it is important to ensure that we are able to highlight instances of very low levels of engagement or where engagement is significantly out of line with a designated peer group, and intervene to support you where we feel that it is important to do so. Supportive interventions can take many forms, but will primarily be designed to support you and try to maximise your opportunities to succeed in your programme of study.

2.4. For students requiring a visa to study in the UK, who are sponsored by the University under our Sponsor license, you will have the same level of expectation from us and commitment to support you, but we will also need to acknowledge that we have a specific requirement under our license to monitor engagement and where non-engagement is identified we may ultimately need to withdraw visa sponsorship and report this withdrawal to the UKVI. Our engagement policy allows us to support you by identifying instances where an intervention might be useful, but also serves the purpose of meeting our sponsor obligations.

3. What will we use to monitor engagement?

3.1. We will use a number of metrics to measure engagement and will make data available to those Academic and Support staff members, whose role it will be to support you. All information is stored and processed in line with the University's [Student Privacy Notice](#).

3.2. Data will be drawn from the following sources, but the exact contribution of each source to any final metrics may vary depending upon the nature of your programme and mode of study:

- **Assessment:** Completion of required assessment components, marks achieved, progression decisions;
- **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Interaction:** Time spent using, and interaction with the VLE (absolute and relative to other students on the same modules/programmes);
- **Library:** Electronic and physical usage;
- **Engagement with University processes:** Exceptional Circumstances, Academic Appeals;
- **Attendance:** If modules have any specific attendance requirements then this may also feature;
- **Interaction with Programme Staff and Faculty support processes:** Academic Advisors, Student Support Coordinators, etc.

4. How will we determine what constitutes low levels of engagement?

4.1. The aim of this policy is to describe a level of engagement which is compliant with sponsored students' responsibilities under the terms of their Visa, and to describe the ways in which we may determine that a minimum level, expected of every

sponsored student on their respective programmes of study, has not been met, and that some form of intervention is required. It should be noted that this policy does not in any way preclude or discourage support being offered to a student with any level of engagement, but sets a standard below which the University expects an intervention to take place, and, where appropriate, for action to be taken in accordance with this policy and with the University's responsibility as a sponsor.

- 4.2. The following levels of engagement must be met every semester in order to achieve a satisfactory level of engagement (or have successful Exceptional Circumstances outcomes to mitigate).

4.2.1. Students studying at academic level 3 (Foundation courses)

- a. Sponsored students at this level are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours of daytime (08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday) classroom-based study per week. Attendance at these sessions will be monitored via class registers. Registers will be taken daily by the tutors and attendance will be monitored by the specific Programme Administrators with responsibility for these courses. Where the student has not reached 85% attendance of their classroom-based study in any given month, action will be taken as described in section 4 below.
- b. Following those interventions, where a student's attendance falls below 70% for three consecutive months, the University will withdraw sponsorship due to lack of academic engagement unless there are exceptional and evidenced reasons for the non-attendance (e.g. illness).

4.2.2. Students studying at academic levels 4, 5, 6, and 7 (undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including postgraduate research courses)

- a. Students' engagement with courses at these levels will be monitored by means such as those described below. In each case, the measures used will be appropriate to the nature of the student's course, and as such may vary between subjects, course types, and study levels. The measures used include, but may not be limited to:
 - An average of at least one substantial interaction per week over each semester interacting with the university's Virtual Learning Environment(s) (VLE). A "substantial" interaction will be measured by its comparison to the average length of time spent per VLE interaction by the cohort as a whole;
 - The amount of time and/or number of interactions with the relevant VLE(s) across a semester/term or a part of a semester/term. In order to determine an appropriate level of engagement in each case, the amount and length

of VLE interactions will be monitored in comparison to the cohort as a whole, and action will be taken, as described in section 4 below, in instances where a sponsored student's engagement can be seen to be substantially below that of the cohort as a whole - for example, if sponsored students' interactions with the VLE are in the lower quartile of the cohort;

- Assessment: sponsored students must complete (where "completion" is defined as passing or attempting all assessment components for a module) at least one module credit in each teaching period;
 - Assessment: sponsored students must submit¹ or attempt all assessment components for modules on which they are enrolled.
- b. If your engagement levels on the above metrics lead to your engagement levels being flagged, we may also consider other metrics, which may be appropriate, where available, to help determine an overall picture of engagement:
- Any specific requirements, as may be determined by the relevant office of the UK Government, for students who require a visa to study in the UK;
 - Any specific Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements which are applicable to the student's course of study;
 - Meet any minimum attendance requirements stipulated within modules or attendance policy within Faculty/School or as a PSRB requirement;
 - Excessive use of "grace period" or self-certification extensions under the University's Exceptional Circumstances procedures;
 - Meaningful engagement with relevant academic staff, including but not limited to, Academic Advisers, dissertation supervisors and Research supervisors.
- c. As a guide, if three consecutive measures of engagement are not met within a semester or other appropriate study period, after supportive interventions as described in section 4 below have taken place, and without exceptional circumstances such as illness being demonstrably present and relevant, the University will consider the withdrawal of its sponsorship. However, the threshold for taking such action may vary depending on the subject, type, and level, of students' courses.

¹ Where "submission" may refer to a coursework submission, or an attempt at a timed assessment such as a presentation.

5. What might the University do when we have identified low levels of engagement?

- 5.1. Where we have identified what appears to be a low level of engagement as defined in 4.2, or through other means that include, for example, liaison with faculty staff, library usage, meeting of enrolment and re-enrolment deadlines, and timely payment of fees, you will be contacted by members of the International Student Advice Team and the International Student Compliance Team, who will agree an action plan with you that supports your re-engagement.
- 5.2. The action plan will be created on the basis of discussion with appropriate faculty staff and consist of actions, with deadlines you need to meet within an agreed time period. In order to remain compliant with UKVI regulations, you will need to fully engage with the plan and meet the deadlines. Failure to do so will lead to a non-engagement report being made to the UKVI, and your Student Visa being cancelled.
- 5.3. Clarity, any intervention as described in 5.1 will not take the form of an academic progression decision, as this decision can only be made by an Examination Committee.

Approved by: Vice-Chancellor's Group, January 2021

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