International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures

Effective from 5 April 2023

BLOOMSBURY INSTITUTE
LONDON

Index

Committee Approval

Committee	Committee Action	Date
SMT	Approved	5 April 2023
	Date in force	**5 April 2023**

This International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures document will be reviewed annually by our Senior Management Team. A review may also be carried out if there are changes to any of the procedures set out within the document, or if there are any changes to the UKVI regulatory framework.

1.   Introduction

This International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures document sets out our procedures for the admission, monitoring and reporting of international students in line with the United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) regulatory framework.

This document will be reviewed annually, and will also be reviewed if there are changes to any of the procedures set out within this document, or if there are any changes to the UKVI regulatory framework.

This document is made available in the Quality Enhancement Manual (QEM) section of our website for public view, in addition to an International Sponsored Student Guide[1]. This document should be read in conjunction with our Admissions Policy[2].

An international applicant is defined in two ways: 1) an applicant from another country who requires sponsorship under the student route to study in the UK and 2) an applicant who holds an alternative UKVI visa such as, but not limited to, indefinite leave to remain.

2.   International sponsored student policy

International applicants wishing to join Bloomsbury Institute may require sponsorship to support a visa application to enable them to study in the UK. The sponsorship is confirmed by the issuing of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). International applicants are required to meet our standard published admissions entry criteria for our courses, as per our Admissions Policy, as well as any additional UKVI requirements for international students.

Applicants who do not require a student visa need to provide evidence that they have the right to study in the UK at the admission application stage in line with UKVI requirements.

The applicant journey differs slightly at the initial admission stage depending on the method of application, i.e. directly or through UCAS (see **Sections 3.1 and 3.2** below).

2.1   Classification of risk

At its meeting on 20 January 2023, our Board of Directors approved a Risk Appetite Statement. This Statement provides a range of risks with a rating of 0-10, where 0 is categorised as "avoid" and 10 as "hungry". The risk of "compliance", that includes UKVI compliance, has a rating of "0" ("avoid") which is a clear direction that we, as a higher education provider, are completely averse to taking risks which could impact upon UKVI compliance.

We act upon our own internal intelligence, as well as external intelligence that we gather through our participation in, for example, Independent Higher Education's (IHE) Immigration Compliance Network (and through which we receive UKVI intelligence).

UKVI defines a 'low-risk' applicant as being from a pre-defined list of countries outlined by the UKVI in Appendix ST, with which differential agreements have been established. Please see the UKVI publication with regards to low-risk countries under "Eligibility Requirements for a Student" at paragraph ST22.1: Appendix Student[3].

When considering applications, if a country is classified as 'low-risk' by the UKVI, applicants from that country will be subject to the considerations set out in **Section 2.1.1** below. Where an applicant comes from a country not on the UKVI list of low-risk countries, they will be subject to the considerations set out in **Section 2.1.2** below.

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[1] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[2] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student

2.1.1 Applications with low risk

Applicants from low-risk countries are covered by Differentiation Agreements, meaning that they are subject to different evidential requirements when applying for a student visa to study in the UK. This means they are not required to submit their academic and financial documents with their visa application. However, they still need to satisfy all UKVI requirements.

Although applicants from low-risk countries will not automatically be subject to the same degree of checks as those from other countries, the UKVI may at any stage during the application process or at the UK port of entry request any information or documents. Applicants are therefore advised to have all the required documents to hand until after they have arrived in the UK.

We reserve the right to apply additional checks to any application for which we deem necessary to do so by asking applicants to provide us with any other additional evidence, just as we do for applications with inherent risk (see **Section 2.1.2** below). For example, all applicants from low-risk countries have to provide their academic certificate(s)/transcript(s) and approved English Language Test/Qualification (both of which go through a verification process).

As a responsible sponsor, we are committed to ensuring that applicants are genuine and conform to the requirements of the UKVI regulatory framework.

2.1.2 Applications with inherent risk

Applicants not originating from any of the low-risk countries will automatically be subject to more stringent checks and verification than those from low-risk countries.

To ascertain that an applicant in the inherent risk category is suitable for sponsorship, we will check and verify all information whenever possible.

Key considerations for checking may include, but are not limited to:

- The applicant's previous UK immigration history.

- The applicant's English language ability.

- The applicant's qualifications used to support their application.

- The applicant's ability to study and progress.

- The applicant's genuine intention to study.

- The applicant's suitability as per other UKVI requirements for international students[4].

If any inconsistencies are identified amongst the submitted documents or information provided, the applicant will be notified for further explanation, rectification or submission of new evidence.

2.2 Assessing an applicant's ability and genuine intention to study

To make an assessment of an applicant's ability and genuine intention to study, we require all applicants to disclose their immigration history (see **Section 2.2.1** below), complete a Pre-CAS credibility questionnaire (see **Section 2.2.2** below), require some applicants to undertake an interview (see **Section 2.2.2** below), check English Language ability (see **Section 2.2.3** below), and check all academic certificate(s)/transcript(s) and English Language Test/Qualification are genuine through the application of a verification process (see **Section 3.1.2** below).

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[4] https://www.gov.uk/student-visa

2.2.1   Immigration history

Once an applicant receives an unconditional offer, their application will be moved to CAS Shield (see **Section 3** below). CAS Shield is the system we use to collate all information and documents that we need in order to decide whether or not to issue a CAS.

Where relevant, within CAS Shield we will require applicants to provide us with a summary of their UK immigration history to cover periods of previous permission to stay, the purpose of the stay and the level of the course (if the permission was granted for study purposes). In some cases, we will also check with the UKVI to confirm an applicant's UK immigration history.

2.2.2   Pre-CAS credibility questionnaire and interview

Within CAS Shield, all applicants are required to complete a Pre-CAS credibility questionnaire. They may also be required to complete an automated interview through CAS Shield[5]. In some cases, if an applicant fails the automated interview, they may be invited to attend a live online interview.

2.2.3   English language assessment

Applicants must prove their English Language ability when they make their Student visa application (unless they are exempt; see below).

Applicants can prove their English Language ability by passing an English Language Test/Qualification that we recognise; the full list of approved Tests/Qualifications is available on our website[6].

Password Skills Plus Test

Applicants can take the online Password Skills Plus Test to prove they meet our English Language requirement. It is scored on the same basis as the IELTS for UKVI Academic. There is a charge (currently £95). Applicants can also take a practice test beforehand at a current charge of £40.

Applicants can book the test here[7]. Once they have sat the test, they will normally receive the results within 5-7 working days.

Note: All English Language Tests must have been taken within two years of the date the online Student visa application is submitted.

Exemptions from providing an English Language Test/Qualification

Applicants will be exempt from providing an English Language Test/Qualification if they:

- obtained a GCSE, A Level or Scottish Higher qualification in the UK, which was commenced before they turned 18. The qualification must be in English Literature or English Language and have been issued by an Ofqual, SQA, Qualifications Wales or CCEA regulated awarding body in the UK. Applicants must also have undertaken their education at a UK-based school.

- previously completed an academic qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in a "majority English-speaking" country - see **Table 1** below. A UK ENIC

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[5] Applicants who are resident in the Indian Subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal) and the United Arab Emirates, are automatically required to undertake an automated interview in CAS Shield [This list is kept under review and may be expanded]; other applicants can be required to undertake an automated interview.

[6] https://www.bil.ac.uk/how-to-apply/international-students/english-language-requirements/

[7] https://passwordplus.englishlanguagetesting.co.uk/test-takers/

Statement of Comparability confirming the degree is equivalent to a UK degree may also be required. Click here[8] for further details on the Statement of Comparability.

- are a national of a majority English-speaking country – see **Table 2** below.

- obtained an academic degree qualification from an educational establishment in the UK, which is a bachelor's degree or above.

More details about these exemptions can be found here[9].

Table 1

A – H	I - P	Q - Z
Antigua and Barbuda Australia The Bahamas Barbados Belize Dominica Grenada Guyana	Ireland Jamaica Malta New Zealand	St Kitts and Nevis St Lucia St Vincent and the Grenadines Trinidad and Tobago United States of America

Table 2

A – H	I - P	Q - Z
Antigua and Barbuda Australia The Bahamas Barbados Belize Dominica Grenada Canada Guyana	Jamaica Malta New Zealand	St Kitts and Nevis St Lucia St Vincent and the Grenadines Trinidad and Tobago United States of America

Note: If an applicant is an Irish national, they benefit from the Common Travel Area (CTA) Arrangement, and so they will not need to prove their English Language ability.

To assess the equivalency of an oversees qualification, the applicant may be required to provide a UK ENIC Statement of Comparability[10]. We reserve the right to require an applicant to take one of our recognised English Language Tests/Qualifications.

2.3   Academic progression

The way in which academic progression is now assessed by the UKVI has changed. Its basic premise is to ensure that international students on a Student visa are academically progressing on courses connected to their permission to stay in the UK by applying for higher level courses after the successful completion of their previous courses.

A student does not need to show academic progression if they are applying for a visa extension to retake an exam/coursework, repeat a section of their course, or complete their course (having needed to retake an exam/coursework or repeat a section of their course previously).

Although the UKVI state that applicants applying from outside the UK will be exempt from academic progression, their application will still be assessed on credibility grounds to ensure they are a genuine

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[8] https://enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx

[9] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-english-language

[10] https://enic.org.uk/Qualifications/SOC/Default.aspx

student. For their visa application, applicants are still required by the UKVI to submit evidence of their academic qualifications that were used to obtain the CAS and they will also be subject to an immigration history check. This essentially means the applicant will still have to evidence academic progression in their application.

For full information, see the [Student Route guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-finance)[11] (academic progression section).

2.4   Rejecting an application

We reserve the right to reject an application to study with us at any stage of the admissions process if an applicant fails to satisfy any of the requirements referenced above. An application may also be rejected:

- If an applicant is unable to provide evidence within reasonable timeframes when requested to do so.

- If an applicant is unable to satisfy any of the core requirements for applying for a Student visa (English Language proficiency, financial documents, academic progression, etc.).

- If there are any doubts about the validity and authenticity of any documents or evidence provided.

- Where doubts exist about the applicant's genuine intention to study.

- Where doubts exist about the applicant's current English Language proficiency evidence or any other document they may have used to support a previous visa application.

- For any other reasons not listed above if the need arises, depending on the details of the case.

Applications with inherent risk will be assessed on a case-by-case given that some cases will hold more inherent risk than others. Provided we are satisfied that any risk has been addressed, we will sponsor the applicant and issue them with a CAS. Where we have any doubt about the applicant, we may investigate the application further and/or terminate the process, and the application will not be progressed any further.

2.5   Extension of Student visas

If a student has already been studying in the UK on a Student visa, normally they will only be able to get a Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) and apply within the UK for further permission to stay if they fulfil all the following criteria:

- They have successfully completed their course.

- There are not more than 28 calendar days between their current visa expiry date and the new course start date.

- They will be studying at a higher academic level than their previous course (for example if a student has successfully completed an undergraduate degree and will be starting a master's degree course).

If the student does not meet all three criteria, they must leave the UK and make their visa application from their country of nationality or residence.

In some cases, some students may be permitted to apply for a visa to study a new course at the same level as their previous course. For these students, to meet the academic progression requirement the

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[11] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-finance

course should either be connected to the previous course, which means it must be part of the same subject group or involve deeper specialisation; or in combination with the previous course, support their career aspirations.

To prove successful course completion, students will need one of the following:

- A degree certificate and a final academic transcript.

- Formal written confirmation from the Institute that they have completed or, based on all progress to date, are highly likely to successfully complete their course.

2.6   International applicants on 'other' visas

As a requirement of the UKVI regulatory framework, it is important that we have a clear knowledge and understanding of applicants who are on other visas.

There are several visa categories including, but not limited to:

- Indefinite leave to remain (Settlement).

- Limited leave to remain.

- Dependent leave.

- Family reunion.

- Refugee.

Skilled Worker visa holders can also study during the validity period of their permission to stay in the UK if it does not infringe on the requirements of their work sponsorship. It is important to ensure that we, through our internal admission processes, comply with UKVI rules by identifying applicants on alternative visas and checking their visa expiry dates. This is to ensure that the applicant is made aware at an early stage that they need to have a visa that covers the full duration of the course and if they do not, they will need to either extend their permission to stay in the UK nearer the time of its expiry or switch to another visa category if necessary.

Once the applicant's visa is provided and uploaded onto our system, along with all other required documents, the application will be processed by the Admissions Department.

3.   Application procedures

The application stage begins with the receipt of an application directly through our Self-service Centre (SSC)[12] on Radius or via UCAS. Once the application has been processed and the applicant receives an unconditional offer, their application will then be transferred into CAS Shield, ending once all requirements are satisfied, and an applicant is ready to have a CAS assigned to them.

3.1   Direct applicants

When applying to us directly, applicants will create an account and complete an application form online through our Self-service Centre (SSC)[13] in Radius. At this stage, data is collected relating to, *inter alia,* the applicant's personal details, qualifications, English Language ability and intended course of study.

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[12] https://lsbm.radiusbycampusmgmt.com/ssc/zx670m700x6G0x67026.ssc

[13] https://lsbm.radiusbycampusmgmt.com/ssc/zx670m700x6G0x67026.ssc

3.1.1 Initial decision: conditional offer; under review; or reject

The information provided on the application form is assessed against our academic entry criteria by the Admissions Department, and one of the following decisions is made:

- Conditional offer

- Under review (because insufficient information is available to make a decision)

- Reject

If a conditional offer is made, the applicant is required to upload the following:

- Certificate(s) and Transcript(s)

- English Language Test/Qualification

- Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- MBA Only – Proof of 2 Years' Supervisory/Managerial Experience

In addition, a reference or Letter of Recommendation has to be provided.

3.1.2 Unconditional Offer and Qualification Verification

To ensure that we can detect fraudulent qualifications, and also deter such applications, we have set up an account with ECCTIS-approved Qualification Check (QC), https://www.qualificationcheck.com/.

Applicants upload certificates and transcripts for verification through our QC Portal: https://bil.qualificationcheck.com/#/login/register.

QC contact the awarding body directly for verification, and it normally takes around 5 working days to receive the verification. QC has staff in the UK, India and Nigeria. Some awarding bodies may take longer than 5 working days, and some may even refuse to verify. If we do not receive verification, we will not proceed with the application (i.e. the application will be rejected) unless we can verify it internally or directly with the awarding body. Both the applicant and ourselves receive the verification report from QC.

All applicants (including those from low-risk countries) will be required to go through this verification.

We can verify some English Language Tests/Qualifications, such as IELTS. If we cannot verify the English Language Test/Qualification, it will be verified by QC.

Once an applicant has been made a conditional offer and uploaded all the documents set out in **Section 3.1.1** above, the process is as follows:

- Our Compliance Team check the documents and identify the academic certificate(s)/transcript(s) and English Language Test/Qualification that will be included in the CAS.

- The applicant is made an unconditional offer (subject to qualification verification), unless it is decided that our academic entry criteria are not met, in which case the application is rejected.

- If an unconditional offer is made, the applicant is required to apply to QC for verification of the academic certificate(s)/transcript(s) and (if we are unable to verify directly with the awarding body) the English Language Test/Qualification.

- A CAS will only be issued if we receive a positive verification.

3.1.3   CAS Shield and Radius

Once the applicant has been made an unconditional offer (subject to qualification verification) they are transferred to CAS Shield.

Applicants have to re-upload their academic certificate(s)/transcript(s) and English Language Test/Qualification. All CAS-related documentation and information is then processed and approved (or rejected) within CAS Shield. This includes: passport; immigration history; details of any criminal convictions; checking personal details against academic certificates/transcripts and English Language Test (and requesting proof of change of name, if applicable); proof of deposit payment; financial evidence; TB certificate (if applicable).

In addition, as previously stated:

- All applicants complete a pre-CAS questionnaire.

- All applicants who are resident in the Indian Subcontinent or United Arab Emirates undertake an automated interview.

Once all the above has been approved, our Compliance Team move the applicant to "Ready for CAS".

Prior to the CAS being issued, the applicant is required to complete an online enrolment form in Radius. This is an important stage because it requires the applicant to provide some personal sensitive information that we require for the HESA submission, and it also pushes the data through into our Student Management System (Oracle) to generate the applicant's @bil.ac.uk email address and Student ID Card, and attach the student to our other IT systems (e.g. timetabling, attendance monitoring, VLE and online library).

The CAS is then issued by our Compliance Team, and the applicant is sent a decision letter (and email) through Radius with full details about how to apply for their Student visa.

The applicant is sent a separate decision letter (and email) through Radius inviting them to face-to-face enrolment and induction, both of which take place during Welcome Week.

The applicant is requested to complete post-CAS formalities within CAS Shield: upload a copy of their Student visa application form; copy of entry vignette (or refusal letter); travel tickets. The applicant is subsequently requested to upload copies of the stamped entry vignette (when they have entered the UK) and copy of their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

3.2   UCAS applicants

When applying via UCAS, applicants will initially engage via the UCAS system.

When a UCAS application is received, it is imported into Radius for us to manage the application in the same way as for direct applicants. The academic entry criteria for a UCAS applicant are the same as for a direct applicant. However, often a UCAS applicant's qualifications can be verified via UCAS, in which case we would not require a separate qualification verification.

If an applicant selects Bloomsbury Institute, and is made an unconditional offer, the applicant will be transferred through to CAS Shield and processed in exactly the same way as a direct applicant.

3.3   All applicants

While the initial engagement and management of requirements differs according to whether the applicant applied directly or via UCAS, the considerations when evaluating documents and progressing applicants remain the same. International applicants will have an immigration history check where applicable, undertaken by the UKVI. In cases where applicants have only recently turned 18, it may not be required as it is unlikely they would have a Student or Tier 4 visa immigration history.

While looking at the evidence of information and documents supplied as part of an application, consideration is given to, and assessments made of the applicant's genuine intent to pursue their proposed course, their individual circumstances, and the risk involved in processing their application.

General guidance on the issuing of a CAS and how to apply for a student visa can be obtained from our Compliance Team by emailing visa.compliance@bil.ac.uk or telephoning 020 7078 8790 [International: +44 20 7078 8790].

3.3.1   Financial requirement

As part of the document checking process, bank documents are assessed to make sure that they show the required living costs for the appropriate duration (£1,334 x the length of course up to 9 months) plus outstanding Year 1 Tuition Fees, if any. Any money which is to be used for living costs and outstanding Tuition Fees needs to be maintained in the applicant's account for a full 28 consecutive days. The bank document must not be more than 31 days old from the date of submitting the online visa application.

Applicants can also use bank documents in the name of either:

- their biological parent(s) or legal guardian(s)'s name; or

- any other person's name (provided they are also named as a joint account holder).

If they rely on money held in their parents(s)/legal guardian(s) bank account, they must also show that their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have given their permission for them to use their money. Applicants must therefore provide a letter from their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) confirming that they consent to the applicant using the funds in their bank account.

Proof of the relationship between the applicant and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must also be provided by issuing us with one of the following:

- Their birth certificate.

- A court document confirming legal guardianship.

- A certificate of adoption.

If the applicant relies on a joint account, they must provide a letter confirming that the other account holder(s) has given them their consent to use the funds in the bank account.

Applicants can also obtain a student loan or official financial sponsorship from institutions approved by the UKVI. They must provide either a Student Loan Letter or Financial Guarantee Letter for the visa application and the letters must confirm how much money is granted to them for their living costs and/or outstanding course fees. Student Loan Letters and Financial Guarantee Letters can only be accepted if the application and/or offer was made in the applicant's name **only**. The UKVI will not accept Student Loan Letters or Financial Guarantee Letters in any other name.

Where the funds are held in a foreign currency, this will be converted into British Sterling (GBP) using the spot exchange rate which appears on www.oanda.com for the date of the application.

All applicants need to ensure that they are providing bank documents from financial institutions where one of the following applies:

- The financial institution must be regulated by the appropriate regulatory body for the country in which that institution is operating; or

- The financial institution must use electronic record keeping; or

- The UKVI decision-maker must be able to make satisfactory verification checks with the financial institution.

Further details can be found on the following link: [Appendix Finance](#)[14].

3.3.2   Deposit payment

Before we can issue an applicant with a CAS, the applicant must make a minimum payment towards the cost of their Year 1 Tuition Fees. The actual amount of the deposit will be set out in their offer letter. The minimum deposit is 50% of Year 1 Tuition Fees, but we set a higher minimum deposit (up to 100% of Year 1 Tuition Fees) for residents of specific countries. Payment can be made via our website: [Make a Payment](#)[15].

The finance stage is another measure to assess the credibility of the applicant. The Compliance Team will liaise with the Finance Team to make sure payment is received from the applicant.

3.4   Issuing a CAS

During the application process, the information and documentation required to issue a CAS via the UKVI Sponsor Management System (SMS) is captured within both Radius and CAS Shield.

As stated in **Section 3.1.3** above, once all the required information and documents have been approved, a CAS is issued to the applicant.

UKVI define a CAS as a 'digital document like a database record' of which the only element required for inclusion in a visa application is the actual CAS number. A document is generated from the SMS once the CAS number has been assigned, which also contains the applicant's personal, course, academic, English Language, deposit and course fees details. The applicant must use the exact details stated in this document when completing the Student visa application form, as well as submit all the supporting documents listed therein. Our Compliance Team supports applicants with their visa application to ensure that they obtain a visa and enrol on the course.

In line with our record-keeping duties specified in **Section 4.4** below, a record of the applicant's information and documents is retained in Radius and/or CAS Shield.

After the applicant obtains their visa and enrols onto the course, some of their information and documents relevant to their post-arrival enrolled status are transferred to our Student Management System (Oracle).

If an applicant no longer wishes to study with us at any stage of the process, it is important for them to let our Compliance Team know as soon as possible by emailing visa.compliance@bil.ac.uk.

3.5   Immigration Health Surcharge

All non-EU nationals as well as EU nationals (including nationals from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) who do not qualify for the EU Settlement Scheme, who come to the UK to study are required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). The IHS payment is an embedded part of the visa application. It is recommended that the applicant makes the payment when completing the visa application form. There may be an opportunity to pay for this charge after completing the application but it is highly advisable that it is done before the application is submitted to avoid a potential rejection, refusal or any delays.

The amount to be paid will be based on the length of leave granted to an applicant and will be calculated automatically during the application process. The charge is currently £470 per year. More details can be found [here](#)[16].

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[14] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-finance

[15] https://www.bil.ac.uk/fees/make-a-payment/

[16] https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application

3.6 Visa application management

The UKVI operate an online application system for Student visas in most countries across the world. The applicant will be encouraged to complete the visa application themselves and is offered our support throughout the application stages to ensure compliance with all requirements.

It is important that there is a continual line of communication between the applicant and the Compliance Team for support and regular guidance. This practice increases our awareness of when a visa application has been approved, refused, or rejected at the earliest opportunity.

3.6.1 Visa refusals and rejections

There may be instances where a visa application will be refused or rejected, and it is essential for international applicants to immediately alert us of this decision so that we can provide the appropriate support and guidance.

Refused application

This is when an application has been processed but does not meet the Student visa requirements. Reasons for not meeting requirements could be due to missing documents, not meeting the financial requirement, not submitting original copies when requested or providing false documents. The application may also be refused on credibility grounds if the applicant fails a UKVI credibility interview. It is therefore important that applicants are made aware of the implications of making mistakes on the visa application form, not meeting the requirements, or not adequately preparing for a UKVI credibility interview because it will count against them as a visa refusal. This may also affect any future visa applications they might make whether to the UK or any other country.

Applicants must notify us of any visa refusal so that the Compliance Manager can assess the grounds of refusal and provide further support and guidance. If it is deemed that the visa application was refused in error, there may be a case to apply for an Administrative Review (AR). An Administrative Review is where a refused application can be checked for errors made by the UKVI decision-maker. The applicant must apply for an Administrative Review within 28 calendar days of receiving the visa refusal and it will take up to 6 months or more for a decision to be made.

If the visa or Administrative Review application is refused, there is no guarantee that we will be able to issue the applicant with an additional CAS to enable them to make another visa application.

Rejected application

This is where the UKVI has found an anomaly in the application and has not processed the application. Unlike a refused application, this will be treated as a non-processed application and any payment will be refunded. It will be as though the applicant has not made an application. The reasons for rejecting an application could be because the student paid an incorrect fee, for example. Depending on the timing of the rejected application, the applicant may be able to re-apply if all issues are resolved, and the deadline for enrolment has not passed.

3.7 UKVI metric for visa refusals

During the first intake that takes places within a monitoring year (our monitoring year runs from mid-March to the following mid-March), consideration will be given to all applications with the aim of securing as many visa approvals as possible.

Straightforward applications will be offered the necessary amount of support they need to make sure that the visa application is processed smoothly and without issues.

If enough visa applications are approved, applicants with more complex or challenging cases will be considered while being offered additional support to mitigate the associated risk as much as possible.

During the second and subsequent intakes that take place within a monitoring year, the approach taken towards applicant cases will depend on the current statistics following the first intake. Where a high

number of CASs were assigned, and the visa approval rate was satisfactory, challenging cases may be considered in the second and subsequent intakes. Where a low number of CASs were assigned, or the refusal rates were causing concern after the first intake, challenging applications could be refused for the second and subsequent intakes unless there is absolute confidence that the application will be processed and approved by the UKVI.

4. Student procedures

Once an applicant has successfully made an application and has been granted a visa, we as a Sponsor have responsibilities with which we are required to comply. These are:

- Ensuring that the student enrols on the course within the expected timeframe.

- Upholding the sponsorship duties for an enrolled student throughout the duration of their course.

- Ensuring that the student completes their course.

Further sponsorship duties that have to be carried out throughout the duration of an international student's studies until they have finished their course or are withdrawn, are outlined in Student Sponsor Guidance, Document 2[17].

4.1 Enrolment and student arrival

Once a CAS has been issued, the applicant will be issued with a letter through Radius with a date and time of when they should attend their face-to-face enrolment in the UK (at the same time, they will also be invited to a separate induction session). For the face-to-face enrolment, they will need to bring with them the following:

- Original passport they used to enter the UK with the 90-day entry clearance vignette and entry stamp.

- Original documentation they provided us with at the admissions and CAS stage (as required).

- The front and back side of their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) (if they collected it from the Post Office).

After a visa has been issued, the applicant will be requested to upload the following documents within CAS Shield:

- Full copy of the visa application.

- Proof of Entry Clearance (i.e 90-day vignette).

- Flight ticket.

- Stamped Student visa vignette.

- Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

The applicant's UK arrival date should be before the start date of the course as stated on the CAS letter. If there is any delay in the student arriving in the UK they can request an extension letter from the Compliance Team (and this will be issued at the discretion of the Compliance Team).

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[17]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939471/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2020-12.pdf

Once the last date of entry to a course has passed, the Compliance Team will conduct an audit of all students who were assigned a CAS to determine the enrolment rate for that intake. If any applicants are not yet enrolled and have not notified us of any delay, they will be contacted. If they cannot be contacted or they inform us that they no longer wish to enrol due to personal or other reasons, we will withdraw their sponsorship and they will be reported to UKVI as a 'failure to enrol' within ten working days of the notification from the applicant.

4.2   90-Day Vignette and Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

The UKVI issue Biometric Residence Permits (BRP) to all non-EU nationals as well as EU nationals (including nationals from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) who do not qualify under the EU Settlement Scheme, who are coming to stay in the UK for more than six months. Successful applicants will be issued with a 90-day entry clearance vignette in their passport which entitles them to travel to and enter the UK within the 90-day validity period.

Once they arrive in the UK, the student will need to collect their BRP either from our Compliance Team[18] or the post office (depending on the location stated in their decision letter), usually before the 90-day entry clearance vignette in their passport expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is later. The address of where they will need to collect their BRP from will be stated on the student's decision letter from the UKVI.

It is imperative that students obtain their BRP within the specified timeframe to avoid complications due to non-compliance with the terms of their stay in the UK. If students cannot collect their BRP from either our Compliance Team or the Post Office within 10 days of their arrival in the UK due to credible reasons, then they must collect their BRP before their 90-day entry clearance vignette expires in order to continue with their course. Prior to the student's vignette expiry date, if a student has not yet collected their BRP, they will be reminded to do so. If the student still does not collect their BRP within the requested period, they may be required to stop attending their classes until they collect their BRP. If the student collects their BRP from the Post Office, they must bring it, along with their passport for ID purposes, to the Compliance Team for a scan to be taken. The scan will be uploaded to our Student Management System.

It is the responsibility of the Compliance Team to ensure that any mistakes on either the 90-day entry clearance vignette and/or the BRP are reported to the UKVI. Reporting of errors can be done via the UKVI website on the following link: Report a BRP error[19]. Once a new BRP is obtained, a scan should be taken and uploaded to our Student Management System by the Compliance Team.

4.3   Monitoring duties

We have a range of monitoring duties under sponsor requirements once we issue a CAS to an applicant such as to report a visa refusal if the applicant's visa is not successful. If, however, the student's visa is successful, then we have a duty to:

- monitor non-enrolments.

- monitor academic engagement.

- monitor authorised and unauthorised absences.

- monitor discontinuation of studies (medical and other reasons).

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[18] When we issue a CAS, we provide the applicant with our ACL Code (3HE292) and full instructions of where to insert this code in their online visa application so that they can collect their BRP from our Compliance Team at face-to-face enrolment (rather than have to collect it from a Post Office).

[19] https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/report-problem#:~:text=with%20a%20BRP-,Report%20a%20problem%20with%20your%20new%20BRP,your%20BRP%20does%20not%20arrive.

- monitor breaches to conditions of stay including work rights.

4.3.1 Monitoring academic engagement

There are a range of reasons why students might miss scheduled classes, for example illness, bereavement or being a victim of crime. International students can apply for an authorised absence if they have documentary evidence as stated in our [Engagement Policy](#)[20]. The applicant should make a request for an absence to be authorised through our [Student Self-service Portal](#)[21] (SSP) with relevant evidence.

Our Engagement Policy is applied by our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS). It is applied equally to all students, home students and international students.

SEWS follow up on matters of non-engagement, whether this be in terms of physical non-attendance at class, non-attendance at virtual classes (if applicable), non-submission of work, or underuse of the digital learning platforms we provide. Following up instances of non-engagement ensures that students can be supported and given every opportunity to succeed.

International students have to comply additionally with the UKVI regulatory framework with regards to academic engagement, and therefore any instances of non-engagement are referred through to the Compliance Team for additional intervention.

However, it should be noted, that even if an international student is referred through to the Compliance Team, SEWS will continue to apply the Engagement Policy and make its own interventions.

For international students, academic engagement can include:

- Attending timetabled classes.

- Submission of assignments.

- Sitting examinations either online or in person.

- Participating in other formal assessment activities (including participation in meetings).

- Engaging with the Virtual Learning Environment.

Academic engagement is monitored each month[22].

If a student has not been academically engaging for a period of 4-weeks, they are referred through to the Compliance Team for further intervention (although as stated above, SEWS will continue to apply the Engagement Policy and make its own interventions).

The Compliance Team will maintain a list of such students and separately record the time period of academic non-engagement.

At various stages, the Compliance Team will make a series of interventions: email, telephone call, face-to-face meeting. The type of intervention will depend upon the time period of academic non-engagement.

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[20] https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/

[21] https://ssp.bil.ac.uk/lsbm-ssp/auth/ssp/login

[22] UKVI permit 2 checkpoints over a rolling 12-month period. However, in the early stages of implementing this new system, we have opted for a more regular review. Once this new system is fully operative, we may opt to introduce three formal checkpoints [for formal UKVI reporting purposes] to take place after the end of each of our 3 teaching terms when full assessment data is available for that term. It is at this checkpoint that any student who has not been academically engaging for a period of 60 days or more would have their sponsorship withdrawn and would be reported to the UKVI.

Any student who fails to academically engage within a 60-day period will have their sponsorship withdrawn and will be reported to the UKVI.

4.4 Record-keeping duties

While a student is sponsored by us, we are required to maintain a full and up-to-date record of them and their studies. Full details of record keeping requirements can be found in the UKVI document, 'Appendix D'. This can be accessed by clicking on the following link: Appendix D[23].

Appendix D includes all documents required for issuing the student's CAS such as passport, financial documents, academic documents plus (if applicable) UK ENIC Statement of Comparability, English Language Test/Qualification results, as well as post-CAS documentation such as the 90-day entry clearance vignette and entry stamp), BRP and UK contact details.

If a student changes their contact details in the UK, they must raise a SSP request to have their contact details updated on our student database Oracle. A note of the student's previous details will also be kept.

Contact details include:

- UK address.

- UK mobile number.

- Email address.

The documents collected for Appendix D purposes are as follows:

- Application form.

- Academic qualification(s)/transcript(s) and (if applicable) UK ENIC Statement of Comparability.

- English Language Test/Qualification.

- Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS).

- Passport/travel document.

- Financial documents.

- 90-day entry clearance vignette and entry stamp.

- Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).

- UK contact details.

Other documents may be collected depending on the student's circumstance.

Current UKVI rules state that documents specified within 'Appendix D' must be kept for one year after the end date of the student's sponsorship.

4.4.1 Filing system

To ensure UKVI compliance for record keeping, all information and documentation will be stored within one or more of the following systems:

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[23]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970042/2021-03-16_Sponsor-guidance-Appendix-D-03-21_v1.0.pdf

- Radius CRM.

- CAS Shield.

- Oracle Student Management System

4.5   Reporting duties

In addition to maintaining a full record for international students, we are also required to comply with the sponsorship duties listed in the Student Sponsor Guidance[24]: Document 2 of the Sponsorship Duties document published by the UKVI.

4.5.1   Student's change in circumstances/sponsorship withdrawal

We are required to report any changes to a student's circumstances. The reporting must be made on the Sponsor Management System (SMS). The SMS is a UKVI online tool where we carry out our day-to-day sponsorship activities such as reporting any change in a student's circumstances or withdrawing a student's sponsorship. Any reporting must be done within ten working days of the change being known.

The changes may include, but are not limited to, a student changing immigration categories, a student's start date being delayed, a student deferring their course, a student completing their course earlier than expected, a student obtaining a visa refusal, a student's failure to enrol onto their course within the enrolment period and a student's failure to complete their course. The latter three specifically feed into the statistics of the Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA).

Here are some of the reasons we may have for withdrawing a student's sponsorship:

- When an application is refused by the UKVI - (this affects our refusal rate).

- When a student has not enrolled onto their course within the enrolment period (this affects our enrolment rate).

- When a student withdraws or is withdrawn from the course post enrolment (this affects our completion rates)

Here are some of the reasons a student may be withdrawn from the course post-enrolment:

- Student is found to have not academically engaged within a 60-day period.

- Student is found to be in breach of their conditions of stay.

4.5.2   Academic Administration Team

The Academic Administration Team provide a crucial link for the reporting of information once a student has enrolled, for example:

- If an international student decides to self-withdraw at any stage of their course, they must contact the Academic Administration Team by logging a ticket on the SSP with the relevant withdrawal form which can be found on our website: Student forms[25]. The Academic Administration Team will notify the Compliance Team.

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[24]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939471/Student_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Doc_2_-_Sponsorship_Duties_2020-12.pdf

[25] https://www.bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/

- An international student may be withdrawn at the end of an academic year due to academic failure. Once the final examination grades are published, the Academic Administration Team will notify the Compliance Team if any international student will be withdrawn from their course.

- In instances where international students may be permitted to repeat modules or re-sit exams, the Academic Administration Team will notify the Compliance Team.

- In some cases, an international student may notify the Academic Administration Team that they wish to change their course. The decision will be made on a case-by-case basis considering the UKVI academic progression rules, ability to map modules and CAS availability. The Compliance Team will review the request to ensure that the relevant rules are being followed.

- An international student is required to contact the Academic Administration Team if they need to update their contact details. The Academic Administration Team will update the student's contact details within our Student Management System (Oracle) and create a note of their previous contact details.

4.5.3 Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA)

The Basic Compliance Assessment (BCA) is a UKVI application made on the SMS by sponsors, to enable the UKVI to assess whether the sponsor is adhering to their requirements over a continual 12-month basis. Our 12-month period for the BCA runs from mid-March to the following mid-March.

There are three core requirements that UKVI officials will check in a BCA assessment: visa refusal, enrolment and completion rates.

Sponsors are required to maintain:

- A visa refusal rate of less than 10%.

- An enrolment rate of at least 90%.

- A course completion rate of at least 85%.

BCA calculations are made as follows:

Refusals: Calculations are made based on all CASs defined as being 'used' for a UKVI application, against the number of visa applications that the UKVI has refused.

Enrolment: Calculations are made based on all applicants who have been granted student visas against those that enrol during the enrolment period.

Course completion: Calculations are made based on all students who enrol against those who complete their course. Note: the calculation will not include those who have switched institutions, switched to another immigration category, or withdrawn from the course and provided proof of leaving the UK.

5. Sponsor's change in circumstances

As a sponsor, we are required to submit to the UKVI specific reports outlining changes to our circumstances. These reports must be made within 20 working days and would cover circumstances such as the following:

- Appointment of a new principal.

- Change of ownership (a new licence must be applied for).

- Change of address and/or adding or removing designated premises.

- Change of Authorising Officer or Key Contact and contact details of each.

- Substantial change to the nature of the institution.

- Involvement in a merger or taken over.

- Cease trading or become insolvent.

- Change to Educational Oversight.

- Criminal prosecution /civil penalty.

5.1 Reporting third party organisations

We are required to report to the UKVI any organisations within or outside the UK that support the recruitment of international students, for example recruitment agents. All such reports should be made by the Compliance Team by email to EducatorsHelpdesk@homeoffice.gov.uk.

The Compliance Team maintains a register of recruitment agents that is periodically submitted to the UKVI.

6. Licence summary

To be able to sponsor students, we must have a registered licence with the UKVI. The UKVI make it clear that sponsorship is a privilege and not a right. A sponsor licence is valid for four years and we must renew our licence prior to its expiry via our SMS account. Renewal applications can be made up to 3 months prior to the licence expiry date.

6.1 Renewals and allocations

6.1.1 Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) annual allocation

UKVI state that on an annual basis, sponsors must make an application for CASs that it intends to assign over the next 12-month period. The application is made through the sponsor's SMS account.

The application for the renewal of the CAS annual allocation has to be applied for within a period set out within the SMS.

6.1.2 Renewal of licence

The details of our licence expiry can be accessed from the licence summary page in the SMS. The renewal process is fairly simple and only requires adding the allocation confirmation through the section renewals of the licence in the SMS and should only be done by a SMS Level 1 user.

The statuses of the BCA and licence renewal applications appear in the "applications tracking" section in the SMS. This section should be monitored for status updates until the BCA and renewal application processes are completed and the licence summary page is updated with new expiry dates.

7. Reporting to SMT

Highlights with regards to compliance with these procedures, including but not limited to the BCA statistics (i.e. visa refusal, enrolment and completion rates) and internal audit reports must be provided to the SMT.

8.   Related documents

Internal documents

- Admissions Policy

- Engagement Policy

- International Sponsored Student Guide

External documents

- Student Sponsor Guidance Document 2: Sponsorship Duties

- Student Sponsor Guidance Document 3: Student sponsor compliance

- Immigration Rules Appendix Finance

9.   Review

This International Sponsored Student Policy and Compliance Procedures document will be reviewed annually by our Senior Management Team. A review may also be carried out if there are changes to any of the procedures set out within the document, or if there are any changes to the UKVI regulatory framework.